

Remediation effort reaches milestone at Topps Cleaners site

BY RICHARD MARDEKIAN
Staff Writer

FAIR LAWN – Anderson Mulholland & Associates (AMA) announced it has reached a milestone in the remediation effort at the former Topps Dry Cleaners site on Fair Lawn Avenue by Plaza Road.

The environmental company, hired by the Topps property owner, has installed an Electrical Resistance Heating (ERH) remediation system that is currently fully operational. The land is contaminated with perchloroethylene, the main solvent used in the dry-cleaning process.

According to Ellen Ivens of AMA, installing the ERH involved drilling metal poles into the soil. The system then works to heat the soil to vaporize the contaminant. Vacuum units are used to capture and clean the air.

“The end result is clean air,” said Ivens.

AMA will monitor the ERH system to make sure it operates properly. It will also collect groundwater samples and continue an indoor air monitoring program.

According to the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Web site, the investigation of Topps began in 1990. At that time sampling of surrounding wells revealed the groundwater was contaminated. AMA has installed wells at the Topps site, on Archery Plaza and along Plaza Road, Ramapo Terrace

and Ramsey Terrace. According to Ivens, these wells have been tested for contamination.

“We want to see how far it (contamination) moves,” she said.

She said the company is waiting on data from the tests of these wells.

In 2005, air samples were taken from 11 homes near the Topps property and the results came back showing one of the homes required remedial action to prevent vapor intrusion.

Ivens said 16 homes in the area have been tested to check the air quality inside the dwellings. Six homes had PCE levels that were above the DEP limit and had to have mitigation units installed. Ivens said the mitigation units remove PCE vapors from underneath the houses, making sure the inside of the homes are not impacted. She added that five homes monitored were deemed safe and the company is waiting on data for the other five houses.

Mayor Steve Weinstein is pleased with AMA’s work.

“They are really being user-friendly,” said the mayor. “They are reaching out to the public and council to keep people informed. The company is doing a tremendous job.”

Weinstein pointed to a May 14 public forum AMA held to inform residents about the site as an example of the firm’s commitment to letting the community know about the work at the property.

Ivens said the installation of the system is a milestone because it means the cleanup process has started. She said the company first had to investigate the site, then

propose a plan for remediation, submit the plan to the DEP for approval and then get the neces-

sary equipment to carry out the plan.

“This is (now) an active remediation site,” she said. “The site is actually being cleaned up.”

Ivens said the cleanup process should be completed within 9 to 12 months. After that the DEP must

declare the property safe before any future plans for the site can be discussed or move forward.

Rich Mardekian's e-mail address is mardekian@northjersey.com