

Hazardous Materials Commission

Final Minutes Operations Committee

June 9, 2006

Members and Alternates

Present: Jimmy Rodgers, Don Grant, Henry Clark, Mike Shimansky, Leslie Stewart (alternate), Igor Skaredoff (alternate), Lara DeLaney (alternate)

Absent: Pam Aguilar, Sharon Fuller (represented by alternate),

Staff: Michael Kent, Gerald Tamayo and Donna Mann, CCHS

Members of the Public: Lee Jones, Gail Garrett, Jannat Muhammad, Johnny White, Luz Gomez, Office of Supervisor John Gioia,

1. Call to order, announcements: The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Rodgers at 10:05

- Commissioner Clark announced that he is helping to organize a health summit at Verde Elementary School on June 10th from 9:30 till 4:00.

Michael Kent announced:

- The Public Comment period for the Miraflores Housing Development cleanup plan closes June 23rd, and a public meeting will be held on June 13th by DTSC.
- DTSC has renewed the hazardous waste storage permit for General Chemical in Bay Point after lengthy review.
- DTSC has issued a draft hazardous waste management permit to Ecology Control Industries in Richmond. The public comment period will run from June 5th to July 20th and a public hearing will be held on July 10th.

2. Public Comments: None

3. Approval of Minutes: The May 12, 2006 minutes were approved 5-0, moved by Commissioner Grant and seconded by Commissioner Rodgers.

4. Old Business:

a. **Develop a community education strategy for addressing emergency planning and preparedness issues during catastrophic events involving hazardous materials.**

The discussion began with a recap of Commissioner's impressions of the May meeting's session on the topic.

Commissioner Rodgers felt that the risks from industry were well known, but that the risks for flooding were less well known. Industry has been successful in managing accidents because they have had detailed plans in place. He didn't see a detailed plan in place by the County to address an evacuation in the face of a hazardous materials release. The Commission needs to make sure that the North Richmond community doesn't get left out in the event of a catastrophic accident. He believes OES is hard working and sincere, but the efforts of the County and Richmond need to be coordinated. He would like to see presentations on the hazardous materials risk associated with flooding and earthquakes, and the risks compared to the status of the emergency plans for these events. He is concerned that OES is understaffed. He also feels the community needs to be educated, so they know what the issues are.

Commissioner Clark was also concerned about the possibility of a long-term chemical release. He felt the Commission needed to consider whether to present to the public the hazardous materials risks during flooding and earthquakes, or be educated on these risks themselves first.

Commissioner Rodgers felt the Commission first needed to know what the County will say about these issues before holding a community meeting.

Commissioner Shimansky felt it was important that the Commission keep the focus on the hazardous materials issue. San Ramon did their own analysis of hazmat risks during earthquakes and found that for the first 72 hours the County is going to be very busy and people will be on their own. He hasn't seen much planning going on for this.

Michael Kent mentioned that OES staff had shared with him that they had just recently participated in a Health Department drill where hazmat issues were discussed. These and other layers of planning and exercises are happening, and residents should know about these.

Commissioner Rodgers observed that it is good that planning is happening, but planners need to know there is a difference between the people and their needs in North Richmond, and those in more affluent areas of the County. Plans need to be different for these different areas.

Commissioner Stewart suggested that a good first step would be to put together a multi-hazard drill for North Richmond since the County has to periodically conduct drills.

Commissioner DeLaney thought it would be helpful to find out the hazardous materials related results from the June 5 Health Department drill.

Commissioner Skaredoff observed that since planning seems very contingent on the circumstances of the event, good communication with the community is even more important at the time of an event. Telling people to listen to a specific radio station during the event isn't enough. People need to know how to get information in other ways as well. Some places are more vulnerable than others and the County needs to work with them as well.

Commissioner Rodgers recommended promoting the idea of a North Richmond drill and to get a presentation on the flooding risk. After that, the Commission should try to set up educational meetings with the public. The Commission may need to communicate with the Board of Supervisors on the progress of this issue.

Commissioner Stewart felt it was important that if the County does a drill they involve the community in planning the drill, and do community education about the drill.

Johnny White observed that the community is very concerned about crime during an evacuation and would feel particularly vulnerable at that point. They would need strong assurances that they will be protected.

Commissioner Skaredoff felt it is very important to involve community members in the planning of the drill. He wouldn't want the County to wait until all their emergency planning is done before initiating a drill.

Commissioner DeLaney mentioned that the Health Department was developing a plan to identify the needs of special populations that should be done in six months.

Commissioner Shimansky noted that crime is a legitimate concern. After Katrina, while he was working with the Red Cross in Houston, he saw crime starting around the Astrodome due to the presence of refugees. After the San Ramon exercises they started setting up CERT teams.

Donna Mann informed the group that CERT teams are set up through law enforcement.

Commissioner Grant felt that any effort the Commission undertook had to stress to residents that they need to be prepared to take care of themselves immediately after an event.

In conclusion, the committee wants to ask OES for presentations on the hazardous materials risks associated with flooding and the earthquakes. They also want to request that a drill be conducted for North Richmond involving an evacuation scenario.

b. Follow-up discussion of issues raised by the analysis of the emergency response to the March 26, 2006 release from Shell refinery in Martinez and the May 1, 2006 release from the ConocoPhillips refinery in Rodeo.

The two major issues identified by the committee as being of concern were the TENS system and the resounding of the sirens. The TENS system didn't work properly in either event and the County chose not to resound the sirens during one of the events. Concern was expressed by the committee that the policy should be strictly followed, or the public will lose confidence in the system. Concern was also expressed by Commissioners Shimansky and DeLaney that 30 minutes might be too long between resoundings, and that a shorter interval such as 15 minutes might be more appropriate.

The committee asked if they could have a presentation on the status of the TENS system, and a presentation on the background and rationale for the current resounding policy.

5. New Business:

None

6. Items of interest to the Committee: The committee ran out of time to discuss a summary of the meeting with Supervisor Gioia, but will do so at the next meeting.

7. Adjournment - The meeting was adjourned at 12:00.