



MEMORANDUM

To: Roger L. Stancil, Town Manager

From: Lance Norris, Public Works Director

Date: April 24, 2014

Subject: Update on Coal Ash Assessment at the Chapel Hill Police Station

Background:

As part of the Town's asset management initiative, we recently conducted a property assessment of the police building, which is one of several Town owned properties that the Council is considering for potential sale. Based on previous knowledge of the site, we engaged Falcon Engineering to provide due diligence environmental services to qualify this property for potential redevelopment activities. On October 18, 2013, the Town released information from an environmental assessment of the Police Department property accomplished by Falcon indicating the presence of coal ash in fill deposited on the site in the 1960's and 70's. That information was provided to the NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources (NC DENR) for their review.

The Town was proactive in taking additional soil and groundwater samples to further characterize conditions on the property in the event they were later requested. In late October 2013, NC DENR requested that the Town proceed with these tests. The samples were taken and analyzed and Falcon Engineering is providing a full report to NC DENR to determine what further actions may be needed by the Town. The full report is also posted on the Town's web page (<http://www.townofchapelhill.org/index.aspx?page=2311>).

Summary of Report:

Information in the report identifies the presence of elevated levels of several metals, characteristic of coal ash leaching, in groundwater samples taken from one of two monitoring wells installed on the site. Specifically levels of Mercury, Arsenic, Barium, Chromium, Lead and Selenium, in samples from this well exceeded NC DENR's established groundwater standards. In the soil samples, evidence of coal ash related metals was also identified but these levels were generally less elevated. Specifically, with the exception of the single constituent Barium, the levels of these metals did not exceed established standards for residential use of the property and all constituent levels were significantly below the established standards for the existing "commercial" property use designation.

In addition to completing the testing directed by NC DENR, the Town contracted with Falcon Engineering to take some supplemental measures in response to the previously released environmental assessment. These measures were initiated proactively by the Town to assure that we received comprehensive information about the site conditions and that any possible environmental impacts would be minimized as we undertook these further studies.

The Town's extra efforts included the installation of silt fencing at the base of the slope above Bolin Creek, to mitigate the potential for coal ash to migrate off-site as a result of stormwater run-off, and security fencing around a section of the site, to restrict public access. Falcon Engineering also conducted some additional testing, including a number of soil probes across the site to better delineate the extent of the coal ash fill materials, and analyses of surface water samples taken from Bolin Creek both upstream and downstream of the assessment site. These surface water samples indicated that the coal ash on the Police Station property had no quantifiable impact on Bolin Creek water quality.

Next Steps:

After NC DENR has had an opportunity to review the new information we anticipate that they will provide the Town with recommendations for next steps. These further actions could include additional testing, supplemental mitigation measures, and/or the placement of future use restrictions on the property. We will follow the direction of NC DENR and will provide updated information as it becomes available.