

The Community Responds to the Ohio EPA's Inadequate Proposed Plan to Cleanup Hilton Davis

Earlier this year, on February 25, more than a hundred residents of Pleasant Ridge and surrounding communities packed the Blue Room at the Recreation Center. The purpose of the meeting was for representatives of the Ohio EPA to receive feedback from residents regarding the agency's proposed plan to cleanup the Hilton Davis Chemical Plant site at 2235 Langdon Farm Road. *The agency got an earful.* Through their questions and public comments made on the record, residents gave the proposed plan a big thumbs-down.

To understand the residents' concerns, however, a quick history of the Hilton Davis cleanup is in order. In the 1980s, neighbors began intensely complaining about the foul odor caused by the site's lagoons and discharges to the sewers. Led by Pleasant Ridge Community Council, neighbors organized and the group Citizens Concerned about Hilton Davis was formed. Ultimately, Hilton Davis and its parent company, Sterling Drug, were required to cleanup the site, as dictated in a 1986 Consent Decree, which gave the community a "seat at the table" about how the cleanup would proceed. This hard-fought success in court led to a hugely successful cleanup of the "lagoons," which constituted six acres of the site that primarily had contributed to the terrible odor. The lagoons were cleaned up to the *highest* standards.

Yet, as residents learned at the February 25 meeting, the Ohio EPA is *not* imposing these same rigorous standards for the cleanup of the rest of the site. Instead, the agency has basically rubber-stamped the plan drafted by Eastman Kodak, the owner of the property. (Note: an unrelated company owns and operates the chemical plant currently.) The main area of concern is the Bloody Run Creek Ravine. Hilton Davis used the creek and its ravine as a convenient way to dispose of its industrial and highly toxic hazardous wastes for some 50 years. *Ohio EPA's proposal would leave every bit of the ravine's waste and contamination in place.* Instead of requiring a cleanup of the site, the agency has adopted Kodak's plan to use a thin layer of soil to purportedly contain the landfill's toxic wastes and vapors.

At the February 25 meeting, residents were outraged that the agency would propose such a "cover-up" plan. They pointed out that the proposal fails to comply with critical provisions of the Consent Decree, which requires cleanup remedies to be implemented that "minimize or eliminate the potential for release of hazardous wastes and constituents into the environment" and "provide the greatest improvement to public health, welfare and environment." The proposed plan does not meet these requirements but instead simply saves money for Kodak, to the detriment of the community.

(For more information about the agency's proposed plan and the community's five-point cleanup plan, please visit www.pleasantridge.org – click on the "Board" tab and then scroll down to view the documents on the left.)

At the meeting, the Ohio EPA promised that before it issued its final plan, it would listen to residents' concerns and respond to any of their questions about the plan. Through letters and e-mails, residents flooded the agency the following month with specific questions and scathing criticisms of the plan. So far the Ohio EPA has *not* responded.

So what do we do now? The community council is asking residents to keep up the pressure.

At the urging of residents, the Cincinnati City Council passed a resolution in March demanding the Ohio EPA require a complete cleanup of the site. (Those council members who supported the resolution are listed below.) Also, our state legislators in Columbus have voiced their support of the community on this issue. Yet our city officials and state representatives need to continue to hear from residents *directly* – and *before* the Ohio EPA issues its final plan. Please take a few minutes to call or e-mail one or more of the elected officials below and let them know how important a complete cleanup of Hilton Davis is to you.

(So that we can track these calls/e-mails, please cc: or send a separate e-mail to president@pleasantridge.org (subject line: Hilton Davis) and let us know which officials you contacted and what response, if any, you received.)

Governor Ted Strickland
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Senator Eric Kearney
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