



Many Voices Working for the Community

Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board

Monthly Meeting of the Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board

Approved November 8, 2017, Meeting Minutes

The Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board (ORSSAB) held its monthly meeting on Wednesday, November 8, 2017, at the DOE Information Center, 1 Science.gov Way, Oak Ridge, beginning at 6 p.m. A video of the meeting was made and may be viewed by contacting ORSSAB support offices at (865) 241-4583 or (865) 241-4584. The presentation portion of the video is available on the board's YouTube site at www.youtube.com/user/ORSSAB/videos.

Members Present

Kathryn Bales
Christopher Beatty
David Branch
Richard Burroughs
Martha Deaderick
Eddie Holden
Bonnie Shoemaker
Deni Sobek

Rosario Gonzalez
Belinda Price, Vice Chair
Leon Shields
John Tapp
Venita Thomas
Ed Trujillo
Rudy Weigel
Dennis Wilson, Chair

Members Absent

Leon Baker
Michelle Lohmann
Deni Sobek¹
Fred Swindler
Tara Walker

¹Second consecutive absence

Liaisons, Deputy Designated Federal Officer, and Alternates Present

Dave Adler, Acting deputy manager and ORSSAB Alternate Deputy Designated Federal Officer (DDFO), Department of Energy, Oak Ridge Office of Environmental Management (DOE-OREM)
Kristof Czartoryski, Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC)
Connie Jones, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
Jay Mullis, Manager and ORSSAB DDFO, DOE-OREM
Melyssa Noe, ORSSAB Alternate DDFO, DOE-OREM

Others Present

Shelley Kimel, ORSSAB Support Office
Cameron Niemeyer, Hardin Valley Academy
Chloe Nussbaum, Oak Ridge High School
Pete Osborne, ORSSAB Support Office

Seven members of the public were present.

Mr. Wilson opened the meeting by congratulating Mr. Mullis on his promotion to OREM Manager.

Liaison Comments

All liaisons likewise congratulated Mr. Mullis

Mr. Czartoryski – No comments.

Ms. Jones – No comments

Mr. Mullis – No comments.

Public Comment

None

Presentation

Mr. Mullis gave a presentation (Attachment 1) on DOE's 45-Day Review, which was initiated by OREM Acting Assistant Secretary Jim Owendoff upon his appointment to the position. He directed EM executives to provide an open book of suggestions to headquarters. Oak Ridge initially supplied 18 or 20 items, said Mr. Mullis. After further screening, Oak Ridge ended up with about 14 items, he said. Field managers and other senior staff then presented those items to the organization's leadership, and teams were formed to move them forward. Of these items, Mr. Mullis' presentation addressed five involving field work that directly affects Oak Ridge. Of these five items, four should be complete by the end of the year, he said. The other items include administrative procedures or business items being discussed internally by DOE, he said.

1. Establish a path forward for non-radiologically contaminated elemental mercury.
On this topic, Mr. Mullis stated OREM has removed 1.2 tons of mercury from equipment in Alpha 5. The project is about halfway done, he said, and workers will remove about two tons of mercury in total. There are regulatory conflicts on how to deal with that material, he noted. DOE would like to amalgamate and dispose of this material and, with headquarters support, OREM is working on that solution.

2. Benefits of In-Cell Macro Encapsulation
This issue involves disposal procedures the new proposed waste site, Mr. Mullis explained. That site is still in dispute among the agreeing parties. DOE would like to work with EPA and the state to be able to move and treat all waste in the new waste site rather than treating them on-site, which is what current regulations require. Due to its complexity, this item will take some time and not be completed this year.

3. Evaluate long-term in-place stabilization for some transuranic (TRU) waste
This goal is focused on disposition of the Molten Salt Reactor at Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL). The reactor's fuel, including both uranium and plutonium, has mostly been removed, said Mr. Mullis. However, trace amounts of both elements remain as well as additional cesium and strontium fission products. The current interim Record of Decision (ROD) requires DOE to remove all the material. However, DOE feels this is an overly hazardous approach as the salt removal carries a significant risk of dispersing contaminated material into the environment. DOE would instead like to entomb the reactor in place. Other sites, including Hanford and Savannah River, have used this method, he said. Depending on the results of the technical evaluation, DOE would work with the state to move forward, he said. The facility is expensive to maintain and would be very expensive to clean under current procedures. DOE believes entombment would both safer and more cost effective.

4. Acceleration of medical isotopes from uranium 233 material

This item focuses on Building 2026, which contains excess radioactive materials that need to be treated and down blended, Mr. Mullis said. While there is a design project underway to accomplish this, funding requirements mean the workforce can't be maintained while that is happening. Laying off workers then re-hiring and training them once work is available would create a years-long delay in cleanup, he said. Alternatively, there is an option for a partnership with a private company that would like the thorium in these materials. The company would give OREM's cleanup contractor funds to accomplish the cleanup in return for the materials. Mr. Owendoff has approved this project, Mullis said.

5. Use of remote handled waste overpacks to enable disposal of ORNL remote-handled TRU waste at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP)

When WIPP shut down, OREM had to work to continue storing waste that could not be shipped, said Mr. Mullis. To accomplish this, OREM purchased shielded storage casks that could contain multiple drums of remote-handled TRU waste. While it has resumed operations, WIPP is still not taking remote-handled waste, only contact-handled waste. Because of this, OREM proposes sending the shielded casks that have worked here to WIPP, where they could be again filled with the remote-handled waste. The extra storage barrier should allow the package to be classified as contact-handled waste. For this to move forward, there would need to be a permit change in New Mexico, said Mr. Mullis. DOE headquarters is working to assist in the permit process.

Mr. Mullis noted there are additional items identified in the 45-Day Review by other EM sites that could impact Oak Ridge: Disposition of TRU waste from the West Valley Demonstration Project; lifting the moratorium/suspension on recycling of metals and other materials that meet free release criteria (including nickel); and the previously mentioned improvements to internal DOE business systems.

After the presentation board members asked the following questions.

Ms. Shoemaker asked how long until the new waste cell is approved. Mr. Mullis reviewed the formal dispute between DOE/TDEC and EPA and noted there is not a timeline for resolution. There is a proposed plan that cannot be presented to the public for comment until the dispute is done, he added.

Mr. Weigel asked about mercury from Alpha 4. Mr. Mullis said Alpha 4 is not an EM facility and it is still with NNSA. EM does not yet have funding to take on that facility, he added.

Mr. Trujillo asked, on the cell microencapsulation, would the dispute slow the design of the site. Mr. Mullis said it should not have a substantial change on the construction of the cell. Mr. Trujillo asked if there were specific criteria for the five items chosen. Mr. Mullis said that cost was definitely a factor. For example, storing of nickel is expensive for no particular purpose, he said. The decision about what to do now and what to put off was more based on what could be accomplished in a year or less and what would have the most payoff. There were additional things that were proposed that were returned to the site manager for a decision – they are not part of the 45 day review because headquarters has ceded that authority to the site to move forward.

Mr. Tapp asked about additional funding for these five goals. Mr. Mullis said none of these projects should require additional funding. They should all actually save money in the long run, he said. For example, getting rid of the mercury in Alpha 5 is far more cost effective than storing it securely.

Mr. Wilson asked about cost savings if the Molten Salt Reactor was entombed as proposed. He also asked about related facilities. Mr. Mullis said identifying the savings is part of the evaluation DOE wants to perform. Mr. Mullis said the reactor would be entombed but the other facilities could be dispositioned. So the only piece left would be the underground portions of the reactor.

Members of the public asked the following questions

Mr. Mullis answered a question from the audience regarding if macro encapsulation was for EMWMF or the new cell – Mr. Mullis said that would be for the new cell.

Committee Reports

EM & Stewardship – Mr. Tapp gave a brief overview of the Oct. 25 meeting to review Mr. Adler's presentation on Vision 2020.

The committee discussed several sites, he said, including Duct Island redevelopment. Mr. Petrie answered many members' questions. The committee also addressed rail cars at East Tennessee Technology Park (ETTP), with the general conclusion that those are all private property. There was discussion of the potential for the future airport, which is waiting on FAA approval. Deed restrictions on ETTP property being transferred and their enforcement was a topic of great interest. He noted the deed issue will be discussed further at the November EM & Stewardship meeting.

During the meeting, Tapp reported, Mr. Trujillo asked about revenues and property sales. Mr. Tapp said he had done extensive research on this topic and would be happy to share. There was conflicting discussion on acres transferred by DOE that was cleared up in email after the meeting by DOE staff, he added.

Mr. Tapp asked for a clarification on a DOE agreement with TWRA on several thousand acres on Black Oak Ridge. Mr. Adler said it was a long-term conservation easement. Mr. Tapp briefly covered some other property that has been turned to greenspace of various types. Mr. Tapp noted DOE is very focused on historic preservation and that historically, ORSSAB has been active in this area. He shared with the rest of the board that Martha Deadrick is the official ORSSAB representative to the historic agreements. ETTP is scheduled as the last topic of this year's work plan, Tapp reminded board members, and so the EM Stewardship committee felt it would hold any recommendations on the topic of preservation and greenspace etc. until that time.

Executive – Discussion at the Nov. 1 Executive Committee meeting centered on a lack of information about deed restrictions as previously mentioned by Mr. Tapp, said Mr. Wilson. That is one driver behind addressing the topic further at the Nov. 29 EM & Stewardship meeting. The committee also discussed proposed recommendations moving forward on the topic.

Mr. Wilson gave an overview of his experience at the Fall Chairs Meeting, which was held at the Hanford site in Washington. He noted the challenges faced by Hanford due to the size of their site compared to Oak Ridge, which is fairly close together and easier to navigate. He commended the Hanford site's participation in the Manhattan Project National Historical Park.

Many of the topics covered by Mr. Mullis were likewise part of the chairs meeting, he said. Some topics covered were the Molten Salt Reactor cleanup, as well as the Biology Complex at ORNL and Beta 4 getting extra funding. The challenge put forward with the new administration, he said, is that all sites must share best practices to stay within their funding going forward. While overhead for infrastructure continues to increase and threatens to pull funds from cleanup, no large increase in budgets is expected. Mr. Wilson noted that during the event, Ms. Charbonneau suggested everyone read the Energy Communities Alliance paper on waste management. While no recommendation was made, he said, the chairs did produce a work product on making good recommendations, which he shared with members (Attachment 2). He noted that WIPP responded to the chairs recommendation about additional storage, but was planning to pursue the suggestions. However, WIPP is working on additional ventilation that will allow it to increase shipments soon.

Regarding the December social meeting, Mr. Wilson asked if board members still wanted to do this. He suggested staff pick some dates and send out for the first week of December. Ms. Price suggested a Wednesday evening would be best.

Open Discussion

Mr. Burroughs noted there was a second consecutive absence by Ms. Gonzalez, but she was present at the meeting, so no further action was pursued.

Announcements and Other Board Business

ORSSAB's next scheduled meeting will be Wednesday, February 14, 2018 at the DOE Information Center. The topic will be Excess Contaminated Facilities. Issue Managers: Bales, Swindler, Tapp, Thomas, Trujillo.

The minutes of the October 11 meeting were approved.

Motions

11/8/2017.1

Mr. Wilson motioned to approve the meeting agenda. Ms. Price moved to approve and Ms. Thomas seconded. The motion was approved.

11/8/2017.2

Mr. Wilson motioned to approve the October minutes. Mr. Weigel moved to approve and Mr. Holden seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Alternate DDFO Report

Ms. Noe said DOE has responded to all current recommendations.

Action Items

1. Staff should put the ECA paper on next week's Tuesday Newsday since it came up again in discussion. **Completed by email 11/14.**
2. Staff should send information for the December holiday gathering to the membership and liaisons.

Mr. Wilson adjourned the meeting at 7:13 p.m. Attachments (2) to these minutes are available upon request from the ORSSAB support office.

I certify that these minutes are an accurate account of the November 8, 2017, meeting of the Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board.

Richard Burroughs, Secretary



Dennis Wilson, Chair
Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board
DW/smk

2/14/2018