

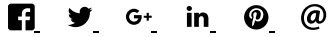


http://www.washtimesherald.com/news/local_news/city-provides-update-on-former-tokheim-site/article_b89292f7-3914-5476-be65-02b0ebfd5686.html

EDITOR'S PICK

City provides update on former Tokheim site

Special to TH Jul 21, 2017



The City of Washington is taking a proactive approach to get a property on the city's near west-side redeveloped and returned to productive use. The property located at 227 Front Street has been vacant for many years and is on the county's delinquent property tax list.

Site Evaluation

The Southern Indiana Development Commission (SIDC) has been exploring redevelopment opportunities for the site since 2016. The city and SIDC identified the property as a site for potential redevelopment. SIDC obtained a grant from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to investigate the property in order to acquire a working understanding of the conditions of the site. This assessment would allow potential developers to fully analyze any potential projects before committing to any development plans.

The results of the preliminary property investigation revealed elevated levels of some chemical compounds in the soil and groundwater at the site. Residents near the affected property are supplied with city water, and the city separately samples and treats this drinking water to ensure it complies with all state and federal regulations. The city's drinking water is safe. While the full extent of the contamination is not yet known, the investigation to date suggests the contamination was caused by historical manufacturing operations at the site. The city of Washington did not cause the contamination but is evaluating all possible avenues to clean up the site.

Air Sampling

The city is working with the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM), the state agency in Indiana responsible for protecting human health and the environment. IDEM employs engineers, scientists and environmental project managers specializing in air, land, pollution prevention and water quality issues. IDEM will assist the city to ensure that area residents are safe and that the investigation and cleanup are performed properly. The city has retained the Indianapolis-based, environmental consulting firm Keramida to investigate potential impacts. Currently, this involves air quality testing in the surrounding buildings to confirm that the air in structures is safe.

Indoor-air sampling of the nearby properties is underway. City and Keramida personnel have already begun meeting with area residents. At these meetings, the team and residents are discussing access to properties so Keramida can complete the testing. In most cases, Keramida places small canisters in homes to perform a 24-hour air test (similar to a radon test).

Residents will not be charged for these indoor-air tests. The city expects the corporate entities responsible for the contamination to pay for these tests, as well as any future investigation and/or cleanup. The city is working with IDEM to identify and pursue the responsible corporate entities, and the city is considering legal action, if necessary, against any liable corporate entity. The city is also pursuing insurance coverage to minimize any costs the city may bear.

Development Plans

A developer had expressed interest to SIDC in developing portions of the Front Street property. No definitive plans have been made at this time, and any redevelopment efforts are on hold while the conditions at site are investigated. The city and SIDC are considering all options for future uses at the site, and the city will be making every effort to encourage redevelopment of the property to benefit the surrounding residents and all residents of the city of Washington.

Public Meeting

A town hall meeting will be held on Friday, July 28, 2017, beginning at 6:30 p.m. at the Washington Fire Department Station, No. 2, 1002 W, Walnut St., Washington, IN 47501. Area residents and citizens are invited to attend this public information session. City representatives will provide additional details about the site, focusing on the relevant background and current status of the site. City representatives also will be available to answer questions.

For more information, residents are encouraged to contact the mayor's office 812-254-5575. If any residents have helpful information about historical operations at the site, you are encouraged to call the mayor's office.

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