

42-8778

February 23, 1997
1891 W. Chestnut St.
Washington, Pa. 15301-2637
Tele.: 412 225 3524

Nuclear Regulatory Commission
11545 Rockville Pike
Washington, D. C. 20555

Dear Sirs:

I am a concerned citizen of Washington, Pennsylvania, who over the years has read of situations such as the one now facing the people of this area. In the nearby town of Cannonsburg, Pa., millions of dollars of taxpayers money was spent in recent years to clean up radioactive waste deposited in that area.

I live in a nearby area called Ellwood Park; property that I purchased just a few years ago. Under my back yard there is an under ground creek that is piped beneath my driveway into an open sewer. The water flows continuously even in the dryest weather.

If so called "low level radioactive waste" is stored underground above my property what is to prevent this material from gradually being leached into the ground, picked up by the water from this creek and passed directly beneath my home?

My son and I discussed this issue and he (also a Chemist) suggested that I purchase a Geiger counter, and monitor the water passing under my driveway.

According to articles in our local newspaper, we are advised that your department or departments are fully aware of the plans of the Molycorp Corporation. (Copies enclosed of these articles and other pertinent letters and data.)

I am personally sending you this information, so that in the future I will know personally that your Commission is fully aware of what I and others consider a predicament.

Enc.

060069

Yours truly,

Frank L. Weber
Frank L. Weber

ML 10/1

9703060398 970223
PDR ADOCK 04008778
C PDR



TO: Residents of Elwood Park and Surrounding Areas

FROM: A Concerned Friend

DATE: January 10, 1997

SUBJECT: Canton Township Meeting
Tuesday, January 14, 1997
5:00 P.M. @ Township Building

Molycorp Inc. has asked for NRC approval to bury low level radioactive waste within hundreds of feet of your neighborhood. This waste contains thorium which is currently located in the flood plain within the Canton Township plant and also thorium with a low quantity of radium and uranium from their York plant. Molycorp has been working on this project for years but only recently decided to make it public. Although an Environmental Impact Statement must be completed and a public hearing held, we must get the township SUPERVISORS to act now to protect our best interests. Because as stated in the newspaper, they have made a second request for NRC approval to move the York waste to Canton for temporary storage.

PLEASE SHOW THE SUPERVISORS YOUR CONCERNS BY ATTENDING THE NEXT TOWNSHIP MEETING ON TUESDAY, JANUARY 14 AND ALL FUTURE MEETINGS TO VOICE YOUR OPINIONS AND TO UNDERSTAND WHAT IS HAPPENING.

Thank you.

225 89010
CANTON TWP.
OFF.

NUCLEAR
REGULATORY
COMMISSION
NRC

January 14, 1997
1891 W. Chestnut Street
Washington, Pa. 15301-2637
Tele.: 412 225 3524

Dear Mr. Pettit,

My name is Frank Weber, and if you recall we had a brief discussion at the township meeting last evening re Molucorp, Inc. request for NRC approval to bury low level radioactive waste in our area.

I indicated that I was a Chemist, and while not an authority on radioactive metals such as Radium, Uranium and Thorium, I am quite familiar with these metals since I worked as an analyst with metals as well as non-metals, analyzing same both qualitatively and quantitatively for about twenty years in St. Louis, Mo., and at Findlay Refractories here in Washington, Pa. for eighteen years before my retirement in 1990.

Radioactive materials have life spans of from a few minutes, to Radium 226 of the Periodic Family 2A which has a life span of 2440 years. (Ref.: Herman T. Briscoe "General Chemistry" 3rd Ed.)

While Environmental Agencies monitor all radioactive materials and require licenses to purchase and dispose of same, there have been numerous instances where these materials have contaminated very large areas, and have cost taxpayers enormous sums to decontaminate these areas. i. e. New York, Sunset Beach in Missouri, etc.

The letter, copy of which I found in my mailbox at the above address was from a "concerned friend" -- no signature. It was the first I had heard of this. I did not see any mention of this in the newspapers. I worked at Findlay next to MolyCorp for eighteen years and I know how many cars MolyCorp paid to have repainted because of damage from the effluent from their roasters.

I believe as individuals we should personally contact the NRC, or follow whatever correct procedure is necessary to personally bring this situation to their attention.

I do not believe there is such a thing as "temporary storage" of "low level" or any type of radioactive waste.

Again, I do not claim to be an authority, but I would be willing to be of help in any way.

Yours truly,
Frank L. Weber
Frank L. Weber

In limbo

Bentworth School Board may open football coach's position, **page B1**



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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 15, 1997

Molycorp planning radioactive dump

Canton Township residents want supervisors to block storage facility
BY CHRISTIE CAMPBELL
THE OBSERVER-REPORTER

Concerns about a possible storage site for radioactive materials in Canton Township brought about 35 residents to the township's meeting Tuesday.

They asked supervisors to find ways to block Molycorp Inc. from developing the storage pit on its property and eventually trucking in low-level radioactive waste from its York County plant. That waste

would be permanently stored with radioactive thorium generated 30 years ago from nuclear baking operations at the Washington plant.

Molycorp is currently seeking permits from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to build the storage site.

The process, managed by engineer William J. Karrow told township residents, will take 11 years. The company is gathering scientific information in order to submit a plan to the NRC and Canton said

any plan would not be approved without the NRC first requiring public hearings.

The supervisors and township solicitor John C. Pettit had already scheduled a meeting for today with representatives of Molycorp, and Pettit offered to express residents' concerns then. He was also asked to request that plant officials attend the next township meeting to answer questions.

Several residents of Ellwood Park and Western Avenue have already met with plant officials who promised them he has

no telephone, but others said they have never heard from the company.

In spite of meeting one-on-one with representatives of Molycorp, some residents said they were suspicious that these companies had been made only so the company would not have to face a large angry group of officials told some people that two disposal sites, one in North Carolina and another one out West, had once been under consideration.

"Our main question is why isn't it being sent to Utah where there are less people?" asked William J. Karrow.

Supervisors: Chairman John Fortin

said he was unsure what the township could do since the company plans to bury the material on its own land. "I can see the people's concern, but you have to look at Molycorp's point too," he said. "That stuff has been there for years, and as far as I know it hasn't hurt anybody."

One man took exception to that, stating the rate of cancer deaths in Ellwood Park is higher than the national average. In other instances, the supervisors voted to send a copy of the township's new zoning ordinance to the Washington County Planning Commission for review.

Observer-Reporter

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The Washington Reporter

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THE WASHINGTON OBSERVER

Founded September 18, 1871

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EDITORIALS

Molycorp is being open with community

Through much of the first part of this century, radium was produced at a plant near Canonsburg, and radioactive waste was rather casually dumped nearby. The dangers of this material were not well known at the time, either by workers at the plant or by those who lived nearby. The clean-up efforts at this site in the 1980s became a source of controversy and fear in Canonsburg.

Contrast this unhappy bit of history with what is being proposed at the Molycorp plant in Canton Township. The company wants to build a storage cell for radioactive slag that was created as a byproduct of its operation in the 1960s.

The proposal has generated criticism from residents, especially in the Ellwood Park neighborhood. While we lack the scientific knowledge either to assess the company's plan or to reassure (or support) the critics, we believe the company is going about things the right way.

Representatives of Molycorp have met individually with about 30 residents who live near the Caldwell Avenue plant. An informational library will be set up and be open to the public even after normal working hours.

A company officer met with Canton Township officials this week to outline the company's plans. Additionally, it agreed to schedule a public meeting to be attended by health and engineering representatives.

Molycorp will not be able to act without approval from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, which is in a better position to evaluate the merits of the plan than anyone locally.

But Molycorp is being open about what it wants to do and accessible to those who are fearful about the consequences. As a result, it is a long way from the Canonsburg situation, where widespread ignorance gave way to community alarm when the facts were known.

Keep radiation dump out of Canton

We the people of Canton Township should be very concerned about a proposed radiation dump site on the MolyCorp grounds. Radiation, no matter how it's stored, can seep out over a period of time. Radiation can cause cancer and other health problems.

I live in the west end of Canton Township. I know over a handful of people who have had or have died of cancer in this area. My father died at the young age of 44 of cancer. I myself at the age of 22 developed tumors in my jaw and had to be operated on. To this day I still have problems with my jaw from time to time.

I would like to raise my kids in this area because this is where I grew up.

We the people of Canton Township and Washington should not allow radiation waste to be trucked into our lives. Tell them to bury it where they make it in York County. We do not want it in our area and we should do whatever it takes to keep it out.

Dawn Sloneker
Canton Township

Take up a petition

This is for the people living in Canton Township.

Have someone in each neighborhood in the township get a petition and have everyone in that neighborhood sign it and then send it to Gov. Ridge.

It doesn't cost anything for the petition. Tell Gov. Ridge what MolyCorp is planning and explain why you don't want this storage pit built.

Someone very close to me died of cancer in 1971.

There are people who are very close to me living not far from MolyCorp. I don't want to see them or anyone else dying of cancer because this company wants to build a storage pit and bring in low-level radioactive waste from its York County plant.

Mary L. Rodgers
Washington

Santorum is out of touch

I would like to add some additional

comments regarding Sen. Santorum's recent visit to Washington High School.

As a senior preparing for college, I think his remarks were totally out of touch with the majority of students of an urban high school. The nature of his feelings regarding opportunities for superior private colleges are probably best suited for wealthier, suburban school districts.

I find it difficult to understand how Rick Santorum ever secured election to the U.S. Senate. His attitude often times appeared indignant, and on more than one occasion he failed to let a member of the audience ask a complete question without repeatedly interrupting him or her.

I feel the speech Santorum delivered was unprofessional and did not relate to his audience. He did more to dissuade 18-year-olds from voting and getting involved in the electoral process. In my young life, I have had opportunity to hear a number of politicians speak, both Republican and Democrat, and I would have to place Sen. Santorum at the bottom of my list.

Ryan F. King
Washington

A valuable resource

If you have ever taken your child to a story hour, researched a report topic, borrowed a best seller or video free of charge or taken an informative class at a very economical price, then you know what a valuable resource the Burgettstown Community Library is for the citizens of this area. What you may not realize is how the library manages to offer these services and where the funding comes from.

The library receives less than \$2,000 per year from the Burgettstown School District, the borough and Smith Township. State money covers approximately only one-quarter of annual operating costs. The remainder of the funds comes from the generous donations of local patrons.

The Burgettstown Community Library is open over 40 hours per week including evening and Saturday hours. There is a meeting room available to the public as well as computer and fax

services. Over the years the library has offered many programs and classes for adults and children. Books and information from other libraries across the state can be accessed from right here. The librarian and her staff are dedicated to serving the people of the area.

Unfortunately, we now find ourselves in a financial crunch with no immediate prospects for increased state or local funding. One way to solve this dilemma is to cut services and hours, an alternative we hope to avoid. The other solution is to appeal once again to the generosity of our local supporters. The library has launched a winter fund drive and support from the community will be deeply appreciated. Any donation helps the library to continue to provide the high quality services we have come to expect and to keep a vital community resource operating.

Sheila Repole
Burgettstown

The writer is a member of the Burgettstown Community Library Board.

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Cease and desist

Molycorp says order to halt work on radioactive waste site is premature

BY CHRISTIE CAMPBELL
THE OBSERVER REPORTER

Under pressure from its residents, the Canton Township supervisors agreed Tuesday to tell Molycorp Inc. it must stop work on a low-level radioactive site.

The supervisors plan to send a letter to Molycorp, telling the company it must immediately "cease and desist all operations" until a public meeting Feb. 27.

Residents said they want the township planning commission to

decide whether the site complies with zoning ordinances.

After the meeting, when Township Solicitor John C. Pettit was asked if the township has a legal right to make Molycorp stop work, he replied, "I'm not going to answer that, no comment."

But a Molycorp official said the company is only doing clean-up work at the site and was unsure if planning commission approval is needed for that.

Barbara Dankmyer, resident manager for Molycorp, said Tues-

day night the company has a couple of drill rigs on top of a hill checking geology and underground water. The company is also in the process of making preparations to clean out coal tar left from a turn-of-the-century mine.

"We're not building anything at all," she said. "We can't go ahead and build the cell or move any of the thorium (a low-level radioactive material) without expressed approval from the NRC."

Molycorp wants approval from the Nuclear Regulatory Commis-

sion to build the storage cell for the radioactive slag, produced there in the 1960s. Most of it is currently buried in a mound on Caldwell Avenue. Because that area is in a flood plain the company wants to relocate it to a higher elevation on its property.

Molycorp recently cleaned up radioactive soil on a neighboring property. That soil is currently stored in on-site containers.

Molycorp has also petitioned

► SEE CEASE, A2

► CEASE

FROM PAGE ONE

the NRC to bring between 3,000 to 5,000 cubic yards of radioactive slag from its closed York plant to Washington to be buried in the proposed storage cell. Because of NRC regulations, the approval process is expected to take between three to five years. Molycorp is seeking permission from the NRC to build an on-site storage cell for low-level radioactive slag.

Most of the residents who attended the meeting live in Ellwood Park, a housing development over the hill from the Caldwell Avenue plant. They expressed their concerns to the supervisors about possible long-term effects of the radiation.

"This can give you bone cancer and it's not going to give it to you tomorrow; it's going to give it to you 20 years from now," said one woman who declined to give her name.

"We feel Molycorp has jumped a couple of steps," she added. "Our planning commission has the pow-

er to say it's outside our zoning ordinances and you can't do it here."

The motion to send a letter to the company came after a report by Pettit on meeting held Jan. 15 with representatives of Molycorp.

Pettit said he believed the company was being sincere in its approach to bury the slag on its property. "I frankly was impressed with the sincerity with which they worked with us on that particular day which was about a two hour session," he said. "They seem genuine in their efforts to have all questions fairly answered."

But residents objected. "We are

just as sincere as Molycorp and have the best interests of the people at heart," said Tim Sakovich.

"I do think we would have the right to do something. If you're building a house and you're not doing it right the township can tell you to stop," said Chairman John Unrue. Unrue and supervisor Ron Megyesy voted to send the letter to Molycorp. Supervisor John Veltrie was absent.

Molycorp has scheduled an open house from 3 to 9 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 27, in the Canton Township fire hall, to address residents' concerns.

Molycorp outlines radioactive storage plans

BY CHRISTIE CAMPBELL
THE OBSERVER REPORTER

Ellwood Park residents will be in no danger should Molycorp Inc. receive approval to bury low-level radioactive material on its property, a company representative told Canton Township officials Wednesday.

Barbara Dankmyer, resident manager for Molycorp, met with township supervisors, solicitor John C. Pettit and municipal engineer William J. Garrow to outline the company's plans to clean up and store the material.

The meeting had been planned before about 35 residents attended the supervisors' meeting Tuesday to express their concerns about the proposal.

Dankmyer outlined the process by which Molycorp is requesting permission from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to build an on-site storage cell for about 40,000 cubic yards of radioactive slag. The company is also seeking NRC approval to bring between 3,000 and 5,000 cubic yards of material from its closed York County plant to Washington. Dankmyer said the company has no plans to bring any other material to the site.

▼
"We're very reluctant to send the material outside our control."

Barbara Dankmyer
Molycorp resident manager

▼
Molycorp representatives have met one-on-one with about 30 residents in the area of the Caldwell Avenue plant. Dankmyer said the company intends to keep people informed of their plans and has set up an informational library people can visit during business hours. Arrangements can be made for people who work to visit the library after normal work hours.

Dankmyer agreed to meet with residents concerned about the proposed storage facility and will also ask health and engineering representatives to attend. A special meeting is expected to be scheduled within a couple of weeks, probably at the fire hall.

Molycorp cannot proceed with its plan until the NRC reviews it and holds public hearings. The process includes taking core samples of the proposed site, and con-

ducting a risk assessment and environmental impact study. The process and is expected to take five years.

At issue is a black, glassy-looking slag which contains thorium, a natural radioactive material in Brazilian iron ore. Between 1964 and 1970, Molycorp produced ferrocolumbium, an ingredient used to strengthen steel, from the ore. The slag, which looks like the rock obsidian, was a byproduct and was used to fill in ponds around the plant.

In the 1970s the company cleaned up those ponds and stored the material in a mound at the site. Dankmyer explained the company must relocate the material because it is in a 100-year flood plain.

Because of the liability involved in moving the material to a commercial site in South Carolina or Utah, Dankmyer said the company would prefer a location on its 55-acre property.

"We're very reluctant to send the material outside our control," Dankmyer said. While the commercial site would serve as a guardian, Molycorp would remain responsible for it.

"If we send it to a site we have no

control over what goes next to or over top of it," she said.

The glassy material tends to vent thorium from leaking, Dankmyer said. The storage would be lined with a geotextile of plastic, with several layers of clay, soil and sand capped by it.

In October the company closed up 4,000 cubic yards of contained material on adjoining land owned by Findlay Refractories. That material is currently stored in containers on Molycorp property.

The company is building an access road to the proposed storage to clean up an old coal tar pit. Garrow said township ordinance did not require a permit when the company first began the road. The company has since applied for a permit.

Molycorp operated at the site from the 1920s until 1991. Last year it restarted operations on a limited basis but no longer produces radioactive byproducts. If the storage cell is approved, Molycorp will be required by the NRC to establish a fund for future maintenance of the site even if the company leaves the area.

JURY CONVICTS MAN OF ASSAULTING YOUNG GIRL — PAGE B2

MOLYCORP REVIEWING township request on radioactive slag

BY CHRISTIE CAMPBELL
THE OBSERVER REPORTER

Molycorp lawyers are reviewing a request from the Canton Township supervisors to halt any work connected with a proposed low-level radiation storage site, the company said Wednesday.

The supervisors hand-delivered a letter to Molycorp Wednesday requesting the company to stop work on a hillside above its Caldwell Avenue plant after residents insisted plans be first brought before the township planning commission.

Molycorp is seeking permission from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to build an on-site storage facility to bury an estimated 45,000 cubic yards of radioactive slag.

Company officials say the only work being done relates to a "site characterization," a study to determine if the property is suitable for such a project, as required by the NRC.

Molycorp resident manager Barbara Dankmyer said, "We are not building anything or moving any of the slag at the moment and have no plans to do so, so we see no reason to cease and desist."

Township Solicitor John C. Pettit said Wednesday he had requested, not ordered, the company to stop work. The township is also asking Molycorp to acknowledge, in writing, its willingness to cease and desist until Feb. 27, when the com-

pany will host an open house to answer residents' questions about the project.

The company plans to issue its site report to the NRC by the end of March. Dankmyer said Molycorp may miss that deadline if work is halted.

The township is requesting Molycorp alter its open house format. The company plans to hold the open house from 3 to 9 p.m. in the township fire hall to enable residents to view displays of the site and ask questions. Brief presentations will be given at 4, 6, and 8 p.m.

However, residents have requested an open meeting be held at a specific time.

"It remains the strong desire of many Canton residents to have an actual meeting, at which time, everyone that chooses to attend can share collectively in the thoughts and ideas that are exchanged in regards to this project," the letter from the township reads. It asks Molycorp to schedule a meeting for 8 p.m., following an open house from 3 to 8 p.m.

Dankmyer said the company has no plans to change its format, but residents are welcome to attend as a group.

"There will be lots of opportunities to be able to express exactly what their opinions are," she said.

Design engineers and health care experts will be available at the open house to address residents' concerns.



Geologist Dave Cercone of Verona checks water samples from a core site at Molycorp's proposed disposal site in a field a quarter of a mile from the company's Canton Township plant.

DAVE GRIFFIN/THE OBSERVER

February frenzy

WPIAL releases pairings for high school basketball playoffs, **pages C1,4**



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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 1997

Canton to Molycorp: See you in court

Township to seek injunction against proposed storage of radioactive waste

BY CHRISTIE CAMPBELL
THE OBSERVER-REPORTER
ccampbell@orplus.net

Angry that Molycorp Inc. is continuing with plans to store low-level radioactive waste on-site, residents of Canton Township Tuesday demanded its board of supervisors go to court and seek an injunction to stop the work.

At the end of a 90-minute meeting and following an earlier vote to refer the matter to the township's planning commission, the supervi-

sors unanimously voted to seek the court order.

About 70 people who crammed into the township meeting room cheered when the vote to seek the injunction passed.

On Jan. 29, the township requested the company stop all activity related to its cleanup and storage of waste. But Molycorp rejected the request, saying it was engaged in site preparation and had not started construction of a storage cell.

The company is seeking permission from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to build a permanent storage cell for radioactive slag and to move similar material from its closed York County plant to Washington.

Along with the injunction, the township is requesting that containers of radioactive soil, present since the soil was cleaned up from neighboring Findlay Refractories Co. last summer, be removed.

The supervisors will also ask the

Department of Health to conduct a study of health problems experienced by people living within a three-quarter-mile area of the Caldwell Avenue plant.

Barbara Dankmyer, resident manager for Molycorp, declined to comment on the injunction request until attorneys have reviewed it. Any action on the containers filled with soil would come under the jurisdiction of the NRC, she said. "They are aware of it and how they're storing it. The NRC has

been on site and seen it," she said.

Dankmyer was positive about the Health Department study, saying either that department or the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta could provide a good, unbiased study. "That's good, that's going to be the only department with resources to do this type of study," she said.

The request to enjoin Molycorp from its work was made by Edwood Park resident Tim Sakovich, who said the township's zoning ordinance does not allow activities that emit radioactivity. "Molycorp's actions are truly not as sin-

cere as we're led to believe and are damaging the delicate harmony within this community," he said.

But solicitor John C. Pettit recommended the matter be turned over to the planning commission, which could review a site plan and decide whether Molycorp qualified for a change of use of its property.

One member of the planning commission, Chad Smith, reported on a meeting he and two others members had with Molycorp Jan. 31.

► SEE COURT, A2

COURT

FROM PAGE ONE

Smith said he was more concerned about possible arsenic by-products and lead at MolyCorp's site, as well as potential hazardous material other manufacturing facilities may have dumped in the area. "It makes radioactive material look small," he said. "Many people who are sick right now are sick because of what is here right now, not from what they're going to bring in here."

Smith urged the township to ask MolyCorp for chemical and toxin reports on soil samples; that it conduct soil and water testing in areas leading up to Ellwood Park; and provide radioactive test kits to surrounding homeowners.

"The amount and severity of illness in the neighborhoods bordering that plant are remarkable," he wrote to the supervisors.

Sheila D. McKinney, who lives on Findlay Street, agreed. She said she and 16 of her neighbors have suffered ill health from living near the plant. McKinney said she has lost 136 pounds, has cataracts and a heart problem that doctors at Allegheny General Hospital attribute to low-level radiation.

Reports that people were working on the site at midnight Monday were discounted by Dankmyer. She said the company had hired a security guard to watch the area after a windshield on a truck was broken. "We considered it to be a random act of vandalism," she said. She believes lights residents reported seeing was the guard driving his truck around the site.

THURSDAY

► The Canton Township Planning Commission will meet at 6:30 p.m. in the township building to discuss a site plan for MolyCorp Inc., which has proposed building a storage cell for radioactive waste on its property.

FRIDAY

Molycorp awaits NRC OK of company plan

BY CHRISTIE CAMPBELL
OBSERVER REPORTER

Molycorp Inc. said Tuesday it will comply with Canton Township's request that it stop work on a proposed storage cell for low-level radioactive waste because it is working on the cell.

The company was responding to a "cease and desist" request the township supervisors made Jan. 29. In a letter delivered to the township office, Barbara Dankmyer, resident manager for Moly-

corp, noted that construction of the proposed storage cell has not started and won't until the Nuclear Regulatory Commission approves Molycorp's decommissioning plan.

The company said the only work being done at the site is certain testing and sampling as part of a site evaluation process in order to report to the NRC by the end of March.

"However, please accept our assurances that construction of the proposed permanent storage cell itself has not started and will not

commence unless NRC approval is obtained. As this approval process will take some time, Molycorp will have ample time to consider or address concerns of the board of supervisors and residents," the letter states.

The township had asked the company to stop work until a public meeting is held Feb. 27 in the township fire hall.

Molycorp had offered to conduct an open house following a Jan. 15 meeting with the supervisors, municipal engineer William J. Garrow

and solicitor John C. Pettit.

However, at the last supervisor's meeting, residents asked that instead of a six-hour open house, the company set a specific meeting time. That request was also included in the supervisor's "cease and desist" letter.

However, Dankmyer's letter said that since the project is in its preliminary stages, Molycorp believes the original plan for an open house would be the most effective way to convey information.

"A public hearing such as you propose in your Jan. 29 letter is premature" the letter read, adding that such a proceeding may be appropriate at a later date.

Molycorp reiterated that it has been open with the board of supervisors and the community to address any concerns about the clean-up project and intends to continue to do so.

None of the township supervisors were available for comment Tuesday.

1997

Judge to rule on Molycorp Monday

BY CHRISTIE CAMPBELL
THE OBSERVER REPORTER
ccampbell@orplus.net

A Washington County Court judge will issue a decision Monday on Canton Township's request that Molycorp Inc. be ordered to halt work on a radioactive waste storage site.

Judge Katherine B. Emery heard testimony from both sides Friday in motions court. She will either schedule a hearing on the injunction request or grant a preliminary injunction to prevent the company from continuing work at Caldwell Avenue plant.

Molycorp wants to build a storage cell for radioactive slag that was

created as a byproduct of its operation in the 1960s. The proposal has generated criticism from residents, especially in the El Park neighborhood.

In addition to requesting Molycorp halt all work on the storage site, the township asks in the petition, filed Thursday, that the company be prohibited from moving radioactive material from its York plant to Canton Township. The township also wants Molycorp to remove any radioactive waste already stored there in containers and conduct a geological survey of the site. And the court is asked to require the company to contact health and environmental agencies to determine if the material

could have any effects on residents' health or safety.

John Olshock, representing Canton Township, argued before Emery Friday that the company has "used the municipality's previous test to stop work."

Randy Struk, Molycorp's attorney, said the company was not doing anything underhanded. "We have gone over and above what the NRC (Nuclear Regulatory Commission) requires," he said. Molycorp has a permit from the NRC to store radioactive material, he said. And regarding the proposed storage cell, Struk said, "We are in the most preliminary stages of this project."

In light of the legal proceedings,

Molycorp decided Friday to postpone next week's open house.

Company officials regret canceling the open house. But resident manager Barbara Dankmyer said the postponement was necessary because the petition would overshadow the informational intent of the open house. The event may be rescheduled after legal issues are resolved.

The company has set up an informational room in its Caldwell Avenue plant where people can review material on the cleanup. To date, only one resident has reviewed the material there.

Molycorp invites residents with questions about the project to call 222-5605, extension 521, and

leave a message.

Last week, the township supervisors referred the matter to the planning commission, which met Thursday night. The planning commission said it believes Molycorp has had a change of use at its site, from manufacturing to storage.

The board voted to ask the supervisors to seek a change of use from Molycorp for review by the planning commission and request the company to submit a full environmental impact study of the property where the change has been proposed.

The township has sent a letter to the state Department of Health requesting a health study of people who live near the plant.

ATTENTION ELLWOOD PARK RESIDENTS

WAKE UP!!!!!!!!!!!!

WE, THE RESIDENTS OF ELLWOOD PARK, HAVE A VERY SERIOUS HEALTH HAZARD ON OUR HANDS! ARE YOU AWARE THAT MOLYCORP, INC. IS IN THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING A RADIOACTIVE WASTE DUMP SITE SEVERELY CLOSE TO OUR NEIGHBORHOOD (FOR SOME IT IS PRACTICALLY IN THEIR BACK YARDS)? A TOTAL OF 40,000 CUBIC YARDS (35,000 FROM A SITE NEAR MOLYCORP'S PLANT ON CALDWELL & GREEN, AND 5,000 BEING SHIPPED HERE FROM A CLOSED PLANT IN YORK) WILL BE BURIED AT THIS DUMP SITE. WE HAVE TO STOP THIS NOW BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE! MOLYCORP IS SHIPPING THE YORK PLANT'S WASTE HERE IN MARCH.

WE HAVE TO COME TOGETHER TO FIGHT THIS! ONE OR TWO PEOPLE WILL NOT STOP THEM. THE SUPPORT OF THE ENTIRE NEIGHBORHOOD IS NEEDED. THE CANTON TOWNSHIP SUPERVISORS ALREADY FEEL A MAJORITY OF ELLWOOD PARKS' RESIDENTS DO NOT CARE ONE WAY OR ANOTHER ABOUT THIS SITUATION. ONE REASON FOR THIS COULD BE DUE TO THE FACT THAT MOLYCORP HAS ONLY CONTACTED A FEW OF THE NEIGHBORS REGARDING THE DUMP SITE. OTHERS ONLY KNOW WHAT THEY READ IN THE NEWSPAPER.

THE NEXT SCHEDULED TOWNSHIP MEETING IS TO BE HELD ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 11 AT 5:00 P.M. PLEASE COME TO SHOW YOUR SUPPORT AGAINST MOLYCORP! SHOW THE SUPERVISORS AND MOLYCORP THAT WE DO NOT WANT THEIR CANCER-CAUSING RADIOACTIVE WASTE TO BE BURIED IN OUR BACK YARD! PLEASE DO NOT IGNORE THIS--IT WILL NOT GO AWAY!!! YOUR HEALTH IS AT GREAT RISK!

HOPEFULLY, THE THOUGHT OF CONTRACTING CANCER WILL BE ENOUGH TO MOTIVATE YOU TO FIGHT FOR OUR NEIGHBORHOOD. IN THE EVENT YOU ARE NOT CONVINCED, HERE IS SOMETHING ELSE TO THINK ABOUT. WHAT DO YOU THINK WILL HAPPEN TO PROPERTY VALUES AROUND HERE IF THIS DUMP GOES THROUGH? THEY WON'T INCREASE, THAT'S FOR SURE! DON'T THINK ABOUT MAKING A PROFIT ON YOUR HOUSE SHOULD YOU TRY TO SELL IT LATER ON (THAT'S IF YOU CAN SELL IT AT ALL)!

PLEASE ATTEND THE MEETING. SHOW YOUR SUPPORT FOR YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD. GET INVOLVED!



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EDITORIALS

Jumping the gun on Molycorp

The Canton Township supervisors reacted to the concerns of worried residents when they voted to seek an injunction against plans by Molycorp to store low-level radioactive waste on its property. Although its action will be politically popular, the township is moving too fast.

First, Molycorp needs the approval of the federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission before it can build a permanent storage cell for radioactive slag. This agency is far better equipped to judge the safety of the company's plans than a township board or a court.

Second, the complaints about health problems in neighborhoods around the Molycorp plant are, at this

stage, only anecdotal. Similar complaints in similar numbers might well be found in other neighborhoods far removed from this kind of industrial operation.

The township is on more solid ground in asking for a study of the residents' health problems by the state Health Department. Molycorp itself supports such a study either by the Health Department or by the federal Center for Disease Control.

Either agency should have the expertise to determine what relation, if any, these health problems may have to Molycorp. Their findings would provide a sounder basis for judgment than the anecdotal reports we are now hearing.