

# Contaminated material needs to be removed in Edgewater

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BY SVETLANA SHKOLNIKOVA

STAFF WRITER

EDGEWATER VIEW



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CHRISTOPHER TRENTO/PHOTO

Residents speak to the council during the July 23 meeting to discuss the contamination at Veterans Field.

Approximately 30,000 cubic yards of material needs to be removed from the field, according to a recent soil sampling.

**EDGEWATER** — Approximately 30,000 cubic yards of contaminated material, including 7,300 cubic yards that are considered hazardous, will need to be removed from Veterans Field to make the park safe for residents, according to results from recent soil sampling.

The borough's new environmental consultant, First Environment Inc., collected more than 1,000 samples to pinpoint the location of the PCBs imported onto the field last fall and will collect more in the coming days to determine the extent of contamination in certain hot spots.

The Edgewater council appropriated an additional \$19,150 last week for more testing, which will help First Environment refine the scope of the remediation plan it will submit to the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for review.

Borough officials hired the company in May to replace TERMS Environmental Services Inc., the original consultant on the Veterans Field cleanup project, after the contractor tasked with performing the work, Waterside Construction, trucked in tainted crushed concrete from the site of the former Alcoa aluminum plant on River Road.

The two sides clashed over how the mishap occurred, with Waterside claiming it had approval to reuse material from the property from the DEP and TERMS arguing that Waterside had failed to submit the concrete for required testing.

Borough officials expressed frustration with how the consultant handled the debacle and conducted subsequent soil testing, according to the borough's attorney, resulting in its dismissal.

TERMS notified the borough last month that it had grounds to sue for wrongful termination, alleging that officials had acted on the wishes of Waterside's owner, developer Fred Daibes.

First Environment initially came on board for a cost of service fee of \$46,950. Last month, the borough authorized a payment of \$131,347 for additional soil sampling and other work.

In a presentation to the governing body July 23, the company's director of site investigation and remediation, Thomas Bambrick, said the most extensive contamination was concentrated in the southern portion of the park with one spot containing tainted fill 2.5 to 4 feet deep.

"All material has to be taken out," said Bambrick, adding that the rough cubic yard estimate does not include soil stockpiles that contain asphalt, crushed rock, concrete and other material that could be contaminated.

The borough has approved \$5.5 million for the remediation plan and intends to award a contract that will pay for the removal of contaminated fill on a per unit basis, according to Borough Attorney Philip Boggia.

As the borough readies to go out to bid, it also continues to pursue the money being held by Waterside's insurance company, Liberty Mutual, through mediation.

"We have put their feet to the fire," said Tom Corrison, the borough's special counsel for Veterans Field-related litigation. "If we do not resolve the matter via mediation, we will then be able to sue against Waterside, TERMS and other parties."

Council members last week defended their decision to sever ties with TERMS, praising the work currently being done by its replacement.

"Had this approach been taken from the get-go, perhaps at this point we might already have had trucks on the field and been moving on with remediation," said Councilman Luis Vidal.

Email: [shkolnikova@northjersey.com](mailto:shkolnikova@northjersey.com)