

# Edgewater halts construction at Alcoa site as state investigates contaminants on the property

APRIL 30, 2014, 6:14 PM LAST UPDATED: WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30, 2014, 6:14 PM  
BY LINH TAT  
STAFF WRITER  
THE RECORD

EDGEWATER — Borough officials have ordered construction to stop at the former Alcoa site — where contaminated concrete was removed and imported to Veterans Field last fall — as state investigators look into whether those materials were improperly recycled, Edgewater officials said.

News of the state investigation, confirmed Wednesday by an attorney for the borough and a New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection representative, comes a week after the mayor announced that the borough hopes to resume the field cleanup within a month.

Edgewater's premier park shut down in 2011 after the discovery of polychlorinated biphenyls and other carcinogens in the soil, and the borough hired Waterside Construction LLC for the cleanup. But work halted in October when the contractor brought in PCB-laced crushed concrete from Alcoa to cap the soil at the ball field.

Waterside is also the contractor on a spa-and-hotel project underway at 660 River Road on a portion of the Alcoa property, according to documents filed with the borough's building department. Both Waterside and 38 COAH Associates LLC, which purchased the Alcoa property, are entities owned by developer Fred Daibes.

Representatives for Waterside said last fall that the DEP previously allowed contractors to reuse materials from the Alcoa site, so the company assumed the concrete was clean. Nevertheless, Waterside was required to test materials imported to Veterans Field for impurities, which, according to the borough's environmental consultant, it failed to do in this case.

And Timothy Corrison, special environmental counsel for Edgewater, sent a letter to the borough last month saying he's not aware of Waterside being issued a recycling permit to crush and process the concrete.

“It is our position that they didn’t have the necessary approvals to crush the material or recycle [it], and under no circumstances were they permitted to use this material at Veterans Field,” Corrison said Wednesday.

A DEP representative also confirmed Wednesday that the state has launched an investigation involving Veterans Field and the Alcoa site, but would not elaborate further.

A spokesman for developer Fred Daibes, who owns Waterside, said Wednesday he would look into the issue of the recycling permit.

The borough is currently in mediation with Waterside over the extent of the removal of the latest contaminants at the field. Mayor James Delaney announced at last week’s council meeting the borough plans to use the remaining balance from a \$9.7 million bond ordinance to fund a more comprehensive cleanup of Veterans Field.

The DEP wrote to the borough in early April that it had been notified of soil contamination at Alcoa.

Corrison also stated in an April 16 letter to the borough that “there appears to be no dispute” that the unclean fill imported to Veterans Field came from the Alcoa site and that “we have concerns about the present safety to workers on the site as well as the surrounding neighbors. ... Strong consideration should be given to suspending all activities at the site.”

The borough’s construction official issued the stop-work order the following day.

In addition to the spa and hotel under construction, two other developments have been built on the Alcoa property — the Avalon residential building and 38 COAH, an affordable-housing complex.

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