



Deer Park Community Advisory Council

Monday, August 23, 2021

DPCAC Updated on Odor Event, Hears Industrial Hygiene Presentation

Deer Park Community Advisory Council (DPCAC) planned to continue a series of meetings related to what are called “the BTEX chemicals” but changed their late August agenda to add reports on an August 15 event at the Lubrizol Deer Park plant that released a pungent odor that slowly traveled through multiple communities and was a nuisance to some and an irritant to others. Though investigations are still underway, the community-industry forum heard Deer Park Lubrizol General Manager Sam Striegel describe the event itself, the plant’s notifications of responsible agencies and its communications with and for the community. Buddy Rice, Interim Emergency Management Coordinator for the City of Deer Park, explained the city’s experience with the event, its decision not to call for a shelter in place, and how the city communicated with residents. Craig Hill and Kayla Roman of Harris County Pollution Control Services talked about air sampling and where the public could track the results. DPCAC facilitator Diane Sheridan summarized input from Deer Park and other communities that expressed frustrations learning what the odor was, its hazards, and steps to protect yourself and your family. In an effort to learn from this experience, community input will be shared with industry and government entities responsible for communicating with the public in an emergency. Striegel said, “Lubrizol will partner with EHCMA (East Harris County Manufacturers Association) to work with the local agencies to better understand how all parties can improve the flow of information during events to ensure that all know how to respond.”

The meeting ended with the planned presentation on how plants protect workers who could be exposed to Benzene, Toluene, Ethylbenzene, and Xylenes (BTEX). CTEH toxicologist Scott Malm described typical engineering and administrative controls for BTEX, personal protective equipment, and air monitoring and sampling tools. To protect workers from exposure to all four common chemicals, Malm said plants focus on Benzene, the one that is a confirmed human carcinogen.

On September 27, DPCAC will receive the Annual Report on Air Emissions from DPCAC Plants. Visitors are welcome to attend the Zoom meeting. Contact DPCAC at info@deerparkcac.org for details. *Read about DPCAC meetings and see summaries of our most recent presentations at www.deerparkcac.org.*