**Deer Park Community Advisory Council**  
**www.deerparkcac.org**

**Meeting Notes**

**Monday, March 25, 2024**

The 316th meeting of the Deer Park Community Advisory Council was held on Monday, March 25, 2024 at the Republic Grill. Facilitator Anne Gowan reviewed the agenda, which was accepted as proposed. The February 2024 meeting notes were approved without changes.

**Houston Ship Channel Security District**

Chairman Gary Scheibe of the Houston Ship Channel Security District (HSCSD) provided an overview of the HSCSD’s formation, its security mandates, and the evolving landscape of security regulations since 9/11. Drawing from his extensive background with the Houston Police Department, the Houston Mayor’s office, Shell Deer Park and now Pemex, Scheibe's expertise uniquely positions him to lead the HSCSD effectively.

Established by the State of Texas in 2007 and ratified by Harris County in 2009, the HSCSD is unique public-private partnership dedicated to improving the security of the region’s crucial waterside and landside supply chain. Scheibe said that the HSCSD is the only place in the world where industry collectively agreed to self-impose taxes to fund security enhancements. The tax assessment rate for the Houston Ship Channel Security District has been decreased by 50% since Gary Scheibe became Chairman in 2012. This reduction reflects the District's efforts to efficiently manage its resources and funding while still fulfilling its security enhancement and support commitments to the region's industrial and maritime facilities.

Scheibe said that security is a collaborative endeavor, necessitating active participation from industry partners, associations such as the East Harris County Manufacturer’s Association (EHCMA), and a spectrum of local, state, and federal entities. This network includes the Port of Houston Authority, Harris County, and the cities of Houston and Baytown, alongside agencies like the Department of Public Safety, Texas Parks and Wildlife, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Standards, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. These collaborations are crucial in navigating the complex web of regulations and ensuring comprehensive security coverage for industry stakeholders and the community.

The security infrastructure along the Houston Ship Channel includes over 200 surveillance cameras monitored round-the-clock by the Sheriff’s office at Ellington Field. This video surveillance is supplemented by aerial patrols over the Houston Ship Channel and its vicinity.

Schiebe said the largest threat to the community and the HSC is cybersecurity. He warned against phishing scams and wire transfer fraud, urging prompt communication with local law enforcement and the FBI to potentially halt and recover fraudulent transactions. The call to action, "If you see something, say something," encapsulates the collective vigilance required to counter not only cyber threats but also insider threats, extremism, terrorism, and the challenges posed by artificial intelligence and border security. Scheibe advocates for comprehensive background checks, cybersecurity measures, adherence to local, state, and federal regulations, and ongoing self-education to maintain situational awareness and preparedness against these diverse threats.

**Questions and Comments:**

1. *What can the HSCSD do about unmanned aerial challenges/drones?* Drones equipped with explosives have been deployed within shipping lanes and terrestrial zones, posing a dual threat of physical damage and intellectual property theft. In response, the Houston Ship Channel Security District (HSCSD) has collaborated with state authorities to reinstate/ reenact drone legislation, ensuring stringent restrictions against unauthorized drone operations over vital infrastructure. It's now a violation of state law to pilot drones over these critical facilities.

The HSCSD diligently monitors drone activities, maintaining constant communication with local partners to manage potential security breaches effectively. Upon detecting unauthorized drone usage, the HSCSD can swiftly coordinate with local law enforcement agencies, directing them to the drone's operator. All pertinent details gathered by the HSCSD regarding such incidents are forwarded to law enforcement, which, in turn, assists prosecutorial authorities in deciding on the appropriate legal actions.

However, it's crucial to understand that the HSCSD and other entities are prohibited from physically downing drones, as this action is classified under federal regulations as akin to aircraft hijacking. This legal framework underscores the complexity of addressing drone-related security risks while adhering to established laws and ensuring public safety.

1. *Are we going to be able to do something to get our borders secure?* The Department of Homeland Security is working towards establishing controlled entry points, leveraging existing laws for this purpose. It falls under the jurisdiction of the Federal government to enforce these regulations, ensuring secure and regulated access.
2. *Are there plans on how to take a weaponized drone out of the sky?* Technology exists that can hijack or seize control of drones. Discussions are ongoing to clarify which entities are authorized to utilize this technology to take control of drones, emphasizing the need for legal and regulatory frameworks to guide its use.
3. *How do we protect the airspace?* For significant events such as festivals or large gatherings, the Houston Ship Channel Security District (HSCSD) employs geofencing to create a virtual perimeter around the area. This strategy enables them to monitor for unauthorized drone flights, ensuring any illegal activity is promptly reported to law enforcement for immediate action.
4. *Is there an opportunity where Terminals could set up an invisible fence that keeps drones out?* HSCSD is working with the Federal Aviation Administration and Commissioner Garcia’s office to enhance airspace security over critical infrastructure. Currently, they are working to create a “no fly zone” over critical infrastructure. A significant achievement in this effort is the designation of the Houston Ship Channel corridor as a National Security Cluster. This classification not only bolsters protection against threats but also mitigates risks associated with unintended consequences during emergencies. Furthermore, the HSCSD is actively engaging in educational initiatives aimed at state-level elected officials, emphasizing the importance of critical infrastructure and the potential impacts of unforeseen events on the district's security and operational integrity.
5. *How does HSCSD prevent illegal entry on waterlanes/waterways in the Port?* Each vessel is required to provide a crew list, and those originating from countries of concern undergo additional scrutiny, and are stopped further from shore. A dedicated task force is in place to oversee maritime activities, utilizing boats equipped with side-scanning sonar technology to detect individuals or items attached to vessels. Moreover, vessel movements are closely monitored from the Coast Guard Center located at Ellington, ensuring comprehensive surveillance of maritime traffic.
6. *How could we schedule a tour of the Coast Guard Center?* Contact Commanding Officer Captain Keith Donohue at [Keith.M.Donohue@uscg.mil](mailto:Keith.M.Donohue@uscg.mil) or (281) 464-4802. Harris County Industrial Liaisons can also provide you contact information.
7. The Gulf Coast region is experiencing significant growth, with industries investing billions of dollars in local facilities. It's imperative that we all collaborate to ensure safety. If you notice anything unusual or concerning, please speak up.

**Updates**

**Written Facility Updates -** Members received regular periodic plant updates in advance of the meeting but the facilitator asked the plants who reported this month to share one or two highlights from their update that they wanted members to know about.

* **Intercontinental Terminals Company (ITC)** – John Ferguson shared that all on and off-site soil remediation from the 2019 event has been completed. There was 1 Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD) permit limit exceedance at Outfall 006 in November 2023. The investigation did not reveal any issues or concerns at the outfall, and there have been no further exceedances. ITC continues to work toward completing OSHA’s Challenge Program and has successfully completed second stage of the 3-stage process.
* **Lubrizol -** Hector Acosta reviewed the 5 recordables injuries that occurred since the last reporting period, one of which was a lost-time injury. The site implemented a hazard recognition focus program is launching their Standard Work model in April. There were two Tier 1 Process Safety incidents, neither of these had impact to surrounding community.
* **Westlake Epoxy** – Prashanth Hejmadi is the new Plant Manager for Westlake Epoxy Deer Park. The site had one Tier 2 process safety event which was the release of epichlorohydrin to atmosphere above the RQ of 100 pounds. There was no impact to residential or industrial neighbors. There were no recordable injuries this reporting period. The site started the SafeStart behavioral safety program in the 4Q 2023. The program encourages employees to use the same safety mindset at home.

**Other Updates**

**Flaring by Shell** - Site Manager Nate Levin discussed the power outage in an olefins unit that led to flaring on Friday, March 22nd. He mentioned that although the power issue has been resolved, flaring is expected to persist for a few days during the startup phase until the unit resumes normal operations. Levin emphasized the crucial safety role of flaring, noting that it ensures hydrocarbons are safely managed, with potential emissions minimized by at least 98%. Shell has been proactive in communicating with the community about the situation through CAER and social media channels, committing to continue this communication until the flaring has ceased.

**Plant Host**

OxyChem Deer Park VCM Plant manufactures vinyl chloride monomer (VCM) and its precursor ethylene dichloride (EDC). VCM is the key chemical precursor to polyvinyl chloride (PVC). VCM is produced by chemically reacting chlorine and ethylene, which produces EDC that is heated to produce the essential VCM. Josh Munn stated that Houston is the largest manufacturing site for OxyVinyls, with

5 facilities in the Houston area. Some of the products that their raw product is in include: wastewater

treatment, medicine and Temper-Pedic mattress foam.

**Plans for Future Meetings**

DPCAC meets at Republic Grill at the City of Deer Park Battleground Golf course from 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

*Monday, April 22, 2024 DPCAC at Age 34 and How to Improve*

* In order to increase visibility and membership of DPCAC, ongoing need to enhance the community awareness of the group.
* Review the following: formation of DPCAC, mission and purpose, meeting participants, ways we currently publicize meetings, and community outreach
* Review meeting flyer/ publicity materials and brainstorm ways to make it more visually appealing
* Develop list of materials needed for current members to “go and tell” others about DPCAC
* Brainstorm list of community groups in which current members participate
* Brainstorm ways to publicize DPCAC in the community
* Prioritize efforts to increase visibility
* Form 2-3 committees for efforts: publicity, membership gaps, community events

*Monday, May 20, 2024 – Flaring 101: Understanding the Necessity of Flaring in Industrial Plants*

* Community members are interesting in learning the following about flaring:
* What is flaring and why is it necessary?
* What are the different types of flares and what they are used for?
* What is the difference between routine flaring and safety flaring, and what are examples of each?
* How can flaring be mitigated?
* How does flaring impact plant emissions?

**Dates for 2024 -** all Mondays

Jan. 22  
Feb. 26

Mar. 25

Apr. 22

May 20

No June meeting

No July meeting

Aug. 26

Sept. 23

Oct. 28

Dec. 2

No December meeting

Deer Park Community Advisory Council

**Input on Houston Ship Channel Security District**

March 25, 2024

**General Comments**

1. **Anything you were happy to hear?**

* Monitoring of drones, Capabilities of the Security District
* Security Report was sufficient
* I feel safer
* Good presentation
* Air is monitored and confirmation they are watching everything.
* Drone tracking/operator training
* Progress on Systems
* Enjoyed all of what he said. Good to know about the drones. How small a gathering is a threat?
* The amount of surveillance is reassuring
* Extent of the security in place to monitor
* Multi-agency coordination to manage security.
* Drone monitoring, they can track it back to the controller.

1. **Any concerns about what you heard?**

* Still concerned about the sophistication of cyber security…
* I have no concerns
* Cyber threats; lag of government help towards no fly zone for critical infrastructure
* Laws behind technology
* Actually feel better about it and more protected. Heard they can see inside your house with a drone.
* Drones are a concern and how easily they can access from the air.

1. **Any lingering questions?**
   * No
   * Any thought for community volunteers w/security; training
   * We need to support our first responders.
   * Additional state help with lobbying from other facets
   * How small a gathering is a threat?
   * Can the drones see inside your house?
   * How geofencing works with security
   * Can plants use jamming devices against drones in the same way airports do?
2. **Input on anything else?**
   * Very good presentation
   * What does the frequency look like; has it increased/decreased as far as security/cybersecurity?
   * Glad to hear it is in place but understand the need for a level of secrecy.

**ATTENDANCE**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **DPCAC Community Members** | | **DPCAC Plant Members** | | **Guests/Resources** | |
| X | Ruth Boyd | x | **Clean Harbors,** Bruce Riffel | x | Manny Cabrera, Dow |
|  | Steve Corry, DPISD | x | **Dow Chemical Deer Park,** Sharon Hulgan | x | Kyra Cantrell, Kinder Morgan |
| X | Sheryl DaPron | x | **Evonik Oil Additives,** Jim Bentinck-Smith | x | John Collins |
| X | Kristina DeWitty, SJC | x | **GEO Specialty Chemicals,** Steve Outlaw | x | Brett Conaway, Harris County OEM&HS |
|  | Ken Donnell | x | **Intercontinental Terminals,** David Wascome rep. by John Ferguson  **John Ferguson** | x | Bubba Coxie, Harris County OEM&HS |
|  | Jamie Galloway, DP OEM | x | **Kinder Morgan,** Blake Wood | x | Holly Kurth, EHCMA |
| X | Sherry Garrison | x | **Lubrizol,** Hector Acosta | x | Brian Lawson, Dow |
| X | Tommy Ginn |  | **NOVVI**, Alan Kominek | x | Betty Lemley |
| X | Karen Guidry | x | **OxyVinyls PVC/KOH,** Jeff Koetitz, rep. by John McPhaul | x | Brad Lyons, Westlake Epoxy |
| X | Paul Guidry | x | **OxyVinyls VCM,** Josh Munn | x | Emily Morris, PCAC |
| X | Cara Herbeck |  | **Pemex Deer Park,** Guy Hackwell, rep by | x | Stuart Mueller, HCPC |
|  | Steven Horton |  | **Pemex Deer Park,** Jennifer Walsh | x | Gary Scheibe, HSC Security District |
| X | Gretchen Knowles, Harris Co. Pct. 2 | x | **Shell Deer Park,** Nathan Levin | x | George Tullgren |
| X | Wanda Morris | x | **Shell Deer Park,** Caroline Alcantar | x | Don Zuckero |
|  | Bill Patterson, DP City Council | x | **Texas Molecular,** Jimmy Bracher, rep by Frank Marine |  |  |
|  | Ariel Pena | x | **Valvoline,** Robert Shelton |  |  |
|  | Randon Pierson |  | **Vopak Moda,** Jeff Sanford, rep. by JD Abernathy |  |  |
|  | Darrell Pinckard |  | **Vopak Terminal Deer Park,** Kathy Stewart, rep. by Gary Jackson |  |  |
|  | Vickey Roberts | x | **Westlake Epoxy,** Prashanth Hejmadi |  |  |
|  | David Sanchez |  |  |  |  |
|  | Maria Sanchez |  | **Support Staff** |  |  |
| x | Andy Smith, San Jacinto Battleground Historic Site | x | Anne Gowan, Facilitator |  |  |
|  | Angela Smith, City of Deer Park | x | Marilyn Bass, Secretary |  |  |
|  | Charles Thomas |  |  |  |  |
|  | Cheyenne Valdez |
|  | David Wade |
|  | Ernest Weedon |