



GOVERNMENT

Update on the Caroline Avenue Park Remediation Plant

A walk through of the pump and treatment plant being constructed by the EPA at Caroline Avenue Park with Keith Glenn, the on-scene coordinator for the agency.

By **Lon Cohen** January 6, 2011

The pump and treatment plant that is being built by the Environmental Protection Agency in [Caroline Avenue Park](#) is on schedule for a 20 year process of treating toxic waste under the village of Port Jefferson. Patch took a tour of the facility to review the ongoing construction and talk to the onsite coordinator from the EPA about how the remediation project got off the ground and what the plant will mean for the residents of the village.

Chemicals dumped by Lawrence Aviation in Port Jefferson Station decades ago have made their way along the downhill gradient from the property to [Mill Creek](#) causing health concerns among residents and officials in the village of Port Jefferson.

"It's one mile away as the crow flies," said Keith Glenn, the on-scene coordinator for the EPA who is managing the project to build the pump and treatment plant.

He explained that the chemicals at Lawrence Aviation crept from the site to the place where the plant will be built in the park. Water under Mill Creek was deemed by the EPA to have been contaminated by those toxic chemicals.

For years the village tried to sort out a solution to the problem with the EPA. While behind the scenes the EPA was working on the problem, the process seemed opaque to many residents.

According to Glenn, in February of last year Mayor Margot Garant went to state Sen. Kenneth LaValle to enlist his help in bringing to light the concerns of the village about the toxic plume growing in the ground water under Port Jefferson village.

"The community as a whole was not getting updates of what was happening behind the scenes," said Glenn. "The line of communication wasn't there."

Glenn helped reconnect those lines. Since he came on to the project, he's been in contact with the village board of trustees, the mayor's office, the Parks Department, the Architectural Review Committee and the Building Department all in an effort to move the remediation plant to a place where construction could begin on a pump station that will filter out the contaminants from the water system.

The treatment will take place in a dual step process at the Mill Creek site, according to Glenn. Vapor will be extracted through a unit housed inside the plant and put through a carbon filter. Clean vapor will be released into the air through a pipe. The second system will take groundwater by several wells dug at differing depths near Mill Creek and put them through two treatment processes.

"The contaminated water will be passed through air strippers and carbon filters," said Glenn.

Clean water will then be put back into the environment by pumping it into Mill Pond at a primary discharge line. Water will be pumped into Mill Creek as a secondary discharge. Sensors in Mill Pond and Mill Creek will shut off the pumps if the water levels get too high. This may occur in heavy rain to prevent the plant from contributing to any flooding.

Glenn [promised the community](#) that the plant would be weather tight by Christmas. His crew delivered on that promise. Coincidentally, the [holiday blizzard](#) that tore through the area on the day after Christmas provided an unexpected opportunity to test out the structure's soundness. Aside from a few ripped sheets of Tyvek wrapping, it passed the test with flying colors.

"There was no moisture inside," Glenn happily reported.

The exterior of the building looks like almost any unfinished home built around Long Island. Great care was taken by the EPA to work with the Architectural Review Committee from the village to ensure that the structure did not stand out like a sore thumb among the homes in the residential neighborhood surrounding Caroline Avenue Park.

Carriage doors were custom built by EPA carpenters for the front of the building.

"They're just for looks," said Glenn. "They serve no purpose but aesthetics."

He also stressed the fact that the EPA wanted to work with local resources as much as possible.

"It was important to hire an architect that is in Port Jefferson," Glen said. "We tried to acquire materials locally and we used sources within 5 to 15 miles of the site."

The EPA contracted with John A Grillo Architects in Port Jefferson to design the plant.



PHOTOS (12)



A custom made roll up gate and garage door will be installed on the back of the building. Glenn said that they are looking for suppliers on Long Island and getting all of the specs done so they can put out a request for proposal next week. Utilities should be connected to the plant by the end of the month, according to Glenn.

The inside of the building is bare bones, just framing and open walls. To address noise concerns they will spray in eight inches of insulation. Windows in the front facing wall of the room housing all the remediation equipment will be blacked out.

"They're also just for show," said Glenn.

The EPA may use treatment machinery from other jobs that are ending soon to save the taxpayers money and recycle as much equipment as possible.

When it is fully operational the plant will be staffed by about four EPA employees to tweak the system and maintain the onsite lab. If offsite sampling is needed they will increase staff as needed.

After the system is set the site will be visited about once a week by a local EPA employee. Most of the equipment can be remotely controlled. There will be an alarm system installed for security as well as a perimeter fence and gate.

Glenn said that the building at Caroline Avenue Park is one of the more unusual pump and treatment plants built by the EPA.

"This is a unique structure," Glenn said. "They normally just look like a mobile home."

The plant is expected to begin operating by the summer of 2011.



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