

**West Campus Cogeneration Facility (WCCF)
Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
February 3, 2006**

Advisory Committee members present

Karen Carlson, RNA
John Hausbeck, City of Madison
Don Peterson, MGE
Steve Schultz, MGE

Others present

Bob Stoffs, MGE

The meeting was called to order at 7:40 a.m.

1. Review of Previous Meeting's Minutes and Review of Today's Agenda

There are no changes to the September 9, 2005, minutes. The minutes will be finalized, e-mailed to the Committee, and posted on the Web site.

2. Neighborhood Concerns or Issues

In October, MGE received an e-mail asking about a low, intermittent hum reportedly heard on some early mornings several blocks from the facility. MGE staff listened for but could not locate any low hum or other unusual noise near the facility or in the neighborhood during subsequent early morning start-ups. Equipment at a nearby apartment building and at a campus research building was identified as a possible source for the noise.

Information on registering questions and complaints was placed in the fall issue of the *Regent Neighborhood* newsletter to encourage residents to follow up with details of any concerns regarding the WCCF.

3. Cogen Project Updates

• **Operational Status**

WCCF is now fully commercial for production of electricity, chilled water, and steam. The plant runs when either the UW needs steam or chilled water or when scheduled for electric production by the Midwest Independent Transmission System Operator. The facility has been running recently about three to four days per week.

The backup diesel generator has so far failed to achieve permitted emissions standards. After replacing some defective parts and retesting, the engine is very close to the standards and MGE is consulting with experts on how to get the small improvement needed to pass the test. If it appears the standards cannot be met, a permit change may be requested from the Wisconsin Department of Natural

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Resources (WDNR). The backup generator will have very few hours of operation since it is used only for emergency situations such as an electric system blackout. The only time the diesel will run during normal operations is for a brief monthly test. The generator is intended for use to help startup WCCF in the event of a regional power failure.

- **Street Reconstruction and Landscaping Status**

Street construction and landscaping are complete except for replacement of several new trees that were damaged during a windstorm last year.

- **Recreation Field Restoration**

Grading and planting of the field and ponds are complete. A metal grid over the pond areas has minimized damage from geese, but the remainder of the field has had some problems with wintering flocks. The UW plans to use noisemakers to scare away the geese. New lights will be installed in the spring, and the field will be turned over to the UW on May 1. The new recreational surface is scheduled to open the spring of 2007, but it may see some limited use this fall.

4. Update on Sodium Hypochlorite (Bleach) Spill

On Tuesday, October 18, a fitting broke as a valve was being repaired on an outdoor tank that stores a sodium hypochlorite solution used in water treatment at the WCCF. Sodium hypochlorite is the active chemical in household bleach, but the solution used to treat water at the WCCF is a somewhat stronger concentration (12 percent solution for WCCF compared to 5 percent to 6 percent for most household bleach). About 1,500 gallons of the solution drained into a containment structure under the tank. After the spill occurred, it was discovered that a conduit opening in the containment had not been plugged during construction. Approximately half of the spilled material leaked through the opening into the ground. The remainder of the solution was recovered and filtered for reuse.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the WDNR were notified of the leak, and MGE hired an environmental consulting firm to test the soil and groundwater under and near the tank to determine the location and condition of the spilled material.

To assess the spill impact, two groundwater monitoring wells were drilled and soil samples were bored at six locations. Testing found a slightly elevated chlorine level in one soil sample and none in the groundwater samples. Chloride (salt) levels of 200 to 230 mg/liters were found in the groundwater. These levels are somewhat elevated and may be partly a result of a reaction of sodium hypochlorite with the soil and crushed limestone under the spill site. These chloride levels have probably also been affected by road salt applications and salt storage at a nearby UW Grounds Department storage facility. The detected chloride was below WDNR enforcement levels.

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Based on the results of the investigation, the WDNR agreed that no further remediation is necessary. A copy of the investigation report will be posted on the WCCF section of the MGE Web site.

5. Results of Post-Construction Noise Survey

A noise survey was conducted in September and October of 2005 to follow up on the initial noise study and WCCF noise impact estimates completed during the facility application process. Comparison sound measurements taken by Sanchez Industrial Design, Inc., at six locations during daytime and nighttime periods during full plant operation and again when the facility was not in use. A draft version of the survey report and a summary table were distributed.

The measurements indicated the increase in ambient noise from Facility Operations is consistent with the levels predicted in the preconstruction studies at all locations except for the spot directly between the WCCF and Walnut Heating Plant. Noise levels at this location appear to be high most of the time even with the WCCF not in operation. Measured changes in the neighborhood locations ranged from 0 to 4 decibels as predicted in the preconstruction study. A change of 3 decibels is generally considered to be just noticeable.

A copy of the final noise survey will be posted on the WCCF section of the MGE Web site when it is available.

6. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, June 2, 2006, at 7:30 a.m. at Blessed Sacrament Parish Center, 2116 Hollister Avenue.