

Subject:

Date: Mon, 23 Jun 2003 16:07:59 -0700

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A MESSAGE FROM ERNIE CRIST

On May 27 I submitted a resolution to Mayor and Council regarding a GVRD Discharge permit for Mohawk Oil in the Maplewood area. It has always concerned me that the GVRD should have the pwer to issue permits for emission of toxins in violation of existing standards.

When my motion came up, Council passed a resolution that staff provide a report on the issues raised this evening (Crist) with respect to the impact on air quality by all licensees in the Maplewood Area.

The Newalta (Mohawk) used Oil refinery currently operates with an air discharge permit under the GVRD Air Quality Management System Bylaw. It asked for a permit from the GVRD allowing it to exceed allowable emission of pollutants which would be to the detriment of public health.

Council subsequently requested that the GVRD not grant the permit amendment at least until Newalta prepares a long term green house gas and pollution management plan. The concern was that Newalta would make little effort to improve the situation.

To date the GVRD has upheld the District's request and has withheld the permit amendment until Newalta satisfies the request for further information and a public information session is held.

In the meantime Newalta, I have been given to understand, has made improvements in its operations to address some of the concerns and a final report will come before Council. It is at that time when we will find out whether the improvements are sufficient to meet pollution emission control standards and if so, to what extent and, above all, whether they are acceptable to the public.

The issue is clearly one of interest to the people of Maplewood and beyond. If nothing else it points to the need for people to be alert and to monitor the situation on an ongoing basis. This is not only true for people living in Maplewood but for everyone, especially the people in Seymour.

Pollutants have a tendency to wonder along wind patterns and victimize even those who live far afield. Children are particularly affected. The number of asthma related diseases is increasing everywhere, especially affected, according to statistics, are children and the elderly.

This is an issue which again points to the need for effective Community Associations. The bottom line is that Community Associations can help you stay healthy in more than one way.

