OCT 13 1983
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City, Westinghouse reach agreement

PCB cleanup solution announced

By BRIAN WERTH
H-T City Editor

Though the details are far from being finalized, PCB-contaminated soils and materials from the Bloomington area will someday be incinerated in a multi-million dollar disposal operation to be built and paid for by the Westinghouse Corp.

THE LOCATION of the facility has not yet been chosen, but the possibility of the site being near the new Dillman Road sewage treatment plant was mentioned by the city's PCB attorney Joseph Karaganis.

Details of the operation are expected to be worked out by next spring, but it is unlikely the project will be built until at least 1985.

In making the historic announcement Tuesday after a two-hour closed-door executive session with other city officials, Bloomington Mayor Tomi Allison said, "This is a very happy day for all of us."

Flanked by attorneys and engineers for Westinghouse and before a large group of media representatives and politicians, Allison said the city and Westinghouse "have reached a conceptual agreement to destroy polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) soils and other PCB materials, using proven destruction techniques in a cooperative arrangement."

SHE SAID the out-of-court settlement would resolve the city's $329 million pollution damage suit against Westinghouse, which is still officially pending in federal court in Indianapolis until the agreement is worked out.

The proposal calls for Westinghouse to construct a high-temperature incinerator that will be used to destroy PCB-contaminated materials. Allison said the agreement came after months of discussion between the parties and generally stipulates that:

- Westinghouse will remove and incinerate designated PCB-contaminated soils and materials from area landfills now in litigation and from the Winston-Thomas sewage treatment plant.
- The city will provide an acceptable site for the construction and operation of the incinerator.
- The incinerator will be fully licensed and permitted by the appropriate local, state and federal authorities, and both parties will cooperate in obtaining the necessary permits.
- A major fuel source for the incinerator will be garbage, refuse and solid waste — which has a high energy value. In effect, the joint Bloomington/Westinghouse effort will use one environmental concern — municipal garbage — to destroy another environmental concern — PCBs.
- Once the PCB-contaminated materials are destroyed, the incinerator will be available for possible long-term use as a highly efficient means of refuse disposal for the City of Bloomington.
- The incinerator will be designed, located, constructed and operated to generate both steam and electricity, which can be used by both Bloomington and local industries.

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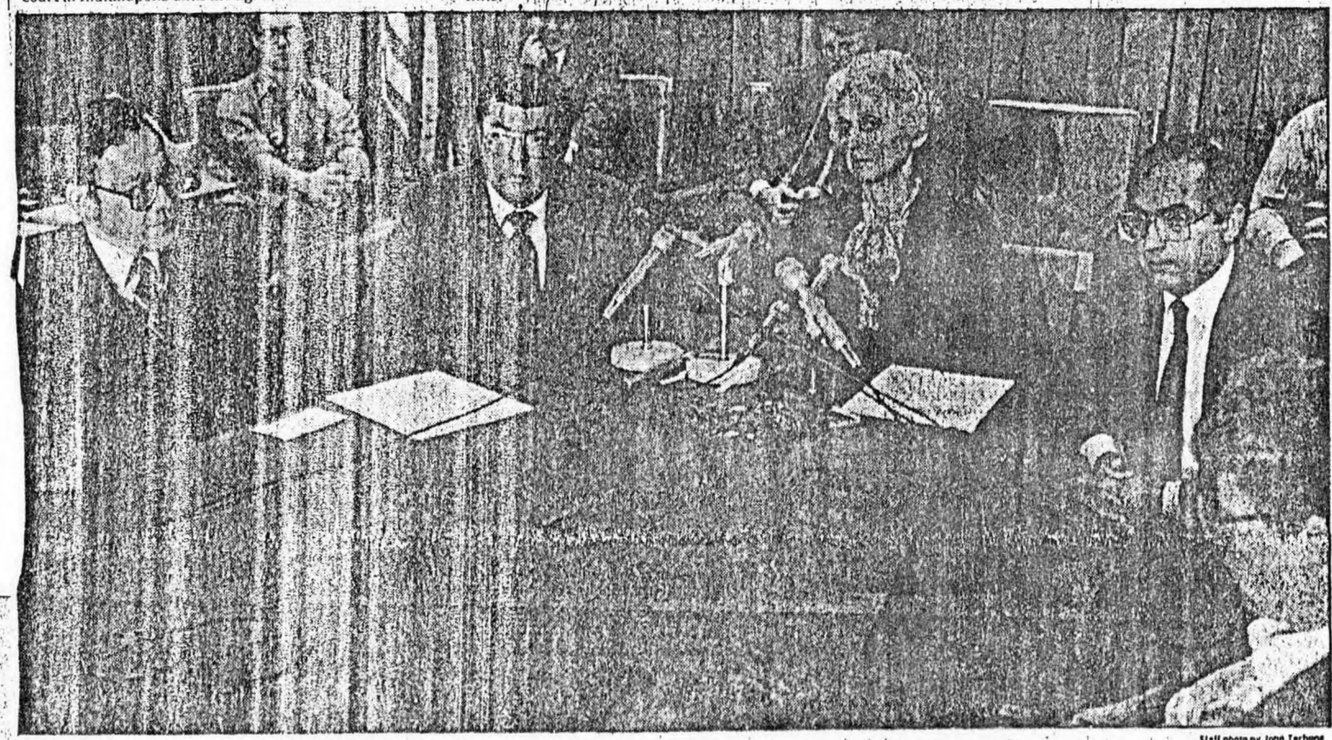

Staff photo by John Terhune

Bloomington Mayor Tomi Allison, flanked by Westinghouse officials — from left, Jack Fisch, Leo Duffy and Robert Pugliese — answers a question from reporters after announcing that the city and Westinghouse have agreed in principle to destroy PCB-contaminated materials in a high-temperature incinerator to be built and paid for by Westinghouse. The facility, expected to cost between $13 and $20 million, will also incinerate garbage, with usable steam and electricity as a byproduct.

Bloomington Herald Telephone
Wednesday, October 12, 1983

PCB-ARCH-EXT0378314



TOMI ALLISON
City's mayor



JOSEPH KARAGANIS
PCB attorney



LEO DUFFY
Westinghouse



ROBERT PUGLIESE
Westinghouse

City, Westinghouse announce solution for cleaning up PCBs

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The incineration of PCBs fueled by garbage has never before been attempted, but engineers for Westinghouse, a noted specialist on environmental pollution and attorneys for both sides believe it can work.

"MUNICIPAL solid waste incineration is a proven technology and so is the incineration of PCBs," said Leo Duffy, general manager of waste technology services at Westinghouse headquarters in Pittsburgh, Pa. "We're trying to combine the two."

Duffy said the facility would have to be about 20,000 square feet in size and would have to be located on at least two acres of property — perhaps near a railroad spur.

Robert Pugliese, vice president and general counsel for Westinghouse, would not speculate on what the final costs of the project will be, but said said the start-up of any municipal waste incineration facility would be at least $13 million plus operational expenses.

Joseph Highland, of Environ Inc. and Princeton University, said the project can indeed work and that the facility could be a model for others like it across the country. Presently, there are only three approved PCB incineration sites in the country, with one opening near Chicago just recently, according to Highland.

"THE COST of construction of the facility will be far less than the cost of trucking massive amounts of soils and materials to be incinerated," Highland said.

No air pollution will result from the project, Highland said, because of state-of-the-art pollution control devices such as scrubbers and precipitators.

Karaganis hinted that the facility might even turn into a profitable venture in the future when it reverts to a municipal garbage incinerator. Allison said no out-of-state contaminants would be trucked to the facility for disposal.

"Westinghouse is committed to carrying out the program," Pugliese said. "We'll be working with the city and hope to have a plan by the end of the year."

Officials said the public would be informed about the progress regarding the design and planning of the facility in addition to cost estimates and location choice through public hearings such as City Council meetings.

KARAGANIS praised Westinghouse for initiating the plan.

"Using municipal waste as a way of eliminating an industrial pollutant is the real story here," he said. "The EPA has licensed the technology already.

"In the past year we've concentrated our efforts on investigating the technological aspects of solving the problem. It's a mistake to focus on past blame. Westinghouse could have litigated us into the ground, but they have come forth with a plan."

Karaganis said the intent from the beginning of the litigation was "to solve the problem," and that the proposed agreement does just that.

Pugliese said Westinghouse does not admit responsibility for the PCB pollution, saying at the time the capacitors were placed in the ground, "we thought it was lawful." He said the company was now exercising its responsibility under current law to clean up the contamination.

MOST OF THE more than $1 million already spent by the city in attorney fees, the cleanup of sewer lines and disposal of some contaiminated sludge and soil, has actually come out of the pockets of Bloomington Utilities customers. Karaganis said no arrangements regarding the possible repayment to the city — or to customers in the form of rebates or delaying a rate hike — of that money have been made.

The polluted areas that Westinghouse has agreed to clean up include the Lemon Lane dump (an old northwest dump off of Gray Street and Lemon Lane operated in the 1960s by the city) and the decommissioned Winston-Thomas sewage plant (located off South Walnut Street north of Gordon Pike — most of the grounds, equipment and the lagoon on the site are contaminated). The company has also agreed in principle to clean up Neal's Landfill in western Monroe County, Neal's Dump in Owen County and the contaminated land near the Bennett Quarry northwest of Bloomington.

PUGLIESE also said the company would take care of any other, as yet undiscovered, sites.

Allison cautioned that the agreement "has not been formalized" and that several important matters, including state and federal approval of various aspects of the program must still be negotiated.

Indiana Attorney General Linley Pearson and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency have been advised of the discussions, Allison said. It is hoped by Westinghouse that the state and EPA will be able to work out their pending lawsuit against Westinghouse along the same lines.

The Monsanto Chemical Corp., the company that developed PCBs as a flame retardant and industrial fluid used as an insulator in heavy electrical equipment, was not a party to the conceptual agreement.

Allison said the agreement, which she hopes is finalized by the end of the year, represents "a dramatic example of how environmental problems can be solved through close cooperation between government and industry.

"THIS prospective partnership to destroy PCBs was accomplished at the initiative and with the leadership of Westinghouse," she said.

PCB-ARCH-EXT0378315