

Office of the Mayor

City of
Madison

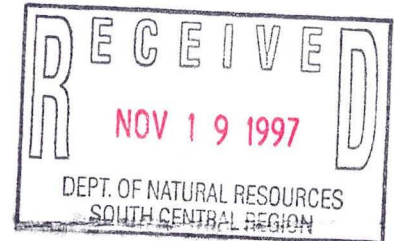


Susan J. M. Bauman, Mayor

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November 18, 1997

Wendell Wojner
Southern District DNR
3911 Fish Hatchery Road
Madison, WI 53711



Re: Contaminated Soil Pile at 501 S. Park Street

Dear Mr. Wojner:

I am requesting that your department take the necessary enforcement actions to expedite and clear the site at 501 S. Park Street of the partially covered contaminated soil pile. The near proximity of the pile to Monona Bay is a concern for contaminants reaching Madison's lakes.

The Capital Times articles of October 9 and 28, 1997 (story texts enclosed), and Madison's Commission on the Environment have heightened my interest and the public concern in this issue. Therefore, I am looking forward to your cooperation and would appreciate information of your scheduled actions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Susan J.M. Bauman". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Susan J.M. Bauman
Mayor

SJMB/bp

Enclosures

cc: George Meyer, Secretary WDNR
Mike Schmoller, WDNR
Larry D. Nelson, P.E., City Engineer
Pat Gadow, Health Director
Amato Realty
Nelson Eisman, Commission on the Environment
Scott Russell, The Capital Times

1ST STORY of Level 2 printed in FULL format.

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Capital Times (Madison, WI.)

October 28, 1997, Tuesday, FIRST EDITION

SECTION: Local/State, Pg. 7A

LENGTH: 427 words

HEADLINE: DNR ACTION URGED ON DIRT PILE

BYLINE: By Scott Russell The Capital Times

BODY:

The city of Madison's Commission on the Environment is recommending that Mayor Sue Bauman write the DNR to press for action on removing a pile of contaminated dirt near Lake Monona.

The Capital Times reported earlier this month that the dirt pile, contaminated with diesel fuel and the solvent tetrachloroethylene, has been sitting partially covered in front of 501 S. Park St. for more than a year.

Joe Demorett, a hydrologist for the city of Madison who had reviewed the DNR file on the property, said the site was a low priority for the DNR.

'The smaller sites can fall through the cracks,' he said after the commission meeting.

Nelson Eisman, chair of the Environmental Commission, had asked if the city had any enforcement power to act on such sites. The city could act more quickly than the state, he said.

Demorett said the city did not get involved unless the leak was on a city right-of-way. The DNR had primary jurisdiction, he said.

Eisman asked for staff to look into whether any city ordinances, such as those for nuisances, might apply to future contamination sites.

DNR representatives said in interviews earlier this month that the level of contamination in the dirt pile appeared to be low enough to make it non-hazardous, but asked for further tests.

Both the DNR and Demorett said the pile, now about one-third covered by a blue tarp, should be completely covered to prevent run off into a bay of Lake Monona, about 70 yards away.

Demorett did not know if any contaminants were actually getting into the lake.

The Park Street property is owned by Amato Realty, the business of the late restaurateur Sam Amato and his brother Joseph 'George' Amato. It is leased by The Finishing Touch dry cleaners.

Until the early 1960s, a gas station operated on the property. One Hour Martinizing later leased the property.

Capital Times (Madison, WI.), October 28, 1997

In 1993, five underground storage tanks were removed from the site. All were intact except for one 500-gallon fuel oil tank, which had a leak.

Some of the contaminated soil was removed, but the site still needed a cleanup plan, the DNR said. Contamination had reached the groundwater, according to information in DNR files.

The pile of dirt now sitting on the property was unearthed in the summer of 1996 during a water line repair, according to the owners of The Finishing Touch.

The DNR had asked for further toxicity tests on the 27 cubic yards of dirt in order to decide where best to dispose of it. Those tests had have now been requested and should be completed soon, Demorett said.

NOTES:

A shorter version appeared in the second edition on page 7A. The headline was: DNR action urged on dirt.

LOAD-DATE: October 29, 1997

2ND STORY of Level 2 printed in FULL format.

Copyright 1997 Madison Newspapers, Inc.
Capital Times (Madison, WI.)

October 9, 1997, Thursday, ALL EDITIONS

SECTION: Front, Pg. 1A

LENGTH: 790 words

HEADLINE: PILE OF TAINIED DIRT JUST SITS ON PARK ST.

BYLINE: By Scott Russell The Capital Times

BODY:

A mound of dirt contaminated with fuel oil and dry cleaning solvent has been piled up outside a dry cleaning business at 501 S. Park St. for more than a year.

The property, some 70 yards from the shore of Lake Monona, also has subsurface soil and ground water contamination, the extent of which is still unknown.

It is the legacy of a gas station that once operated at the site on the corner of Park and Drake streets.

Tom Upham, who rents the building and runs The Finishing Touch dry cleaners, has been putting up with the dirt pile, which has been partially covered with a blue tarp.

He is unhappy that the landlord has been slow to clean the mound from what should be a parking lot.

The pile is roughly 24 feet long, 8 feet wide and 4 feet high. It was unearthed during a repair of a water line in July 1996, and has been there since, Upham said.

"It shouldn't take a year to get rid of a pile of dirt," he said. "It's an eyesore. They have had time to test it and get it out of here."

The contamination in the dirt pile appears to be low level, but the cleanup would be costly to the landlords, Amato Realty Inc.

The tarp helps prevent runoff into the lake when it rains, but officials say the pile should be entirely covered to stop more runoff.

In some ways, the site is not unique.

According to a list from the Department of Natural Resources, it is one of roughly 550 open cases in Dane County of leaking underground storage tank cleanup sites.

In this case, Upham is mad enough to retain an attorney to push the matter with Amato Realty, the business of the late Sam Amato, who used to operate Amato's Holiday House at 515 S. Park St. The other owner of Amato Realty, Sam's brother Joseph "George" Amato, lives in Florida. George Amato said Wednesday

Capital Times (Madison, WI.), October 9, 1997

that he did not have a timeline to get the contaminated dirt pile cleaned up.

"That is being resolved with the DNR," he said. "That is all I can tell you."

Robert Tramburg, Sam Amato's son-in-law, has become involved with the problem in the past few months.

"I don't know the whole history," Tramburg said. "I know there are some concerns. We are trying to get it removed as quickly as possible."

Conn Choles, co-owner of George's Flowers, which is just across the street from the dry cleaners, said it was unfortunate that the dirt pile was there.

"It's a nuisance for him (Upham) and it is not a positive for the neighborhood," he said.

Jon Heller, co-owner of HPS services, the company that removed the fuel oil tanks from the property in 1993, estimated it would cost less than \$ 5,000 to clean up the dirt pile, but at least \$ 50,000 to address the underground problems.

The property itself is valued at \$ 96,000. It is unclear if the site would qualify for any government clean-up funds.

The DNR is responsible to oversee the cleanup of leaking underground storage tank sites. It notified Amato Realty in April 1994 that it needed to clean up the contamination.

According to DNR guidelines, property owners are supposed to submit a remedial action plan within 120 days of discovering the site and begin remediation within 180 days.

The DNR is still waiting for the remediation plan from Amato Realty.

A DNR project sheet lists the site as a "Priority 4," which means there is not enough information to classify it yet.

Amato Realty had five underground fuel tanks removed in 1993. They were abandoned from a Standard gas station that operated at the location into the early 1960s.

Four of five tanks were fine. The fifth, a 500-gallon tank, still had more than 350 gallons of fuel oil and it had a piping leak.

According to a report filed with the DNR in 1994, "the contamination has reached the water table." Some soil around the tank was removed, but no other action was taken.

According to information in DNR files, the dirt also contains the dry cleaning solvent tetrachloroethylene. When and how the tetrachloroethylene got in the soil is unknown.

After the gas station closed, a One Hour Martinizing dry cleaners operated on the site.