



Facts About...

Center Property at Fairlands (Voluntary Cleanup Program)

Site Location

This 26-acre property consists of five parcels and is located off Gunpowder Road, adjacent to Minnick Industrial Park, in Burtonsville in a mixed land use (commercial/residential) area of Montgomery County. Portions of the surrounding area are undeveloped. The property is part of a larger, 42.42-acre tract of land that is proposed for single and multi-family residential development. The property is bordered to the east and southeast by a sand and gravel excavation operation, to the southwest by a maintenance garage and sand and gravel excavation, beyond which is undeveloped land, to the northwest by a townhouse community, and to the north and northeast by undeveloped land, beyond which is an industrial park and other commercial operations.

A majority of the property has historically been utilized as a stump/dump landfill and a lumber yard/sawmill. The only on-site buildings are associated with the lumber milling operation. Access to the property is via a private driveway off Old Gunpowder Road. The property is surrounded by fencing, which has been breached in several areas. Public water and sewer are available in the vicinity. Groundwater flow is generally to the east, towards the Little Paint Branch, which traverses the property in a general north-south direction and forms a contiguous wetland area.

The Artery-Ryland Fairland, LLC plans to grade approximately 70% of the property and utilize the area as open green space. The remainder (approximately 30%) will be graded, partially paved, and developed for use as single-family housing.

Site History

In the early 1960s, the property was mostly forested, with some sand and gravel operations in the northwest portion. In the late 1960s, a Colonial natural gas pipeline was constructed within an easement on the southeast corner of the property, while sand and gravel-mining activities were active in the western portion of the property. In the early 1980s, E&S Excavating began operations at the property. In 1989, a townhome community was constructed adjacent to the northwest boundary of the property, and an earthen berm was placed to physically and visually separate the community from the landfill. Since 1989, the site appears much the same as it does today, and from at least 1993 through 2002, the on-site stump/dump landfill was in full operation.

A majority of the site was privately owned until the early 1970s, after which Gunpowder Land Venture gradually acquired most of the property. In the early 1980s, Gunpowder Land Venture continued to acquire acreage, and sold portions of the property to Earl S. Center. Currently, Earl S. Center owns the entire 26-acre property.

A lumber sawing and milling facility operates on a portion of the property. Three aboveground storage tanks (ASTs), used for the storage of diesel fuel, are present on the property along with several abandoned ASTs, drums, abandoned vehicles, and a large number of hardwood logs.



Environmental Investigations

In May and November 1996, Phase I and II Environmental Site Assessments were prepared for the property to investigate potential contamination caused by unauthorized dumping in the stump-dump landfill and a potential petroleum release in the vicinity of the underground storage tanks (USTs), reportedly located near the lumber mill. Laboratory analytical testing indicated that levels of total petroleum hydrocarbons (TPH) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in soil and groundwater were below method detection limits.

In August 2001, an Updated Environmental Site Assessment was prepared, which involved screening of surface soil, collection of groundwater samples, and one surface water sample. Laboratory results for TPH - Diesel Range Organics and VOCs in groundwater samples indicated that they were below the method detection limits. The USTs located on the southeastern portion of the property were reportedly removed and stored on the landfill portion of the property. However, the Maryland Department of the Environment's (MDE) Oil Control Program database indicates that the USTs are out of service, but not removed. This document concluded that some localized contamination was present in the vicinity of USTs, ASTs, and 55-gallon drums at the property.

The January 2005 Report of Preliminary Geotechnical Exploration involved the initiation of soil borings and test pits. Soil samples, groundwater samples, and surface water samples were collected. Laboratory results of soil samples indicated that VOCs, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and pesticides were not detected above MDE residential standards. One semi-volatile organic compound (SVOC) (benzo(a)pyrene) and two metals (chromium and mercury) were detected above MDE's residential standards. Mercury was detected above the non-residential standard in one soil sample. Laboratory results for the groundwater and surface water samples indicated that VOCs, SVOCs, pesticides, PCBs, and metals were not detected above MDE's groundwater standards.

The January 2005 Preliminary Methane Gas Evaluation concluded that methane gas is present in the subsurface and may impact the future use of the property, and that future development should consider the design and implementation of appropriate methane gas mitigation measures.

Current Status

The site is presently under a Consent Order whereby the Maryland Department of the Environment, Hazardous and Solid Waste Management Administration has required Earl S. Center and Earl Center Excavating Company to cease and desist the operation of an open dump, land clearing debris landfill, or refuse disposal system at the property.

Artery-Ryland Fairland, LLC submitted an application package to the Voluntary Cleanup Program (VCP) on February 28, 2005 seeking a Certificate of Completion as an inculpable person. On April 25, 2005, the Department accepted the property into the VCP and confirmed the applicant's status as an inculpable person. On November 9, 2005, the applicant amended the VCP application to Fairland Development, LLC (formerly Artery-Ryland Fairland, LLC). Before development proceeds, the Department is requiring the applicant to develop a site closure plan that will satisfy the requirements of the existing Consent Order.



Contact

Jim Metz

Maryland Department of the Environment
Voluntary Cleanup/Brownfields Division

(410) 537-3493

Last Update: July 17, 2006

