

Date visited 08/07/12



## River Forest Cleaners contamination under Lathrop Ave.

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By **BILL DWYER**

An environmental remediation expert retained by the village of River Forest told the village board Monday that there is significant environmental contamination adjacent to a sewer line under Lathrop Avenue stemming from a drycleaner located 150 feet to the west.

Tom Hahne, of village consultant Tetra Tech, also said "very low levels" of the dry cleaning solvent tetrachloroethylene, TCE, or perc, was found under the village's right of way immediately north of the building and on the east side of Ashland Ave. That contamination is also near the St. Luke's property

Village President John Rigas said Tuesday that Tetra Tech has been directed to return with a plan for addressing the contamination at the Dec. 8 board meeting. Rigas also said he expects the village to begin soliciting potential developers for the property at Lake and Lathrop in the near future.

Hahne said his firm's testing found no ground water contamination because, in fact, it found no ground water.

"Of the 15 soil samples, only one exceeded state levels," said Hahne.

That one problem is nearby a sewer under Lathrop that drops into the main sewer line on Lake Street.

"It has followed the sewer line into Lathrop," said Hahne. The sampling results "do suggest potential problems with the sewer line," he said, and there is likely enough contamination to potentially jeopardize the safety of workers who would excavate the site.

"My opinion is the contamination is moving along the sewer line itself," said Hahne.

That, he said, "would suggest a follow up investigation on Lathrop to assess contamination there." While not conclusive, Hahne said the contamination does not appear to extend beyond Lathrop Avenue.

The testing also detected low levels of contamination on the east side of Ashland, west of the 7623-29 Lake building.

"So we clearly have contamination on village property," said Rigas.

"It's a pretty significant hit at that location," said Hahne, who put the contamination at 60 parts per million.

Hahne said there are three issues of concern: Potential exposure to excavation workers, the cost of materials management, and the potential for migration of the contamination through utility lines.

Noting that there is a water line and sewer line in the immediate area, Rigas said Tuesday, "If either one needs service, you don't have the luxury of taking it slow."

### **EPA inspects St. Luke's, children's gym**

Hahne said the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency conducted an investigation in and around the St. Luke's school Friday, Nov. 20, and near My Gym in the 7623-7629 Lake building. That testing is being conducted to determine if there has been any "vapor intrusion" into either building.

Vapor intrusion occurs when gases from contaminants work their way up through ground soil and permeate through building foundations. Hahne said probes were drilled under the buildings to measure soil gas. Air samples were also taken from inside St. Luke's itself, using vacuum containers that slowly draw interior air over a 24-hour period.

# Date visited 08/07/12

In his Nov. 19 letter, Hahne states the soil under 7625 Lake was tested in 1998, 2004 and 2007. Previous investigations "identified (perc) in soil and groundwater on the properties (7625 Lake Street and 423 Ashland Avenue) adjacent to the west side of the 7613 Lake Street (property)."

Hahne added that, while no investigation was conducted for the 7629 Lake property, "a report prepared in 2007 evaluated the existing data and did not identify a concern with the current use of that property."

Hahne said the Illinois EPA was working with the U.S. EPA to develop a fact sheet on the environmental contamination. That data will be released to the public by mid-December, around which time the state and federal EPA plan to conduct a public meeting.

### **Village to take first step toward redevelopment**

Rigas said Tuesday that as the board works to develop a comprehensive remediation plan for Lake and Lathrop, it is also preparing to issue a request for proposals to be sent to developers.

"We're interested in hearing ideas," said Rigas. He said the responses would also clarify any questions potential developers may have and detail their needs and concerns.

"They'll tell us what they want from us," said Rigas.