Meeting on MT demolition May 9 (22)

The Bethlehem Gadfly Gadfly's posts, Martin Tower, Serious Issues May 3, 2019

(22nd in a series on Martin Tower)

Martin Tower demolition May 19

www.martintowerbethlehem.com

From the City: May 3, 2019 12:51 PM

There will be a public informational meeting, hosted by the Martin Tower property owners, representatives from the demolition company Controlled Demo Inc., along with other governmental agencies, regarding the May 19th demolition of Martin Tower on May 9, 2019 at 6 p.m., at Nitschmann Middle School. City of Bethlehem Public Safety representatives will be in attendance. *This meeting is intended for the general public.*

Gadfly strongly suggests that those concerned with public health and safety from the demolition should prepare for the meeting, should just not blindly accept any "expert" opinion provided by the official representatives at the meeting.

And that official representation is a bit vague. Will the state be there? Our City Health Bureau? Is the representation vague because this was a hastily arranged meeting because Martin Romeril was burning up the

phone waves this morning? I think we need to know the line-up well in advance of May 9. And if we see a gap, we need a chance to plug it.

I think Martin would agree that he did not do systematic in-depth research about the effects of implosion, but his offer of these two items might be a starting point about things to consider:

1) A 2003 article "Spectators Discouraged from Watching Building Demolitions" about "one of the first studies of its kind [to fill] a research gap and respond to community concerns about the impact of such events on community air quality."

- The researchers studied the quality of air within a four-block radius immediately after the August 19, 2000, implosion of a 22-story building in east Baltimore, Md. Samples were taken at seven indoor locations and four outdoor sites. They found that immediately after the implosion, concentrations of airborne dust particles were as much as 3,000 times higher than they had been prior to the demolition. As expected, sites nearest to the implosion had a more dramatic and earlier peak when compared to sites further away. Even at the furthest site, seven and one-half blocks from the implosion, there was a 20-fold increase in particulate matter. The good news, according to the researchers, is that the peaks were very short-lived, lasting only 15-20 minutes. No measurable effect was found upwind of the implosion, nor in the indoor sample sites. The researchers suggest that remaining upwind of a building demolition and staying indoors offers protection from high outdoor concentrations of dust particles.
- The spectator hazard can be avoided easily and completely by simply staying at home and watching the event on television. The fix is not so easy for the surrounding community. Our

results suggest that staying indoors with the doors and windows closed will offer some protection.

2) A 2005 article on an 1998 implosion "The Implosion of the Calgary General Hospital:

Ambient Air Quality Issues" :

- The ability of an implosion to effectively aerosolize building materials indicates that all lead painted surfaces and nonfriable and friable asbestos-containing materials should be removed from a building during the preparatory work. The implosion dust cloud affected ambient air quality up to 20 kilometers downwind and suggests that public advisory zones around implosion sites should be extended. The necessity for large advisory zones in densely populated areas will be a challenge for the effective public communication of the health risks, mitigation, and cleanup strategies. We suggest that implosions should be prohibited in densely populated areas.
- Public advisories to mitigate personal exposure and indoor migration of the implosion dust cloud constituents should extend to 10 or 20 km around an implosion site.
- Air sampling conducted after the implosion indicated there were several stationary short-term air quality issues. As well, the implosion-created dust cloud traveled much further than expected, out to 20 km, and, thus, needs to be considered when
  communicating preventive measures to the public.
  Furthermore, all sources of hazardous materials, such as Pb-based paints and nonfriable asbestos, should be identified and removed before the implosion so that the airborne release of

> these hazards is prevented. Problematic issues surrounding public health protection in affected areas that could extend 10 or 20 km downwind from an implosion site suggest that implosions should be prohibited in metropolitan areas.

For illustrative purposes, Martin provided maps showing city area in radii of 1, 10, 20 kms (.6, 6, 12 miles) of MT. Find your home. Find your loved ones' homes.

Martin Tower ONE KM dust radius map

Martin Tower TEN KM dust radius map

Martin Tower TWENTY KM dust radius map

Now, these studies may be severely dated. In 1-2 decades no doubt the technology of removing asbestos has significantly improved. In 1-2 decades no doubt more studies have been done on the impact of implosion demolitions.

As Martin said, "maybe there is no danger at all."

The lack of communication seems the prime problem.

It feels late in the game to be staging such a meeting. The City web site promised a follow-up "mid-April."

But we need to know what questions to ask, what procedures for safety are being used, what studies they are based on, and we need to do some of our own research.

The Gadfly blog could be a clearing house for questions and information. Then someone might volunteer to organize. Let us know what you are thinking. Let us know what you find. Let us know what we should read.

It might also be well to prepare a worse-case outcome of the meeting. Suppose the collective “we” are not pleased by what we hear May 9? How would we seek an injunction to halt the demolition? Any advice on that from Gadfly followers?

Gadfly reminds followers that email links to the Mayor and City Council are on the sidebar for easy access.