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KeySpan seeks to ease fears over gas plant

By MARK HARRINGTON

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KeySpan Corp., the owner of more than two dozen former utility gas-plant sites on Long Island, yesterday sought to allay concerns about one of the largest sites as community members prepare to meet about it in Hempstead next week. The Hempstead manufactured natural gas plant, located off of Intersection and North Franklin Streets, has spawned a nearly 4,000-foot by 600-foot plume from the 7.5 acre site, a recently released report said.

KeySpan plans a meeting on the final remediation report at Adelphi University on June 28 at 7 p.m., in the University Center rooms 202 and 203.

According to the report, chemicals from this site and others nearby "present potential direct contact and inhalation exposures for current and possible future site use scenarios and adjacent area populations." The potential for exposure included visitors to a nearby park, a car dealership lot and the former facility, which is now primarily vacant land.

In a statement prepared for Newsday, KeySpan said direct exposure to the migrating plume-related material was unlikely. "The important thing about the Hempstead groundwater plume is that it begins 25 to 30 feet below the ground surface, and never rises near the surface," the company said.

The report also said 18 chemicals were found in indoor-air samples of a nearby medical office. KeySpan suggested some could have come from other sources. Some are "commonly found in office buildings of that type in urban areas," the company said, suggesting the materials were "commonly used in buildings of this type," and could also have come from "passing vehicular traffic and cars in the parking lot." "Typical" MGP-specific tracers "were not found," KeySpan said.

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Walter Hang, president of environmental database company Toxics Targeting in Ithaca, took exception with KeySpan's characterizations. He noted the groundwater contamination plume "starts at ground level and extends downward" off site. And he noted the report references "extensive, heavily contaminated soil at ground level."

"The bottom line," he said, "is the site should be cleaned up in strict accordance with applicable remedial requirements."

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