

https://www.fredericknewspost.com/news/economy_and_business/real_estate_and_development/city-notes-advisory-committee-set-to-discuss-fort-detrick-steam/article_45c3a574-ea45-535f-8ec1-649e40e839b0.html

City Notes: Advisory committee set to discuss Fort Detrick Steam Sterilization Plant issues and aftereffects

By Mallory Panuska mpanuska@newspost.com Jul 14, 2018

People who are curious about the recent shutdown of the Fort Detrick Steam Sterilization Plant and subsequent halting of biosafety work at some containment laboratories can attend a meeting this week to hear an update on what's going on.

The Containment Lab Community Advisory Committee is meeting at 7 p.m. Tuesday in the City Hall boardroom with Fort Detrick officials to discuss the shutdown of the plant — which occurred in May due to flooding in the basement — and the effects of the closing.

The group formed roughly seven years ago to serve as a liaison between Fort Detrick and the public. Members meet quarterly, or more as needed or requested, and the meetings are open to the public.

Tuesday's meeting is set to focus on the recent event at the steam sterilization plant, which forced the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases (USAMRIID) to halt all operations at Biosafety Levels 3 and 4 on May 31.

On May 17, two days after a large storm brought heavy rain to Frederick, plant workers noticed flooding in the basement of the plant. As they addressed the problem, they discovered leaks in a storage tank due to over capacity because of the flooding, and as a result they shut down operations and began repairs.

The plant provided steam sterilization of liquid waste from USAMRIID research laboratories. The waste was chemically disinfected on site and routed to the plant, where it was held in storage tanks until entering the steam sterilization process.

Thanks for visiting FrederickNewsPost.com. ×

The high levels of safety associated with the work at BL3 and BL4 labs require becoming a member (Already a member? [Login](#)), which was not possible with water restrictions put in place with the plant out of commission.

Lanessa Hill, a spokeswoman for the U.S. Army Garrison on Fort Detrick, said last week that officials will address the future of the plant and answer questions from members of the advisory committee and the public at Tuesday's meeting.

"We will be there to talk about the steam sterilization plant, the reason why it was closed, the effects on USAMRIID," Hill explained.

She also said USAMRIID was the only contractor the plant shutdown affected, and that officials performed required environmental testing for any known pathogens that employees were working with in the labs, and that all of the tests came back negative. She added that officials are keeping an eye on the situation to ensure the area remains safe and uncontaminated.

"We are working with state and federal agencies weekly," she said.

building height code headed to a vote

Bucking a recommendation from the city's Planning Commission, members of the Board of Aldermen came to an informal consensus last week to approve a change to the city's land management code that would limit building heights in some neighborhoods.

The request borrows ideas from a similar proposal the aldermen denied in June, which Magnolia Avenue resident Susie Chaitovitz resident brought forward in response to plans for a large, disproportionate house next door. She began researching the city's land management code and identified what she believed were flaws with a number of facets, most notably the city's building height regulations. The code currently sets a cap of 40 feet to roof midpoints, but allows some wiggle room in total height.

Chaitovitz's proposed amendment, which the Board of Aldermen denied 4-1 last week, would have limited building heights in the R6 low-density residential zone from exceeding the average block roof height, plus 20 percent, and set a maximum height cap of 40 feet at the highest point.

Planning staff members, commissioners and members of the Board of Aldermen cited a desire for a more comprehensive change, though, prompting a different staff-initiated proposal that is now going through the approval process.

You're on the 2nd of 3 free articles before you must **register**, and 7 more before **becoming a member**. (Already a member? **Log in**)

The new proposal eliminates the 20-percent average block roof height equation and sets the height at a solid 40 feet at the highest point and 35 feet at the midpoint. It also adds the R4 district — another low-density residential zone — to the applicable area. Low-density residential

refers to neighborhoods where all of the homes are single family.

In mid-June, the Planning Commission voted 4-1 to send a negative recommendation to the aldermen, citing concerns that it did not include other desired changes to the code outside of building heights.

The aldermen, who will make the final decision, expressed different opinions at a workshop Wednesday. While they agreed that other changes are needed, they expressed a desire to get something on the books now and there support behind the new proposal. They will officially vote at a future public hearing.

Follow Mallory Panuska on Twitter: @MalloryPanuska.

mpanuska



Thanks for visiting FrederickNewsPost.com. ×

You're on the 2nd of 3 free articles before you must **register**, and 7 more before becoming a member. (Already a member? **Log in.**)