

Robert Novatnack
Emergency Management Coordinator
City of Bethlehem

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Subject: Martin Tower Demolition

Bob:

Many of us are quite concerned about the possible health consequences of the Martin Tower demolition planned for May 19.

Here attached is a list of questions I compiled from followers of the Bethlehem Gadfly blog. We are hoping that the presentations at the meeting May 9 will provide answers to these questions.

We would appreciate prior public notice about the format of the meeting, such as who will be presenting, who others will be “up front,” what the structure will be, and what the plans are for audience participation.

Our questions are in a logical and chronological order under nine headings, which may, in fact, serve as a sensible way of focusing and structuring the meeting.

Ample time for audience participation is crucial, and we suggest a time for direct questions and answers, not just the one-sided communication that characterizes participation at City Council meetings.

Ed Gallagher
ejg1@lehigh.edu
The Bethlehem Gadfly
<https://thebethlehemgadfly.com/>

cc: Mayor Donchez, City Council President Waldron

QUESTIONS FOR THE MAY 9 MEETING ON THE MARTIN TOWER DEMOLITION

Preliminary Planning:

- What options besides implosion are available for demolition?

It is the building owners' decision on how to demo the property.

- Why (according to the newspaper) is implosion used only 1% of the time?

Most times based on safety concerns for workers, question can be answered in full by the building owners and demolition team, it was their choice.

- What factors (time, cost, efficiency, geography, etc.) made implosion the best option for MT?

See above.

- Where did potential health hazards factor in to the decision? Is it fair to say that other options would provide less of a health hazard?

According to the demolition team, the same amount of dust would be created if you jack hammered the concrete out and it would go on for weeks and months, instead of a larger single clean-up.

- Was the City involved in the planning decision? If so, name those City officials involved. If so, what role did the City play in the decision? If so, did the City have a veto power?

The building is privately owned and the City of Bethlehem is only responsible for some issued permits.

- Was there any disagreement about the decision to use implosion among any of those consulted in the planning decision? If so, who and for what reason?

No, not to my knowledge.

- Is it too late to choose another option for demolition?

Months of planning when into this demolition project, highly unlikely that the building owner would change plans moving forward.

The Regulatory Process:

- What Federal and State laws, regulations, and guidelines govern implosions?

Other governmental agencies have requirements for imposition methods, requirements and guidelines can be acquired from the Federal and State agencies.

- What Federal and State approvals had to be obtained? What offices, where located, and who were the principal government agents consulted and responsible for approvals?

Checked with our Chief Code Official; building owners and the demolition team receive those approvals and. would be able to provide that information.

- What City laws, regulations, and guidelines govern implosions?

Storage of explosives being used falls under the Office of the Fire Marshall.

Demolition permit is required for the contractor.

- What City approvals had to be obtained? What City offices were consulted and were responsible for the approvals? Who were the key figures in the approval process?

City of Bethlehem Zoning Office, Water Department, Fire Department and Engineering Department and Code Enforcement on City of Bethlehem required permits.

- What information had to be submitted to the City in order to obtain approval?

Contract, Contractor, Insurance, Utility Sign-Offs and applications.

- Were there any disagreements or concerns voiced by City officials during the approval process? If so, who and for what reason?

No. Just meet all the requirements for the demolition of Martin Tower.

- What Federal, State, and City laws, regulations, and guidelines specifically relate to health concerns? Where in the regulations are health concerns addressed?

PA.DEP was overseeing this project.

- Did the City do its own background check on Controlled Demolition, Inc.? Did the City solicit references? If not, why not? If so, were there any concerns or, more importantly, “red flags”? What was the last job similar in nature and scope to Bethlehem? Who was responsible for the vetting of CD?

The building owner is responsible for the hiring of the demolition company. The city does not get involved in the hiring of private companies.

- Did City officials meet with the developer and/or CD during the approval process? Elaborate.

Yes, to acquire permits and numerous times on site.

- Did City officials research prior implosions by CD for health protocols and health consequences? Did CD provide testing data post-demolition in previous cases?

CDI was asked to provide whatever is the standard recommendations on matters of dust and how it will be controlled.

Members of Public Safety Team did look at some of the past implosions completed by CDI. Post-demolition data was not requested.

- Are there any City officials with prior expertise or experiences in implosions?

Yes, Chief Code Official.

- What in the history of demolition in Bethlehem, imploded or otherwise, was pertinent to consideration of MT?

Buildings have been demolished within the City of Bethlehem but not on this scale.

- What pertinent independent general studies of the health consequences of implosions were studied by the City?

Not aware of any studies that were studied by the City of Bethlehem, but city department may have conducted their own research.

Possible contamination:

- Is there any asbestos on site? What tests have been done? Where are the results available? Is there independent verification of what asbestos is onsite? If there is asbestos, what will be done to control it?

None on site.

Pa. DEP has been on scene during the demolition of all the building located on the 53 acres track. Morning Call, Wednesday, May 8th, 2019. Pa. Dept. of Environmental Protection spokesperson, Collen Connolly “all the asbestos in the Martin Tower building has been abated”.

- Are there other contaminants onsite? What are their health effects?

All interior furnishings, carpets, light fixtures, walls, ceilings have been removed.

- What will the fallout, the “dust” that the implosion raises contain?

According to CDI, dust is an unpreventable by-product of all types of demolition.

Please go to the Martin Tower Website and review the most frequently asked questions. Answer to question number 6 would be a more detailed answer from the experts performing the demolition.

- Will the developer remove and safely dispose of any building components containing lead and other known contaminants before demolition?

Yes, that work was completed.

- Has a fallout zone been determined? Where will the fallout be most intense? How far will the fallout spread?

Yes, map provided on Martin Tower Website.

- Will there be tests to determine the range and intensity of the fallout? If so, who will do them? Will there be independent tests? Where and when will the test results be available?

Map being given out to the press and general public will include the fallout zone.

- Will there be tests of indoor air quality?

An independent 3rd Party firm is conducting particulate and asbestos air quality monitoring before, during, and after the implosion activities.

- What health effects can we expect from “normal” fallout? What is a worst-case scenario? Are there long-term studies of fallout health consequences after implosions?

Review the handout provided by CDI, it will be provided on the Martin Tower Website and at both meetings being held.

- What will be the effect on the Monocacy Creek? Won't the water cannons used to suppress the dust wash contamination into the Creek?

It will be monitored and the responsibility of the building owner and demolition team...

Preparation of the townspeople:

- Should people be worried about health consequences? If so, what should they do to avoid or to mitigate those consequences?

The recommendations from CDI is to stay away from the scene, but if you can't just stay indoors until after the implosion. And debris clean-up. NOTE: Once the roadways are open by mid-morning it will be safe to be outside.

- Should people with certain health conditions take certain precautions or avoid the area for a period of time?

CDI will open the area to traffic and citizens when they deem it safe.

- Do you recommend face masks
No, recommendation is to stay away from the area, stay indoors in the area. If you want to view the implosion it is the choice of the individual to wear a protective mask, or just avoid any dust in the air.
- Has the city made arrangements to ensure that community residents within the fallout zone are provided with high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) vacuums and "tack mats," which remove dust from shoes as individuals enter the home?
- Should homes be sealed up?
- Will dust lay on cars, outdoor furniture, and so forth, and, if so, should anything be done?

Please review #6 on the most frequently asked questions on the Martin Tower Website for a detailed answer.

- Should people be told to avoid lawn mowers, blowers, etc., for a time – things that stir up the dust?

No.

- Should people be kept off the Little League fields, off the Golf course, out of Burnside, from shopping at Lowe's, and so forth, for the day?

No.

- Should people be advised to restrict any kind of activity or to avoid any locations?

Follow the guidelines provided by CD and remain out of the exclusion zone.

- Has the city made arrangements to ensure that residents, community organizations, faith-based organizations, and city agencies are fully informed about the potential health hazards from dust from the demolition and who to contact if they believe they have been exposed?

Public has been advised attend the public meeting being held at Nitschmann Middle School and review up dated postings on the Martin Tower Website.

- Has the city made arrangements to ensure training of community block monitors to assist residents with questions and home safety measures?

No training of block monitors was conducted.

Demolition day operation:

- Who is in charge of the operation that day? Who is calling the shots? Does the City have any say in the operation? What officials will be on site?

Controlled Demolition Inc. [CDI].

- What factors will determine that the demolition is “a go”?

CDI and Public Safety Official will coordinate.

- What factors would determine a delay or a cancellation of the demolition?

Same as above.

- What could go wrong? What could seriously go wrong? What is a worst-case scenario?

CDI would be the experts that need to be asked.

- Is wind speed and direction a factor in whether to go or not?

CDI will make that call.

Post-demolition testing:

- Will there be tests to determine the range and intensity of the fallout? If so, who will do them? Will there be independent tests? Where and when will the test results be available?

CDI will need to provide that at the meetings.

- In addition to air-quality tests, will there be seismic monitoring, to determine possible impact on building foundations and so forth?

Yes, that is required.

- Has the city made arrangements for independent testing of the streets and sidewalks surrounding demolished properties to measure the impact of demolition and debris removal on the local environment, and to repeat such tests when clearing the site has been completed?

Yes, Safety Teams will survey the roads; crews will be on stand-by for any cleanup needed.

Post-demolition clean-up:

- Has the city made arrangements to ensure that all sidewalks, streets, and parking lots in the fallout zone are swept immediately after the demolition and again when debris has been removed?

Yes, within reason.

- Has the city made arrangements to ensure the developer will cover all dust & debris on the demolition site so it will not be carried off by wind or rain AND require it all to be completely removed as rapidly as possible?

The contractor is responsible for all dust control.

- Has the city made arrangements to ensure that two inches of topsoil are removed and replaced on all exposed ground within the fallout area?

No.

- Has the city made made arrangements to ensure the developer has established procedures for safe removal of all debris from demolished buildings, including use of hoses to suppress dust and covering trucks?

Dust will be evaluated after the implosion by CDI.

- Do we have to wait for rain to be totally safe?

No.

- Will it be safe to use the Little League fields, play golf, visit Burnside, use compost, and etc.?

Yes.

Cost to taxpayers:

- Who is paying for all the city time and personnel involved here?
The building owner will be reimbursing the City of Bethlehem for costs incurred.

Long-term view:

- People will eventually live, work, visit at the MT site. What safeguards will be put in place to protect their health?

Question for the developers of the property.

- Are we learning anything in this process about such things as City-citizen communication and the efficacy of our various laws, regulations, and guidelines that we would want to change as a result of this MT experience?

The City of Bethlehem Public Safety Teams from Police, Fire and EMS are always looking for ways to improve our communication and relationships with the public. So when an event such as the implosion of Martin Tower occurs we are well prepared to protect the residents that work and live within our city.

The information being provided today at our meetings with all stakeholders, and on the Martin Tower Website, should give enough information for all those concerned to make common sense decisions on the day of the implosion.