HARNESSING DIVERGENT ENERGY

How to utilize community activists, affected parties, and public participants to reach a rational, sustainable public health result

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Massachusetts Association of Health Boards

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Town of Hudson

MHOA Annual Conference 2026 | Springfield, MA

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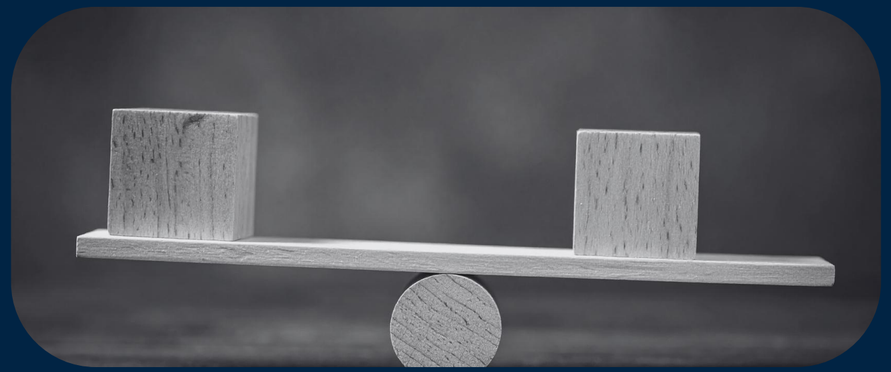
Community Knowledge & Public Responsibility

Residents & Organizations

- Identify recurring conditions
- Reach neighbors officials may miss
- Sustain attention over time

Health Directors & Boards

- Investigate and test the evidence
- Provide a fair public process
- Make findings and follow through



Give Respect. Expect Respect. Otherwise....



Examples of Community-Driven Change



Boston
Tobacco-Free Pharmacies

Marblehead
Organic Land Care

Taunton
Dust at a Concrete Plant

Somerville
Healthy Food Access

Amherst
Waste Reduction

Boston: Tobacco-Free Pharmacies

An initiative by Bold-Teens, 2008

- Residents
  - Youth advocates sought an enforceable response to pharmacy tobacco sales.
- Health Officials
  - Staff reviewed policy, consulted pharmacy representatives, and worked with counsel.
- Board Action
  - Boston adopted Massachusetts' first tobacco-free pharmacy regulation.

Advocacy helped turn a community concern into workable policy.

Marblehead: Organic Land Care

An initiative by the Marblehead Pesticide Awareness Committee, 2001-2005

- **Residents**
  - The committee worked with the Board of Health for more than a year.
- **Health Officials**
  - The policy included implementation oversight and employee training.
- **Board Action**
  - A 2001 policy became formal regulations in December 2005.

The collaboration continued into day-to-day municipal practice.

Taunton: Dust at a Concrete Plant

Initiative by Weir Dust Busters, 2026

- Residents
  - Neighbors raised concerns about dust, noise, trucks, and nearby elderly residents.
- Company Response
  - Dauphinais described pollution controls and disputed residents' characterizations.
- Board Action
  - March 31, 2026 minutes record a motion to set a quasi-judicial hearing.

A final BOH finding or abatement order has not been verified for this account

Somerville: Healthy Food Access

Initiative by Groundwork Somerville and Green City Growers

- Residents
  - The city credits these partners with spearheading urban agriculture.
- Health Officials
  - The board coordinated with planning and legislative bodies.
- Board Action
  - Health regulations addressed food sales, soil safety, rodents, and animal keeping.

Public-health review can help a beneficial community activity proceed safely.

Amherst: Waste Reduction

Initiative by Zero Waste Amherst, 2021-2022

- Proposal
  - Waste-hauler reform and universal curbside compost collection.
- Organized Support
  - Mothers Out Front, Sunrise Amherst, and other local groups joined the effort.
- Board Action
  - The BOH voted to support the proposal on January 13, 2022.

The documented outcome is board endorsement and continued municipal consideration.

Hudson Transfer Station: A Case Study





- Town-owned property operated as a solid waste transfer station by B-P Trucking, Inc.
- Application for a Minor Modification to Existing Site Assignment
- Proposed capacity increase: 350 to 850 tons per day of solid waste
- Formal public hearing process involving a hearing officer, intervenors, and expert testimony

The Community Shows Up: Intervenors

Individual Resident (1)

Keep Hudson Clean (18)

Citizens of Elaine Circle (11)

Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.
Hudson Health Department

Mulready Ohana (10)

The Good Neighbors of BP (17)

Together For Hudson (10)

Hudson Safe Streets (13)

Numbers indicate group membership

Ten Hearings. Many Perspectives. One Decision.



What Did Community Participation Bring to the Table?

Local Knowledge

Firsthand observations of existing conditions

Truck traffic, odors, noise, idling, neighborhood impacts

Evidence & Technical Scrutiny

Questions and examination of the proposal

Expert testimony, impacts, environmental concerns

Public Engagement

Organized participation and sustained engagement

Community mobilization, greater transparency, and public oversight

Behind the Scenes: Managing the Process



More trash trucks might come rumbling through Hudson.

The firm that handles Hudson's solid waste is asking to double the current limit – from 350 to 850 tons per day – of waste brought to the Cox Street transfer station. A larger facility would be built to handle the extra solid waste, according to documents filed with the town's Board of Health.

Challenges:

- Coordinating multiple parties, experts, and hearing sessions
- Managing extensive testimony and documentation
- Maintaining fairness, transparency, and clear communication
- Balancing public expectations with legal requirements

... all while keeping up with the day-to-day!

The Decision

SAY NO!

BOARD OF HEALTH

WE'RE WITH YOU.



THANK YOU!

BOARD OF HEALTH

FOR PROTECTING OUR COMMUNITY.

The Value—and Challenge—of Meaningful Participation

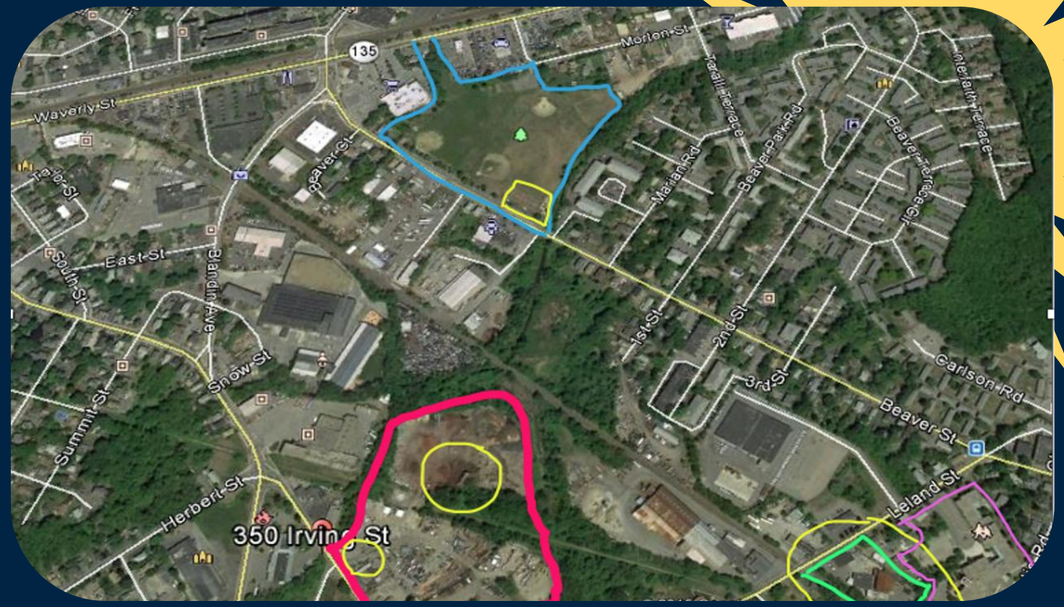
The Challenges

- Extended hearing time and workload
- Cross-examination by multiple intervenors
- Extensive testimony, research, and documentation
- Complex coordination and procedural requirements

The Value

- Significant investment of residents' time and resources
- Independent research and informed questioning
- Issues and evidence experts had overlooked
- A more comprehensive hearing record

Framingham General Chemical: A Case Study



- FACES and neighbors organized outreach and petitioned for public involvement
- Board of Health held hearings and scrutinized assessment and cleanup proposals
- Cleanup of facility is ongoing 14 years later!



Framingham Action Coalition for Environmental Safety

METROWEST DAILY NEWS

FACES to receive environmental activism award

Staff reports

March 7, 2013 | Updated March 8, 2013, 7:16 a.m. ET

Framingham Action Coalition for Environmental Safety, the group that successfully rallied to close a Leland Street chemical plant, is being honored for its work.

FACES, which fought General Chemical Corp., will receive the "Outstanding Activism" award during the 26th Annual Environmental Action Conference. It takes place Sunday at Northeastern University.



Framingham Action Coalition for Environmental Safety

AT A GLANCE

LOCATION: Framingham, Massachusetts

PRIMARY ISSUE AREA: Environmental Health

ACTIVE SINCE: 2011

GRANTS RECEIVED IN: 2011

CORE VOLUNTEERS: 9

COMMUNITY SIZE: 68,318

Are you a member of this group? Please log in or register to join.



The Boston Globe

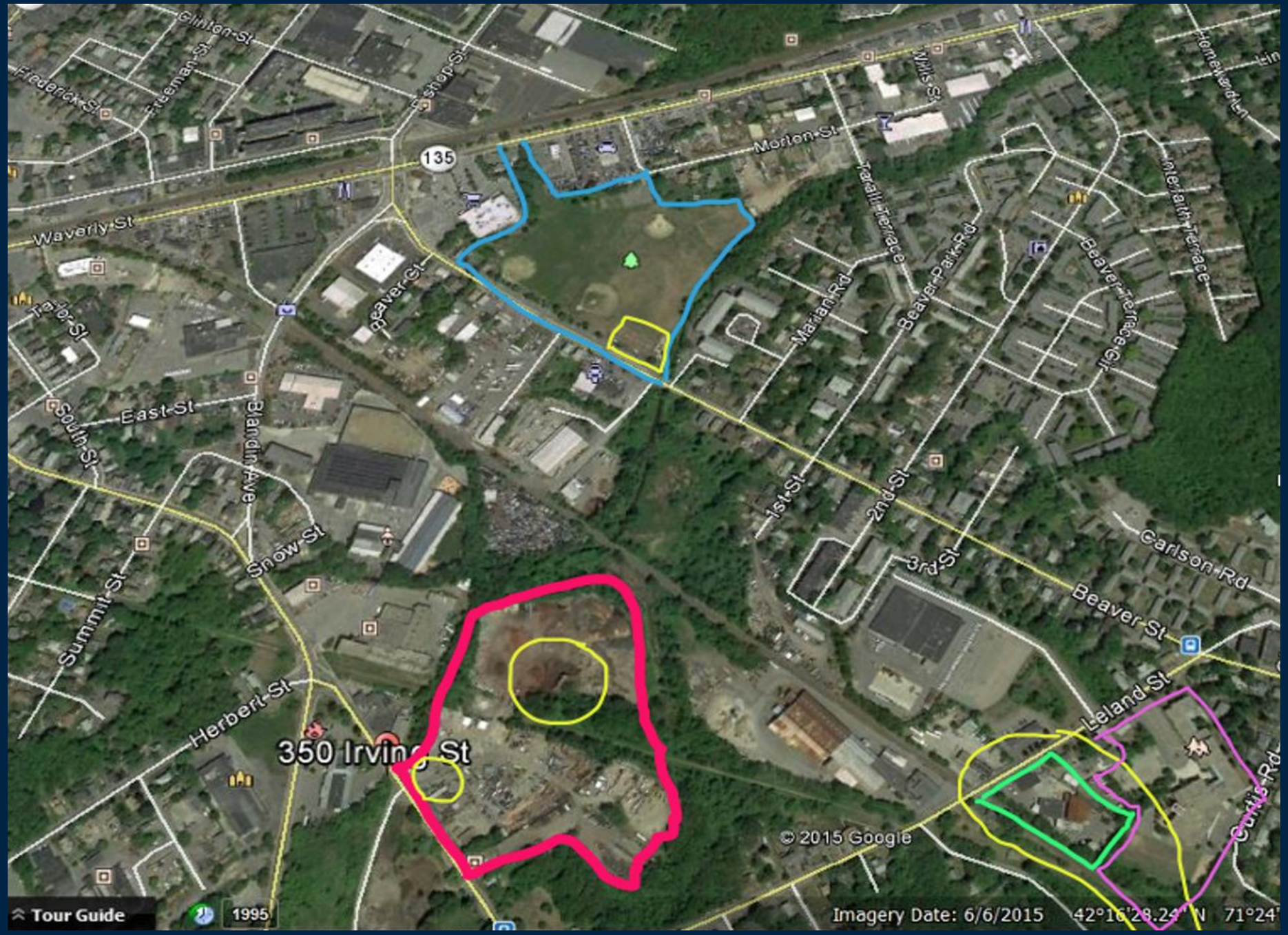
Neighbors living with toxic legacy in Framingham

Framingham group seeks quicker cleanup of chemicals

By John Dyer Globe Correspondent, November 3, 2011, 12:00 a.m.



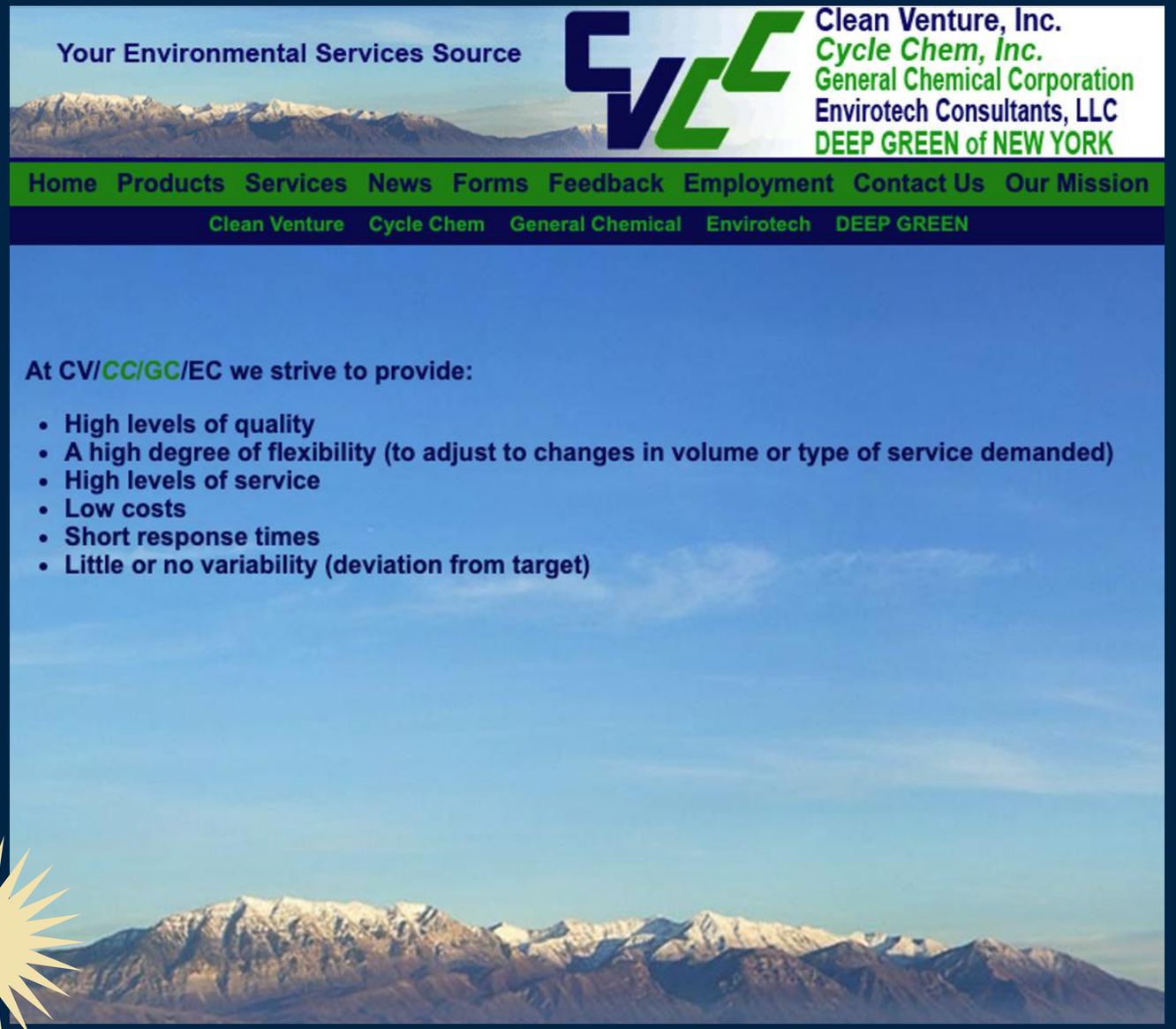
Junia Faust, a member of the Framingham Action Coalition for Environmental Safety, sees trouble at the Wilson Elementary School playground. PHOTOS BY SUZANNE KREITER/GLOBE STAFF


Clinton St
Frederick St
Freeman St
Bishop St
Wills St
Morton St
135
Waverly St
Beaver St
Tabor St
South St
East St
Blandin Ave
Summit St
Snow St
Herbert St
Marian Rd
Beaver Park Rd
Beaver Terrace Cir
Interfaith Terrace
1st St
2nd St
3rd St
Carlson Rd
Beaver St
Leland St
Curtis Rd
350 Irving St
© 2015 Google
Tour Guide
1995
Imagery Date: 6/6/2015

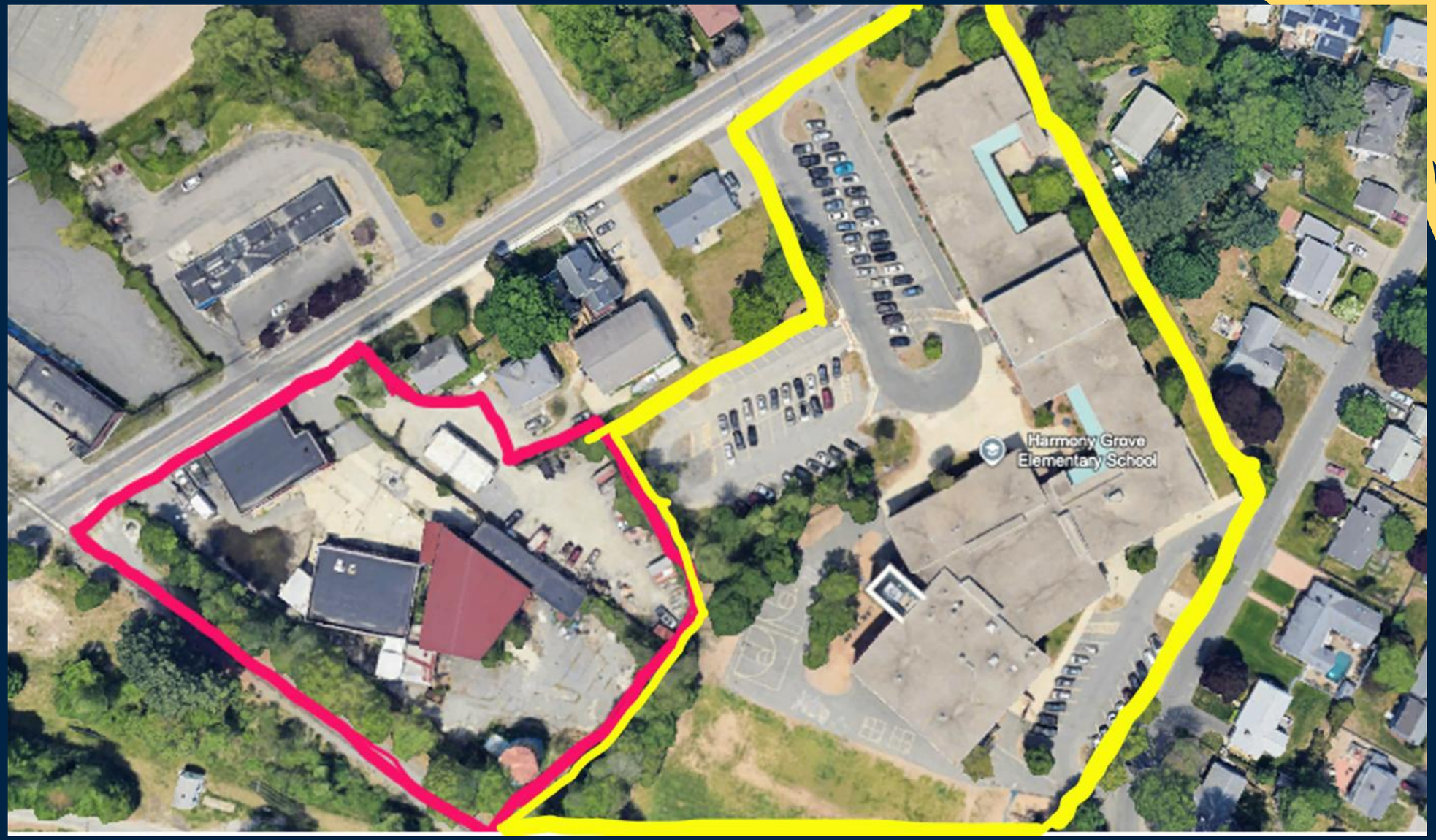
Clean Venture, Inc. d/b/a General Chemical



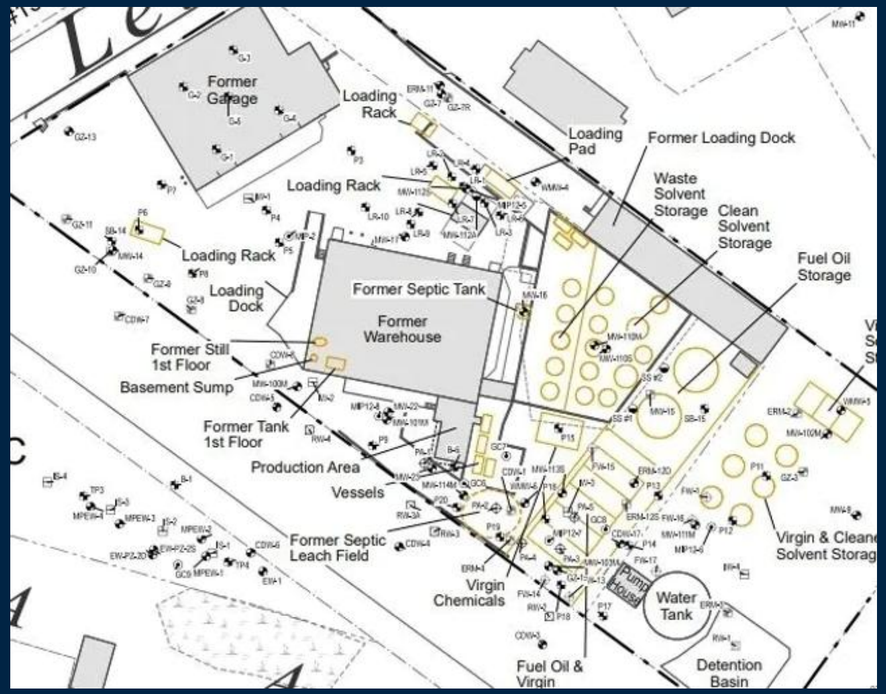
CLEAN? Venture???



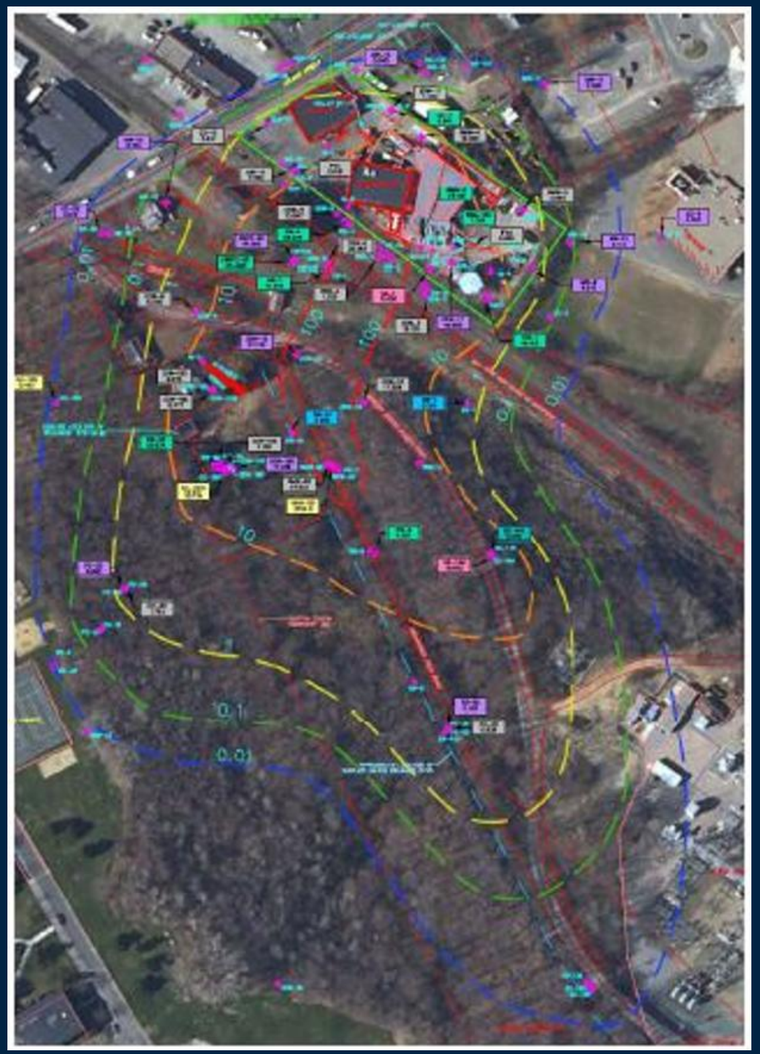
Love Thy Neighbor



DEP Steps in to Assist BOH







Two Weeks Notice Prior to Inspection














MERCURY DEVICES
10/3/08

Asbestos, Neon Lights, Mercury against a Fence



The Sky Was BLUE!!







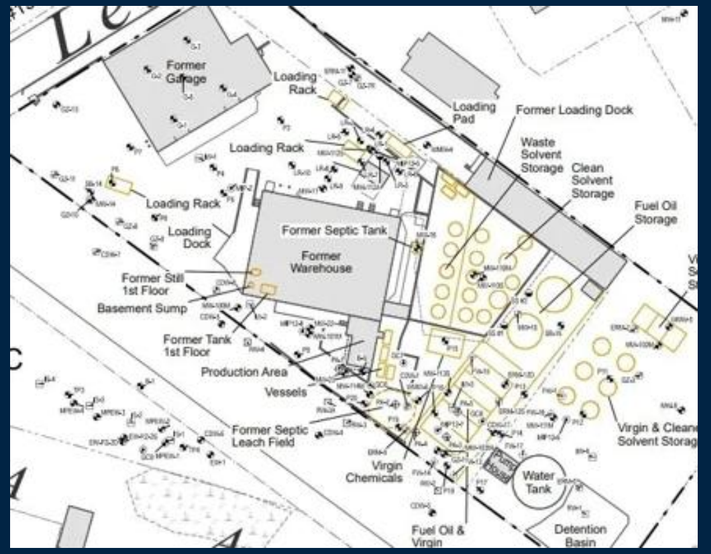
The Plume Map




SHUT
DOWN!
Move
SHUT
DOWN


Chairman
Michael Hugo




Former Garage
Loading Rack
Loading Pad
Former Loading Dock
Waste Solvent Storage
Clean Solvent Storage
Loading Rack
Loading Rack
Fuel Oil Storage
Loading Dock
Former Septic Tank
Former Warehouse
Former Still 1st Floor
Basement Sump
Former Tank 1st Floor
Production Area
Vessels
Former Septic Leach Field
Virgin Chemicals
Water Tank
Fuel Oil & Virgin
Detention Basin

General Chemical Corporation

Responsive Environmental Management Services

March 1, 2012

Mr. Steven A. DeGabriele, Director
Business Compliance Division
Bureau of Waste Prevention
Mass DEP
One Winter Street
Boston, MA 02108

Re: General Chemical Corporation
Notice of Intent to Close Facility

Dear Mr. DeGabriele:

In accordance with Massachusetts Hazardous Waste Regulations, 310 CMR 30.583(3)(b), The owner and operator of General Chemical Corporation are hereby providing MassDEP with 45 day advance notice of facility closure.

Michael S. Persico
President

133-138 Leland Street • Framingham, MA 01702
Phone: (508) 872-5000 • Fax: (508) 875-5271
www.cyclechem.com

Corporate Office: 301 South First Street Elizabeth, NJ 07206 (908) 355-5400 Fax: (908) 355-3495

New Jersey TSDF: 217 South First Street Elizabeth, NJ 07206 (908) 355-5803 Fax: (908) 355-0582

North Jersey Office: 36 Butler Street Elizabeth, NJ 07206 (908) 354-0315 Fax: (908) 355-3495

South Jersey Office: 600 Corco Boulevard Clayton, NJ 08312 (856) 863-8778 Fax: (856) 863-3726

Pennsylvania TSDF: 550 Industrial Drive Lewisberry, PA 17339 (717) 938-4700 Fax: (717) 938-3301

Maryland Office: 2931 Wellington Avenue Baltimore, MD 21230 (410) 368-9170 Fax: (410) 368-9171

Maryland Office: 23655 Rosa Oak Road Quantico, MD 21856 (410) 677-6720 Fax: (410) 677-6720

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Persicos Finally Win One -- Michael Persico Goes Home

It's been a long time since anyone named Persico has won anything in the never-ending court battles the family has been waging for more than half a century all around the town.

NEW YORK POST

ECTIONS

News Metro Long Island Politics World News

Mob prince battles prosecutors over loan-sharking sentence

By Selim Algar
Published Jan. 19, 2016, 3:45 p.m. ET

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Reputed Colombo associate Michael Persico outside Brooklyn federal court on Jan. 19.

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Feds Probe Mob Prince in Vending Machines Scam

The son of legendary Colombo crime boss Carmine (Junior) Persico is the focus of a federal grand jury probe into one of the oldest of mob scams: the placement of candy and soda machines.

By Jerry Capeci, Contributor
Organized crime expert
May 23, 2010, 05:12 AM EDT | Updated May 25, 2011



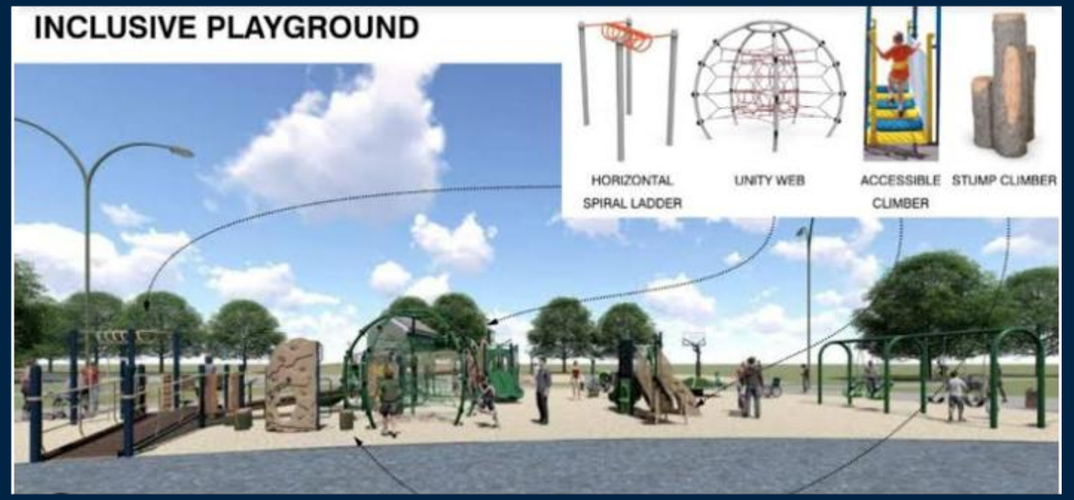
The American Mafia · Join
Pete Rock · June 12, 2020 ·

Michael Persico (Pictured), the businessman son of the late Mafia boss Carmine (Junior) Persico was quietly released into "community confinement" by the federal Bureau of Prisons last month a few days before his cousin, Colombo capo Theodore (Skinny Teddy) Persico, moved out of his halfway house and officially returned to his old Brooklyn haunts.

From NOR to Partnership







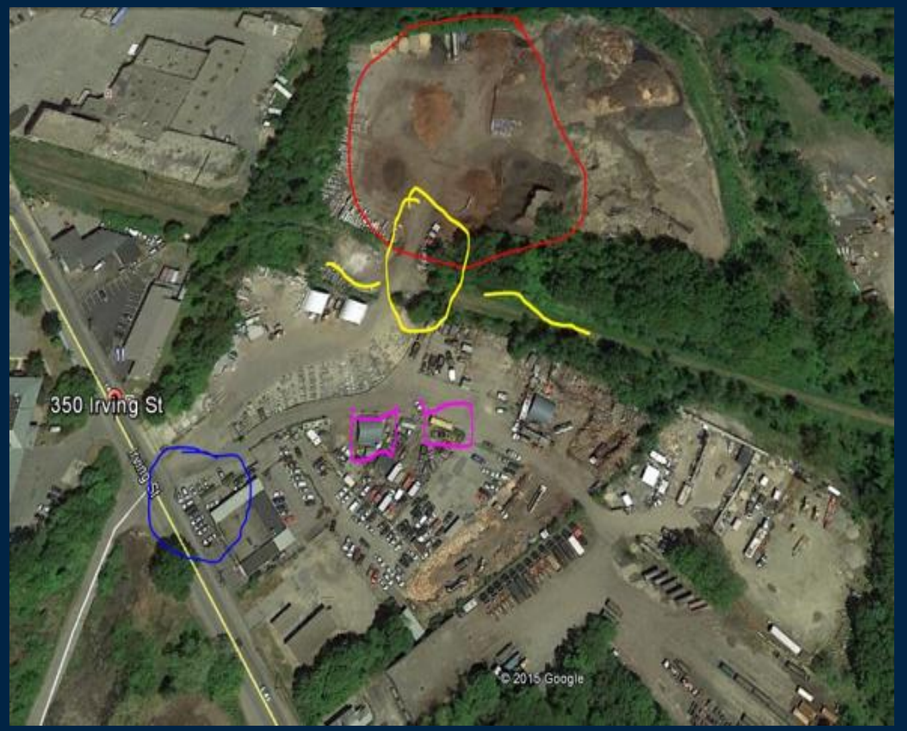




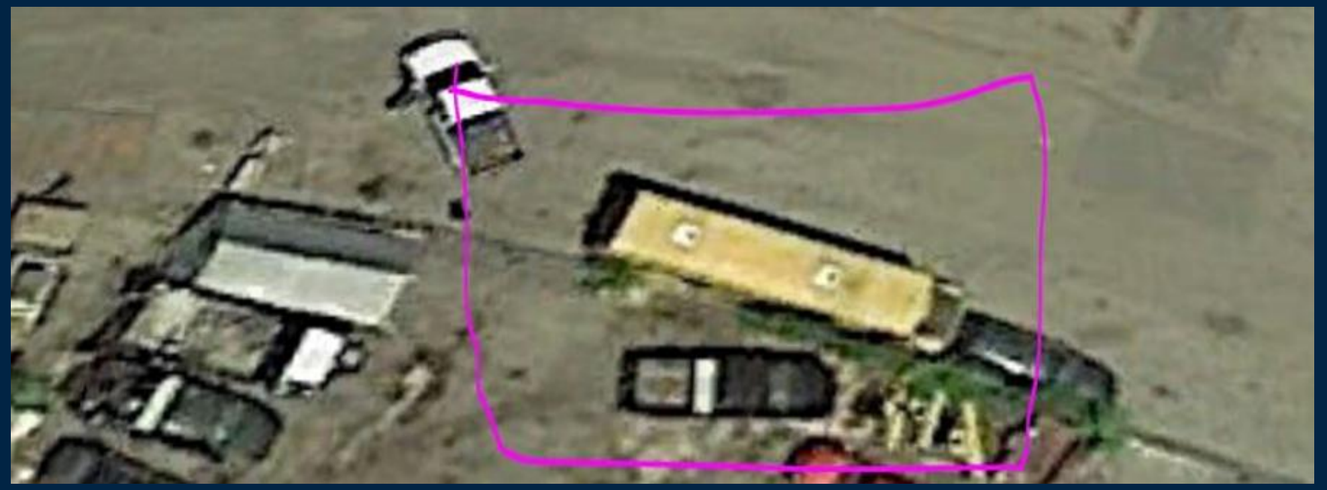


LANDSCAPE DEPOT/EVERSOURCE

Smoking ground, Undocumented Gaslines and Other Horror Stories







Turning Community Energy into Action



Organize the Information

Encourage documented timelines, complaint logs, photographs, and supporting records.

Establish Clear Communication

Identify appropriate contacts, communication channels, and expectations.

Focus on Relevant Evidence

Help participants understand what information is useful and how to submit it.

Set Realistic Expectations

Explain the process, timelines, regulatory authority, and potential limitations.

What Activist Organizations Bring to the BOH

- Local Knowledge
- Research Capacity
- More Eyes & Ears
- Community Connections

Sharing the Heavy Lifting

- Leverage Community Resources
- Focus on Meaningful Information
- Encourage Organized Participation
- Build Collaborative Relationships

Engagement Without Compromising Independence



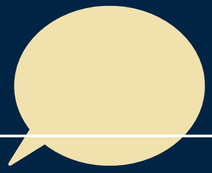
Welcome participation without promising a particular outcome.



Apply the same standards & procedures fairly to all parties.



Independently evaluate evidence, including conflicting information.



Clearly explain how the evidence & applicable regulations informed the decision.

Community voices inform the process. The Board retains responsibility for the decision.

Lessons Learned: Harnessing Divergent Energy



Don’t underestimate community members.

Passionate, organized residents can bring meaningful knowledge, research, and evidence.

Meaningful participation takes time.

Plan for the added complexity, resources, and administrative demands.

Engagement and impartiality can coexist.

Welcome participation while maintaining independent, evidence-based decision-making.

A stronger process builds a stronger record.

Diverse perspectives and thorough examination can support well-reasoned, defensible decisions.

THANK YOU