



June 23, 2008

Company promises cleanup plan

Extension ends today; public meeting is next

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FRANKLIN —Months of waiting to learn how Franklin paint maker Egyptian Lacquer Manufacturing Co. will next address the chemical pollution flowing into Liberty Creek and the Harpeth River should end today.

Bill Penny, plant attorney, said he expects to meet a June 23 deadline for giving state environmental officials a revised action plan to deal with the potentially harmful chemicals that have been draining underground since last year near homes along Daniels Drive.

The plant's original plan of natural attenuation called for chemicals to be intercepted by trenches and absorbent "booms."

Penny declined to provide specific information on the revision, saying he wants state officials to see the plan first.

"Obviously it's going to follow up on the things they requested from last time," Penny said.

Activists have criticized both the state and the company's response to the matter, and neighbors have threatened to file a federal lawsuit against the company if it doesn't better address the matter.

"It's taken entirely too long, and the company has been allowed to continue polluting," said Pam Davee, Harpeth River Watershed Association development director.

State officials granted the company a two-month extension in May so it could revise its plans and perform more investigations of the problem.

Improperly wrapped underground pipes on aboveground storage tanks were blamed for the flow of the chemicals, including acetone, toluene and benzene, a known carcinogen. The Fort Granger Drive company is still in operation but no longer uses the storage tanks.

After the plan is filed with state Department of Environment and Conservation officials, a public meeting will be scheduled 10 days later where public comment on the plan can be made.

"TDEC values public participation and will ensure that the concerns of the people affected by the (Egyptian Lacquer) release are given serious consideration," said Ashley Holt, manager of the state remediation program.
