

Further study needed at dump site in Pownal

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POWNAL — Drafts of a preliminary study on a former town dump site off Dean Road suggest that a more in-depth look will be required to assess the amount of contamination present and determine if a cleanup is needed, according to Brian Woods, an environmental analyst with the state Department of Environmental Conservation.

The study's final report had not yet been submitted to the state agency.

"I read a draft of it and it does suggest that a second phase is required," said Woods.

The site is on the Dean Road property owned by Robert Barlow of Stamford, and a brownfields grant was awarded in November for the preliminary study. Woods said a contractor evaluated the nature, degree and size of contamination on the property, stemming from an old dump.

The site, which included a gravel bed that Barlow has operated, was discovered to have some pollution similar to that found at the former Pownal Tanning Co. property, when Barlow attempted to sell the land a few years ago. The DEC then required the preliminary study.

The tannery property itself required a \$60 million cleanup, which was completed with state and federal funding. That work also required razing the factory buildings off Route 346. The Barlow site is located less than a mile away. A cleanup of some type may be required after all studies are completed, Woods said.

Select Board Chairman Nelson Brownell previously said that the town and a number of businesses that dumped there when the dump was in operation could conceivably be named responsible parties and have to share any cleanup cost.

The town contracted with Joseph Sarkis in the 1960s to run the dump for the town. Sarkis owned the Barlow property at the time.

Barlow previously proposed that the town take responsibility for the dump portion and use its municipality status to get federal and state funds for the cleanup. The Select Board rejected that proposal.

Brownell said that the town hired an attorney to determine what, if any, liability the town has. "There is not a clear indication of what the problems are and who is responsible," said Brownell.

The study did not include soil samples, said Woods. The contractor visited the site and did record searching, he said. The next phase would include sampling.

Woods said that the site would be put into the brownfields funding cycle for the second phase study. He did not say what would happen if funding is not received.

"Our goal is to make sure the work gets done and we cooperate with all parties involved," said Woods.