



Mary Dennison Park – Fact Sheet September 2014

Why is the Town testing the soil at the Mary Dennison Park?

The approximately 17-acre park was built over 50 years ago by placing topsoil (soil covering the surface) over an old landfill (buried waste or trash). The Town of Framingham was planning for future work to improve the Mary Dennison Park on Beaver Street. During this planning, we found information about soil tests taken in the past. We needed to find out if there was enough clean soil over the buried material, and we also needed to find out if anything that was buried could possibly be harmful to the children playing at the park or adults using the park.

How was the soil tested?

The Town hired scientists/engineers who specialize in testing the soil. Fifteen soil samples were collected at various depths below the ground surface in March 2014. Then, a laboratory tested the soil samples for many different types of contaminants. They tested the soil in the top 12 inches (30 centimeters) and also deeper down, between approximately 3 ½ to 5 feet (about 1 to 1.5 meters), below the ground surface.

After the results of the initial March testing was conducted, the Town continued with additional testing in August 2014. An additional 69 shallow (0-12 inches/0-30 centimeters) soil samples were collected from 64 locations and were screened in the field. Then, 19 of those samples were sent to a laboratory for additional testing. The Town received the final laboratory results and evaluation on September 10, 2014.

What were the results of the soil testing?

The following results are based on the soil samples collected in the top 12 inches (30 cm), which is the soil layer people could contact. The contaminants found in some of the soil samples included metals, such as lead and arsenic. We determined the following, based on the soil testing to date:

- In the greater park area (baseball fields, soccer field, and unfenced western playground, etc.) the levels of lead and other metals did not warrant closure of the park. The park remains open while the Town continues testing and assessment at the property.
- In the eastern playground (fenced area near Beaverdam Brook and Beaver Street), based on the available data, the levels of lead were higher than the rest of the park, so the Town immediately closed that portion of the park to remove the potential for exposure to the soil in that area.

What actions did the Town take?

The Town reported this information to MassDEP on September 10, 2014 as required, and then fenced off the entire eastern playground area with a 6-foot high fence and posted signs indicating the playground is closed temporarily, until we determine where and when we can re-open the playground for younger children.

What agency oversees this testing and approves the actions needed?

The state agency in charge of contamination issues in the environment is the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP). The Town reported this information to the state agency and is working closely with MassDEP to continue more testing to make sure that the area inside the fenced-off playground is addressed in the long-term and that the rest of the park is safe.

Why is soil contamination a concern?

Exposure to contaminants in soil can pose a health risk. Soil can enter your body in different ways. For example, soil can get into your body from:

- (1) touching the soil while digging in dirt;
- (2) breathing in small particles of contaminated dust; and/or
- (3) eating contaminated soil stuck to the skin or to objects that young children might put in their mouths.

At the park, there is grass covering the soil on the park field, wood chips under the equipment at the children's play area, and clean sand on the baseball diamonds. This likely reduces the level of actual exposure for people using the park.

What should I do if I think I might have a health problem?

If you have concerns about you or your family's health status, you should talk with your family doctor.

How can I get more information?

If you have concerns about the work at the park, and would like more information, please contact any of the following:

Town of Framingham, Board of Health

- Mr. Steven J. Ward, Director of Public Health
health@framinghamma.gov
(508) 532-5470

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection – Northeast Regional Office, Wilmington, MA

- Ms. Kathy Cahill, Environmental Analyst
Bureau of Waste Site Cleanup
katherine.cahill@state.ma.us
(978) 694-3368