



Community Advisory Council to Flint Hills Resources - Historical Overview -

Introduction

The Community Advisory Council (CAC) to Flint Hills Resources continues to be thoughtful and committed while fulfilling the organization's vision of creating open dialogue between the community and Flint Hills Resources (FHR). Ultimately, the CAC's concerted efforts have helped enhance the quality of life in Dakota County through vibrant relationships, transparent communication and purposeful action. Committed volunteers—those who serve today, as well as the progress led by past members—continue to advance the CAC's founding goals and mission. Monthly meetings, information gathering, seeking expert knowledge and counsel, detailing comprehensive and highly-technical environmental and safety reports...these are just some of the efforts that began in 1998 and continue today.

With many milestones marked over the past 14 years, the CAC membership roster has included a total of 89 past and current members. CAC membership includes 20 community members selected by a process originally designed in conjunction with the MN League of Women Voters, three members from FHR's management, a FHR employee Union representative, a nonvoting member from the MN Pollution Control Agency, and a nonvoting student representative from the High School for Environmental Studies. CAC members have consistently worked together to further its mission, including seeking out third party consultants when needed to lend credibility and expertise to the group's efforts. And, community members have asked hard questions, to which Flint Hills Resources has stepped up and answered.

The CAC's positive impact has taken hold in a variety of ways. For example, there is now a Reverse 911, emergency preparedness system in place to alert neighbors in the event of a refinery emergency. The program grew out of a simple question raised during a CAC meeting: how would the Pine Bend refinery quickly alert neighbors if there was an urgent situation that required immediate evacuation or notification. Other notable successes include: the placement, installation and ongoing analysis of air monitors around the refinery; working with FHR to implement annual safety reports; the review and granting of Supplemental Environmental Funds (overseen by the MN Pollution Control Agency) to area nonprofit organizations and schools; and instigating the development of the refinery's state-of-the-art water reuse plant.

A Community Reaches Out – How the CAC Began

The late 1990s, Pine Bend Refinery neighbors were voicing concerns related to the large industrial facility next door. The refinery, a major producer of transportation fuels for the Midwest, was an integral part of the community's economic development providing well-paying jobs. Due to environmental and safety federal and state penalties, surrounding neighbors were waiting to hear details on the refinery's progress.

As neighbors and a Rosemount-based nonprofit organization, “Concerned Citizens for Dakota County, Inc., sought out their local community leaders, Dennis Ozment’s phone began to ring. Ozment was the area’s State Representative at that time, and he also lived near the refinery on a three-acre plot that his parents had purchased just after World War II. Ozment listened to his neighbors’ varying opinions, and he clearly understood the challenges. Dakota County Commissioner Will Branning was also fielding calls from concerned refinery neighbors. With the support and encouragement of FHR leadership, the two local leaders connected and began looking for a solution to bridge communication between the Pine Bend refinery and the surrounding community.

The two gentlemen asked a lot of questions, they hired a consultant and researched possible Community Advisory Panel (CAP) models for engaging communities and industrial facilities in meaningful and productive dialogue. The result: the Koch Community Advisory Council Steering Committee was created to assist in the design and implementation of what was to become the Community Advisory Council.

The Steering Committee Sets Course

In the spring of 1998, Ozment and Branning enlisted a steering committee comprised of peers to help design and implement this community-based initiative. Local mayors, city managers, county commissioners, state legislators, as well as a refinery employee were all active participants. They tapped consultant Mariann Johnson to conduct interviews with more than 40 community members and 10 refinery employees in order to determine the community’s and the refinery’s interests and concerns as they began shaping the Koch community advisory panel (CAP). The team enlisted the expertise of academic researchers, gathered best practices from CAP groups from around the country, and with the assistance of the MN Chapter of the League of Women Voters, adopted objective member selection guidelines.

In the fall of 1998, the Steering Committee approved a proposed set of operating practices to establish a CAP on behalf of the Koch Pine Bend Refinery, with a collaborative mission to ultimately ***provide two-way communication between the community and the management at the (then Koch) Flint Hills Resources Pine Bend Refinery.*** By the close of the same year, the first community members of the Community Advisory Council to Koch Oil Refinery (CAC) were selected by the League of Women Voters and the ongoing process of building effective communication and collaboration began.

Founding Members Off to a Strong Start

On December 5, 1998, the CAC held its first meeting at the Southview Country Club in Inver Grove Heights, MN. A total of 19 community members attended, representing the diversity of the communities surrounding the refinery: Rosemount, Inver Grove Heights, Coats, Apple Valley, Eagan, Hastings, Empire Township, Vermilion Township and Nininger Township. In addition, a representative from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), and three Flint Hills Resources employees were part of the inaugural team. In this first year, the CAC’s General Operational Policies and Practices were reviewed, refined and approved; a committee structure

was put in place; and CAC meeting guidelines were established and approved. It was agreed that the CAC would have an advisory role, not a decision-making role for the refinery.

Tom Fiutak, a professional mediator and University of MN professor, facilitated and oversaw the Council from December 1998 – April 2000. The CAC was poised to thoughtfully review issues and make recommendations, and the refinery leadership was committed to considering how to best act on those recommendations. In May 2000, Mariann Johnson assumed the role of CAC facilitator, a tenure she still holds to date.

1998-2000: The Early Years

The CAC was up and running as the calendar turned to 1999. In 2000, four new and active committees were in place including Environmental, Safety, Membership & Operations and Community Outreach. Highlights included:

- Three of the committees each took responsibility for an area of the CAC’s mission (Environmental, Safety and Communication with Community). In addition, the Membership and Operations Committee was established to oversee the membership selection process and to work with the facilitator to ensure the CAC’s adherence to its Operating Policies and Practices. Annually, each committee creates and updates plans and activities to further the CAC’s mission. A representative from the refinery sits on each of the committees. The nonvoting MPCA representative serves as a member of the Environmental Committee;
- The CAC’s first annual planning retreat was held in the fall of 2000. Each year, the CAC reflects on its accomplishments and areas of need including community outreach/input, and establishes future committee priorities, strategies and meeting topics. The retreat also provides the CAC with an opportunity to discuss and reaffirm its mission and, as needed, update its operating policies and practices;
- The CAC heard details on an emergency preparedness system, the Reverse 911, which seemed like a plausible solution to alert neighbors if an emergency was to take place at the refinery;
- Holding two open community meetings resulted in the review of the refinery’s groundwater cleanup efforts as well as input from community members on the council’s activities;
- Several environmental assessments and reports were presented involving the (MPCA) on topics including air quality, groundwater evaluation and a MN Department of Health (MDH) Health Risk Assessment report.

Y2K –2003: Building Momentum

Through teamwork and dedication, CAC members rolled up their sleeves and began to see tangible results of their efforts. Highlights during this period included:

- Held a community-wide meeting on air-monitoring results that were conducted by an independent consultant, and assisted with the installation of air monitoring equipment near the refinery;

- Launched its first website to help neighbors stay current on news, environmental reports and CAC activities;
- Awarded the first round of Supplemental Environmental Project (SEP) Funds to neighboring groups to further local environmental education. The first grant recipients were Hastings Middle School, Pine Bend Elementary School, Dakota County Environmental Program, Rosemount Elementary School, Parkview Elementary School, Head Start, and Stewards To Our Parks;
- Actively worked with Flint Hills and the City of Eagan to advance the Reverse 911 emergency preparedness system;
- The CAC implemented its first membership drive in geographic areas where member terms had expired. Outside consultant, Nancy Leland, PhD, worked with the Council to implement the membership recruitment and selection guidelines established by the Minnesota Chapter of the League of Woman Voters. Ms. Leland continues to work with CAC annually and oversee its membership selection process and recruitment process.

2004-2007: Full Steam Ahead

CAC members hit their stride and further developed a thoughtful focus on environmental, safety and community outreach initiatives:

- Members explored the possibility of expanding the CAC's efforts beyond the Pine Bend Refinery to include other Pine Bend Area industries. In the summer of 2004, at the requests of CAC members, then Pine Bend Refinery manager Jeff Wilkes held several meetings with area industrial company representatives to see if they might be interested in forming a Pine Bend Area Industrial Group/CAP. After several meetings, the area industries leaders determined the timing was not right to form such a group;
- CAC ramped up its member outreach by participating in community events, such as the School for Environmental Studies Earth Day conference;
- Worked with FHR engineers to develop a Refinery 101 training for new and old members alike, and they created a flow chart to help new members and neighbors better understand the complex and highly-technical workings of the refinery. Both the Refinery 101 PowerPoint and flowchart are accessible on the CAC's website;
- Continued annual reporting of FHR's water remediation activities and milestones;
- Continued annual air monitoring reports provided by an independent consultant, using air monitor data collected by the MPCA from monitors that surround the Pine Bend refinery.

2008-Present: Established and Celebrating 10 Years

In 2008, the CAC celebrated its 10-year anniversary with an expanded community meeting. What began as a group of concerned citizens had become an established partnership between the refinery and the community. Members continue to work with FHR to address issues, ask questions, develop solutions, seek out independent expertise, and overall, volunteer their time and resources to advance the CAC's mission while building productive relationships between the refinery management and its neighbors.

At an annual planning retreat in 2009, during a discussion on its mission, the CAC elected to reaffirm a set of guiding principles for its members and its operations. The guidelines were further refined following the retreat and formally approved;

- Serve as to a credible and trustworthy voice for our community and neighbors through transparency and in all our deliberations and decision-making;
- Respect and encourage differing perspectives by promoting open dialogue and questions at our meetings;
- Seek out input from our neighbors and community members to ensure that we are respecting their interests and delivering on our mission;
- Gather and analyze credible data for making informed decisions and recommendations on environmental and safety topics relevant to refinery operations;
- Value a trusted and productive partnership between community representatives and the refinery management.

In addition, most recent accomplishments and milestones include:

- The Environmental committee worked closely with Flint Hills and neighbors to discuss well-water use and an independent and comprehensive groundwater report;
- Hosted community meetings – in partnership with the City of Eagan – to officially rollout the Emergency Preparedness Network (EPN), which quickly and efficiently reached homes and businesses within a 3-mile radius of the refinery;
- Continued updates and analysis on various environmental studies including greenhouse gas emissions, the refinery’s environmental footprint, groundwater remediation and air emissions in conjunction with the MPCA and an independent consultant;
- More specifically related to air monitoring, worked with the MPCA on in depth review and analysis of ambient air monitoring samples collected at three of the four active air monitors around the refinery to track pollutants and metals. The CAC had strong input as to the placement and relocation of the four active air monitors;
- Review of safety concerns and hazards happening at other refineries, learning about FHR’s award winning safety programs and discussing with FHR proactive steps to eliminate the risk for accidents at the Pine Bend refinery;
- Analysis and deciphering of various safety, security and health reports from Flint Hills including the refinery’s fire department, paramedic team, railroad safety efforts and general recordable safety incident data.