

Posted June 14, 2021

Questions posed to Councilmember Doug Cirbo and Mayor Pro Tem Robert Pequeno during a neighborhood walk on June 12.

1. Complaints registered in Portola Hills Direct as far back as January. Why was this not given attention until April? Was Baldwin covering this odor issue up until we got vocal enough?
 - A. *City staff was first made aware of the odor on March 29.*
2. A comment in a testing report available at <https://lakeforestca.gov/1073/Portola-Hills-Soil-Information> mentioned the samples "were not sealed." Is this significant?
 - A. *The tests have been reviewed for accuracy. The City hired a consultant to review the work of the consultant hired by Baldwin & Sons.*
3. The reports show 5 of the 12 levels measured are above residential recommended safety values?
 - A. *That does not indicate an immediate threat, but that the soil is not suitable to remain in a residential neighborhood. That is one of the reasons that removal to an off-site facility is the solution being used in this case.*
4. A statement Baldwin provided the City on March 20 and shared with a resident cited Hydrogen Sulfide was present, yet the Tetra Tech document on Page 3 available at <https://lakeforestca.gov/1073/Portola-Hills-Soil-Information> says there was no detection of Hydrogen Sulfide? Which is it?
 - A. *Hydrogen Sulfide was mentioned in an initial statement sent by Baldwin on April 20. After additional testing, Tetra Tech provided the May 18 report stating:

*The GEM 5000 Multi-gas detector was also used to evaluate the work area and to screen the soil samples. **There we no detections of methane, hydrogen sulfide or sulfur dioxide at any of the excavations, the eastern property boundary or in the soil samples.****
5. Have the boring samples been taken from all future areas of the site being developed to ensure this does not happen again?
 - A. *A plan is being developed to test remaining areas. The priority at this time is removing the odorous soil and monitoring those operations to ensure they remain within acceptable limits.*

6. The area they are excavating is soil they removed three years ago (the big hill at Saddleback Ranch Road and Glenn Ranch), staged and then used it fill the area now being excavated. The stinky area had 70 plus feet of fill put there and no digging up again. The odor area that has been claimed to be undisturbed for eons is not true.

A. That is correct. The soil was moved to the current location from across Glenn Ranch Road several years ago. No odors or other issues were reported at that time.

7. With Baldwin's poor history, why did the City of Lake Forest even consider approving permits to build here? We heard about the worker who died from a trench collapse and a resident killed by a construction truck hitting her in a crosswalk a couple years ago? Rumor is the Baldwin company owes \$200 Million in taxes?

A. The issues cited involve other regulatory agencies and do not relieve the City of its legal obligation to issue building permits to the property owners.

8. Why has Baldwin's Omar gone dark on us lately? Not responding to calls?

A. The developer has provided the contact info for Robert Patterson, their Director of Environmental and Safety Compliance. His email address is rpatterson@baldwinsons.com and his phone number is (949) 421-7398.

9. The city hotline number had a message saying the last update was April 13th?

A. Baldwin's initial statement did not reach residents as intended. The City now updates its hotline, 949.461.3536 every Monday. It will be updated more frequently if the situation demands it.

10. We are not licking the soil, we are breathing chemicals. How often are air and ground samples being taken? I stopped a 25-year-old person in an AQMD car driving around but not using any devices to take air samples and when asking them what they were doing, the response was monitoring the odor?

A. The City posted a June 9 memo from Tetra Tech regarding the air/dust monitoring. The Air Quality Management District (AQMD) is also monitoring the site. Residents should contact AQMD to file complaints. See <https://www.aqmd.gov/home/air-quality/complaints> for options on filing complaints.

11. The trench was bad again Sunday morning. Are they actually covering the site and spraying to reduce the odor?

- A. *On Friday, June 11, at the completion of exporting soil for the day, the developer capped the disturbed area with 3 to 4 feet of regular dirt and sprayed this area with water mixed with Simple Green. After that, Baldwin covered the area with plastic. Saturday and Sunday they had a crew remove the plastic, spray the area again and re-install the plastic.*
12. A resident has drone footage from Friday with steam coming out of the ground away from the area where excavation of soil was being removed, suggesting the area where they are digging is not the only place the problem soil exists.
- A. *Staff has reviewed the drone footage and it appears the soil in the video will all be removed under the current work. An environmental engineering firm is developing plans to test the entire odorous soil. The City has retained a separated environmental engineering firm to review and monitoring the work.*