





## Collaborative team to clean up contaminated Kiley Barrel site in Union Square, Somerville

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**Wicked Local Somerville**  
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Somerville — It operated for just under 40 years, but Kiley Barrel left a lasting mark of pollution on the corner it occupied in Union Square. On Wednesday morning, officials finally announced collaboration between agencies to clean up the site and clear the way for its redevelopment.

From 1951 to 1989, the **Kiley Barrel** factory reportedly refurbished drums that held chemicals and bakery supplies, leaving arsenic and lead in the soil unbeknownst to the site's immediate neighbors, who grew vegetables there.

Lt. Gov. Tim Murray and **Department of Environmental Protection** Commissioner Laurie Burt announced the creation of a collaborative Brownfields Support Team, which is intended to speed up the cleanup process by bringing together federal, state and local agencies.

"If the city had been on its own trying to address these problems, they would have been unsolved," said state Rep. Denise Provost, D-Somerville.

Owners of contaminated lots used to stop paying property taxes so the city would seize it in foreclosure and inherit the cleanup responsibilities, Provost said. Somerville bought the scattering of lots at the intersection of Somerville Avenue and Prospect Street from a developer, in 2002.

No specific funding has been committed with the announcement of a new Brownfields Support Team, but in addition to expertise, the collaborating agencies could provide grants for the cleanup.

The idea is to clean up the fenced-off lots next to a scrap yard so that a developer could build a mixed-use project there, but no developers have been selected, said city planner Steven Azar. The city is within the area city planners have proposed for District Improvement Financing, which would funnel tax receipts for new buildings into neighborhood improvements.

Ward 2 Aldermen Maryann Heuston, who grew up in Union Square, said the cleanup alone would improve quality of life in the neighborhood.

"What this means to the average citizen who walks up that hill every day ... this means that no longer will they be walking by parcels that look like they're abandoned, parcels that are contaminated," Heuston said.

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