

Richmond won't recommend disposal method

CITY COMMISSION: IT WILL SUPPORT THE ARMY'S DECISIONS

By Jodi Whitaker
Register News Writer

In a move different from those of its Madison County and Berea counterparts, the Richmond City Commission decided Tuesday night not to back a disposal method for chemical agents at the Blue Grass Army Depot, but to instead be "fully supportive" of whatever method the Army decides to use.

The decision was not unanimous, however, as Commissioner Kay Cosby Jones voted against adopting Order No. 02-126, which stated the commission's decision.

State Sen. Ed Worley gave the commission a brief overview of the methods available for disposing of the 523 tons of chemical weapons stored at the Depot. Worley, along with commis-

sioners Mike Brewer and William Strong, looked into the issue, focusing primarily on the economic and environmental impacts the disposal method would have on Richmond.

"Our intent all along was to look at those impacts more so than the technologies," Worley said.

Worley outlined the types of chemical weapons stored at the Depot, as well as information about incineration and non-incineration methods of disposal.

Worley said all the sites in the United States built to dispose of chemical weapons via the incineration method are now shut down for one reason or another. The senator also said, however, the neutralization method was "not the Holy Grail" choice either, as the second phases of destruction used with any neutralization method have only been tested in laboratories and not in an actual on-

site neutralization location. Worley added the worst-case scenario with neutralization would be the creation of a toxic waste dump where agents have gone through the first step would be stored until the second step is completed.

"I don't feel like I have the expertise to recommend to the Army which method to pursue," Worley said. "To endorse something of this nature and magnitude, I'm hesitant to do this."

Worley said instead of backing a method of disposal, the commission should focus on making sure whatever the Army chooses to do takes the best interests of the residents and the community into consideration. He said doing what has to be done to protect the community would be the proper thing to do.

Jones argued the commis-

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sion should instead endorse a non-incineration method of disposal, which is what she said CAC asked of the commission.

Strong said the commission and the community has to have faith in the government and the Army to choose

the most appropriate disposal method and by passing the order the commission was only showing its support in whatever the Army decides.

Worley said the section of the order stating the city's decision is the section that says the city will be fully supportive of the Army's disposal method "providing that the Army has invested in the community to the extent necessary to address our public

safety and infrastructure concerns."

When the final vote was taken, Jones voiced the lone "no" vote, stating, "No, because I do not favor incineration."