

MINUTES FOR AQC MEETING

NOVEMBER 1st, 2018, 2-4pm
ACRD Board Room

Present: Larry Cross (Catalyst Paper)
Dave Jarrett (Community at large)
Earle Plain (MOE)
Anna Lewis (Chair)
Gary Swann (Agricultural Community member)
Judy Carlson (Community at large)
Patty Edwards (MLA's Office)
Keith Wyton (ACRD)
Chris Alemany (City of Port Alberni)
Stephanie Bruvall (Island Health)
Jade Yehia (Island Health)
Ashley Popovich (Catalyst Paper)

Regrets: Representative from Fire department
Mike Irg (ACRD staff)
Karen Larsen (FNHA)

Meeting called to order at 2:05

1. WELCOME

-acknowledgement of the traditional territories
-roundtable of introductions

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Keith Wyton moved to adopt agenda as presented. Chris Alemany seconded.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Oct. 11th, 2018

Gary Swan move to adopt. All in favor.

3. PRESENTATION: Jade Yehia (VIHA): "Where to find Health Data"

Jade presented on where to find health data and associated granularity. The topic of health data came up at stakeholder meeting held last spring and AQC members requested a presentation on where to access and utilize health data as it relates to air quality.

There are three categories of health data that can be accessed.

- 1) Local health area profiles (Island Health profiles)
- 2) Provincial resources (PHSA). Not as much granularity.
- 3) Additional air quality and health data (I.e. MOE)

- 1) Local health area profiles are essentially the associated school district and primarily based on census data. Through this school district delineation, Port Alberni falls into LHA70. Alberni health area includes neighboring coastal communities such as Bamfield. LHA profiles include: demographics and population projections; socio-demographics (income, education, housing, crime); healthy development and child health; births and deaths; chronic disease; hospital, ED and community care service utilization as well as health behaviours.

LHA Profile just released 2017 data profiles. Port Alberni shows estimated population change. Expected to increase to 32000 in the next 30 years, which is lower than provincial average. People are healthier and living longer and huge increase in our aging population.

Interesting data points specific to Port Alberni:

- Higher level of homes in need of repair; which can contribute to lower air quality due to mold growth, flooding, etc.

- Percentage of pregnant women who report smoking is higher than provincial average
Allows one to ask questions such as what are some of the variables in the community that lead to higher incidence of chronic disease? What is the relationship between woodsmoke, stable homes and good air quality?

Link: <https://www.islandhealth.ca/about-us/medical-health-office/population-health-statistics/local-health-area-profiles>

- 2) Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA). The PHSA: have community health atlas and community profiles, interactive website and downloadable aggregate data. One can run search queries on the health atlas which allows indicators to be teased out. With census data being voluntary have lost some of the data sets.

The community health profiles are down to the municipal level. There is one for Port Alberni, Tofino, Ucluelet. These includes information on population, distribution, population projections and diversity. Sometimes they refer/defer to local area as no capacity.

Link to Community Health Atlas: <http://maps.gov.bc.ca/ess/hm/cha/>

Link to Community Profiles: <http://communityhealth.phsa.ca/HealthProfiles>

- 3) Additional Health and Air Quality Data
 - a. Stats Canada <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/health-sante/82-228/index.cfm?Lang=E>
 - offers population and social economic data
 - health profiles are arranged by the health service delivery area (hsda); broader geography where Port Alberni encapsulated into Central Island.
 - includes information on: health and well-being; health conditions; health behaviors and health conditions
 - b. BCCDC
 - reportable disease data
 - uses interactive graphs/tables at hsda level to show specific diseases
 - c. Vital Stats
 - birth and death data at LHA level
 - d. Ministry of Health – Health Ideas

- Hospitalization rates by clinical categories at the LHA-level (e.g. Hospitalizations for Disease & Disorders of the Respiratory system)
- e. Perinatal Services BC
 - maternal and birth indicators, HA level reports but can request aggregate data
- f. Cancer Agency
 - Cancer statistics (rates of cancer by type, mortality from cancers, survival rates) provincial level only

Ensuing conversation:

Some of these sites can be cumbersome to wade through (i.e. Health Ideas). Jade has colleague would is willing to help navigate if more information is needed in specific areas. There are formalized channels to go through due to privacy issues, but they could access some of that data.

BCCDC is producing very interesting graphs. We are seeing elevated levels of asthma medication being dispensed due to elevated pm2.5 levels. This does not include specific events. Is it just physician visits or emergency visits as well? Earle suggested we could follow up with Dr. Sarah Henderson. It would be interesting to correlate data relating the Port Alberni air quality advisories and related health visits. If we give Jade specific dates, she could generate data related to those dates. Would also be interesting to add the permanent dates for the open burning season. Airshed management plan could utilize this information. There is a recognition that this data is being requested on a very regular basis.

Gary: concerned around level of anxiety and depression and observation is why is that and what can we do to help with that. 1/3 of popn. Is diagnosed with depression. Is it related to diet/quality of food that people are getting?

Would be useful to have Dr. Paul Hasselback give similar presentation to RD once new electoral directors are in place.

Additional input from Dr. Paul Hasselback regarding moving forward regarding health data requests/asks:

- *Sometimes data can be analyzed in specific ways. If you don't ask – you will not learn whether it is doable or what it will take*
- *I encourage folks to try hard to put their questions into words first. Once the question is developed we can look at whether data can inform an answer to the question.*
- *A key point of discussion in any conversation on data, is that the data often needs to be interpreted. Issues like small numbers, data gaps, etc. can lead to inappropriate conclusions. Also that causation by linking data sources can lead to erroneously conclusions.*

4. UPDATES

- **Woodstove Exchange**

Anna

The ACRD has facilitated 13 of a possible 36 exchanges. The breakdown of exchanges is: 9 of 27 vouchers completed at the \$250 level; 4 of 9 vouchers completed at the \$400 level.

Tracy Bond (ACRD staff who facilitates exchange in the office) had someone come in that had gone to two retailers requesting information on the woodstove exchange and they did not provide her with any information. One stated that they were not sure if it was still going on. Tracy had taken a leave of absence this summer/early fall and although email communication introduced the new person in the office that was coordinating exchange in her absence perhaps this created some confusion for the retailers. Once there is confirmation of funding for the 2019 woodstove exchange program, Anna will connect with all retailers to ensure continuity and promotion of the program.

In the upcoming woodstove exchange proposal, the request was for: 40 exchanges. 20 for straight woodstove exchanges and 20 at the higher rate (\$500) for switching out 5-year-old stoves or older to cleaner energy. Additional funds were requested for advertising campaigns (radio ads, impress article with Black press) and development of materials.

- **Acknowledgement of AQC members in various govt. capacities** Anna

Anna officially recognized the important work and expertise that Keith Wyton (ACRD electoral director) and Chris Alemany (city councilor) have done in their respective capacities.

Emails have been sent to both Doug Holmes and Sharie Minions regarding the process for appointing new directors to council. Anna made a recommendation for a director from one of our interfacing electoral areas here in the valley. "Interfacing" refers to the two electoral areas (Beaver Creek and Cherry Creek) which sit on the regional and municipal boundary and have the largest populations whose actions often affect the largest majority of people due to proximity. Due to the focus of the AQC this next year: potential creation of regional district open burning bylaws and woodstove compliance regulations, new provincial OBSCUR laws (coming into effect most likely in January), and the creation of an airshed management strategy for the Alberni Basin feel that the most appropriate representation would be from a director representing these areas.

Gary Swann brought up the point that the mayor can appoint someone to the AQC that isn't a councilor.

- **Air Emissions Inventory** Earle

Earle reported that although the province has set aside \$20,000 for the air emissions inventory the AQS needs to confirm that they have allocated \$10,000 for the remainder of the inventory cost. AQS is meeting tomorrow and Anna will report back to Earle regarding status of funding. The anticipated work should be completed by mid-March and the province will invoice the AQS once the work is complete.

- **Paper Excellence** Keith

Larry reported that there are currently no developments. End of the year beginning of January is when anticipated transfer to begin.

5. Letter to MoECC regarding Catalyst's industrial emissions permit

Anna

See Appendix A.

Anna drafted letter, circulated to AQC for input and will email out to AJ Downey, Director for Authorizations South, of the Regional Operations Branch, MOECC.

6. AQC Terms of Reference

Anna

Anna thanked everyone for their input and is still awaiting input of AQS before drafting final version. There currently exist some redundancies with regards to goals and objectives. A section regarding the relationship between the AQC and AQS will be added. Anna will also draft a one pager for quick reference. Will be completed and sent out to AQC members one week prior to December 6th meeting in hopes of finalizing and adopting at the December meeting.

7. Open Burning Smoke Control Regulations (OBSCR)

Anna/Earle

The province has released their proposed smoke sensitivity zone maps. Under the Environmental Management Act the province is reviewing and revising OBSCR. It is anticipated that this will be adopted by the province in early January and rolled out. The proposed changes will establish three smoke sensitivity zones covering the entire province – High, Medium and Low. This is proposed to replace the two-category system used in the current regulation. To help the public and stakeholders understand the implications of the proposed revisions, the ministry has prepared draft maps of the proposed smoke sensitivity zones. These maps are now available for the public and stakeholders to view prior to legislative review of the amendments.

Port Alberni and nearby outlying areas will now both be considered in a high smoke sensitivity zone. The mapping exercise began with 10km bubbles surrounding populations of 200 people/km² as the initial High Smoke Sensitivity Zones (HSSZ). These zones were expanded or contracted based on topography and looking at meteorological patterns. There are different rules for different areas. High has more stringent rules and low sensitivity has less regulations, which vastly increases the ability to manage smoke in the high sensitivity areas. New burning regulations for high zones will require greater distance from homes and schools for any burning to occur at all and will only permit burning for a maximum of 36 hours (less than 2 days) and only on days with good ventilation.

Some of the general comments and questions:

This new three-tiered system focuses on where people live. Under the old two zone system the city of Port Alberni was category A and the surrounding areas were B. This was not a good fit due to localized geography. Now Beaver Creek, Cherry Creek are included and much of Beaufort,

and Sproat Lake. This impacts slash burning and other large-scale open burning like we have seen in Cherry Creek in the past couple years. Island Timberland may have some issues.

What is going to change on regulation side? If you meet regulations, you can still burn but for a much shorter timeframe. Some provisions for community fire abatement programs.

Who will be ticketing? Conservation officers will be ticketing.

Is there any change in the quality of venting information? Almost like the system is broken.... Province in conversation with Environment Canada is in discussion around custom venting forecast.

Does Right to farm ACT supersede OBSCR? If land clearing, farmers will need to need to follow OBSCR.

As communities grow and population densifies will the boundaries change? Assumption is that it will be reviewed and amended to reflect.

Industry can apply to substitute a piece of the regulation for something different through a substitution order. I.e. existing smoke management plans with licensees may be used more formally. Within existing smoke management plans, rules are already more stringent in HSSZs and less stringent in LSSZ. Substitution order applications are made company by company rather than by area. Should continue to encourage best practices, lighting early in the season, good venting, etc.

Link to proposed OBSCR maps and overview of OBSCR process

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/natural-resource-stewardship/laws-policies-standards-guidance/legislation-regulation/environmental-protection-regulatory-review/open-burning-smoke-control-regulation>

Link to power point that was presented on OBSCR last spring by the Ministry of Environment

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/environment/air-land-water/air/reports-pub/obscr_presentation_2018_4_23.pdf

8. Plan H grant

Anna

The transfer agreement has now been signed and public announcement can be made. The AQS via the ACRD was successful in a \$5000 grant application. The primary activities outlined in the grant were to build formal capacity to develop an airshed management plan which incorporates the needs and views of the community and to convene a community forum to enhance community awareness around the linkages between air quality and human health.

Anna: spoke with Sarah Clarke (Plan H planning coordinator) regarding their role. Willing to do quite a bit to assist in process. Seemed disappointed that we wouldn't be doing specific outreach

in WC communities but satisfied if the event is advertised to smaller communities and that there is a relationship with the Alberni Clayoquot Health Network.

Earle: Suggested that Dr. Michael Brauer and Sarah Henderson (BC Lung Association) be brought in to present. Earle can connect Anna with Menn from BC Lung Association.

9. Next Meeting and presentation

-Dec. 6th, 2pm, ACRD boardroom

-Nick and Larissa will present on the Vancouver Island University Regional Mapping Project and overview of winter sample route with a request for input.

Meeting adjourned at 3:52

APPENDIX A: LETTER TO MOECC RE. CATALYST INDUSTRIAL EMISSIONS PERMIT



Alberni
Air Quality
Society

Port Alberni
Air Quality
Council

October 29th, 2018

Regional Operations Branch
Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy
2nd Floor – 2080-A Labieux Road
Nanaimo, BC V9T 6J9

Attention: AJ Downie, Director of Authorizations South

On behalf of the Port Alberni Air Quality Council (AQC) and the Alberni Air Quality Society, I am writing to request that the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy consider lowering the level of the industrial emissions permit currently issued to Catalyst Paper Corporation to better reflect operational attainment and need. In May of 2013, prior to Port Alberni being flagged as a red zone community, the AQC raised the question of reducing the permit level to reflect actual operations. With Port Alberni falling into and maintaining status as a red zone community the AQC feels it is an opportune time to readdress this issue as the Alberni airshed has no capacity to absorb any excess emissions.

Catalyst has been exemplary in their proactive approach regarding continuous improvements and achieving a high level of excellence in relation to air quality. For over a decade they have kept their Particulate Matter (PM) emissions far below what their permit allows. The permit level for their power boiler (the largest source at the mill) currently allows emissions up to 115mg/ m³ while Catalyst has reported low stack emissions consistently under 10mg/ m³.

Best Practices recommendations from provincial and federal management for airshed management call for constant improvement and keeping clean areas clean. Industrial emissions permits should reflect these principles. Given the current state of the Alberni Valley airshed and the policies required to attain PM_{2.5} reductions, the province should act to prevent a potential tenfold increase in Catalyst emissions currently allowed within the existing permit.

The Air Quality Council is a valley-wide stakeholder roundtable which serves to promote health by working to ensure the cleanest possible air for the Alberni Basin and its inhabitants. Stakeholders meet in the spirit of open collaboration to further mutual air quality goals. Due to the Alberni Valley currently falling into the red zone category for its continuous exceedances of PM_{2.5}, the council and community are actively taking steps to lower PM_{2.5} emissions from non-industrial sources and engaging in a process to create an airshed management plan.

Due to geography, thermal inversions continue to be a factor in seasonal increases in PM_{2.5} levels. Although the new OBSCR regulation may help to further manage PM_{2.5} emissions we feel that the

Alberni Airshed is currently at a maximum threshold and there is no room in the valley airshed emissions budget for increases in industrial PM_{2.5} emissions.

The Air Quality Council and Air Quality Society encourage the MOECC to open discussions with Catalyst and find an appropriate permit level that will meet the above-mentioned considerations while supporting the operational needs of the company.

Sincerely,

Anna Lewis, Chair
Port Alberni Air Quality Council