

MINUTES FOR AQC MEETING

January 17th, 2019, 2pm
ACRD Board Room

Present: Earle Plain (MOE)
Dave Jarrett (Community at large)
Anna Lewis (Chair)
Gary Swann (Agricultural Community member)
Ashley Popovich (Catalyst Paper)
Stephanie Bruvall (Island Health)
Patty Edwards (MLA's Office) 2:11

Regrets: Karen Larsen (FNHA)
Judy Carlson (Community at large)
Ron Corbeil (City of PA)
Larry Cross (Catalyst Paper)
Jade Yehia (Island Health)

Guest: Diane Bodnar

Meeting called to order at 2:03

1. WELCOME

- acknowledgement of the traditional territories
- roundtable of introductions

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Gary Swann moved to adopt agenda as presented. Dave Jarrett seconded. All in favour.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Dec. 6th, 2018

Gary Swann moved to adopt minutes as presented. Stephanie Bruvall seconded. All in favor.

3. PRESENTATION: Earle Plain: Purple Air Pilot Project for the Cowichan Valley

When first starting to do work in Cowichan there was a lot of doubt around the ability of small, low cost sensors. (\$250 vs. \$30,000). The Purple Air Pilot Project was a way to increase public awareness around air quality at the neighborhood level and for evaluation purposes. Earle presented the geography of the area and showed the location of the permanent regulatory monitoring sites and the purple air monitoring sites.

The Cowichan Valley has a similar geography and issues as Port Alberni and Comox. PM_{2.5} is the major source of concern. Anything that is burnt will create PM_{2.5} as it is a combustion byproduct. It causes an array lung problems and cardiac issues. Particles get into the bloodstream and the body sees them as invaders and tries to get rid of them but can't, thus creating an inflammatory response.

The data from this project has been utilized for public outreach and is an effective way to raise awareness as to how certain activities impact neighborhood air quality. Rather than reporting 24-hour

concentrations the data was categorized into low, medium and high. A heat map was produced in Excel and it was interesting to note the correlations between poor air quality and when open burning was allowed. Also, interesting to note the correlation of higher weekend activity and poor air quality. Towards the end of the regulatory burn window you could see how people panicked and burned regardless of what the venting index was.

This data has been used to demonstrate how ineffective the existing regulatory burn window was – instead of minimizing impacts, it caused a real problem across the entire airshed. The Municipality of North Cowichan have now extended the burn window to give people more time to burn with proper consultation of the venting index. The results from this monitoring project were the basis for effecting change. Now, in high density area there are stricter rules, whereas larger lots and more rural areas the regulations are less strict. They have created a map in which you plug in an address and then you can know what the corresponding burn regulations are.

The takeaway is that there are seasonal peaks and valleys in daily PM_{2.5} concentrations and in the winter, there are exceedances of fine particulate levels which are driven primarily by wood smoke. Open burning and residential wood heat sources account for 70% of fine particulate matter in Duncan. Cowichan is looking at ways to provide alternate options to burning. For example, yard waste pickup is a potential solution.

The data from the purple air monitors is consistently biased on the high side when compared to the regulatory monitors, especially when concentrations are higher. However, both monitors track each other very well. A disclaimer that Earle mentioned was around how fog may impact the small sensors ability to accurately read PM_{2.5}. Last week when Cowichan was under heavy fog advisory the regulatory monitors were all showing red and all the purple air monitors were showing high. The fog rolled in, which in the case of an air quality advisory is a good thing for particulate matter as water absorbs particulates. The purple air sensors all remained high while the regulatory monitors decreased. This may be due to the small sensors seeing fog as particles. Small sensors do not have the ability to condition the air prior to sampling thus water vapors may be being sampled and showing as high particulate.

Diane: asked questions around how does seasonal temperature impact particulate level. This is a particularly warm winter so the assumption is that there would be less impact due to wood stove use as they aren't being utilized quite as much.

Is it possible that the landfill can take in more of the yard waste to try to lower the amount of backyard burning that occurs? In Europe huge amounts of garbage is burnt, and the energy is utilized. You require a large, steady amount of waste to make this system work. The idea of a biomass community energy system has been investigated. Waste energy is a potential resource.

Gary: Has there been any correlation between the red days (high particulate) with emergency visits due to respiratory issues. This would be interesting to see.

Anna: Has heard of purple air sensors being used a community engagement tool and you can borrow a sensor from the library and set up in your yard. Not sure as to the merit of the data when so many people are utilizing a sensor or how long the sensor would actually last, but it is a unique way to engage the number of people participating in citizen science.

4. UPDATES

- **Woodstove Exchange**

Anna

- new brochures, vouchers, retailer guidelines and participatory agreements have been made
- Vistaprint banner designed and ordered.
- retailers were contacted and the importance of their participation and promotion of the program was emphasized
- 2018 final report is due February 14th. Anna will have completed by the end of the week.
- 2019 transfer agreement does state that there needs to be a Burn it Smart workshop. New fire chief as of Feb. 4th so will connect around doing a workshop in conjunction with the fire department for next fall.
- will reach out to WETT inspectors regarding program and see if they can promote on their end.
- may also drop off some brochures at the realtor and insurance agencies.
- look into the possibility of more moisture meters. Inventory is down to about 5.
- Shaw TV: have 25-word ad which someone else speaks. Due to funding cuts Shaw no longer comes out and does a short segment. They will come out and set up a camera in which you have 1 minute to speak and then it is put on the air unedited.

- **Air Emissions Inventory**

Earle

- WSP began inventory and are on track.
- Should have draft report in early February. Dave and Anna both expressed interest in seeing draft report.
- Final report will be completed in early March.

- **Status of ACRD bylaw development**

Anna

- Alex is putting together a briefing document which includes official health statistic related to air quality, various options of bylaws and a breakdown of how they could be enforced.
- To be on the agenda at the February meeting of the electoral directors.

- **Status of ACRD representation from electoral directors**

Anna

- With the Beaufort and Cherry Creek electoral areas results being declared invalid we are still waiting for representation. Unsure as to how long this process could take as these two regions need to go into a new election.
- Diane Bodnar (the Cherry Creek electoral director) had agreed to come and sit at the table.
- Would be great to have representation from the large interface area to the municipal border as the AQC have decided that it would be important to have a voice from that region.
- Diane is here today as a guest and we may be able to welcome her as an official member at the council at a future date.

- **Plan H grant**

Anna

- As stated in the application one of the outcomes is to convene a community forum to enhance community awareness around the linkages between air quality and human health.

- Date has been set for Monday, March 11th
- Dr. Paul Hasselback and VIU are currently scheduled to present.

Earle suggested that we considered having booths set up in the room. This format was used a few years ago when Sarah arranged a community event. Invite Catalyst, Port Authority, etc.

Some of the members of the table of partners of the ACHN have requested posters that they can put up in advance to get more community members engaged.

- **Grant-In-Aid application**

Anna

- due Jan. 31st
- will request \$12,000
- primary funding for the chair position of the AQC

5. Community Web Cam

Earle

- Earle currently has a camera available for community use. It is straight on as opposed to a pan tilt. The limiting factor is that must have access to power and Wi-Fi.
- Purpose: want an overview shot, to see plumes and inversions
- Potential siting locations Earle had a technician take pictures from the bell tower of the firehall and from the roof of the hospital. The AQC viewed the pictures and decided that both of the locations were not optimal.
- privacy is a big issue for people.
- would be optimal to be able to see Cherry Creek.

Discussion ensued around potential locations and some of the suggestions that came up were:

- *Water tower on the backside of the landfill*
- *Clock tower at the harbor quay*
- *Visitor bureau at the junction*
- *By casino*
- *Catalyst*
- *Baptist church (old cherry creek school)*

6. BC Lung Association

- annual conference is Feb. 6th in Vancouver, 8-5
- Wildfire Smoke: A growing threat to air quality and public health
- Anna and Earle are attending

Anna

7. City's Climate Adaption Workshop

Anna

- ICLEI (Local governments for sustainability) is putting on a series of four workshops in conjunction with the City of Port Alberni (first one was early December). Purpose is to develop a community climate change adaption plan.

-next meeting will be scheduled for early March which Anna has been asked to attend on behalf of ACHN regarding her background in agriculture and air quality.

Next Meeting and presentation

-Feb. 28th, 2pm, ACRD boardroom

Meeting adjourned at 3:35