

MINUTES FOR AQC MEETING

February 28th, 2019, 2pm
ACRD Board Room

- Present: Peter Mazey (FNHA)
John McNabb (ACRD electoral director)
Dave Jarrett (Community at large)
Anna Lewis (Chair)
Gary Swann (Agricultural Community member)
Ashley Popovich (Catalyst Paper)
Stephanie Bruvall (Island Health)
Judy Carlson (Community at large)
Larry Cross (Catalyst Paper)
Patty Edwards (MLA's Office) 2:10
- Via Phone: Earle Plain (MOE) left at 3:45
Jade Yehia (IH) 2:05 – 3:15
Ron Corbeil (City of PA) left at 3:20
- Guest: Stephen Saltar (Farallon Consulting) left at 3:10
Diane Bodnar (community at large)
Chris Alemany (community at large)
Mike Owens (Port Alberni fire chief) left at 3:20
Rob Williams (ACRD staff) arrived 2:30 – left at 3:10

Meeting called to order at 2:01

1. WELCOME

- acknowledgement of the traditional territories
- roundtable of introductions

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

John McNabb moved to adopt agenda. Larry Cross seconded. All in favour.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Jan. 17th, 2019

Gary Swann moved to adopt minutes as presented. Peter Mazey seconded. All in favor.

3. PRESENTATION: Stephen Saltar (Farallon Consultants Limited): Port Alberni Community Energy Presentation

The district energy system has been discussed by the City of Port Alberni since 2009 with an initial resource recovery study comparing options. Stephen Saltar previously presented to the AQC on March 4, 2015 when the idea was to recover and utilize Catalyst's waste heat. The idea had been put on hold for a few years and there is a resurging interest in utilizing this option by the City of Port Alberni and Island Health.

The goal of the project to reduce current greenhouse gas emissions by replacing the natural gas furnaces in up to 12 buildings with a central biomass boiler and distribution system. The overall emissions will be the same or lower than the existing natural gas furnace but once the wood diverted from open burning is factored in, the overall net emissions to the airshed are lower.

In 2016 Island Health (IH) identified the West Coast General Hospital as a potential site for a biomass boiler as it has the space and there are operators there which could operate and maintain boiler. Island Health and the City signed an agreement in principle in 2018. The agreement in principle says that the city will own the system, IH will operate and maintain the boiler, city will operate the piping and current route plan is possible as city owns all of the right of ways, and whatever cost and benefits there are will be shared by city and island health.

Locating the boiler at the hospital makes project more economically viable as the hospital has a huge consumption of hot water. The lifespan of the steel pipes once in the ground is approximately 60 years. The pipes are a 3-temperature distribution system which is considered a technical innovation and further grant opportunities exist.

The potential routing of the district energy system starts at the hospital, then would go down to the retirement homes along 10th avenue, echo center, apartment buildings by Roger street and possible the RCMP. Up to twelve buildings have been identified and it may be possible to add a couple more clusters.

Current air emissions with a natural gas boiler are 0.1 tonnes per year while the new system is equivalent or lower. The biomass boiler's emissions will be a contract requirement. The Electrostatic Precipitator (ESP) manufacturers have put in writing that emissions will meet agreed specifications and will not paid until met. The air emissions with the ESP is estimated to be 0.048kg/tonne.

Proposed budget is 7 million pending additional funding from the federal government. Reduction from the original \$10 million in 2015. The project needs to receive final approval from the City, Island Health stakeholder consultation process and then go to an RFP process where unless there is a proponent that fits within the budget the project would not move forward.

Specific ask of AQC: Could the AQC potentially support this project through a letter of support? Would the AQC consider passing a resolution that was conditional on the technology (ESP manufacturers committed to emissions meeting target specifications).

Presentation generated a lot of questions and conversation.

Rob Williams: The ACRD is currently working on an organic's diversion program. Presenting to COW next week landfill gas management infrastructure. Hovering around 900-1000 tonnes which is just below what is allowed without methane capture.

Previously accepting yard waste and chipping but currently stockpiling as it has been far too costly. The amount of wood coming into the site has been static. Calculation of what is in the landfill is actually measured by the amount that has been tipped into it. Likely in the future will be looking at the better form of measuring.

Would landfill waste be enough for the boiler? If looking at the current numbers yes.

Mike Owens: Looking at the metrics of open burning and diversion of wood; a substantial amount of open burning could be diverted. What is the incentive for home owners? Currently it would be knowledge of diverting material to landfill and emissions from open burning, no financial gain for homeowner.

Dianne Bodnar: Where are examples of this system? Very common in Europe: First system in BC was in Revelstoke. Prince George, Enderby, SFU, UBC, BCIT all have biomass systems, and most have reports that public can access on the web. An island example of a biomass system is in Lake Cowichan at the elementary school.

Earle Plaine: How much tonnage and volume is estimated to go through boiler per year? 2000 tonnes per year. Catalyst goes about 200 000 tonnes per year.

Jade Yehia: In the Vancouver Bylaw, there are interesting elements in the bylaw pertaining to baseline air modelling requirements, emission standards and routine stack testing. How much of that bylaw would be incorporated into this project? The emissions proposed are roughly half of the limit set by the Vancouver bylaw. http://www.metrovancouver.org/boards/Bylaws1/GVRD_Bylaw_1087%20%20Unofficial%20Consolidation.pdf

Dave Jarrett: If using wood waste as the source it is crucial that wood is clean and dry, how would this be done? Waste wood would need to be manually separated, chipped, crushed and run through a magnet. Need to be very clean and then 20-25% moisture content. Similar to what Ellice recycling company in Victoria is doing.

Gary Swann: Where would wood actually come from? The ACRD landfill is receiving wood waste and this is potential source.

Earle Plaine: Happy to see that technology has improved and this could be a realistic option to divert from backyard burning. This could be potentially incorporated into the airshed management plan.

Ron Corbeil: Is the boiler big enough to accommodate NIC, multiplex, high school? At this point it is not economically viable to connect them.

Jade Yehia: For clarity of the council, there are internal discussions happening at Island Health around this project and proposal. Environmental Health/Public Health, and MHOs will remain neutral and autonomous in this projects review. Our mandate is clear to ensure the protection of public health. There will be consulting with Stephen, our Sustainability lead and Energy Managers in this early planning phase. There is an opportunity here but always striving for improvement in air emissions. There is a potential cost saving for Island Health and how could these savings be funneled into the community for further airshed management work. In terms of engagement and consultation a health impact assessment approach should be considered.

Gary Swann: Startup of boiler is the worst. Jade echoed Gary's sentiment on striving for air emission improvements at the stack. How does this boiler rate? The pollution control device has been sized to deal with startup issues.

Diane Bodnar: Did you look at solar or other alternate clean energies? The identified buildings all have heating systems have been designed for high heat systems. Solar and heat pumps were not effective in terms of being compatible with the design of the buildings.

Mike Owens: If contract is contingent on stack test emissions with existing operations is the technology like after 1 year and 5 years? The assumption is that the technology will meet the agreed upon requirements.

4. UPDATES

- **Woodstove Exchange**

Anna

- 2 exchanges thus far, both woodstove to woodstove.
- Sproat Lake Community Association had AGM Monday, Feb. 25th and Anna provided Penny Cote (electoral director for Sproat Lake) with a one pager which gave an overview of Port Alberni air quality, impacts of wood smoke on public health as well as the details for this years' WSE. Penny presented this at AGM.
- going to put in some radio advertising as extra dollars were allocated for advertising.
- John McNabb suggested that a notice could go out with the Beaver Creek water bill as the ACRD sends these out and this is often how community notices go out. Anna will follow up. As well, could connect with the Cherry Creek Improvement District as they send out water bills.

- **Air Emissions Inventory**

Earle

- WSP has had some delays with regards to providing Ministry of Environment the inventory draft but has confirmed draft will be completed by Wednesday, March 6th. Calculations have been completed. This is a particulate inventory as PM_{2.5} is the parameter of concern.
- Final report will be completed in submitted by the end of March.

- **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. The purpose of the web cam is to provide an overview shot, and to see plumes and inversions.
- Earle and Chris (technician) visited 3 sites:
 - 1) Landfill water tower, (amazing view but quite far away, difficult to pinpoint sources);
 - 2) Harbour Quay tower, (issue: tower will be going through maintenance and giving it a makeover in the next few months).
 - 3) City Hall communications tower: 90-foot tower which has an incredible view of North Port and great field of view. Complete shot of all the town. City can accommodate power and Wi-Fi.
- Of all the sites evaluated the tower at city hall shows the most promise.

John McNabb: Suggested investigating the water tower on Kitsuksis road. There is a 300-foot elevation and has a full view of valley. Unaware if there is power and Wi-Fi capability. Anna to connect with Rob Williams and investigate further.

- **Status of ACRD bylaw development**

Anna

-staff has not yet worked on 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. Anna was told on Friday this should be started in the next 2 weeks.

-Was to be on the agenda at the February meeting of the electoral directors.

Anna Lewis: It has been over a year since the electoral directors passed a motion to investigate bylaw development and expressed some frustration with the delay. John echoed this sentiment stating that it has been at least four years since this was originally brought to the board. John will connect with ACRD staff to ensure some action is taken.

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

Anna

-John McNabb Beaver Creek electoral director has been appointed by the Regional District to AQC.

- **Catalyst plume (addition to agenda)**

-Anna was approached by public with a question around the stack at Catalyst. "It seems as if the stack has no velocity and the plume seems to hang right at the top of the stack. This was observed on Sunday. Could this be a low level operational/maintenance issue?"

-Larry Cross was unaware of what would be occurring within the mill's operations that would impact the performance of the plume as identified. There is no significant difference in terms of the operations on the weekend vs. weekdays. Often, they utilize more composted hog fuel on Sundays as no trucks are coming in, but this should not impact the plume.

- **BC Lung Association**

-annual conference was held on Feb. 6th in Vancouver, 8-5

Anna/Earle

-Wildfire Smoke: A growing threat to air quality and public health

Anna Lewis: key item that would be relevant to Port Alberni would be the identification of sites for clean air shelters. If the incidences of wildfires and associated smoky sky bulletins continue with increasing regularity clean air will become a more prominent issue. Anna will connect with Kelly Gilday (ACRD emergency response coordinator) around ensuring that this is identified within the scope of emergency planning.

Have also been approached by a member of the public wanting to know what can be done around the ATVs that are continuously roaring in the bush during fire season. Huge concern.

Anna will connect with the Wildfire Center and see if they have done any sort of analysis of the past two fire season and how to be more proactive. AQC members also stated that they would like an update with regards to the interface fire project that the City had undertaken. Anna will locate some more information on this.

Gary Swann: stated the need for a targeted educational campaign and potentially having a representative from SD70 sit on the AQC.

John McNabb: suggested that the AQC potentially connect with the Sproat Lake Marine Patrol on distributing information as well as utilizing the Bulldogs for educating kids.

Earle: had two items of interest to report:

1. With most of North America covered in smoke the past two years, large populations have been exposed to high levels of smoke. Epidemiologists are doing lots of studies to look at the short-term effects of smoke.

2. Fire behavior specialist talked about the history of fire in terms of the frequency of areas burned. Typically, there has been a big fire year and then followed by a few slow years. 1- and 2-year fire events are closer and closer together. 3 big fire years has never occurred and will be interesting to see what this year brings.

4. Community Presentation on Air Quality and the Linkages to Public Health Anna

-Monday, March 11th 6-8pm. Event starts at 6:30 but VIU mobile van will be available to view prior to the event from 6-6:30

-Dr. Paul Hasselback presenting on linkages between public health and air quality

-VIU on preliminary findings of regional mapping project of volatile organic compounds

-Anna Lewis will provide a snapshot of Port Alberni and some of the action items being identified for the airshed management strategy.

-Promotion includes radio ads are scheduled for the week prior to event, newspaper article to come out the Wednesday prior to event, posters up around town, put on Shaw, radio online community ad, What's On events section of paper, FB site.

-please promote to any of your respective organizations.

Next Meeting and presentation

-April 4th, 2pm, ACRD boardroom. There will not be a presentation as the AQC will go over air emissions inventory and Anna will send out questions prior to meeting pertaining to action items to be included in airshed management strategy.

Meeting adjourned at 4:03