

AQC MEETING

Thursday, June 20th, 2019, 2pm
ACRD Board Room

Present: Larry Cross (Catalyst)
Ron Corbeil (City of Port Alberni)
Gary Swann (Agricultural Community member)
Earle Plain (Ministry of Environment)
Stephanie Bruvall (Island Health)
Anna Lewis (Chair)
Judy Carlson (Community at large)
Mike Owens (Port Alberni fire chief)
Diane Bodnar (ACRD electoral director)
Rosemarie Buchanan (SD70)

Regrets: Jade Yehia (Island Health)
Peter Mazey (FNHA)
Ashley Popovich (Catalyst Paper)
Patty Edwards (MLA's Office)
Dave Jarrett (Community at large)

Meeting called to order at 2:01

1. WELCOME

Acknowledgement of the traditional territories.
Roundtable of introductions.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Gary Swann moved to adopt agenda with the addition of Larry Cross presenting on Catalyst operations which was added to the agenda under #7. Ron Corbeil seconded. All in favor.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – May 2nd, 2019

Ron Corbeil moved to adopt minutes as presented. Gary Swann seconded. All in favor.

3. UPDATES

• New representation from SD70 and ACRD – WELCOME!

-Diane Bodnar is replacing John McNabb as the ACRD electoral director. A big thank you to John for sitting on the AQC for the past few months and the work he did to bring momentum to bylaw development.

- Anna presented during the petition section of the May 14th Regular Public Board meeting to request Trustee participation on the Port Alberni Air Quality Council. Rosemarie Buchanan is representing SD70.

• Woodstove Exchange

-To date: 3 woodstove to woodstove exchanges (\$250 value) and 2 woodstove to heat pump exchanges (\$500 value).

-still having issues with retailers not calling in to receive a tracking number and rebate vouchers not being filled in correctly. Some have reported this due to turnover in staff.

- **Community Health Fair**

-Anna personned a table with information on the WSE, health info, bylaw information, etc. at the event, which was held May 2nd, 5-7 at the multiplex. There were 90 vendors participating and over 600 people in attendance.

-key takeaways from the public during the event were support of increasing backyard burning bylaws to include rural areas and wanting more enforcement of municipal bylaw. There seemed to be confusion as to who to call, the fire department or the city bylaw officer.

-this point has been clarified by Mike Owens:

“The Fire Department is the lead agency for investigating backyard burning complaints. When someone calls the non-emergency line and it is received by the on-duty Captain the crew then responds to investigate the complaint. There are occasions when no one is in the office. Generally, the goal of the crew is to ensure that the fire complies with the bylaw and educate or suppress the fire when necessary. When individuals have been out of compliance with the bylaw on multiple occasions their file is sent to the Bylaw Department with a recommendation to assess a fine.”

- **Presentation to Alberni Clayoquot Health Network**

-Anna did an impromptu presentation for the Alberni Clayoquot Health Network, as the May presenter ended up being a no show.

-Sharie Minions was present as a guest so it was a good way for cross pollination with the city. Josie Osbourne and Penny Cote, both electoral directors for the ACRD, sit on the ACHN's table of partners and Anna elaborated on the merits of developing bylaws for open burning and woodstove compliance.

-The ACHN is and continues to be very supportive of the work of the AQC and reiterated that it will try to promote air quality concerns through their network when possible, write letters of support, etc.

4. **ACRD bylaw**

-Directive from the board was to refer the bylaws to the Air Quality Council, MoE (Earle Plain) and Island Health for feedback. At this point, staff can make any recommended changes. The Board also directed staff to hold public engagement events over the summer. Plan H grant money would be helpful to facilitate some engagements.

Discussion points around bylaws:

-New OBSCR regulations will probably be adopted as going to legislative council in early July. Government has already moved ahead with maps and updated venting index and is ready to implement prior to burning season this fall. Category 3 burning bylaw as written will be overridden by OBSCR legislation, (burn times, setbacks, high density zones). Bylaw should be in compliance with OBSCR or stricter.

-The Category 2 Open Fires (residential backyard burning) section is what is really needed. Backyard burning needs to be regulated by local government as the Environmental Management Act exempts this kind of activity – e.g. the existing and revised OBSCR does not apply.

-Some confusing language as says may not burn for more than 72 hours and then says the fire must be during daylight hours only. Need clarification.

-Like the clean window of no burning throughout the months of December, January and February.

-Regulate residential backyard burning through a bylaw and let the province regulate larger category 3 burning through a revised OBSCR unless they want to be more restrictive.

-Could propose an Urban containment area with could have been based on population density. The Municipality of North Cowichan used this to be more restrictive where there are large numbers of people but less restrictive for large lot owners (can burn under permit).

In terms of the woodstove compliance issue there was lots of discussion around how to enforce or educate around this issue. Some of the thoughts included:

-conversations with real estate agents.

-Send out an FYI that this bylaw exists.

-A home seller's not going to be interested but could be advantageous for a buyer to know about it and required upgrades could be negotiated into sale price.

-Is there something in the real estate bylaws, disclosure statement from bylaws? Maybe a disclosure statement on any existing wood stoves prior to the sale of house and that if that stove(s) is not in compliance, that stove must be decommissioned or upgraded, and a statement sent to the city. To be done prior to property taxes.

-Sunset clause: might get a few people swapping out stoves based on people want to do what is correct. Should be a media release.

-Bylaw is the opportunity at the time of a house being sold, the buyer cannot occupy a building until the non-compliant stove has been replaced or decommissioned and evidence sent to the ACRD.

Anna to follow up with Alex regarding time frame and referral process.

5. Proton Power

-Pat Deakin economic development officer for the City of Port Alberni was approached by David Swann with regards to exploring the opening a plant in Port Alberni.

-David Swan is the founder and CEO of Eco-Options Energy Cooperative. He is proposing a series of refineries throughout BC to convert wood fiber into renewable diesel utilizing the technology developed by Proton Power. He proposes to buy the machinery from Proton Power to convert wood chips into synthetic gas (mostly hydrogen), and biochar. He will need additional machinery to convert the synthetic gas into diesel. He says he would like the first plant to be in Port Alberni.

-The Tennessee based company is using their patented technology as an economical method of harnessing this renewable energy source. According to Proton Power, their goal is to make clean energy cost-effective and more accessible to consumers.

-David believes his project is at the state where he would like to take several people to see the technologies involved. To that end he is proposing to charter a jet from Vancouver Island to Knoxville Tennessee to see the operations of a company called Proton Power who has developed the primary technology for this, then go on to Boulder Colorado to see the operations of another company converting syngas to power (which is also proposed as part of the process) then come back to Vancouver Island in the span of two days.

-The trip was tentatively planned for June 20th and 21st but has now been rescheduled for July 17,18th. The City requested that a representative of the Air Quality Council and each of the local First Nations be invited saying that unless he can prove the technologies will not harm our air or water quality, it is a non-starter for the City. Pat is hoping that Keith Hunter and James Strain

could potentially go. Anna would be interested in going for educational purposes and reporting back but does not have an adequate technical background to ensure a rigorous assessment. -Eco-Options will be footing the bill entirely. The City is not paying for any part of it, nor will anyone from the City's staff or Council be on the trip. The Regional District will be asked if they want to send someone along on the trip as the refinery, if it is built, would likely be located on rural industrial land.

Project aside the key takeaway is that the city directly said that unless there were no impacts to the airshed and waterways this would be a nonstarter and directed Proton Power to connect with the first nations and the AQC. Indication that the city recognizes the value and input of the AQC.

6. Fall Fair

- The annual Fall Fair is September 5,6,7,8th.
- Last year the AQC shared a table with the Emergency Response and Sproat Lake Volunteer Fire Department. Anna will investigate options for this year's booth.
- Anna will connect with members of the AQC via email looking for help personning the table.

7. a) Summary of Highlights from the past year of Catalyst operations

b) Province's response to AQC letter re. Catalyst emissions permit

a) Summary of Highlights from the past year of Catalyst operations -Larry Cross

- Catalyst was purchased by Paper Excellence (positive transition thus far)
- Challenges in printing paper business remain
- Catalyst had been holding off doing a total mill outage (maintenance of water line system, effluent system, steam work). This process has now been approved and funded.
- Catalyst is exploring the challenges of paper business by transitioning to printing less paper and making papers that touch food and packaging papers. Looking positive, thus far.
- Graham Kissick has remained the corporate person, for all 7 paper excellence mills across the country. Allows staff to have a collective hive mind to share problems, what is working, and coming up with solutions.
- Greenhouse gas reporting: emissions for 2018 were less than 2017 as burnt less natural gas and burnt more hog fuel.
- There is a new clean energy incentive program which is tied into greenhouse gas reduction. Catalyst is in the process of applying for and exploring utilizing wood pellets to reduce tire derived fuel.
- BC Hydro with big industrial customers has a focus program looking at effluent treatment systems that use less energy. Catalyst is interested and have someone coming to the site to evaluate and identify what opportunities exist.
- The federal government under fisheries regulations is currently modernizing and starting consultation regarding allowable discharge reductions. These are significant reductions (25-50%) as well as introducing new parameters regarding reporting. Assuming these will be in place by 2021.
- Catalyst will be resuming the sustainability reports.

Mosaic has changed how they are doing things doing fiber recovery as there will be fees to deal with smaller pieces of wood in the bush that are traditionally burned. Secondary processors and small

trucks are making connections with Crofton mill. Companies are trying to reduce the amount of interface burning. Interesting to note this shift and be aware of possibilities.

b) Province's response to AQC letter re. Catalyst emissions permit

- the province has been engaged with Catalyst regarding a 50% reduction of current industrial emissions permit.
- process triggered by the initial letter that the AQC sent the province.
- the Ministry did emission modelling at current output, halfway and at maximum current permitted emission rate.
- There are two primary impact points, northeast of the mill over a residential area/Beaver Creek, and the Southwest side of the Alberni Inlet (unpopulated, elevated terrain).
- The annual impact is .25mg/cubic meter with current operations.
- Catalyst will be responding to the Ministry's request within the upcoming week.

8. Airshed Management Strategy

- Anna will prepare the initial draft over the course of the summer. She will connect with AQC members to request additional information/input.
- the format will be similar to what the Cowichan Valley has done.
- Anna will request assistance from Island Health to provide a more detailed health component.
- The Ministry's 2016 report on Port Alberni will be used to create a comprehensive history of air quality in the Alberni Valley.
- A communications strategy and implementation plan will be drafted alongside the strategy and implementation process will begin in the fall once draft is finalized.
- Any appropriate grants/funding opportunities which may be applicable to air quality work please forward onto Anna.

9. Next Meeting and presentation

- September 12, 2019, 2 pm in the ACRD boardroom.

3:42 adjourned.