

FINAL MINUTES FOR AQC MEETING

FEBRUARY 6th, 2020, 2pm
ACRD Board Room

Present: Dave Jarrett (Community at large)
Anna Lewis (Chair)
Gary Swann (Agricultural Community member)
Stephanie Bruvall (Island Health)
Earle Plain (MOE)
Diane Bodnar (ACRD electoral director)
Ashley Popovich (Catalyst Paper)
Patty Edwards (MLA's Office)
Mike Owens (Fire Department)
Rosemarie Buchanan (SD70)
Judy Carlson (Community at large; AAQS)

Regrets: Larry Cross (Catalyst Paper)
Karen Larsen (FNHA)
Helen Poon (City of PA)
Jade Yehia (Island Health)

Meeting called to order at 2:05

1. WELCOME

- acknowledgement of the traditional territories
- roundtable of introductions

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

-A couple of additions were added to the agenda: grant application; convo with conservative officers around OBSCR; Age Friendly Plan; and a letter of support requested by the City of Port Alberni.

Judy Carlson moved to adopt agenda with additions. Mike Owens seconded. All in favour.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – December 12th, 2019

Patty Edwards moved to adopt minutes as presented. Dave Jarrett seconded. All in favour.

3. PRESENTATION: Earle Plain: Port Alberni Air Quality Trends since 2016 report

A comprehensive air quality report was released by the Ministry of Environment in 2016. <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/environment/air-land-water/air/reports-pub/port-alberni-aq-report.pdf>. The parameter of main concern continues to be fine Particulate Matter 2.5 (PM_{2.5}) where there continues to be exceedances of the provincial and national standards for PM_{2.5}.

PM_{2.5} comes from combustion sources (i.e. burning fossil fuels, wood, garbage, etc.) One of the reasons for concern regarding PM_{2.5} is can penetrate deep into the lungs and into the

bloodstreams and is linked to numerous health impacts. The Comox Valley did a study two years ago which made the correlation of a 14% increase in heart attacks due to woodsmoke exposure.

The provincial air quality objective is 8ug/m³ annual and 25ug/m³ – 98th percentile 24-hour value annually. In Port Alberni the 2017 and 2018 levels were above the provincial objective, and 2019 was the lowest recorded levels since 2012. 2019 was an el nino year which relates to more precipitation which acts as a scrubber for air quality.

Data shows that cooler months have higher PM_{2.5} values. Higher emissions due to home, commercial, industrial heating compounded by geography (inversions), while summer months have better dispersion and lower emissions.

Observed trends.

- Summer months there is good dispersion.
- Winter hour of the day variation is typical of woodsmoke dispersion.
- Continue to see exceedances of the Provincial Air Quality Objectives – Annual and Daily. Port Alberni met the Daily 98th Percentile Standard in 2019. This is the lowest recorded since 2012 and likely weather related.
- Currently meeting CAAQS but this may change in 2020 as standards will become more restrictive. Next Air Zone Report due this spring.
- Highest PM_{2.5} values during the cold season – meteorology and emission changes.
- Hebdomadal (day of the week) analysis indicates that weekend burning in springtime is a significant source of PM_{2.5}. Points to continued need for ACRD open burn bylaw to compliment City bylaw.

The Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) is a federal system based on the synergistic effects of 3 pollutants. Ozone (O₃), PM_{2.5} and nitrous dioxide (NO₂). When looking at in smaller communities the AQHI is not working very well. This is due to the fact that PM_{2.5} is the only pollutant of the three that tends to be an issue in the smaller communities.

AQHI PLUS was developed 2 years ago to deal with smaller communities. To calculate a rough AQHI based on PM_{2.5} values only, divide the hourly PM_{2.5} by 10 and refer to health messaging for general guidance.

4. UPDATES

- 2020 Woodstove Exchange
 - retailers were contacted, have 5 participating this year
 - created 2020 brochure, retailer agreement, advertising, press release
 - still need to create messaging for radio, final report for last year's program due Feb. 15th
 - official launch of the program was Jan. 27th at the ACHN Service Fair
- Legacy for Airway Health and Healthy Indoor Environments at the BC Lung Association
 - Feb. 10th, 11:30-3, Vancouver
 - Anna Lewis, Keith and Bernadette Wyton are attending
 - focus is to discuss an Air Quality Health Research and Knowledge Translation Strategy.
 - Intention is to create a strongly vetted, up-to-date, and comprehensive provincial action plan to coordinate efforts and maximize impact. Their goal is to leverage the collective experience of

experts in the province to develop a provincial strategy that guides research questions and knowledge translation to inform policy to benefit all British Columbians.

-Identify key gaps in practice and policy that guide air quality and health-related research in BC.

-Anna will share any documentation that comes out of this meeting.

- Annual BC Lung conference:
 - Feb. 11th, 8:30-5, Vancouver
 - Keith Wyton, Bernadette Wyton and Anna Lewis will be attending.
 - Theme of conference is: Environmental Justice of Air Quality in the Era of Citizen Science.
 - Patty Edwards will be livestreaming conference in Port Alberni.

- Environmental Protection Agency
 - Feb. 12th 8-4:30, Richmond
 - Covers the environmental assessment act: Enhancing Certainty and Transparency, Promoting Sustainability and Supporting Reconciliation; Reviewable Projects: How are projects brought into the EA process?; Early engagement and readiness decision.

- ACRD Bylaws
 - nothing to report
 - conversation with the junior planner and it is still on their radar

- ACRD Grant-in-Aid
 - application was submitted on behalf of the AAQS requesting \$12,000. In previous years the ask has been \$12,000 and have received \$10,000.

- Airshed Management Plan
 - Continues to be a work in progress.
 - Anna is hoping March meeting she will be able to have prepared interactive component regarding plan and specific targets and associated strategies.

- ACHN Service Fair
 - occurred Jan. 27th at Glenwood
 - about 40 booths
 - attendance by local citizens coming through but several good conversations around woodstoves, burning clean, lack of bylaws in outlying parts of the valley

- Camera on top of city hall
 - Earle report that this project is good to go just requires a signature from the city before the province can set up. Anna and Earle will follow up with city to seek signature

- OBBSCR and convo with Conservation Officers (CO)
 - conversation with CO revealed that the RAPP line has received minimal complaints for the central island, with the majority of those coming from the Nanaimo and Qualicum beach area.
 - When following up with the landowners who are conducting illegal burning, it tended to be located in more rural areas and people seemed to be not overly familiar with technology and the internet, and therefore know nothing about the new regulations.

-CO stated that the new OBSCR is difficult from an enforcement side with how it is written. If the piles don't meet the required size of debris, then the venting index doesn't apply, and then there is nothing to enforce unless there is a local by-law limiting burning of debris in that area. This is especially difficult in the regional districts with no by-law in place.

-Earle stated that the Conservation Officer in Cowichan has been excellent. Perhaps connect with him to see what he has found helpful in educating the public.

- **ACRD Age Friendly Plan**

-Anna is sitting on the working group for the ACRD Age Friendly Plan.

-Some of the air quality items brought to the working group included: emphasizing the need for filtration units for old folks' homes; clean air shelters; basic air quality and your health brochures for doctors' offices, etc.

5. NEW BUSINESS

- **Letter of Support for RD Mt. Waddington chipper**

-In conversation with Jenny Brunn (ACRD) she asked if the AQC to support the regional district of Mount Waddington to apply for a grant for a chipper. Anna had initially asked her to get the ACRD to apply when one of her key reasons for decreasing the diameter of yard waste was based on cost of chipping.

-The RDMW has implemented a methane emission reduction initiative through application of bio cover at their 7 Mile Landfill site during 2018. This results of the initiative for 2018 reduced their total GHG emissions equivalent to 504 tonnes of CO₂-e/year.

-The reason to support the RDMW application is the ACRD would have access to a chipper to deal with yardwaste. As it is increasingly difficult to deal with contracting services this would allow various local governments on the island to utilize the chipper on a cost recovery basis.

-This could be beneficial to air quality in 2 ways, exploration of a similar bio cover at the local landfill to reduce GHG emissions and assist in dealing with yard waste and potential options/creative solutions when the ACRD completes its investigation into open burning bylaws.

Gary Swann moved the motion that the AQC write a letter of support for the RDMW in their application for a chipper through the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program. Dianne Bodnar seconded. All in favour.

- **Letter of Support for Port Alberni application of beautification project of 3rd Avenue.**

-Anna attended a Cycle Alberni meeting in which Tim Pley and Katelyn McDougall were present to talk about the city's application for provincial funding.

-The option the city is most interested in pursuing was option #1 which sees the addition of designated bike lanes. As this directly correlates to some AQC goals (To encourage clean air lifestyles and business practices; To integrate regional air quality goals into local government policies, including land use and transportation management)

-helps to implement the recommendations of the City's Active Transportation Plan

-deadline for funding is Feb. 20th

Rosemarie Buchanan moved a motion: That the AQC write a LOS in support of the City application specifically as it related to encouraging healthy lifestyles, alternative transportation

systems and endorsed the City's Active Transportation Plan. Seconded by Gary Swann. All in favour.

- Air Quality Website hosted by ACRD
 - reviewed and overhauled information on the website and sent Lori all changes to be made. Lots of great information on the website, although not particularly easy to navigate.
- Regional grant application for Comox, ACRD, Cowichan
 - has emerged due to a scheming conversation with Jade Yehia
 - potential to apply for an Island Health Wellness grant application
 - could collectively/jointly apply, for a region wide air quality/climate change forum, supported by the Port Alberni AQC, Cowichan's Airshed Roundtable, and the CRD's Healthy & Safe Environment/Clean Air bylaw folks. ICLEI is also keen on being involved.
 - Anna will follow up with Jade
- Port Authority air quality equipment
 - Planning on reaching out to the Port Authority to see if what their plans are regarding the air quality equipment (PM2.5 and windspeed) they purchased when CanTimber was operating.
 - Investigate if they are interested in potentially collaborating on a project.
 - Primarily would be interested to see data correlations through the winter months.

6. NEXT MEETING

-Thursday March 5th, 2019, 2:30