

MINUTES FOR AQC MEETING

Thursday, Oct.1st, 2020, 2pm

Via Zoom

Present: Diane Bodnar (ACRD electoral director)
Mike Owens (Fire Department)
Earle Plain (MOE)
Anna Lewis (Chair)
Larry Cross (Catalyst Paper)
Judy Carlson (Community at large; AAQS)
Stephanie Bruvall (Island Health)
Rosemarie Buchanan (SD70)
Ashley Popovich (Catalyst Paper)
Gary Swann (Agricultural Community member) 2:06
Tarek Ayache (MOE) 2:07

Regrets: Dave Jarrett (Community at large)
Karen Larson (FNHA)
Jade Yehia (Island Health)
Helen Poon (City of PA)
Patty Edwards (MLA's Office)

Meeting called to order at 2:04

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

- Acknowledgement of the traditional territories of the Hupacasath and Tseshaht First Nation.
- Roundtable of introductions and quick updates/concerns pertaining to air quality.

Rosemarie: Air quality has been on the forefront of student safety at this time. SD70 has been purchasing HEPA filters. Most schools have an h-vac system and some individual classrooms have free standing air purifiers.

Diane: Just attended UBCM. Regardless of the topic being presented they all included climate change.

Mike: Looking at proposing amendments to city bylaw that pertains to solid fuel appliances. Essentially it is currently unenforceable and trying to figure out solutions to make it enforceable.

Earle: His role within government has changed and he is now acting section head so his ability to participate with the AQC has changed. This spring and summer were very busy due to the province taking unprecedented burning ban across high sensitivity areas as recommended by the BCCDC to ensure optimal community health during COVID-19. Wildfire season update: In general, wet, and cool year (especially in northern parts of the province). Minimal smoke events generated from fires within BC although several in

September due to US wildfires. In Port Alberni there was 8 day stretch of advisories, Sept. 11-18th, which saw a 144 as the highest 24-hour rolling average.

Tarek: Will be replacing Earle on the AQC.

Judy: Noticing climate change. Kitsukis hill, particularly the east side is showing new Gary Oak seedlings sprouting and Douglas Fir is dying. The vegetation is changing. Need to ensure that fire smarting is done to get rid of increased debris underneath the trees.

Stephanie: COVID-19 response and compliance checks have been keeping Island Health busy.

Larry: Catalyst has been operating steady with no down time since June. Part of the reason for that is Powell River is not operating. Have been able to observe new COVID protocols.

Ashley: Catalyst is keeping up with monthly maintenance with the BAM unit.

Gary: Has observed mid aged cedars dying on his farm. The community forest does a good job of managing debris. Want to see more emphasis on climate change as the relationship to air quality is crucial.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

One addition to the agenda was proposed to include potential amendments to city bylaw. Diane Bodnar moved to adopt agenda as amended. Mike Owens seconded. All in favor. Motion carries.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – May 28th, 2020

Rosemarie Buchanan moved to adopt minutes as presented. Diane Bodnar seconded. All in favor. Motion carries.

3. UPDATES

- Changing membership at the table
 - Helen Poon: currently taking a leave of absence from council duties to focus on the provincial election campaign.
 - Patty Edwards: officially retired from the MLAs office and has stepped down from the AQC. Further representation is not expected until after election.
 - Earle Plain: has moved into a section head role within the government, and as such does not have the same time to allocate to the AQC but has Tarek taking over all air quality councils/roundtables.
 - Dr. Paul Hasselback has retired as the medical health officer for the region. His replacement is Dr. Benusic.
- **Woodstove Exchange**
 - 3 woodstove to woodstoves exchanges have occurred during 2020 season.

-Checking in with retailers has confirmed lower sales, with the exception of Pioneer Fireplace in Parksville.

-2021 proposal was due mid Sept.

-Anna reached out to woodstove program coordinator for the province and BC Lung to suggest an alternate proposal as the ACRD will carry forward approximately \$24,000 worth of funding from 2019 and 2020. A proposal was submitted which utilized the remaining funding rather than requesting new funds from the province. Awaiting confirmation that it will not be problematic to utilize remaining funds for advertising and coordinator costs as the original intent of funds remaining was all designated for exchanges.

- **Legacy for Airway Health**

- provincial survey on wildfire smoke messaging was developed early summer

- Dr. Chris Carlson, Dr. Henderson, reps from UBC, reps from LAH and Anna worked on the survey. Provincial health authorities all had input.

- Survey was submitted to the UBC ethics committee Sept. 14th for approval. Once approved, the survey will be distributed.

- **Public consultation process for ACRD bylaws**

- status quo. No progress to report from ACRD staff.

- Anna created survey for ACRD to utilize in public consultation. Not online or mailed out as of yet.

- ACRD could potentially utilize a new online platform call "Bang the Table" which the city is utilizing. Anna will explore and report back on this option as she will be undergoing technical training on utilizing this platform for a different contract.

4. NEW BUSINESS

- **Alberni Air Quality Society AGM via Zoom**

- Thursday, October 29th at 7pm via Zoom

- AQC members welcome to attend; Anna to send out link

- **Areas of focus/direction from the Alberni Air Quality Society (AAQS)**

- Anna met with the directors of the AAQS to get setting trajectory for upcoming year and priorities they wanted to see explored.

- 1) To develop a public education curriculum (targeted for Grade 5-7) that pertains to air quality and local issues.

- 2) To create alliances with Cowichan roundtable and newly emerging Comox/Courtenay roundtable to potentially identify a regional project.

- The Cowichan Roundtable will be meeting Dec. 1 via Zoom (tentatively) and the Comox Courtenay newly formed air council/roundtable had their initial meeting last month. Anna will connect with Jade to brainstorm as they had previously discussed.

- 3) To identify a city owned building which could be utilized as an emergency smoke refuge. Build relationship with new emergency response coordinator.

-intent is that there be a couple public, city owned buildings identified that has appropriate filtration systems that could provide respite (clean air) for those within the community that are deemed as vulnerable (elderly, those with respiratory issues, etc.) for the span of a few hours when Port Alberni has air quality advisories.

- Down in the states they are utilizing clean rooms which provide cooling and filtered air. For vulnerable populations these can be a real lifesaver.

-FNHA has developed some ideas for identifying appropriate buildings.

-could potentially approach SD70 to see if any school gymnasiums might be appropriate. Rosemarie can bring to next board meeting for discussion. Anna to get something to her prior to Oct. 13th.

-BCCDC evidence review papers of “clean air shelters”.

- **Suggestions and ideas for AQ related presentations**

- Catalyst. Annual sustainability report, Larry and Ashley can provide update re. operations.

- Tarek can provide an air quality update.

- Environment Canada is looking for community partners for a low-cost sensor project. Anna will follow up with Corinne Schiller at Environment Canada and find out what program involves. Could ask Corinne to present.

- **City bylaw amendments to solid fuel burning appliance**

- Although bylaw currently exists re. age of woodstove it is unenforceable. How to change?

- homework for next meeting! Everyone brings one idea to the table.

- initial brainstorming included:

- Redesign using a more systematic method, i.e. real estate agents disclose/notary at time of transfer.

- Included age of woodstove in the questionnaire that sellers complete when selling their home.

- Should be conditional to sale of home.

- Put onus on the building inspectors

5. NEXT MEETING

- Thursday, Nov. 5th, 2020 2pm via Zoom

Meeting adjourned at 3:35