

East Whatcom Community Council
Clean Air Committee meeting summary

Oct. 16, 2013

Members present: Phil Cloward, Laura Curley, Jerry DeBruin, Wain Harrison, David Moe, Julie O'Shaughnessy, Lou Piotrowski, Katie Skipper, Kurt Thompson

- 1. Introductions** – Committee members introduced themselves.
- 2. Approval of Sept. 18, 2013 meeting summary** – Phil moved to approve the meeting summary. Wain seconded. The summary was unanimously accepted.
- 3. Open public comment** – Lou thanked Fire District No. 14 for its reader board and building signs that say, "Burning garbage is always illegal."
Julie and Katie appreciated the clarity of the message and said NWCAA will consider incorporating it into its own educational materials.
David said since the signs went up, the department hasn't received any more garbage-burning complaints, but he added that could be for a variety of reasons.
- 4. Additions to the agenda** – At Lou's suggestion, the group agreed to move agenda item 6.2, "Reach out to health professionals," down to item 8.1, under "Identify potential stakeholders."
- 5. Committee member reports** –
Phil said word is starting to get around about the Clean Air Committee and its work. He said three different commercial wood suppliers expressed interest to him in participating if the committee develops a wood bank. He said the wood suppliers recognize the economic benefit of distributing wood from one location.
- 6. Action item follow-up**
 1. Draft an outreach plan for the group to review at the next meeting – Katie
Katie provided printed draft outreach plans for everyone to review after the meeting and asked if people could provide her with comments and suggestions. She walked the group through the plan structure and said she incorporated strategies and messages discussed during the previous meeting.
Phil said the group could look at weather forecasts and identify when there was going to be a problem in the valley. He suggested it would be good to let people know in advance that the group was going to be in the area looking at air quality issues, and remind residents to be conscious of how they're burning.
Laura shared a chart displaying monitoring data from the period of the worst air quality last year. She said the agency's data shows peaks of pollution occur in the

evening, when people damper down their stoves. She suggested the group focus its outreach on why damping down stoves is counterproductive and offer tips and alternatives.

Phil said there's no need to damper down. He said he heats his house in the morning, lets the fire go out, and it's still 75 degrees inside when he comes home.

Lou said he was interested in having the fire department take the lead on outreach and the committee could piggyback on those efforts.

Katie said piggybacking on other group's outreach efforts was a component of the plan, but she said she stuck with crafting the strategy around the agency's and the committee's work because she didn't think it would be appropriate to write on the fire department's behalf.

Julie thought it would be good to incorporate simple messages, similar to the message on the fire department's sign. She said if the group sent a letter to residents promoting the committee's work, it could include a note to look for messages on the fire department's reader board.

David mentioned a mobile reader board he saw on the back of a truck and suggested we consider doing something similar. He also suggested that we talk to compressed-wood fire-log dealers about possibly donating broken pieces that we could offer to people to try out.

(Jerry and David stepped out at 5:17 p.m.)

Phil mentioned it was fire prevention week. There was a photo of Fire District 14 in the Lynden Tribune. He said the fire department is well respected in the community. People listen to what they say. They are good at getting the community involved. He added that although the letters NWCAA sent out last year raised some hackles, they served a purpose in that they got the community's attention and helped raise awareness about the problem.

Kurt said that in Maple Falls, where he lives, a lot of the problem comes from people doing things the way they've always done them. Changing long-standing habits will present a challenge when talking about reducing smoke. He said in his experience, the individual communities in the Foothills region – Maple Falls, Kendall, Glacier, etc. – are pretty insular. Part of the reason he's participating on the Clean Air Committee is because he hopes to help disseminate information, so the work the committee is doing doesn't just stay in Columbia Valley.

Resident group members identified the local Post Office as a common destination for residents in a number of the communities, so it might be a good place to use for disseminating information throughout the region.

(Jerry returned at 5:45)

Julie said this direct outreach approach was a new direction for the agency. She said inspectors have been recording information about smoke and pollution sources for a long time, but the agency has never knocked on people's doors.

Action items:

- Email electronic version of outreach plan to group – **Katie**
- Review outreach plan and respond to Katie with comments by Oct. 23 - **All**
- Add to tools/strategies in outreach plan - **Katie:**

- Fire District No. 14 reader board
- Portable reader board rental
- Schedule extra meeting to discuss draft outreach plan – **Lou**
- Look into presto log company to see if they are willing to part with samples the outreach teams could offer to homeowners - **David**

7. Review of latest draft of stakeholder committee list

The group discussed and made revisions to the working draft of the stakeholder committee list.

Lou said the priority “rings,” or categories, are not immutable. For example, some people in the second ring might want to come to meetings all the time, as we would expect with a person in the first ring, and that’s fine.

Action item: Draft a letter for the committee to consider and discuss, inviting stakeholders to participate - **Katie**

The committee will continue its discussion of the stakeholder committee list at its next monthly meeting and carry the following items over to the next agenda:

8. Identify potential stakeholders – messaging/invitations/outreach

1. Reach out to health professionals - All

9. Upcoming monthly meeting schedule – 4:30 – 6 p.m., third Wednesday, East Whatcom Regional Resource Center:

- Nov. 20
- Dec. 18