

East Whatcom Community Council Clean Air Committee
Meeting summary
February 14, 2018

CAC Charge: The charge of the East Whatcom Community Council Clean Air Committee is to work jointly with the Northwest Clean Air Agency to develop a comprehensive, community-based, long-range plan designed to improve the air quality in the East Whatcom County Region.

Chair: Phil Cloward, East Whatcom Community Council

Members: Jerry DeBruin & David Moe, WCFPD #14; John Wolpers, Whatcom County Health Department; Mark Schofield OppCo; Veronica Dearden, Kendall Watch Community Action Group; Viktor Vetkov, Slavic Church; Wain Harrison, Whatcom County; Julie O'Shaughnessy, NWCAA

Present: Phil Cloward, Jerry DeBruin, Mark Schofield, Mark Sniffen, Julie O'Shaughnessy

Agenda items:

1. Introductions – No introductions necessary, only committee members present.

2. Approval of January 10, 2018 meeting summary

Motion:

- Mark Schofield moved to approve meeting notes with the correction of attendees; John Wolpers was present, Mark Sniffen was not.
- Jerry DeBruin seconded the motion as moved.

3. Open public comment – None, only committee members present.

4. Announcements

Julie – Two portable particulate sensors have been co-located with the permanent particulate monitor that is sited at the water district office. The portable sensors cost approximately \$250 each whereas the permanent monitor costs ~\$20,000.

Each sensor has two probes to demonstrate whether or not the readings can be duplicated. One sensor is duplicating its readings, but the other is not. Of the four probes, three are reading the same, but are at levels consistently twice as high as the permanent monitor.

The purpose of co-locating the sensors with the monitor is to see how they compare with the permanent monitor and determine how they might be used in the community in the future.

Phil – Does not question the readings of the permanent monitor, but questions its siting location and whether or not it's representative of the community as a whole.

5. Wood shed status update

Phil – Getting down to the end of the wood shed deliveries. There approximately 10 sheds left and 7 applicants so additional applications may be needed. The final deliveries will be scheduled and completed once the remaining sheds are hauled from the high school.

Mark Schofield – Several clients have approached OppCo since the application period was informally closed so Mark will check to see if there are any additional potential clients.

6. Biomass committee update

Phil – Didn't meet with the Port of Bellingham on January 16. Will meet with Port Commissioner Ken Bell, prior to scheduling a meeting with all of the Port of Bellingham commissioners to talk about activating the light industrial area on Limestone Road.

The wood bank location will be leased from the Zenders. Wood will not be delivered until it is properly seasoned.

Other items in process are a grant and contact with two major timber companies that may be open to negotiation since the pulp market is so poor.

7. Outreach / community event ideas

Julie – Asked committee member for any new ideas or thoughts on how to reach community members we've not yet connected with. In the spirit of addressing this NWCAA will be meeting with OppCo next week to brainstorm possible ways in which to reach different community members. The meeting will include staff from both agencies who are not typically "front-line" but are involved in the overall goal in Columbia Valley of improving air quality. Discussion topics will include outreach, ways to better partner with new and existing agencies and businesses, and how to best maximize existing resources.

In addition, Julie will be meeting with the health department to talk about possible large-scale disposal options (dumpsters) for garbage and clean green to help address potential emissions from outdoor burning. It appears that outdoor burning of garbage has declined over the years, but that it still occurs. Evidently, this large-scale cleanup activity was something that was done in the valley multiple years ago.

Mark Sniffen – Asked about the history of the County's previous attempt to site a wood chipper in Columbia Valley.

Jerry – Warner Webb, WC Fire Marshal (previous) supported and investigated the possibility of locating a chipper in the area. Ultimately, liability and logistics management of the project made it non-viable.

All – A chipper may be something worth looking into again. Perhaps, if it was operated by the entity that owned it the liability issue would be eliminated. Some residents may not be able to take advantage of the service since they have no way to haul material. Chipping is a valuable resource that will probably become more common as population density increases.

Jerry – Regarding dumpsters, Sumas holds an event once a year where dumpsters are brought to city hall and citizens haul whatever they need to dispose of to the site.

Mark Schofield – Shared that the York Neighborhood in Bellingham also does that once per year and it's very popular and well utilized. There is also someone who drives around and assists residents who cannot haul material on their own.

Phil – It seems that when people took pride in our neighborhood the material was disposed of properly. There is a fine line between providing service versus enabling. It's important to also teach personal accountability.

Jerry – Although not disagreeing with Phil's comments, noted that it's disturbing to see the amount of garbage that is illegally dumped on side roads, even when illegal dumping requires that the material is loaded up and hauled. He also noted that options for disposal (ban on burn barrels and residential debris burning) have decreased over time.

Phil – The reason people illegally dump is because they can get away with it.

Julie – Agrees that optimally it's important to find the balance between providing a service and enabling, but that perhaps through new experiences (legal disposal) a cultural shift may occur.

Mark Schofield – Regarding community culture and outreach, it's important to be curious about which messages may better resonate with the community. For example, whether they are health-based, income, accountability to neighbors, etc.

Phil – People will listen when the person talking has been accepted into the community.

8. Air quality data

Julie – Shared “design value” data for PM 2.5 μm^3 that is a rolling 3-year total of the 24-hour average and annual average of particulate emissions.