

East Whatcom Community Council Clean Air Committee
Meeting summary
August 8, 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; Mark Sniffen, Whatcom County; Julie O'Shaughnessy, NWCAA

Present: Phil Cloward, Jerry DeBruin, John Wolpers, Mark Schofield, Mark Sniffen, Seth Preston, Julie O'Shaughnessy

Agenda items:

1. Introductions – No introductions were necessary. Only committee members present.

2. Approval of June 13, 2018 meeting summary

Motion:

- Mark Schofield moved to approve meeting notes. Mark Sniffen seconded motion.

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

4. Announcements

John – Will not be at the September 12, 2018 meeting.

Phil – Announced that once all the wood sheds are delivered, he will no longer be part of the Clean Air Committee. He has a difference of opinion on where the committee is moving and thinks it best to move on to different community groups that better align with his focus.

Mark Schofield– Asked if there are any community members who may be interested in becoming a committee member.

Phil – Will bring up the need for a new committee member at the East Whatcom Regional Council meeting since this committee is a sub-committee of the council. Feels it's their responsibility to fill this position.

Julie – Shared the previous two announcements with Jerry, since he arrived just after they were shared.

Julie – Announced that NW Clean Air Agency (NWCAA) just signed a \$275,000 contract with Ecology for additional change-outs, to be completed by June 30, 2019. The focus will be on the installation of "tier-1" packages consisting of a new wood or pellet stove AND a ductless heat pump in conjunction with qualifying weatherization via the Opportunity Council (OC). Intake of potential clients will still be done by the OC to determine income qualification which is important when determining heating exemptions or participation in the Community Energy Challenge (CEC). However, for this particular grant, NWCAA does not require income qualification in order to receive a "tier-1" package. The focus area of the grant is within the boundaries of the Columbia Valley community.

Phil – Requested clarification about pellet stoves because at the facilities meeting he mentioned that there was no allowance for pellet stoves. He was then advised that pellet stoves have always been included. Also asked if residents are required to take a ductless heat pump.

Mark Schofield – For residents participating in the CEC program, rebates are offered for the installation of ductless heat pumps. For residents participating in the change-out program and income qualify, the choice of either a pellet stove or a wood stove has always been an option.

Julie – Emphasized that even though OC will income qualify residents in the intake process, for this grant round, income qualification if not necessary in order to receive a “tier-1” package. It is also different in that a resident does not have to remove their wood or pellet stove. Julie and Mark Schofield will work closely to maximize grant funds available for the installation of ductless heat pumps through the change-out program and the CEC program. Also, residents are not required to install a ductless heat pump in addition to a pellet or wood stove. It is their choice.

5. Wood shed status update

Phil – Will probably not get deliveries done until after everyone is back in school and done with vacations. It's difficult to find enough people to haul and deliver the wood sheds on the same weekend.

6. Biomass committee update

Phil – The biomass committee took a big hit, but is continuing to move forward. Have to counter the “anti-job” program and move on. We're working with the Port of Bellingham and the Whatcom County Council to create jobs in the community in a different approach. Continuing work on the wood bank and business plan. Have a lease and a site for the wood bank. Need to address the conditional use permit. Still looking at the possibility of creating good jobs in the area.

7. Outreach/community event ideas

Julie

- Shared the newly refined “Clean Burning” packets which now have professionally designed and printed labels. These packets will be provided to residents who participate in the change-out program.
- Attended Kendall Summer Fest and connected with 10-15 community members and acquired names for possible change-outs and also possible participants of the CEC program (ductless heat pumps). Talked to community members about winter-time air quality, clean burning practices and resources available to residents. Also, provided fire starters and stove-top thermometers to residents who use wood as their primary source of heat.
- Attended the Community Connections meeting and learned that the South Fork Community is developing a centralized communications hub (Foothills Communication Hub) that will be a repository of all events and announcements of what's happening in this area. The “Voice of the Valley” radio station has submitted an application with the FCC to install an additional antenna in Acme to provide a stronger signal.
- Will be working with Eryn Spellman, OC, on a focused door-to-door outreach effort to connect with residents who have been identified to either have a wood heating exemption or who have been contacted multiple times by NWCAA because of heavy smoke emissions. These residents are priorities because they may be burning during periods of impaired air quality.
- Still investigating and open to new ways of connecting with the community about air quality, the change-out program, and clean burning methods.

8. Air quality and complaint update

Julie – No wood stove complaints have been received since last meeting. So far, summer fires have not been an issue.

Jerry – Stated that although forest fire emissions have impacted sunrises and sunsets, we're fortunate that they've not impacted air quality like last year. There has also been very few fires considering the warm weather.

Mark Schofield – Asked if air quality has reached "moderate" levels.

Seth – Responded that air monitor readings have reached "unhealthy for sensitive groups" in some locations, but it is more related to ozone because of the heat and sun.