

## East Whatcom Community Council Clean Air Committee

### Meeting summary

November 13, 2019

**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; Aly Robinson, Whatcom County Health Department; Mark Schofield Opportunity Council (OppCo); Viktor Vetkov, Slavic Church; Curtis Metz, Gabe Nelson, Jacob Johnson, Whatcom County Fire Marshal; Julie O'Shaughnessy, Northwest Clean Air Agency

**Present:** Phil Cloward, Jerry DeBruin, Aly Robinson, Mark Schofield, Gabe Nelson, Jacob Johnson, Julie O'Shaughnessy

#### **Agenda items:**

1. **Introductions** – Committee and community members present introduced themselves and provided a brief summary of their role in Columbia Valley.

The following community members were present: Richard Whitson and Rebecca Cayen

2. **Approval of October 9, 2019 meeting summary** – Mark Schofield moved to approve the meeting notes. Jerry seconded the motion.
3. **Open public comment** – Richard Whitson commended the change-out program from a personal perspective. Very pleased with the new woodstove and ductless heat pump. The installation crew provided very clear instructions on how to operate the equipment.
4. **Announcements**

#### **Air quality signs:**

**Julie** – Placed multiple (5) "Avoid a ban, limit burning" signs at Columbia Valley entrances last Thursday to encourage residents to use a different source of heat because weather conditions were stabilizing and air quality was declining. Air quality did not degrade to the point of calling a burn ban, so the signs were to be pulled. However, all signs, except for the one in front of the fire hall were stolen. Julie asked everyone present to keep an eye out for the signs.

**Rebecca** – Suggested securing the signs to prevent theft.

#### **CAC meeting time:**

**Julie** – Asked if moving the meeting time up by 30 minutes was reasonable (4:00 pm start time).

**Jacob** – Said that a later start time might better for the public.

**Julie** – Acknowledged Jacob's comment and Rebecca Cayen's travel time and retracted proposal.

### **Dissolution of KendallWatch:**

**Mark** – Brought up the discontinuation of KendallWatch and the possibility of including another community group on the committee.

**Jerry** – Understands that a new community, block-watch group may be forming. The name is Columbia Valley Watch.

**Aly** – Asked if it is appropriate to have a new community group take the place of KendallWatch for the purposes of this committee.

**Phil & Richard** – Suggested waiting to see what happens with the new group and invite them to join the committee later, if appropriate.

## **5. Wood stove replacement update**

**Mark** – Community Energy Challenge (CEC) and the low-income weatherization programs are assisting the with woodstove change-out program. On the CEC side, there are ten active projects underway. On the weatherization side, there are approximately seven active projects. Inquiries are still coming in on the project and the intake process has been streamlined. This should lessen any confusion the community may have experienced on who to contact and what program they are eligible.

## **6. Biomass/smoke reduction fall event**

### **Biomass committee**

**Phil** – The biomass committee started out with the concept of a wood bank to provide residents with dry fuel, which would result in clean burning. Currently, the committee is in the process of purchasing 150 cords of dry maple wood from Sierra Pacific and putting up a temporary hoop building to store the logs. The wood bank is under the Co-op because of insurance and available work force purposes. Hope that wood will be available fairly soon. Working through issues with L & I and permitting for the hoop building.

**Jacob** – Will check with Curtis Metz on the status of the hoop building.

**Phil** – Will provide any information necessary for a permit. The issue is regarding a conditional use permit for the land where logs have been stored for many years.

### **Chipping**

**Rebecca** – Has become aware of a grant opportunity via email from Aly. Plans to work with Julie and Aly to investigate and apply if appropriate.

**Aly** – The Whatcom Community Foundation has a “Project Neighborly” grant to support community-generated projects that enhance neighborliness and community capacity building. The grant is fairly small (\$5,000), but could be used to further advance chipping efforts and other disposal opportunities such as tires, appliances and solid waste. If disposal efforts are expanded beyond clean-green waste, this would be an opportunity to work with Appliance Depot and the environmental health team to see what capacity can be added to make it a more comprehensive event.

**Rebecca** – Asked how much money is currently available for future chipping events.

**Julie** – NWCAA is committed to supporting future chipping event, but hopes that additional funding sources come forward. One source may be Whatcom County.

**Rebecca** – If the Project Neighborly grant is secured, the number of chipping days may be extended. Perhaps, multiple disposal opportunities for different waste streams throughout the month of April would work well. The Mount Baker Foundation may also be interested in supporting this effort as well. This will be discussed at a subsequent meeting.

**Phil** – Aly's comments are migrating into outreach activities (Item 7.), so let us make sure everything is being included.

## **7. Outreach activities/ideas**

**Phil** – It is important to coordinate these activities so that materials are not accumulated or placed in a way that result in a safety or health concern. Appliances, such as refrigerators, are a potential safety concern example. Different waste streams require different handling approaches.

**Julie** – To limit potential confusion, it may be beneficial to hold discreet events for different waste streams.

**Jacob & Gabe** – Willing to follow-up with funding question to determine the process and possibility of contributing.

**Autumn Fair** – No first-hand update, but understand it was a success.

**Jacob & Gabe** – Curious about any future community events to build community relations.

**Aly** – Has a few ideas to share with Jacob and Gabe after the meeting.

## **8. Air quality and complaint update**

**Julie** – Since our last meeting, there were three exceedances of the health-based standard for PM 2.5. The health-based standard is 35 ug/m<sup>3</sup> averaged over 24-hours.

A burn ban was not called because modeling did not indicate a potential exceedance of the standard for a period of three consecutive days or more.

There were two outdoor burning complaints received. One was on 8500 Golden Valley Drive and the other was in the Oak Court area.

**Phil** – Complimented NWCAA on the way that air quality messaging was handled and that a burn ban was not called.

**Julie** – Thanked Dave Moe for the tour of Campers Paradise. Plans to meet with the general manager to talk about outdoor burning issues and concerns.

**Jerry, Gabe & Jacob** – Offered to attend the meeting and/or presentation with Julie.

**Gabe** – Shared that DNR has proposed a bill to legalize outdoor burning in urban growth areas. The purpose of the bill is to allow the burning of residential yard debris that is considered a fire hazard.