

East Whatcom Community Council Clean Air Committee

Meeting summary

January 8, 2020

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); Curtis Metz, Gabe Nelson, Jacob Johnson - Whatcom County Fire Marshal; Viktor Vetkov - Slavic Church; Julie O'Shaughnessy - Northwest Clean Air Agency

Present: Phil Cloward, Jerry DeBruin, Aly Robinson, Mark Schofield, Curtis Metz, Jacob Johnson, Julie O'Shaughnessy

Agenda items:

1. Introductions – No introductions necessary. All present know each other. Rebecca Cayen, community member, attended.

2. Approval of December 11, 2019 meeting summary – Mark moved to approve the meeting notes. Curtis seconded the motion.

3. Open public comment – None

4. Announcements

Julie - Shared that there is a biomass tax credit for consumers who purchased a qualifying stove before December 31, 2020 to improve the energy efficiency of their home. It is a \$300 dollar-for-dollar, non-refundable, tax credit.

5. Wood stove replacement update

Mark – Not a lot of change from last month in that we are not initiating new projects since there are 22 in progress. Waiting to work through the existing projects before we pursue additional projects.

Just completed several inspections on new installations and anecdotally, it looks as if people are using their heat pumps versus their wood stoves. However, people are pleased that they have the wood stove for heat in case of power outages or on particularly cold days.

Since last meeting, OppCo staff, Julie, Carl and CAZ personnel, met at the Building Performance Center to discuss technological and efficiency aspects of ductless heat pumps. The purpose was to share information and come away with a common understanding of how to efficiently and effectively use heat pumps. It also became clear that there might be opportunities for continued education for folks who have heat pumps on how to best operate their units since they are still learning how to use them.

6. Biomass committee

Phil – The Washington Wood Coop had an issue involving insurance certification that resulted in a temporary setback for the wood bank program. However, there may still be a viable wood program this season unless the snow prevents log hauling of 120 cords. There is another 240 cords of seasoned wood available. The wood bank will probably operate on a year-round basis. Will need to figure out how to run the operation with a volunteer work force.

7. Outreach activities/ideas

Spring chipping event:

Rebecca – The Project Neighborly Grant application is still open for a few more days, but the chipping event is not a natural fit for the grant. However, the Mount Baker Foundation that meets right after this meeting may be a better fit for potential funding. Aly and Rebecca will discuss the path to take to pursue funding after the meeting.

Talked to the Whatcom County Conservation District and they can be the funding pass-through for secured grant funds. Asked if Conservation District would update the chipping event flyer, but have not heard back yet. Not sure if they need funds to do so. Would like to confirm how much funding is currently available for the event and how much additional funding may be needed.

Julie – NWCAA has \$3,000 available for the spring chipping event. That would cover two days of chipping at \$1,300 each, plus tax and possible funding for flyer updates.

Rebecca – Would like to have at least two different chipping timeframes, one at the beginning of April and another mid-month.

Julie – NWCAA is unable to guarantee additional funding for a fall chipping event. Would like to encourage new entities to consider contributing to future chipping events.

Jerry – Views the spring chipping event as the more important one, especially with the recent weather and resulting blow-down material. Typically, there is not as much material to chip in the fall unless there is an early wind event.

Curtis – Spoke with his department about potential available funds for chipping. There may be some funding available, but the exact amount is not known until the budget cycle is processed. Larger funding needs may need to be budgeted for in advance.

Campers Paradise:

Jerry, Jacob, Gabe and Julie will coordinate a date to meet with the community to discuss outdoor burning and smoke issues.

8. Air quality and complaint update

Julie – There were no new complaints regarding wood stove smoke or outdoor burning since our last meeting. There were two days that exceeded the standard for “unhealthy for sensitive groups” since our last meeting; December 9th and 26th.