

East Whatcom Community Council Clean Air Committee

Meeting summary

June 10, 2020 (via video conference)

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, Jacob Johnson, Julie O'Shaughnessy

Agenda items:

1. **Introductions** – No introductions necessary. All present know each other.
2. **Approval of February 12, 2020 meeting summary** – Curtis moved to approve the meeting notes. Mark seconded the motion.
3. **Open public comment** – None
4. **Announcements**

Jacob – Working with NWCAA to develop more burn ban signs before the next burn ban season. Want to have a greater presence and received complaints faster for a quicker response. Also, working with Black Mountain Ranch after several structures burned down. Hoping to use the model being developed with Black Mountain Ranch, when working with Paradise Estates. The goal is to communicate code requirements and fire safety concerns.

Julie – Asked the committee about the appropriate frequency of Clean Air Committee meetings during the pandemic.

Mark – Since work is currently limited, waiting until August to meet seems reasonable.

Jacob – Agrees that every-other-month seems appropriate.

Curtis – Agrees, also. However, as things start shifting and work increases we need to be flexible. Once the border is opened, there will probably be more activity in this area.

Conclusion (all) – The next meeting will be August unless a need for a July meeting arises.

5. **Wood stove replacement update**

Mark – Shortly after our last meeting in February, OppCo made the decision to postpone doing any work in homes. This was approximately one week after the Governor issued the stay-at-home order. At that point, all contractor work stopped and additional work orders were not pursued. OppCo is waiting for guidance from the State Department of Commerce for protocols that need to be in place before weatherization programs can resume work. Community Energy Challenge does not have all the same requirements, but will follow the same protocols put forward by Commerce.

There are 25 projects that are completed or in some stage of work. No additional projects will be taken on until all of these are completed. It is anticipated that these 25 projects will spend out the entire amount of the current grant. Two projects in process still need heat pumps. Several other projects were completed at the time of the stay-home order, which prevented the quality assurance inspection by staff. However, contractor(s) and homeowners(s) submitted photos of the completed work remote photos to close out the projects.

There are 12 additional households interested in the program that are currently on a waiting list. These will only occur if additional funding is secured.

6. Ecology grant status update

Julie – This grant cycle for wood smoke reduction is from July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2021. NWCAA received \$330,000 in total for three different tasks; wood stove change outs, administration and program promotion. A total of approximately \$2 million was available statewide for all seven local air agencies and Ecology regional offices. Ecology is preparing to submit a \$4 million proposal to the legislators for the next biennium.

A remaining balance of \$145,000 exists. During a recent statewide meeting three agencies voiced interest and capacity to receive and spend additional funds. NWCAA was one of those agencies interested in additional funding and will receive \$44,000. A formal amendment will reflect the changes in funding. The additional funding will help to complete the 25 existing projects and several of the high priority projects on the waiting list.

7. Biomass committee

Phil – The Washington Wood Coop secured approximately 190 cords of wood. Prior to COVID, the entire cordage was earmarked for sale to the Swinomish Elders. Because of the pandemic, the sale was reduced to 90 cords. The remaining cordage is being stockpiled. Sierra Pacific has more wood available and the Coop is trying to secure an additional purchase.

The wood bank is alive and well, but the Coop needs to meet and establish procedures and protocol with the Opportunity Council before the local wood bank is established.

The Coop is developing a program to separate wood species during harvest operations to have a pure source of Douglas Fir to make wood pellets. The intent is to further expand the business plan to include a pellet mill.

8. Outreach activities/ideas

Spring chipping event:

Julie (for Rebecca) – The chipping event was held in April, by Zender's mobile chipper. Residents staged their material and were given a timeline of approximately 15 minutes

each, to help estimate the appropriate amount of material. This helped regulate the amount of material any resident would place curbside. There were 57 households serviced through this chipping event, which generated approximately 26 tons of wood chips.

Since we last met, Aly's hard work was able to secure \$5,000 from the "Project Neighborly" grant. That money will fund a fall chipping event in September.

Aly – Semi-related to the chipping (clean-up) event, the Appliance Depot has permanently closed down because of lower metal prices. They picked up old appliances for disposal.

Phil – The leftover vegetation material, south of the Resource Center in Peaceful Valley, was chipped by Cowden.

9. Air quality and complaint update

Julie – There were no new complaints regarding wood stove smoke or outdoor burning since our last meeting. There were no air quality exceedances of any type since we last met.