

**East Whatcom Community Council  
Clean Air Committee  
Meeting summary  
March 10, 2021 - 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:** Rebecca Cayen, East Whatcom Community Council (newly elected)

**Co-chair Outreach:** Carl McDaniel, Community Member (newly elected)

**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:** Rebecca Cayen, Carl McDaniel, Aly Robinson, Mark Schofield, Jacob Johnson, Curtis Metz; Seth Preston, Julie O'Shaughnessy

**Agenda items:**

- 1. Introductions** – All present introduced themselves and identified their role at work and in the community.
- 2. Approval of January 27, 2021 meeting summary** – Carl moved to approve meeting minutes; Mark seconded the motion.
- 3. Open public comment – None**
- 4. Announcements** – Julie will retire at the end of April, but is happy to meet next month if that is beneficial. The committee decided to hold a meeting in April.
- 5. Committee membership changes**

Seth will spearhead meeting agenda development and schedule future Clean Air Committee meetings. Carl volunteered to manage meeting minutes in his preferred format.

**6. PSE power surge update**

**Mark** – Ten Columbia Valley households who lost their ductless heat pumps (DHP) during the October 2020 power surge, contacted OppCo. These ten DHP were installed either through the change-out program or through the weatherization program. To date, OppCo has replaced two DHP.

A PSE engineer, the installer and the distributor of the DHP & internal surge protector have visited at least 1-2 homes to determine the cause of the surge. The goal is to prevent it from happening again. The cause appears to be that the power surge exceeded the internal surge protector's capacity, but not enough to trip the surge protector.

Whatever solution PSE comes up with will probably apply to other situations that involve electronics other than DHP.

## 7. Wood stove replacement update

**Mark** - Additional grant money will allow for the change-out of 2-3 more stoves.

**Julie** – We are down to ~\$2,000 for change-outs, which is not enough to fund another change-out. Working with Ecology to transfer task funds to best utilize the remaining balances. The intent is to use remaining funds for program promotion efforts (stovetop thermometers and moisture meters).

Julie will draft the FY21-23 wood smoke reduction grant prior to retirement to ensure that the program does not experience any interruption. The application for the next grant cycle will only allow the installation of Alaska approved stoves. This will ensure that the stoves are clean burning ( $\leq 2.0$  grams/hour).

## 8. OppCo's work status with clients

**Mark** – Workflow is back to pre-pandemic levels and COVID safety protocols continue to be implemented.

## 9. Biomass committee

- Wood harvesting/wood bank – **Julie**  
At our last meeting, it was mentioned that Julie was going to contact Frank Zender about the logs stored on the Mt. Baker Highway. The last name should have been Cain, not Zender. Frank Cain is out of town, but will be contacted when he returns.
- Chipping event – **Rebecca**  
The chipping event will occur in April. People have already signed up, but there is capacity for more so pass along Rebecca's contact info. The signs are ordered and will be placed throughout the Valley. Emails will be sent to all previous participants regarding the event. The structure will be slightly different this time in that chipping at each residence will be in 15-minute increments.

The two-day April event will use the remaining "Project Neighborly" funds. Trying to reach The Foothills Community Alliance for potential funding for the fall event. Is NWCAA able to help fund the fall event? (Julie will check and report).

## 10. NWCAA update

- PurpleAir sensor update – Julie  
By the end of the week, all nine sensors should be installed in various locations throughout the valley. One sensor will be installed at the Resource Center. Sensor data can be accessed at [www.purpleair.com/map](http://www.purpleair.com/map).

Seth – Shared the purple air website with the group and pointed out a few important elements on how to interpret the maps. The default view on the map is a ten-minute average. This is different from the data NWCAA usually shares or posts, which is a 24-hour average. The timeframe can be changed in the table at the bottom left. Note also, that PurpleAir readings run much higher than the formal EPA sanctioned monitors NWCAA uses. To correct this, Purple Air worked with Lane Regional Air Pollution Authority to develop a conversion rate for a 24-hour period. This conversion can also be activated in the bottom left hand box by choosing "LRAPA" in the "Conversion" drop-down menu. When this conversion factor is activated, the values more closely mirror the formal NWCAA monitors values.

Aly had several questions and suggestions on how to assist the public in interpreting the data, including talking points for committee members and FAQs on how to use the website. The committee also stated that a presentation from a NWCAA monitoring person would be useful.

Carl has developed a community map, initially for COVID, which is viewed by approximately 3,000 people. He is willing to refer people to the PurpleAir map, but would also want to be able to include information on how to use and interpret the data (FAQs).

Rebecca asked about the possibility of YouTube tutorials. Seth shared that our lead monitoring person is already working on that. He will also pass along how enthusiastic our committee is about the development of the tutorial videos.

- Air quality complaints & monitoring data – Julie  
There have been six exceedances since our last meeting of the PM2.5 24-hour average health-based standard. There was one woodstove complaint on January 27 on the 8500 block of Golden Valley Drive.