

AQAC MINUTES

March 3, 2015

Members/alternates present: Beth Berlin, Phil Perszyk, Sue Spanke, Ronni Flannery, Garon Smith, Tom Roberts, Jan Hoem, Guy Hanson, John Ottman, Dave Atkins

Members/alternates absent: John Garberson, Bill Flanery, Bert Chessin, Ryan Leach, Kathy Tonnessen

Staff: Sarah Coefield

Public: Jim Habeck

- 1. Jan Hoem called the meeting to order**
- 2. Excused absences recognized** – Bill Flanery, John Garberson, Bert Chessin and Kathy Tonnessen were excused.
- 3. Agenda approved.**
- 4. February minutes approved.**
- 5. Public comment on non-agenda items**

Jim Habeck asked if there are dusty, unpaved roads with high traffic still causing dust problems in Missoula County. Sarah Coefield told him the Air Pollution Control Program paving rules only apply to the Air Stagnation Zone (ASZ). Residents in areas outside the ASZ can form a RSID to have magnesium chloride applied to their unpaved roads or have the roads paved. The group discussed the fact that the magnesium chloride is also used as a deicer. Jim said the city forester says the liquid deicer used in town is killing conifers. He asked if the deicer is an air quality issue. John Ottman said he had a development in Big Fork, and in his observations, 80 percent of developments sell out quicker if they are paved vs. using dust abatement vs. no dust control at all. He said he challenges every neighborhood to get together, bite the bullet, and pave the roads if they want to maintain the integrity and health of the neighborhood. John said the long term effect of dust is considerably more horrendous than the effects of deicer; his development lost far more trees to dust than to any kind of deicer.

6. Article Presentation

Beth Berlin presented the article “The positive benefits of negative ions” from the Nutrition Review Archive. The article includes a lengthy summary of air pollution’s health impacts, including cardiovascular damage, chronic respiratory diseases and DNA mutation. The article goes on to discuss air purifiers and ions.

Beth said she selected the article because it provides a good review of air pollution’s health impacts. She appreciated that the article mentions diesel exhaust and explains why children are more susceptible to air pollution. She said the article also talks about negative ions as a health benefit.

Jan Hoem asked if particles clump and fall out of the air if you have an air purifier that emits negative ions.

Beth said the article doesn’t explain how the purifiers work – it just says negative ions

are beneficial.

Sue Spanke said that she thought ionizers cause oxidation and that's generally considered bad for you. She said you can clean the air with a HEPA filter – you don't need an ionizer.

Garon Smith pointed out that you can't make negative ions without also making positive ions.

Beth reaffirmed that she didn't pick the article for the ion discussion – she was more interested in the air pollution health studies summarized in the beginning of the article.

Guy Hanson asked if the negative ions are ozone.

Garon said it makes a difference between what the ion is – peroxides have their own health effects. He said he's not sure what negative ions the article is discussing. He said some industrial air pollution control equipment (electrostatic precipitators) use charged particles to remove particulates from emissions.

Tom Roberts said years ago, Kit Johnson did studies on the negative effects of Missoula air pollution on children. Missoula has a history of bad air and pediatricians looking at its effects. He said he's particularly interested in diesel's health impacts. He said the concern about buses is diesel exhaust and there are studies that show just living near some place with diesel exhaust increases your chances for developing cancer.

Garon said diesel has polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), and has come close to being classified as a carcinogen. He said there's been an increase in diesel engine cleanliness in response to health concerns and the potential carcinogen classification.

Tom said the PAHs are why diesel is more of a concern to him than general particulates.

John Ottman said the mandated efficiency requirements of engines have had an impact. He said as far as trucking and forestry equipment goes, because they have to meet efficiency standards, there has been a phasing out of old trucks. John also said that the article is really interesting and really hits home because his wife has asthma.

7. The Tongue River Railroad and Coal Transport – Gary Matson

Gary Matson gave a presentation about Otter Creek coal the Tongue River Railroad. He said he wants to encourage the county to participate in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for coal transport. In March 2010, the State Land Board voted 3-2 to approve a lease to Ark Land Co. (a subsidiary of Arch Coal) that would lead to the mining of 1.3 billion tons of coal. The Tongue River Railroad is a section of rail that would be necessary to transport the coal to the BNSF railroads and ultimately to the coast. There will be an opportunity to comment on the Tongue River Railroad this spring. Gary said possible subjects for county comment included carbon dioxide emissions and climate change, rail interference with vehicular traffic and atmospheric contamination by mercury.

Tom Roberts asked if Gary is looking for a letter from the Health Board during the public comment period.

Gary said there will be a draft EIS published this spring, and he would ask for Missoula County to have personnel read the EIS and see if it addresses things that would impact the county. He said that if the EIS doesn't include language about climate change, the county could say that in the final EIS they need to look at climate change. Gary acknowledged that the county might not have EIS experts, but anyone can look through the document and see if climate change is included in the discussion. He said the EIS will be issued by the Surface Transportation Board.

Garon Smith said the Board sent a letter opposing the coal export terminals to the Corps of Engineers a while back. He said there were also letters from the Council and the County Board of Commissioners.

Beth Berlin said the folks drafting the EIS would have to provide alternatives including a preferred alternative. She said that if they haven't included an evaluation of climate change in that discussion, they could be told that it needs to be included.

Gary said that Arch Coal stock is going down and China is phasing down its use of coal, but this is still an ongoing project. He said DEQ will perform the Otter Creek EIS, but its release date has yet to be scheduled. The Tongue River Railroad is the first scheduled EIS.

Beth said the Surface Transportation Board should consider climate change when they're looking at the socioeconomic benefits and impacts of the project.

Gary said NEPA provides a lot of opportunities for people to see what's going on.

Garon pointed out that because the Transportation Board is conducting the EIS, the eventual burning of coal might be beyond their purview.

Dave Atkins said that they are connected processes – you don't build the railroad if you aren't going to burn the coal. He said the Otter Creek EIS isn't out yet, so why would you even build the railroad if there's a chance you might not have a mine?

Jan Hoem said that Peak Energy may have few funds for the EIS because its stock is way down. Also, she said the mine, railroad and terminals are our opportunities to speak out against the mining and burning of coal. She said the terminals have faced strong resistance. She thinks there's better than a 50/50 chance they will be stopped. She said it makes sense to focus on the mine and railroad.

John Ottman told the group that when he was on an airplane flying into the capital of Mongolia he could see two giant coal burning facilities from the plant. He said that if we're going to do anything to combat coal use and climate change, we've got to get to where the coal burns. They don't burn to any standard in some countries.

Beth pointed out that we can affect things here more than abroad.

John said that the Council can write about vehicle traffic impacts, but we are chasing cheese on the moon with these smaller efforts. He said we need to have impacts at places that burn the coal. What we do in Missoula is limited to the rail's impacts on vehicles. As far as impacts in Missoula, the focus needs to be on how those stalled, idling cars at the rail crossings impact air quality.

Jan said she wanted to get back to what Gary and Judy Matson are here to do. She pointed out that there isn't an EIS document to look at yet and she doesn't believe that the Council can ask the city or county to assign staff to read the EIS when it comes out. She said that if the Council had a committee, they could read the document and craft the letter.

Gary said the Council is advisory to the Board, the Board includes a commissioner among its members, and the Board guides the commissioners.

Jan said the Council could read the EIS and send a letter. She said she'd like to be on the group that looks at the EIS.

Beth Berlin said they could start by looking at the scoping document that precedes the EIS. She also said she would like to be on the committee.

Gary said he would be happy to participate on the project.

Garon said the group had talked about the impacts of decreased diesel emissions from trains in Missoula in previous letters. He said this is one of the real issues that affect Missoula.

Sue Spanke asked if the EIS only covers the building of the Tongue River Railroad in the area where it will be built. She asked if it will be hard to connect its construction with impacts in Missoula.

Dave said these are all connected actions, so the EIS should address the entire project's impacts.

Gary said he's not sure how in-depth the EIS will be. He said the scoping document might provide some answer.

John Ottman said we need to focus on local impacts and join the pack of communities that will be affected by the railroad. He said we can't deal with how the coal will be burned – that's for Congress.

Jan Hoem asked for a motion for a committee to form.

Sue Spanke made a motion to create a committee to read the Tongue River Railroad

scoping document and the draft EIS and to draft a letter to send to the Health Board.

Dave asked if the same committee could also look at the Otter Creek EIS. Jan said there's no date for the Otter Creek EIS release yet, and Gary said it will come out some time this fall. He said DEQ's been waiting for the owner of the coal to get involved in the permitting process.

Phil Perszyk seconded Sue's motion.

Beth and Jan volunteered to be on the committee.

The motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.

8. Select AQAC Chair and Co-Chair

The group discussed the election of the chair and co-chair. Beth Berlin had told Sarah Coefield that she was ready to step down from the co-chair position.

Jan Hoem said she's fine with staying on as chair for another year, but she would like someone to groom themselves to replace her.

Sue Spanke said she'd like to see Jan continue in the chair position. Jan asked if anyone wanted to nominate for chair.

Guy Hanson nominated Jan for chair and Jan asked if anyone would like to co-chair with her. Beth pointed out that the co-chair is the same position as a vice-chair.

Jan was selected as chair with a unanimous voice vote.

Beth nominated Guy Hanson for co-chair.

Sue said that John Garberson, Guy Hanson, Ryan Leach and Bert Chessin have all been on the Council for a long time and would be good co-chairs.

Guy said his plate is too full at the moment, and he turned down the nomination.

Jan suggested waiting until the next meeting to select the co-chair because there were a lot of absentees this month.

9. Staff report

Sarah Coefield gave the staff report. She said she continuing to work on the second 10-year maintenance plan for carbon monoxide. Outdoor burning opened on March 1st, and there have been 900 permits sold so far.

The PM10 Redesignation Request and Limited Maintenance Plan has been sent to DEQ for its final 30 day public comment period before being submitted to the EPA.

She also mentioned some bills that have gone before the legislature that would have the

potential to impact the Air Pollution Control Program, including a bill to limit woodstove regulations. That bill was tabled in committee. There was also a bill that would have required the DEQ to fine the US Forest Service for wildfire smoke if it caused an exceedance of the National Ambient Air Quality Standard. That bill was also tabled in committee.

10. Public comment

Jim Habeck said a healthy forest requires burning – don't think you're going to eliminate fires without having consequences.

11. Select AQAC representative for next Air Board meeting update

Beth Berlin will attend the Board meeting.

12. Announcements, other business

Dave Atkins said he wanted to highlight several things from last month's article about beetles and wildfires. He said the article focused on ecological effects and consequences. He said from an ecological resilience standpoint, if you have lodgepole pines and their cones, you will get lodgepoles back after a fire, so he agrees with that aspect of the article.

He said that from a wildfire fighting standpoint, however, there's a huge safety risk for firefighters if you have standing dead trees, and the article doesn't address this. Also, he said you have to look at land management objectives. Wilderness is one thing, but here are other objectives to think about. He said that there are also ecological effects when trees are in the gray stage and there are severe weather conditions. However, that got bypassed in the article discussion.

He said that in the paper, they mention the importance of looking more than 10 years past an outbreak – after 10 years, most of the dead trees come down and you then have large amounts of down, dry, woody material. Dave said this material will burn hot and create a lot of smoke. If you salvaged some of that material, there would be less consumption in a wildfire.

Ultimately, he said, it's a good article. If you have lodgepole pines with serotinous cones, the trees will benefit from fires. However, some lodgepole pines don't have that kind of cone and aren't regenerating well. As an advisory council, he said it's up to us to look at nuances and details so that we're presenting them when we give advice.

John Ottman said he's on the board for the College of Forestry and Conservation. He said they keep asking, what happened to the beetles? Where'd they go? He said the forest manager thinks a parasite came in because there are no more beetles. The beetle epidemic ended two years ago.

13. Adjourn