

OFFICIAL RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Missoula City-County Air Pollution Control Board
November 18, 2010

Board Members Present: Dr. Garon Smith (Chair), Dr. Alan Gabster (Vice Chair), Jean Curtiss, Teresa Henry, Ross Miller, and Renee Mitchell

Board Members Excused: Eileen Sansom

Staff Members Present: Health Administration: Ellen Leahy and Julie Mohr; and Environmental Health (Air Quality): Sarah Coefield and Ben Schmidt

Legal Counsel Present: Marnie McClain (Chief Civil Deputy County Attorney)

Others Present: Kelly Hart, Ruth Licitra, Dixie McLaughlin, and Ron Scholl

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Dr. Smith called the meeting to order at 2:09 p.m.

ITEM 1 APPROVE OCTOBER 21, 2010 MINUTES

The motion was unanimously approved to accept the minutes as submitted.

ITEM 2 PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

No public comments were given.

ITEM 3 BOARD AND STAFF COMMENTS ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

An open house drew a good turnout in Seeley Lake on October 30th, with participation by the Seeley Lake Community Council, the health department, Axmen, energy companies, and representatives from the Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP).

- The goal was to educate the public on safe operation of woodstoves and use of clean burning techniques, to explain how woodstove use affects particulate levels in the area, and to build awareness of the need to take appropriate steps to meet air quality standards.
- The cooperative outreach offered food and raffles and informed attendees through use of posters, emissions jars, a miniature inversion demonstration, and more.

Outdoor wood burning also affects air quality and has caused problems this year. To protect the Seeley Lake valley currently requires closing Airshed 3B in its entirety. Sarah Coefield explained to the Board how the department is working to define an impact zone that outlines just the valley. Jean Curtiss noted that work done by the Clearwater Resource Council may be useful. Dr. Smith asked that the information from key posters used at the event be added to the health department's website.

Ben Schmidt described air quality monitoring activities in the area, including the locations of equipment and how their positioning will help determine if certain readings are due to a neighborhood effect versus which readings are good indicators of the valley's air quality overall.

Mr. Schmidt met last night with the Evaro Community Council, which formed in May 2010, to explain the 2009 revisions to the air quality regulations. Council members believe they were left out of the rule making process. They oppose requirements that prohibit use of woodstoves during a Stage II warning and intend to seek exemption for Evaro from the rules. Portions of Evaro will not be affected by the rules because the regulations have no jurisdiction over tribal lands.

The Board of Regents meets today and will decide whether to go forward with the University of Montana's interest in acquiring a gasification boiler to generate heat using biomass. On behalf of the health department, Jim Carlson was careful to limit comments for the Missoulian's latest article on the proposal since UM has issued very little information. His remarks emphasized: 1) it is not yet possible to determine whether the State or the County would permit the system; 2) a gasification process is desired when using biomass for heating in order to protect air quality; and 3) the department is conscious of the need to not backslide on progress made over the decades by contributions from individuals and businesses to improve Missoula's air quality. Dr. Smith said he will try to help facilitate a good conversation. Mr. Schmidt noted the public is allowed to use pellet stoves and there are also options available for industry. The new nitrous oxide (NOx) emission standards may prevent the proposal from going forward.

Dr. Smith gave a flyer from an instrument company to the Environmental Health staff. It says Switzerland is among a number of countries that require use of diesel particulate filters for off-road equipment, such as construction machines, in order to protect air quality.

ADJOURNMENT: Dr. Smith declared the meeting adjourned at 2:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Leahy
Health Officer

Garon Smith
Chair