

# Kamloops Air Quality Roundtable

Meeting Summary as at May 21, 2021

**Location:** Online meeting via Zoom

**Meeting Date:** May 20, 2021, 9:00AM to 12:00PM

## Present

Greg Baytalan, Interior Health Authority  
Alex Bursac, City of Kamloops (Environmental Services)  
Glen Cheetham, City of Kamloops (Sustainability Services)  
Kristin Dangelmeier, Domtar (from 9:10AM)  
Josie Howitt, City of Kamloops (Sustainability Services)  
Fiona Goorman, First Nations Health Authority  
James Gordon, Thompson Rivers University  
Gavin King, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy  
Brandon Lewis, New Gold  
Sarah Martin, Thompson Rivers University  
Melissa McGarry, School District 73  
Gina Morris, Kamloops Moms for Clean Air (from 9:10AM)  
Mike Simpson, Fraser Basin Council (FBC) (facilitator, recorder)  
John ter Borg, T'kemplups te Secwepemc (9:10AM to 10:00AM)  
Mike Wypych, KGHM Ajax Mines

## Guests

Warren Asuchak, Thompson Rivers University (to 10:00AM)  
Aleece Laird, Amplify Consulting (to 9:30AM)  
Colin O'Leary, O'Leary and Associates (to 9:40AM)

### 1. Welcome, Introductions, Review Agenda and Objectives

Mike Simpson welcomed everyone, Secwepemc territory was acknowledged, and introductions were made. The agenda was approved as presented.

### 2. Beyond New Afton

Brandon Lewis gave a presentation on *Beyond New Afton: Engaging Community to Build a Plan for the Future* to proactively identify and address the social impacts of mine closure, anticipated in 2030 at the earliest. Aleece Laird and Colin O'Leary are consultants working on the project communications and stakeholder engagement. Everyone can participate by completing an online survey at [www.bit.ly/BeyondNewAfton](http://www.bit.ly/BeyondNewAfton) - also see material distributed with this meeting summary.

### 3. TRU Campus Electrification and District Energy System

Warren Asuchak gave an overview of TRU's plans for campus electrification and a district energy system, to meet their goals of reducing carbon emissions. Subsequent phases will involve connecting to the City's Canada Games Centre and Aquatic Centre. At full build out, it will reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 90% or

4300 tons per year. KAQR members can contact Warren with follow up questions at [wasuchak@tru.ca](mailto:wasuchak@tru.ca) and his presentation slides are circulated with this meeting summary, file named *tru\_lcdes\_slides\_reduced.pdf* and will be posted online by late May.

#### **4. City of Kamloops Community Climate Action Plan**

Glen Cheetham and Josie Howitt gave an overview of the City's Community Climate Action Plan, which can be found at <https://letstalk.kamloops.ca/ClimateAction>. They explained that the plan has gone through several rounds of feedback, and it will be presented to Council for approval in late June. Many of the co-benefits of various goals and strategies include improved air quality, in addition to significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. Glen and Josie's presentation slides are circulated with this summary, file named *City of Kamloops CCAP\_AQRT Presentation May 20 2021.pdf* and will also be posted online by late May.

#### **5. Previous Meeting Summaries**

The meeting summary from January 27, 2021 was approved. Old action items from the previous meeting summary were reviewed (see Action Items at end of this meeting summary).

Regarding the Education Subcommittee actions, the following was noted: nothing has advanced due to COVID; there is less enthusiasm for curriculum initiatives as there's no guarantee that teachers will use anything developed; suggestion that when connections with Big Little Science Centre are made, to give them the mandate/freedom to develop something, as they did this for electricians as a trade and created some very hands-on experiments to engage youth. It was noted that BLSC will likely need some funding to be engaged in such a manner.

#### **6. Information Sharing**

*City of Kamloops* – Josie noted that with the woodstove exchange program, there are up to 60 rebates in total available with 2 wood to wood, 30 wood to natural gas, and 5 wood to electric insert. They are thinking of revamping the program by having more electric inserts and less natural gas exchanges available, surveying past participants, engaging retailers, and leveraging the modest refunds with funding from other programs. Contact Josie if you have any ideas for the program.

Glen noted that the Community Energy Association of BC is hosting online workshops on the future of e-mobility in central and northern BC on June 9-10. See info circulated with this meeting summary and register by contacting [dwiess@communityenergy.bc.ca](mailto:dwiess@communityenergy.bc.ca)

Alex noted that the significant fire at Mission Flats landfill in late winter has not had a cause determined but was likely caused by lithium ion batteries. This prompted a discussion about properly storing batteries for recycling as they can arc, in particular lithium ion batteries. Sarah noted that she has seen similar examples of poorly stored batteries for recycling at Kelowna General Hospital.

*MOECCS* – Gavin noted that while data analysis is not official yet, 2020 was a quiet year on the local air quality front. Most parameters measured were well below limits. With only one week of significant wildfire smoke in mid-September, there are very few spikes over 20µg/m<sup>3</sup> of PM<sub>2.5</sub>. Unknown sources of spikes of total reduced sulfur in July and October occurred. A full report and presentation will be

forthcoming. He noted that it may be a bad forest fire year, based on how little precipitation there has been in late winter and spring.

A discussion ensued about the amount of human caused forest fires, the limited fines and penalties, and what can be done to prepare for wildfire season. Mike Simpson informed those present that another initiative FBC coordinates are community wildfire preparedness roundtables in Williams Lake, Clearwater and Clinton and their surrounding areas (see [www.wildfireroundtables.ca](http://www.wildfireroundtables.ca)) and that recent [presentations by Alan Westhaver](#) have demonstrated the effectiveness of [FireSmart](#) principles that homeowners can take to reduce the likelihood of their homes igniting by embers from forest fires. Alex noted that Kirsten Wourms of City of Kamloops leads wildfire protection initiatives, as well as Kamloops Fire Rescue. Melissa noted that Kirsten and KFR did some door-to-door FireSmart assessments last summer. Interest was expressed to learn more about this topic.

*Interior Health Authority* – Greg noted that March was the driest March on record, and April the 4<sup>th</sup> driest for precipitation. Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) is offering purple air monitors, contact Greg if you or any of your colleagues want one and he'll connect you to them. BC Lung Association is seeking to conduct an inventory of clean(er) air shelters, this hasn't started yet, he will circulate when it does. There's been lots of research underway with respect to COVID, air flows, HVAC systems and best practices. Greg observed that as buildings get "tighter" in terms of energy efficiency that indoor air quality, air flow and radon gas should be increasingly considered.

*First Nations Health Authority* – Fiona reported that they are shifting from flood/freshet to wildfire preparedness. UBC in partnership with Lytton First Nation and funding from ECCC created an air quality toolkit that can be shared, click [here](#).

*Thompson Rivers University* – James noted that Go By Bike week is coming up May 31-June 4; that TRU is engaging in FBC's fleet assessment program; and that they are engaging in the Canadian Campus Tree Program.

Sarah noted that they are preparing for wildfire season with building operations and the possibility of providing space for displaced people.

*Domtar* – Kristin reported that the planned maintenance outage in late April-early May went well, and that there were no emissions from the stack during that time. She noted that when there are TRS spikes, Domtar works closely with MOECCS to determine causes within their operations (none found in 2020). It was noted that weather, inversions and wind patterns often push the high stack emissions down to the valley. Kristin reminded those present that Domtar self-generates electricity, and are exploring options to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including a \$3M investment in their equipment. Much of Domtar's raw material comes from increased utilization of slash piles, which would normally be lit in the forest to abate fire hazard. Paper Excellence is pursuing purchase of all of Domtar's operations.

*School District 73* – Melissa noted that SD73 has acquired one electric school bus and the district expects to have it in operation by September; there are 18 electric school buses in BC. SD73 has increased air filtration during COVID, which means their energy efficiency has decreased. They are planning for September operations next month, and she noted that there has been significant growth in SD73 and it's the fastest growing in the province which means capital projects and new buildings. There will be a new superintendent in September.

*New Gold* – Brandon reported that New Gold has numerous battery electric vehicles in use, and has tested large transport vehicles as they switch from diesel. Stantec has been hired to do air quality modelling for their C zone permitting. Human health and ecological risk monitoring is ongoing. Brandon noted they are looking for an environmental scientist with an air quality focus, job posting [here](#).

*Fraser Basin Council* – Jim Gudjonson is no longer with Fraser Basin Council, he took a job at BC Lottery Corporation leading sustainability initiatives.

BC Lung Association is hosting an air quality webinar on wildfire smoke June 2, 10AM-11AM, register here: [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_ecqVO0auQjimuMiugLxHxg](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ecqVO0auQjimuMiugLxHxg)

## 7. Financial Status

Mike reported that FBC provided support to the KAQR with \$4000 in the year ending March 31, 2021. This included organizing, facilitating and doing summaries for three meetings, a very small amount of coordination in between meetings, and for communications support to post material on [www.kamloopsairquality.ca](http://www.kamloopsairquality.ca) website.

For the year beginning April 1, 2021, the following commitments have been made:

- TRU \$1000
- KGHM \$1000
- Domtar \$1500
- City of Kamloops - \$1000

## 8. Next Steps

Future KAQR meeting dates and draft agendas

- **Fall 2021** – Mike to seek a date a few weeks in advance

Future presentation opportunities

- Kamloops Community Wildfire Protection Plan (understanding what it is, what fuel management activities are taking place around the city) and BC Wildfire Service (challenges with causes of wildfires, what can be done for stiffer penalties for causing them)
- 2020 Air quality report, 2021 wildfire season projections – Gavin
- Shelter in place concept, clean air refuges for Kamloops (evacuation, residents at risk)
- New Gold presentation on air quality
- TRU research chair in Predictive Services, Emergency Management and Fire Science
- Puget Sound Clean Air Agency?

Future field tour opportunities (when able to):

- Air station – federal station downtown
- City – landfill, sewage treatment plant (second choice)
- Stations being built at MOECCS – look at before shipped out
- Tolko – gasifier; veneer slicer; driers; presses; new cyclo-filter
- Pellet plant at Lavington (longer drive)
- SD73 Electric school bus

## List of Action Items

Task	Responsibility	Timing
<b>Education Subcommittee tasks:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Follow up on action items in May 21, 2019 summary</li> <li>▪ Gina, Ralph and Kristin to prepare a general presentation on air quality for a layperson audience</li> <li>▪ Gina to review curriculum material as her time, capacity and interest allows</li> <li>▪ Connect with TRU's Eureka (summer science camp)</li> <li>▪ Connect with Big Little Science Centre, about including information on air quality aimed at various audiences</li> </ul>	Mike, Gina, Ralph, Melissa, Jim, Kristin, Jaimi Garbutt (City)	Ongoing
<b>STANDING ITEMS</b>		
Ask Kristin (Domtar) if you need a supply of <b>wood ash</b>	Everyone	Ongoing
Follow up with Jaimi if you want stickers/info on <b>idling reduction</b>	Jaimi	Ongoing
Apply for <b>grants</b> (if needed)	Gina	As needed
<b>Talk</b> to each other, <b>share</b> resources, <b>collaborate</b> between meetings	Everyone	Ongoing