

May 20, 2009 Minutes

2009-05-20 Minutes

Written by admin on July 8th, 2009

MINUTES

Meeting: Wednesday, May 20, 2009

Trail City Hall – Meeting Room No. 2

7:00 pm

Committee Members Present:

Dieter Bogs, Chair, City of Trail Alternate: Councillor Al Graham

Dr. Nelson Ames, Interior Health Authority

Brad McCandlish, BC Ministry of Environment

Steve Hilts, Teck Trail Operations

Valerie Pitman, Interior Health Authority

Graham Kenyon, Community Rep.

John Crozier, Councillor, Village of Warfield

Marylynn Rakuson, Community Rep.

Craig Adams, Community Rep.

Others in Attendance:

Andrea McCormick, SNC Lavalin Environment

Darin Cooper, Mike Martin – Teck Trail Operations

Chris Stroich, BC Ministry of Environment

PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES: Dated March 3, 2009 – accepted as presented.

REPORTS

Interior Health (Valerie Pitman)

Valerie reported that she has accepted a new position as Team Leader for the public health nurses with IH, but that she will remain involved with the THEC and the public consultation program, at least through the remainder of 2009.

Over the past 1.5 months or so, Valerie has noted an increase in the number of new families requesting home visits. Some of these families are new to the area, while others have lived here for a while, but have not previously participated. She speculated that the interest may have arisen due to the soil testing program or advertisements about the Work Project Assistance Program. The home visits allow Valerie to familiarize the families with the program and to invite them to participate in the fall blood testing clinic for pre-school aged children.

Teck

Steve reported that Georgio Akiki, Environmental Engineer, will be leaving Teck to pursue a masters degree in environmental management in Europe.

Work Project Assistance Program (WPAP - Andrea)

Program is being accessed through new location – SNC Lavalin Environment office on Bay Avenue - signage/sandwich board in place.

The office has received many inquiries about the program, with people walking in off the street because they have noticed the sandwich board or heard the ads. The number of people actually utilizing the program has been one to four per month.

Ron Joseph provided two copies of the WPAP CD for any committee members who are interested in viewing the overview/training presentation.

Case Management Program - “yard services” (Steve and Andrea)

Teck has now relieved Interior Health staff of the responsibility for arranging and overseeing yard repair/remediation services for families of children with elevated or rising blood lead levels. Valerie still conducts the initial home visits, which include an assessment of whether bare soil areas in the yard may need to be addressed. Teck’s consultant, SNC Lavalin Environment, takes care of sampling/analysis and works with Valerie and a contractor to carry out work such as lawn repair, small areas of patio block, small areas of soil replacement, etc.

John, a relative ‘newcomer’ to the committee, asked whether Teck analyzes samples only for lead - what about other smelter-related elements, such as arsenic. Steve replied that although the main emphasis is on lead, samples are generally analyzed for a full suite of metals. A great deal of testing has been done for other metals in the environment over the past ten years or so. The assessment of that data has shown that arsenic in air soil and dust, and cadmium in soil and dust are the other elements of potential concern, although the risk of adverse health effects after even a lifetime of exposure to these elements in the Trail environment is low. The second priority currently, after continuing to prevent exposure to lead by pre-school aged children, is to further reduce emissions of arsenic to air from the smelter.

Air issues update (Steve and Darin)

Steve and Darin presented an update on investigations and actions to address arsenic emissions from the plants (attached to paper copy of minutes).

In summary, Teck is still working toward having an emission reduction plan for the “Lead North” (Refineries) area for presentation to the BC Ministry of Environment by the end of June. The target is to reduce arsenic emissions from the Refinery Scrubber Stack by 80%. Over the past several years, the measured arsenic emissions from the Refinery Scrubber Stack have made up about 80% or more of the measured emissions from the site. Action taken to reduce arsenic emissions at the Refineries will also result in reduced lead emissions. Over the past several years, measured lead emissions from the Refinery Scrubber Stack have been roughly equal to those measured from the #2 Slag Fuming Furnace (Dracco baghouse) stack.

Teck is continuing to investigate all possible sources of arsenic emissions, both from stacks and ‘fugitives’, to build a better understanding of other contributing sources and to evaluate options for other actions.

Other issues:

Dieter mentioned that there had been ‘white spots’ observed on vehicles in downtown Trail several weeks earlier. Darin noted that there was an issue with a cooling tower (source of gypsum) at the end of April, which was repaired, and asked that anyone observing ‘white spots’ contact Teck right away if it happens again.

Valerie mentioned that several residents of Rivervale had asked her about the slag pile above their neighbourhood. Steve replied that the slag stored near Stoney Ck, upslope from the south end of Rivervale, is treated slag that is ‘on spec’ for sale to the cement industry as ‘ferrous granules’. The stockpile accumulates over winter due to the seasonal nature of the cement/concrete industry. The metal content of the granules is quite low, and the bioavailability of that metal is low. The coarse particle size makes this material fairly resistant against wind transport, but Teck has been testing several different dust binder products that can be applied to the granules to minimize dusting.

Consultation Working Group (Steve Hilts)

Steve reported that the Property Issues Task Group has met three times since April and has made considerable progress in its discussions and research on the best way to achieve Provincial approval for the Trail Health and Environment Program. There are still some questions/options to be investigated further, and the Task Group is continuing to work on these.

The Working Group now feels that the property issues should be integrated with the health and environmental issues in one overall consultation program, rather than handled separately. There will still be opportunities for those who are more interested in one particular issue set to obtain more information and provide more detailed input.

The Working Group also feels it will be very important to consult with and involve the other local area governments (Montrose, Area A, Area B at a minimum) prior to the consultation launch. Dr. Ames stated that, in his opinion, it will be important for there to be political involvement/support from the City of Trail and Warfield in order for the committee/Teck to succeed in engaging the other community leaders. Dieter agreed to provide support as needed and requested that an 'action plan' be developed, as well as a letter from the THEC to invite and encourage the Regional District of Kootenay Boundary to come back to the THEC table. He also recommended that the process of re-engaging other local governments should go step-by-step, as there is a lot of information to retain and understand.

The sub-committee recommended the following revised schedule for the public communication/consultation program:

Pre-launch planning: April-August
THEC meeting Sept 9th
Consultation launch: Sept 15th
Introductory Presentations to Groups: Sept 16-30
Open House & Working Meetings: October
Evaluation: November
Reporting: December

Regardless of whether a preferred approach to regulatory acceptance is agreed upon, the consultation on THE Program could be launched Sept 15th as long as all key elements of the program are prepared and the other local governments have been briefed. If this is not achieved by the Sept 9th meeting of THEC, the consultation would be deferred again.

In other words:

Plan A = Approach to achieving regulatory acceptance is agreed upon - proceed with entire consultation program,

Plan B = Approach to achieving regulatory acceptance not yet agreed – proceed with consultation on the other program elements, or

Plan C = Further defer the consultation if appropriate/necessary at the time

NEXT MEETING

“Farewell event for Dr. Ames”: September 1st – Tuesday – details to follow

Regular meeting: September 9th – Wednesday – 7:00 pm – Trail City Hall

