

Small Business Compliance Assistance Advisory Council

Meeting Notes – December 4, 2018

In Attendance:

- Diana Vanek, Council Member – on phone
- Michelle Bryan, Council Member – on phone
- Duane Mitchell, Council Member – on phone
- Hoby Rash, Council Member – in person
- Keith Ouzts, Council Member – in person
- Heather Higinbotham-Davies, Council Participant – on phone
- John Podolinsky, Council Secretary – in person

1. Welcome and Introductions:

John called the meeting to order at 2:00pm and everyone in attendance introduced themselves. John reviewed some housekeeping items including Metcalf Building restroom location and emergency egress.

2. Appointments/Re-appointments:

John reviewed Council member appointments including his communication efforts with Susan Fox of Legislative Services and legislators in appointing members to replace Matt Regier and Terry Schultz. John mentioned the potential re-appointment of Keith Ouzts and Duane Mitchell as their tenures have expired. (The four members represent stationary sources per statute.) John will approach DEQ's new Director Shaun McGrath about re-appointing Hoby as DEQ's representative to the Council. Diana's and Michelle's appointments are current.

3. Summary of 2018 SBEAP/SBO Activities:

John summarized 2018 activities of the Small Business Environmental Assistance Program (SBEAP) and Small Business Ombudsman (SBO) including the following:

- Assisted and advocated for small businesses that requested assistance or had been cited and/or fined by DEQ for regulatory non-compliance or had concerns over regulations. The businesses included gas stations, dry cleaners, surface coating/painting companies, building owners renovating or demolishing their buildings, a chromium plating business, a gravel pit operator, a variety of contractors, recycling companies, breweries, property developers, and others.
- Concluded the two-year Montana Resource Efficiency Program (MREP) with the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT) where over 82 businesses and government facilities were audited for energy use. According to MREP's September 2018 Quarterly Newsletter, the Program has helped save 130,371,080 kilowatt-hours of energy, equivalent to the total annual energy use of 10,477 homes.

- Continued contracting with Heather Higinbotham-Davies and her small business, UnCommon Sense (UCS), in working with breweries in instituting energy and water use conservation measures identified earlier by NCAT and the Montana State University Montana Manufacturing Extension Center (MMEC) under the Montana Breweries Project.
- Recently contracted with MMEC to work with MT Craft Malt of Butte in developing a pilot-test malting unit to study and implement source reduction and pollution prevention efforts at the facility.
- Continued concentrating on building relationships with Montana's Department of Commerce, Department of Labor and Industry Safety Bureau, Department of Public Health and Human Services, Governor's Office, US Small Business Administration, US EPA, Montana Association of Counties, regional economic development agencies, Montana universities, and a variety of associations advertising and promoting the SBEAP/SBO and their services.
- Continued collaborating with Montana State University Extension Service's Pollution Prevention Program, MMEC, UCS, NCAT, and the Department of Commerce's Small Business Development Centers in promoting pollution prevention, environmental regulatory compliance assistance, energy and water use efficiencies, wastewater treatment, business efficiencies and production, and sustainability.
- Participated in a few conferences and seminars including Butte Brownfields workshop, Montana Environmental Training Center Water Quality School in Billings, Montana Economic Development Association conference in Dillon, Integrated Waste Management Act meetings, Montana Occupational Health and Safety Surveillance Program task force meetings, Clean Air Act Advisory Committee meetings, SafetyFestMT trainings, and Montana Brewers Association's annual conference.
- Administered to the Radon Control Program which occupies approximately 15% of John's time. The Radon Control Program hosts a website, telephone hotline, distributes radon test kits, hosts an annual radon conference, issues an annual public service announcement, reports to EPA, and conducts outreach.

4. Council Member Roundtable:

Council members reported on their 2018 activities including:

- Heather Higinbotham-Davies reported she continued running her UnCommon Sense business promoting business sustainability. She expounded on the Montana Breweries Project working with breweries across Montana on sustainability, and energy and water use efficiencies. UCS's next task is to have breweries institute and certify the energy and water use recommendations made by NCAT and MMEC.
- Duane Mitchell reported he continued commissioning for Richland County and was involved with wastewater treatment projects, recycling efforts, and a potential TENORM (Technologically Enhanced Naturally Occurring Radioactive Material) disposal site in Richland County. He mentioned eastern Montana was impacted by grassland wildfires that occurred there last year. He is in favor of developing resources such as oil, mining, and timber as they bring in needed tax revenues to the counties.

- Michelle Bryan reported she continued to teach environmental law at the University of Montana with focus on land use, water law, and wildfire law.
- Diana Vanek reported she enjoys retirement, travelling, and retains a keen interest in pollution prevention, dark skies initiative, energy efficiency, air quality, and epidemiology. She retired from managing the MSU Peaks to Prairies Program last year.
- Hoby Rash reported he continues managing DEQ's air quality compliance section which does field inspections. He reported the air quality program had a transition year including moving toward a registration system for regulating portable sources of emissions (gravel crushers, asphalt and cement plants) from a permitting-based approach. The registration process is more streamlined compared to the permitting process. He mentioned the wildfire impact on Montana and regional haze, a new program for Montana involving visibility impacts on national parks and vistas in Montana. He said the regional haze program will be interesting as much of Montana's haze is caused by out of state sources of air pollution. He reminded us that the open burn season started on the first of December and the program anticipates working with other agencies that do prescribed burns. He reported the program has been working with the oil and gas industry and doing much education and outreach.
- Keith Ouzts reported he's been busy teaching safety classes for the Montana Contractors Association and working with DEQ open cut permitting activities.

5. Future Plans of SBEAP/SBO:

In 2019 the SBEAP/SBO intends to continue assisting and advocating for small businesses per its statutes, continue collaborations and resource building, continue contracting with UCS on brewery work and MMEC on the MT Craft Malt project, continue administering the Radon Control Program, and others.

6. Next meeting:

The 2019 annual meeting of the SBCAAC will occur in 2019; however, no date was set pending new and re-appointments of Council members.

7. Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 3:30pm.

End of notes.