

MINUTES  
ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
JUNE 2, 2016

A meeting of the Environmental Policy Advisory Committee (EPAC) was convened on Thursday, June 2, 2016, at 5:15 p.m., in the Pueblo County Department of Planning and Development Conference Room, 229 West 12th Street. Chair Kester called the meeting to order at 5:25 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Those members present were:

Susan Finzel-Aldred  
Sherie Caffey  
Becky Cortese  
Richard Hubler

Nancy Keller  
Doris Kester  
Chad Wolgram

Members absent: Bill Alt (excused); and Ted Lopez.

Staff present was: Sandy Blanco, EPAC Recording Secretary.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM APRIL 7, 2016 MEETING

Ms. Keller moved to approve the minutes of the April 7, 2016 meeting. Ms. Caffey seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR (EC) REPORT – SUSAN FINZEL-ALDRED

Ms. Finzel-Aldred distributed flyers for the Hyde Park Westside Community Neighborhood Clean-Up, and the Blende/Salt Creek Communities Clean-Up. She also distributed the Pueblo Area Recycling Guide, and read her Pueblo City-County Health Department Environmental Coordinator's Report for April, 2016, and May, 2016, into the record, which is attached as Exhibit A.

Ms. Finzel-Aldred stated this Saturday is the Blende and Salt Creek Clean-up at St. Joseph's Church. The following Saturday is a new event that was added for the Hyde Park Westside Clean-Up. It will be held at the Dolores Huerta Preparatory Academy parking lot. If 30 or 40 households participate that would be great. The students passed out flyers and doorknob hangers and were very helpful. They are selling tickets and the student council will help direct traffic and stack tires. After that, she will be attending the Colorado Association for Recycling State Conference in Grand Junction, which is June 12th-14th. Chair Kester asked Ms. Finzel-Aldred if that conference was held in Pueblo three or four years ago. Ms. Finzel-Aldred replied in 2012, noting it was held in Colorado Springs in 2014.

Chair Kester asked Ms. Finzel-Aldred if the recycling guide was available online. Ms. Finzel-Aldred replied yes, noting it can be downloaded or printed alphabetically. In July, she will be getting ready for the State Fair Education Booth, and in September she has two more clean-ups in the County: Avondale and Pueblo West. The last week of September is Creek Week. Ms. Keller stated they do a Care and Share distribution every third Friday in Pueblo West, noting it would be a great place to put a dumpster. Ms. Finzel-Aldred stated they can talk about it.

CHAIR'S REPORT - DORIS KESTER

Chair Kester stated she had nothing to report.

WATER QUALITY SUBCOMMITTEE – NANCY KELLER

Ms. Keller distributed information on *E. coli* in the Fountain Creek. She stated the AF CURE, which is the Arkansas Fountain Coalition of Urban River Evaluation, is a group of eleven dischargers including Pueblo that work under the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments, and received a grant to do a watershed plan for *E. coli*. It would cover the Fountain Creek and Monument Creek all the way down to the confluence. The State is going to be developing a TMDL, which is a total maximum daily load. The handout depicts a presentation that was done by the State for AF CURE and compares the watershed plan with the TMDL the State is going to be doing. The watershed plan provides information about levels of pollution, the data sources, and projects that can be undertaken to reduce the levels of pollution. The watershed plan will identify where *E. coli* comes from, when does it occur, and what best management practices can be done to reduce it. A lot of it is in the sediment that gets stirred up when it rains. Anything that helps with sediment would help keep the concentrations in the water column down. They can identify different things that can be done to help improve it. That is the basic information the State needs to start doing the TMDL, noting it looks at the data, all the sources, and whether there's a nonpoint source. They have waste load allocations and load allocations and the only difference is one is the point sources and one is the nonpoint sources. It would calculate how much loading is allowed to maintain the standard. AF CURE will be looking at all of the projects along with the Fountain Creek Technical Advisory Committee. They can reduce the amount of *E. coli* significantly if they can include a buffer to get the reduction in the riparian zone before it gets into the river. The State is starting the TMDL process and hope to have it done by 2018. There will be public meetings and PACOG should be one of them. There is a fair amount of data that has been collected by AF CURE that will be a real good starting point. Ms. Finzel-Aldred asked Ms. Keller what MOS stands for. Ms. Keller replied margin of safety, noting if the limit is 286 they may put 36 of that into a margin of safety to give a little buffer then take the rest and allocate it.

Ms. Finzel-Aldred stated today she went to the Regional Storm Water Public Outreach and Education meeting in Colorado Springs. It included people from Manitou Springs, Colorado Springs, Pueblo County, City of Pueblo, and the City of Fountain. They talked about their public education and outreach brochures and how they can collaborate to have a regional approach to what runs on television. There are a lot of things people are doing that are very similar, and they're trying to do it together. Some of things brought up were *E. coli*, Scoop the Poop Campaign, the issue of nutrients entering the stormwater stream, and household hazardous waste collection. A study was done by a college and the students went out and picked up 95 pounds of pet waste within a sector. It is a big issue in El Paso County because of their extensive trail system. It would be interesting to do a study in Pueblo, but she doesn't know who could spearhead it and add the data to the *E. coli* information.

Ms. Keller stated the Arkansas River above the confluence actually meets the limit. A large portion is the lack of sediment in the flow because of the Pueblo Reservoir. El Paso County has done a lot of spots for radio and television and is offering to share what they already paid for. It would be a great asset to use. Chair Kester asked Ms. Keller if *E. coli* causes a lot of diseases once it gets in the water. Ms. Keller replied typically no, noting *E. coli* is the indicator of pathogens. There are some species of *E. coli* that can cause diseases, but the majority of them don't. A lot of *E. coli* is from birds, cattle, and dogs, but most of them aren't pathogenic for humans. *E. coli* is an inexpensive, fairly quick 24-hour test that can be done for potential pathogens in water. When the *E. coli* is high there's a chance of having other bacteria or viruses. The EPA is looking at changing some of the test methods and the main one is for viruses. The studies are really limited and they don't have very good data to base them on. The EPA is trying to go that route, to be more specific to human contamination that is pathogenic. That is how the standards are based.

Ms. Caffey asked Ms. Keller what the levels were in the Pueblo Reservoir. Ms. Keller replied they're pretty low, noting they run 30 to 50 colonies per 100 milligrams. The standard varies and she wasn't sure what the Pueblo Reservoir standard was. Mr. Wolgram stated it's 200 for recreational water.

Chair Kester questioned the article in the newspaper between the candidates. Ms. Keller replied she did a presentation to City Council. The three new council members wanted to know why they had rate increases. She showed them the cost of treating for selenium and nutrients and what the rates were that were adopted in 2015. They weren't new rates like the newspaper said. The rates that were adopted in 2015 will increase an average household \$3.31 per month in 2016, and by the end of five years they will be \$18 more than 2015. The costs are higher because they have to deal with selenium differently than in the past. If the plant removes 50% of the selenium in the groundwater there is less selenium getting into the river. The ambient stream standard is 14.1 so it doesn't take very much groundwater to increase the selenium in the discharge from the Water Reclamation Facility (WRF). The EPA doesn't like temporary modifications, noting Colorado is the only state that does temporary modifications. The Federal program is a discharger specific variance. Three or four years ago when they went in for their discharger specific variance, they were given two years on their temporary modification. The District Attorney, Mr. Thiebaut's office, hired an attorney and fought the temporary modification, noting they didn't want the two years to be allowed. The Commission allowed two years to submit for the discharger specific variance. When the WRF discharger specific variance hearing was held, Pueblo County hired an attorney and fought the variance. It was a mess that got political and controversial. There were some presentations to PACOG and the State backed away stating they needed to develop an adaptive management plan, decide how it was going to be handled, and extend the temporary modification. In December, the State extended the temporary modification for two years, noting they have two years to develop the adaptive management plan. Chair Kester stated that wasn't long enough. Ms. Keller stated no, because they won't have answers. The plan states they have ten years to line the sewer lines and then see where they're at and if they can remove enough selenium to meet the standard. If that doesn't work they would go into treatment. The WRF and the State only have two years to figure out what the standard should be. There is a lot of variability that makes it difficult to say whether they can meet the standard. When they line the sewer lines the groundwater table could go up and be at the height of the individual private service lines, noting some of them haven't been replaced in years. The groundwater can get in through the service lines and the City can't go onto private property and fix them. If that happens and not enough selenium is taken out the WRF would have to do treatment. Mr. Hubler asked Ms. Keller if the lining process would have the most impact or least impact relative to what they're expecting. Ms. Keller replied the most impact. The highest area of town is the west side, noting the bottom of the basin is 100 micrograms per liter going into the plant. The next highest is University Park and Belmont at about 30 micrograms. They are putting everything into the basin that's hitting 100 and it will cost \$31.5 million to line in that area. It will be \$1 million this year, \$2 million next year, and \$3.5 million a year for the next eight years. It is a ten year plan for \$31.5 million. Mr. Hubler questioned the average home age in that section of town. Ms. Keller replied many of the pipes are 75 to 100 years old in that part of town. There is no guarantee that would solve the problem so at the same time they're going to do pilots, try different types of treatments, and try to find something more cost effective than reverse osmosis, which is \$50 million to \$60 million to install and another \$50 million to \$60 million for the pre-filters. They would also be looking at another \$11 million per year for the ongoing maintenance of the river's osmosis system, plus the disposal of the hazardous waste they would be producing at \$15 million per year. Mr. Hubler stated reverse osmosis systems for households generate two times as much untreated water as treated water. Ms. Keller stated about 15% is reject water, which is 15% of 12 million gallons a day that would be a hazardous waste. There is a secondary process they can put it through that would reduce the volume, but it would have to be disposed of by deep well injection and they don't want to go there.

Ms. Cortese asked Ms. Keller what the difference was between the selenium levels now versus what they were 100 or 200 years ago. That should be a contributing factor from the EPA to take into consideration that Pierre shale isn't the same here as it is anywhere else. The geographical concerns that contribute are that humans and animals have lived here for a long time and survived just fine. She questioned the breaking point for the selenium levels, noting they haven't studied an area where there's been selenium naturally occurring. Ms. Keller stated Pierre shale is high in sulfate and sulfate competes with selenium to be taken up by the aquatic life. It reduces toxicity of selenium so that's a difference. Ms. Cortese stated that's nature's way of balancing it out. Ms. Keller stated there are not any identified issues with selenium. They have done studies looking for deformities. Mr. Hubler questioned if that would change their expectations, and Ms. Keller replied no. Mr. Hubler asked Ms. Keller what the flow rate was of the Wild Horse Creek. Ms. Keller replied she did not know the exact flows off hand. Mr. Wolgram asked Ms. Keller what the outflow was from the Pueblo West Wastewater Treatment Plant, and what the concentration of selenium was for the Pest House Gulch, which runs into Wild Horse Creek. Ms. Keller replied they dilute Pest House Gulch because it's 2,000 micrograms/liter. The flow from the Pueblo West Wastewater is somewhat elevated, but not really high. They are discharging to a segment that has a high ambient background standard of 600 micrograms/liter, and they're well below the ambient background standard. When the WRF has high selenium the river has a lot of flow and it is diluted. The stream has lower downstream selenium concentration with high flows. Mr. Hubler questioned the storm water run-off into the river. Ms. Keller replied storm water is high in selenium. Mr. Hubler asked Ms. Keller if it precipitates. Ms. Keller replied it can in the stream with the right conditions. Mr. Hubler asked Ms. Keller if catchment basins bring in high sources that are beneficial to decrease the levels before making it to the river. Ms. Keller replied they could, but they need to have sediment removed frequently. Mr. Hubler asked Ms. Keller if there were any plants that uptake selenium. Ms. Keller replied yes, noting there are a bunch of them. Mr. Hubler questioned if a biological catchment basin would uptake the selenium. Ms. Keller replied it was very possible. Mr. Hubler stated the biological containment system would benefit from any nitrates that are there as well. Ms. Keller stated that was correct, noting it's more convoluted than that because they start attracting wildlife. When they attract wildlife the selenium can cause reproductive issues in birds, so they don't want to attract them to an area that is high in selenium. The WRF looked at putting wetlands at the bottom of Wild Horse Creek many years ago, but the Division of Wildlife didn't like the idea. Mr. Hubler asked Ms. Keller how long ago that was, and Ms. Keller replied in 1999. Mr. Hubler stated biological treatment facilities and science has changed in the past 15 years.

Ms. Keller stated there is an algae that takes up selenium, but they need a large enough containment area to handle 12 million gallons a day. Mr. Hubler stated if conservation programs could decrease the flow of treatment water it would help the situation because they would have a lower flow and wouldn't be at the 12 million. Ms. Keller stated it would be less volume to treat, but it would be a higher concentration, dirtier, and not a real benefit. Ms. Cortese questioned the justification behind the County fighting the City, noting she didn't understand. Ms. Keller replied they didn't either. They were holding Colorado Springs' finger to the fire and felt they needed to do the same for Pueblo. The frustrating thing is that it's natural and not an industry that's causing the pollution. The WRF is 6% of the loading so if the river was at 18 and they took 100% of the selenium out of the effluent and dumped it in water that was zero, they would lower the river to 17.6. Ms. Cortese stated they still wouldn't meet the standard. Ms. Keller stated they would spend millions of dollars and not meet the limits, noting they won't even come close. Ms. Cortese stated it won't end unless someone changes the limits or gives them modifications. Ms. Keller stated the discharger specific variance works on gradual compliance. They are given a timeframe, which could be five or ten years, with a compliance schedule. They will go back in January, 2018 to the Arkansas Basin hearing and request the discharger specific variance for selenium, and hopefully get converted from the temporary modification to the variance with a ten year period to do lining and pilots on different treatments. Ms. Cortese stated hopefully the

County won't be fighting the City over it then. Ms. Keller stated they will have a compliance schedule and limit they will have to meet. Mr. Hubler stated if they say no then their two years is up. Ms. Keller stated if they say no at the end of the two years, the State can put a limit in their permit and the City will have to pay \$36,000 a day in violations. Chair Kester stated it's frustrating because it's not something that people did that's causing the problem. It is a natural thing that they have no control over. Ms. Keller stated human nature may exacerbate it, but they can't pick up the City and move it. Ms. Cortese questioned if the City could make every household put in a new sewer line. Ms. Keller replied no, but if they saw \$36,000 a day in fines because they're not meeting the limits, maybe they would pay to do all of the lines at some point. Mr. Hubler stated that would be less than \$50 million. Ms. Keller stated it would be a huge liability being on private property. Ms. Cortese stated depending on the line, probably no less than \$5,000 per line. Ms. Keller agreed with \$4,000 to \$5,000 to replace each line. When they go onto private property, suddenly that prize rose bush is worth big money and they have to do surface improvements to put it back the way it was.

Ms. Cortese distributed the results from the Pueblo Stakeholder meeting that a lot of people attended in January for the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and their new Solid Waste Management Plan. Ms. Finzel-Aldred stated the preliminary plan would be presented at the State Recycling Conference in Grand Junction. Ms. Cortese read the overview from the Pueblo Stakeholder meeting. It was a larger group compared to some of the other stakeholder meetings throughout the State, but well balanced. The issues didn't revolve around landfill regulations as much as ways to improve recycling. There was a common concern that this process was something that had been done before, but nothing came out of it. They didn't get the information on the results. According to the attending voters, the current disposal system is working very well with a weighted average of 3.8 on a 1 to 5 scale, and fewer thought the diversion system was working well with a weighted average of 3.4. The education was basic ordinances and drop-off with local processing. Almost a quarter of them voted that there was no potential for organics, but backyard composting education was the next option with the most potential. There was no clear consensus on what to do with non-adequate landfills, but changing some to transfer stations based on cost received the most votes.

Ms. Finzel-Aldred stated there wasn't much potential when she talked to people at her table because there has to be end markets. They can compost the branches but who's going to package them, market them, and sell them. Ms. Cortese stated they did a two-year experiment at their transfer station with organics. They took free branches and spent \$15,000 to have them ground up, noting she has a mountain of mulch that nobody wants. They will give it away if anybody wants it.

#### SOLID WASTE SUBCOMMITTEE - TED LOPEZ

There was no report given.

#### AGENDA FOR FEBRUARY 4, 2016 MEETING

The next regularly scheduled EPAC meeting is Thursday, August 4, 2016, at 229 West 12th Street, from 5:15 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before EPAC, the meeting was adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sandy Blanco". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "S" and a stylized "B".

Sandy Blanco  
EPAC Recording Secretary

SJB



Prevent • Promote • Protect

# PCCHD ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATORS' REPORT

## *For EPAC Meeting 6/2/16*

April 2016

### **General Work**

Many hours were spent preparing for the spring Neighborhood Clean-Ups in Bessemer, Eastside, Blende, and Hyde Park, and for the Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day (HHW). Color ads were designed and proofed, to run in *The Pueblo Chieftain*. Flyers and ads for the Spring Clean-Up Day at the Southside Landfill were designed and ordered. Flyers and *Recycle Guides* were distributed in students' give-away bags at presentations in April (see below). Logistics, contracts, equipment, purchases and volunteer recruitment was completed for the HHW event. The Health Department went through reorganization, and the Environmental Coordinator Program is now part of the new Operations and Health Promotion Division on 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. The appointed OHP Director is Katie Davis. The management and staff of Environmental Health Division have merged with the Emergency Preparedness and Response program and Tobacco Enforcement, now located on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor.

### **Stormwater Education**

Anti-litter education classes were made at Liberty Point School preschool and kindergarten, and Ascension Episcopal Church preschool, First Congregational Church and South Park School preschool (200 children and 10 teachers).

### **Events: Bessemer Clean-Up**

Residents bought clean-up tickets at Health Department, NeighborWorks, JB Pharmacy, and MusicMan. The clean-up was located at an empty parking lot at Abriendo Ave. & Canal St. from 8am-1pm. Eighteen (18) senior/disabled residents received curbside pick-up. One-hundred ten (110) total households came to the event. City Council Member Ed Brown and 9 neighborhood residents volunteered. Around 25 Municipal Court juvenile offenders helped pick-up litter and tires from the neighborhood alleys and fence lines. Fourteen (14) 30-yd roll-off dumpsters were filled with solid waste totaling 29 tons; four (4) dumpsters filled with yard waste/branches, a half ton of scrap metal was collected, and ninety-eight (98) tires were received and recycled.

**Recycle Hotline** calls = 120 people

**Recycle Guides** mailed = 30+

### **Solid Waste Assistance Program (SWAP):**

The three new cases on the city's Eastside and one on the Westside began in April. Five 30 yard roll-offs have been distributed so far, with these properties needed another 3-4. A moratorium on SWAP cases have been set for May and June, due to dwindling funds and time constraints with other events.

Environmental Coordinator attended the **following meetings:** Bessemer Neighborhood Update, PCCHD General Staff, new Operations and Health Promotion Division, Sustainable Pueblo, Stormwater Quality Advisory Committee, *Colorado Association. For Recycling Education and Outreach Committee* (2x), and Avondale Community Improvement Team

# May 2016

## General Work:

Much time was spent preparing for the events this month. Susan also helped plan for the state recycling conference in Grand Junction, June 12-14, at which she is coordinating the scholarship program for four college students to attend. Susan served as a judge for the statewide recycle art contest, and travelled to Denver to choose the top ten winners. The artwork will be featured in a video created by Pueblo Community College students in late summer.

## Stormwater Education:

The Annual "Discovering Water in Pueblo-DWIP Water Festival" at CSU-P campus was held on May 9, and video and table top watershed model were presented to 125 students and teachers.

## Events

### *Spring Clean-Up/Discount Day at the Southside Landfill May 7*

This event was sponsored by the City of Pueblo and Waste Connections of Colorado. The landfill admitted only City residents with any allowable solid waste free to cars and pick-ups, 8am-1pm. The EC designed and paid for promotion in the newspaper, sent PSAs to radio stations, and distributed 500 flyers. The landfill will have total vehicles and cubic yards of waste data in June 2016.

### *Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day May 14*

Susan trained the Avondale Community Team volunteers on safety procedures for collecting hazardous waste in their town. Volunteers made 16 curbside pick-ups of old chemicals, paint, cleaners, pesticides and other toxic items by appointment May 6-13. The items were delivered in two long trailers and a pick-up truck load to the State Fairgrounds on event day. Despite colder temperatures, a successful event was held in the Carnival Lot, and staff and volunteers served 613 vehicles in five hours. Set up and tear down went very smoothly. A data chart of materials collected at this event will be finalized in June.

### ***Preliminary volumes collected:***

|                               |                                    |                                     |                       |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>12, 463 lbs. chemicals</b> | <b>14, 580 lbs latex paint</b>     | <b>21, 000 lbs. TVs/Electronics</b> |                       |
| <b>711 Tires</b>              | <b>660 lbs. alkaline batteries</b> | <b>80 Pb batteries</b>              | <b>35 freon items</b> |

### *Colorado City Spruce Up Day May 21*

This was the second year for this event, managed by the Greenhorn Valley Chamber of Commerce. The EC program designed the promo flyer, loaned some event signage, gloves and safety vests, and paid for three roll-off dumpsters and tire pick-up/recycling (145). Illegal dumping overfilled the dumpsters before they could be removed on May 23 and 24.

### *Eastside Clean-Up May 28*

Residents bought clean-up tickets at Housing and Human Services Building, 4<sup>th</sup> Street Barbershop, and the Health Dept. The clean-up was located at an empty parking lot at Abriendo Ave. & Canal St. from 8am-1pm. Twelve (12) senior/disabled residents received curbside pick-up. Eighty-two (82) total households came to the event, a decrease of 35% from last year. Councilman Larry Atencio was in attendance, along with 2 neighborhood volunteers. Municipal Court juvenile offenders with staff helped pick-up illegal dumping, litter and tires from the open space near north Nielsen Road and Fearnow Ave. Twelve (12) 30-yd roll-off dumpsters were



filled with solid waste, three (3) dumpsters filled with yard waste/branches, 10 cubic yards of scrap metal was collected, and only fifty (50) tires were received and recycled.

Recycle Hotline calls = 100 people

Recycle Guides mailed =18

**Solid Waste Assistance Program (SWAP)**

Three households continue to fill their 30 yd dumpsters. No new cases were awarded in May and June, due to budget constraints. After evaluating the program monies remaining, a limited numbers of cases will resume in July.

The Environmental Coordinator attended the **following meetings:** *Colorado Association For Recycling* Education and Outreach Committee, and Summit Plan Team; PCCHD General Staff, Operations and Health Promotion Division, Sustainable Pueblo