

**MINUTES  
CITY OF FORT COLLINS  
AIR QUALITY ADVISORY BOARD**

**Date:** Monday, March 20, 2017  
**Location:** Colorado River Room, 222 Laporte Ave.  
**Time:** 5:30–8:00pm

**For Reference**

Mark Houdashelt, Chair  
Ross Cunniff, Council Liaison 970-420-7398  
Cassie Archuleta, Staff Liaison 970-416-2648

**Board Members Present**

Mark Houdashelt, Chair  
Gregory Miller  
Harry Edwards  
Jim Dennison  
Vara Vissa, Vice-Chair  
Tom Griggs

**Board Members Absent**

Chris Wood  
Robert Kirkpatrick

**Staff Present**

Cassie Archuleta, Staff Liaison  
Lucinda Smith, Environmental Services Department Head  
Mary Pat Aardrup, Environmental Planner

**Guests**

Loren Speer, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment  
Eric Brown, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment  
Stephanie Kuhn, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

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**Call to order:** 5:33 pm

**Public Comments**

None

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**Review and Approval of December and January Meeting Minutes**

<p>Harry moved and Vara seconded a motion to approve the February minutes as amended. Motion passed unanimously, 6-0-0.</p>
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**AGENDA ITEM 1: Board Administration Updates**

*Christine Macrina, Boards and Commissions Coordinator, was scheduled to present an overview regarding the new volunteer time tracking database.*

Christine was unable to attend this meeting due to illness.

Staff Follow-Up: Cassie will contact Christine about rescheduling her presentation to a later date.

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## AGENDA ITEM 2: Radon and Health Presentation

*Eric Brown, with the Colorado Department of Health and Environment, presented an overview regarding radon and health data tracking, and examples of radon policies and programs in Colorado.*

Mark provided an introduction about the Board's interest in the subject of radon. 60-75 percent of Fort Collins homes testing above 4 pCi/L of radon, and the AQAB is looking for a health risk assessment in terms of how the number of cancer cases relate to high radon levels. The Board is in the process of recommending a budget offer for a working group that would further investigate radon in Fort Collins.

CDPHE is working with the CDC and EPA to make sure radon measurement and tracking programs run smoothly. The Colorado Environmental Public Health Tracking (Tracking) Project is a CDC grant-supported project that conducts data analyses that could be used to create products and inform approaches, actions, and interventions at the local level. Because of data sharing agreements, multiple labs are now submitting radon test results directly to the CDPHE at the street address level. According to a radon map, all counties in Colorado have average radon levels over 4 pCi/L. The average radon value in Colorado is 6 pCi/L. The average radon level tested for Larimer County is 7.35 pCi/L (0 pCi/L-250.7 pCi/L).

The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) is a CDC funded annual phone survey that has been conducted for about 20 years. Questions about radon were added into the survey in 2009, 2011, and 2016. The questions include: *Do you know what radon is? Have you tested your home? Did your home test over 4 pCi/L? If so, what did you do about it?* Results show about 72% of people know what radon is, and only 16% of people who tested their homes said the result was over 4 pCi/L, which does not line up with the data. According to BRFSS results, Larimer County and Boulder County are more likely to mitigate than other Colorado counties. In Larimer County, Eric cited an estimate that 1,542 mitigations equals 1 saved life. Eric stated there is a relationship between radon awareness and socioeconomic status.

Visit [www.colorado.gov/coepht](http://www.colorado.gov/coepht) for more information about radon data tracking programs.

### Comments/Q&A

- Are the results only about mortality, or do they include morbidity?
  - Only mortality. Considering morbidity would take a different formula.
- The latest EPA risk assessment stated that 4pCi/L would result in an additional 3% of individuals with cancer. The form of cancer had about a 50% 5-year survival rate. This doesn't line up with other data sources. Which numbers are correct?
  - Eric said he would like to cross reference this data he cited presentation with the EPA source.
- Do you have any data specific to Fort Collins?
  - Not in this presentation, but it can be accessed.
- What do you think about the idea of sending the AQAB's recommendation to council?
  - Fort Collins is on the frontier of progressive action on radon. CDPHE is trying to figure out how to extract Fort Collins data from the BRFSS, which the AQAB could take to Council.
- Rentals aren't required to test for radon. Are tenants being put at risk?
  - Students rent short term. Low income families rent for years.
  - A priority should be getting information to residents on the garden-level of buildings.
- Is there a particular lab that shares the data?
  - CDPHE gets data from 7 labs annually. These are the biggest radon testing labs in the country.
- Do you have any data on public buildings?
  - Some datasets have a field for "building type", but that is not consistent across the data.
- Colorado law requires schools to test for radon but not to mitigate or make the test results public.
  - This is true. Denver just received a grant for mitigation in childcare facilities.
- Will the city get the test results of schools, even though the results are not public?
  - Only results from the BRFSS. Child care facilities are required to report findings to the city.
- Is there any information about best practices nationwide that could inform next steps in Fort Collins?

- There is one town in Massachusetts that may have policy standards for rentals. CDPHE could look into that.
- Website notes “Free radon test kit for Colorado residents” is that program still going on?
  - Yes, in the CDPHE program, and completely free.
- How will the proposed budget cuts to the EPA affect what you are doing?
  - Wouldn’t affect CDC funded programs. The low-income mitigation program is secure because its funding is separate from EPA. State funded programs might be in jeopardy.
- Loren invited the AQAB to contact the CDPHE directly about monitoring radon and for help with analysis.

Board Follow-Up: Jim will send the EPA risk assessment document to Eric for data comparison.

Staff Follow-Up: Cassie will send a copy of Eric’s presentation to the Board.

### **AGENDA ITEM 3: Board Discussion**

*The Board discussed options regarding the preparation of a recommendation to Council regarding a request for mid-cycle BFO related to providing staff resources to research and recommend additional radon mitigation policies or programs.*

Mark reminded the Board that the Council retreat is on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> of May. The AQAB can either finalize their recommendation tonight, or work on it and finalize at a later time. Ross thinks more can be done about radon, but he is the most supportive Councilmember about this issue. Mark showed a draft of a proposed recommendation.

#### **Discussion**

- Draft states “70% of homes have radon levels over 4 pCi/L,” while Eric’s presentation reported 65%.
  - The City’s most recent data summary indicates 65%.
- If the grant goes through, Council might want to work with the grant funding rather than a separate project.
  - Cassie indicated that the grant, if awarded, would focus on strategies to increase the number of mitigations using communication and outreach rather than policy options.
- Mark suggested the possibility of limiting the recommendation to exclude looking at the health impacts.
- Jim wondered if researchers could collect data from randomly selected homes, figure out who has lung cancer, test homes for radon, and do some sort of cross-sectional assessment in order to determine a relationship. He said radon is the second highest cause of cancer in the US, and that he believes someone would fund data studies to address the gap.
- Can you tell when someone dies of lung cancer that it is caused by radon?
  - No.
- Jim referenced a lecture he attended, where he learned that some cancers require a certain amount of exposure before the individual sees health effect. Certain molecules are good for you in small doses. If that is applied to radon, could the limit be adjusted to 5 pCi/L instead of 4? Jim said this is just a theory/hypothesis.
- Greg asked Cassie and Lucinda if City staff thinks the recommendation for a mid-cycle offer is an effective movement forward.
  - Cassie said that there is definitely interest in increasing mitigation rates, but new policy on radon doesn’t seem to be a very high priority right now. It might be better to wait until the regular cycle offers to propose new policy work on radon.
  - Lucinda said it would be great to find ways to increase mitigation in Fort Collins, and it would be interesting to hear what Council thinks. She suggested that there might be interest in taking approaches that aren’t mandatory policy, such as focused outreach or an expansion of previous studies.

- Is there a way we can encourage awareness and sampling without getting into the epidemiology?
  - Could tell landlords that if they know what their radon levels are, it must be put in the lease. If they don't know their levels, there needs to be an informational line in the lease that lists the buyer's percent risk of cancer based on average radon values in Fort Collins.
  - Mark mentioned there are three options right now: finalize a recommendation for Council tonight, table it to the April meeting, or drop the issue until a later date. The Board also needs to decide whether to have Council initially consider any recommendation at a regular Council session or at its May retreat.
    - Mark indicated that feedback from Ross was that taking it to the retreat would be the most productive way to go. It would better guarantee that council requests a mid-cycle budget offer.
  - What is the barrier to mitigation? Is it cost, lack of interest, practicality, or something else? Maybe we need research on the barriers.
  - Mark will discuss recommendation further with Ross Cunniff, and Board will make final decisions about recommendation at its April meeting.
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### **Board Updates**

- Mark attended the Feb 28<sup>th</sup> Council work session
    - Climate Action Plan presentation had commentary about how the term "climate" should remain in the branding. Staff will continue to develop the terminology. Some council members said the rebranding went too far.
  - Mark attended the Mar 9<sup>th</sup> Energy Board meeting
    - Time of Use Study presentation showed reduced energy consumption about 2.5% overall, with a 7% reduced peak. The impacts are likely very dependent on pricing structure. Commercial demand impacts the peak usage most, but the peak rates are only applied to residential.
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### **Staff Updates**

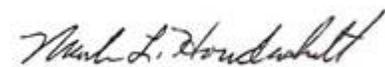
- The AQAB is still looking to fill one vacancy.
  - Air Quality Plan
    - Draft of Air Quality Plan is expected by the end of the year, and will be informed in part by the air quality survey, an ozone data assessment, and an evaluation of the healthy homes program.
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### **Future Actions and Agenda Items**

- April meeting
    - Elections of new AQAB Chair and Vice Chair
    - Time of Use update
    - Radon Recommendation
  - Composting and Organics- Mark expressed interest in hearing the presentation before it goes to Council on May 23<sup>rd</sup>.
  - Vara will be absent for the April meeting.
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**Meeting Adjourned:** 8:09 pm

**Next Meeting:** April 17, 2017



**Signed by Chair**