



Minutes from November 12, 2016 Meeting
33 Hiller Drive, Oakland, CA
2-4 pm

Present: Lin Baron
Dinah Benson
Babara Goldenberg
Jon Kaufman
Michael Kilian
Sue Piper
Dee Rosario
Robert Sieben
Nick Vigilante

Guests: Cheryl Miller, Diablo Firesafe Council

1. Meeting called to order at 10:35 am.
2. Minutes of October 15, 2016 OFSC Meeting with two changes—the cost of the tree removal project at the bottom of Hiller Dive was \$30,000 and more than 100 eucalyptus sprouts were removed.
3. **Treasurer's Report**—Treasurer Michael Kilian reported that \$477.56 remains in the account, following payment of a \$845 check to David Leafhopper for irrigation repairs at Gateway. Sue will send a letter to the Claremont requesting their second installment of \$2,000.
4. Old Business
 - a. **Gateway Garden** —The garden looked fabulous at the 25th Anniversary event. Many thanks to the Oakland Landscape Committee and its volunteers for keeping it in good shape. Gordon Piper is exploring additional grants from the Claremont Spa & Resort and Sales Force to refurbish the Firestorm Memorial Garden and to develop planting and irrigation plans for both the Firestorm and Gateway gardens. Barbara Goldenberg reported that the WETA crews are dwindling because a new group of judges aren't aware of the

program, or are not providing WETA as an alternative. The members asked Gordon Piper to contact WETA for talking points that we could share with our respective groups that have benefitted from the WETA crews, so that we can conduct a mini campaign with those judges.

- b. **Parking in the hills/Evacuation**—Sue Piper reported that there is no new information. However, the group discussed identifying locations that might benefit from DFSC grants in the way that Bob was able to make improvements on lower Hiller. Lin, Barbara and Nick agreed to come up with some locations. A discussion arose concerning the practice of leaving dead trees on the ground. Dee Rosario noted that once a dead tree is flat on the ground, it is less of a fire hazard than a standing dead tree. It was suggested that members raise this question as an issue to be reviewed during the Vegetation Management Planning Process, as the latest best practice should be incorporated into the City's policies and practices.
 - c. **FEMA Grant/Vegetation Management Plan**—Jon Kaufman noted that the money hasn't gone away. The University is considering a law suit, and the funds have been reallocated to EBRP. Sue noted that a contract has been signed with Horizon Consulting to begin the Vegetation Management Planning Process. She, Martin Matarrese and Mike Petouhoff from the WPAP will be meeting with the consultants, along with representatives from Dan Kalb and Annie Campbell Washington's offices, to review the scope of work, time table and to ensure that outreach is as wide as possible. The hope is that the City will start the process in January. WPAD representatives met with Annie Campbell Washington on Thursday to see if the WPAD Advisory Committee could continue to provide oversight on the Vegetation Management Process after funds run out at the end of June. She said she would carry a resolution on that.
 - d. **Other**—Nick Vigilante reflected on the recent Presidential election and what it could mean for Oakland. Having spent his career in the office of Homeland Security, he fears that the Feds will withhold funds from Sanctuary cities. Oakland needs to think carefully about how loss of federal funds will impact the city's ability to support its citizens.
5. Planning for next FY 17-19 in City of Oakland
- Members agreed to support the campaign of the Oakland Urban Forestry Forum and will ask their respective groups to join in on the efforts to seek additional funding for tree services and to have a comprehensive, cohesive urban forestry plan. Jon Kaufman suggested adding a sentence to the Issue statement as follows: *The City needs to increase resources to the PWA Tree Services Department to support this effort. In 2007, the Tree Services budget was \$xxx,xxx with a staff of 55. Today, the budget is only \$xxx,xxx and a staff of 12. The City Council must take action in the FY 2017-19 Budget.* Sue Piper will

bring this recommended change to OUFF at their meeting on Thursday, November 16 at 10 am at City Hall.

6. **Outreach**—Sue Piper asked for volunteers to help staff the table at the Piedmont Pines Annual Meeting, typically held the last Monday in January.
7. **Continuing Discussion on Structure of a New Wildfire Prevention District**—Cheryl Miller, Executive Director of the Diablo Firesafe Council, shared that DFSC was not in a position to manage projects that come out of the Vegetation Management Plan. A lengthy discussion ensued with the following key points:
 - a. Funding for the projects identified in the Vegetation Management Plan will probably require seeding from an assessment or tax, as well as leveraging from grants. But grants alone won't be sufficient.
 - b. The structure for managing that process should be located within the City of Oakland's City Administrator's Office, not the Fire Department. Trying to set up a different agency outside of the City would not be as efficient (an entire new bureaucracy would need to be developed) and would dilute funding should the agency be broader than Oakland alone.
 - c. The City will most likely need to hire a project manager for this program, as there are very few people within the City with the right set of skills who could devote their time to this. The person should have experience with major environmental/wildfire/land management projects, and be skilled in working with volunteers and city bureaucracies.
 - d. Staff should also include an outreach/education/community relations coordinator with expertise in website communication.
 - e. The new entity should include funding for a consulting biologist and other consultants as needed.
 - f. Once the Vegetation Management Plan is completed, vetted and CEQA approved, it will be more a matter of implementing it according to the plan. Consequently, we need to work hard to get widespread involvement and understanding of the Vegetation Management Plan during its development. The broader that understanding as it is being developed, the easier it will be to promote a new "district".
8. The next meeting is scheduled for Saturday, February 11, 2017 at 10:30 am at 33 Hiller Drive.
9. The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 pm