



Oakland Firesafe Council  
Draft Minutes – November 17, 2018

Present:

Lin Barron  
Ken Benson  
Hayward Blake, Friends of Dimond Park  
Shelagh Broderon  
Alice Friedman  
Barbara Goldenberg  
Jeff Kahn, Rockridge Terrace Homeowners Association  
Jon Kaufman  
Mike Kilian  
Martin Matarrese  
Gordon Piper  
Sue Piper  
Bob Sieben  
Gary Sirbu  
Nick Vigilante  
Doug Wong

A minute of silence for Dinah Benson

New Business requested:

- Endorse regional vegetation management agency-Jon Kauffman
- Sharing information about what you can do when power goes out - Bob Sieben
- How to deal with Chronicle—things completely missing—how to get heard- Bob Sieben

1. Minutes—approved as mailed
2. Treasurer: \$26,050 current bank balance (due to annual appeal for contributions)
  - insurance coverage, Liability Directors and Officers, due to expire Jan 2019  
Motion approved: to renew LDNO coverage of \$498



Oakland Firesafe Council  
Draft Minutes – November 17, 2018

3. Old Business

Benchmark Study – Intent is to start early 2019

- a. Need to staff with independent researcher & funding to perform a benchmark study statewide around funding sources for vegetation management, best practices for inspection, enforcement, doing public community outreach, communication. One graduate student from Goldman School has applied.

Study will aid OFSC for what or how to advocate for a possible district. OFSC to campaign for fund raising; then it is a vehicle for OFSC to get an interview with legislators.

- b. Vegetation Management Plan OWLS 11/15 meeting follow-up: consultants haven't changed the VM Plan despite multiple & redundant comments. This report should indicate the least amount to be done for a set amount of money.

Discussion

Fire breaks: highway 24 was a huge barrier, but the 1991 fire still jumped it; a normal red flag day does not include wind speeds as a critical factor. Red flag & winds should be described in context of the VM Plan. The idea of a buffer zone is less meaningful – why even focus on it?—with wind speeds in recent fires: 1971 = 7 football fields/minute; 1991 = 11 & 12 football fields; Tubbs fire = 21 football fields per minute; Paradise Camp fire = 30 football fields/minute.

Prevention and prevention of spread: Historic condition of forests such as in a 1910 fire Colorado, Wyoming was that nothing grew above a certain height in the understory; forests had no ladder fuels. This slows a fire. Need to find ways to slow the spread, so evacuations can occur, and that fire units and responding units can get in place with bulldozers and pick axes.

Bob Sieben— suggests the City of Oakland lets volunteer groups do their thing and not “get in the way.” Give us support. Not helpful for just one homeowner to make their own property fire safe; groups of homeowners will help create islands.

Barbara Goldenberg -- US forest service says this is where we are & we need to speak their language: Fire safety in Oakland is not just our little parks, but



Oakland Firesafe Council  
Draft Minutes – November 17, 2018

the houses and other properties too. Need to weave in community & residential properties with OFSC outreach. The state is aware of need for landscaping hardening—Office of Public Resources uses it part of their data base. The house is a part of the safety element, details of what you are not allowed to do any longer. Best practices already exist after San Diego county's Cedar Fires and Matthews Fire in early 2000.

Shelagh—focus on parks is important, because most Oakland parks are surrounded by houses. Leadership is missing – There should be leadership across the district. OWLS pushing for a robust vegetation management plan; the current version is not. Each park requires specific management.

Keep pushing comments to Council.

Lin—need leadership across the City, not just the fire department that owns this task. Who will implement the plan, oversee and manage the plans? Does fire department have enough expertise? - ecology, botany, project management or administrative skills. No representative at the meeting from Adopt-a-Spot Public Works division—no cross interdepartmental communication. City has to own this, have to have a leader in charge.

Nick Vigilante - Not enough management skills to manage this VM program. City has relied heavily on Vince Crudele; he is hampered by constant turn-over in the OFD Vegetation Management Unit. By January the unit will have lost 3 full time inspectors to other unit. There is no list of possible new candidates or when; inspectors needed for spring inspections and time needed to be trained — This makes the potential for a future delay. He has written to Shang Thao, the new District 4 council person. The City Administrator office does not give OFD the resources it needs.

Gordon – need a vision of where we want to be in 5, 10, or 50 years—lacking a 10 year plan. No plan for removal of aging and fire prone trees.

What to do? Need to contact our council members now!  
Talking points to City Council and for next 11/20 VM Plan meeting:



## Oakland Firesafe Council Draft Minutes – November 17, 2018

- Our position in context of:
  - OWLS are park stewards, “fanatic zealots” about open space and its management over time
  - Concerns, expectations & disappointments with what was heard, and what hasn’t been done and what should be done going forward.
- If the VM Plan continues in current vein, there will be no support from fanatic zealots who would have been Council’s most avid supporters –why?
  - Still no specificity & a lack of new thinking – There is a reason for doing a regional wildfire prevention district; City and OFD are not the place for this because the current City’s structure perpetuates silos the current status quo.
  - New Normal, not way to do the plan or manage that plan
  - Visibly apparent steps needed that the City’s leadership is committed to a long term management plan
- An interval of 4 months of inactivity from July’s public meeting to this month’s 11/15 meeting: Desley Brooks, Council Public Safety Committee, assigned four (4) deliverables —not be able to meet this in 2 weeks.
  - No one asked contractor what they’ve been doing for last 4 months.
- What prompted contractor to have these meetings this month with OWLS?
- With deep sorrow and disappointment I have to inform you that 3 bullets— we have wasted the time and effort of valuable city volunteers and organizations that would have added value to any plan to address vegetation management in City of Oakland.
- Can we afford the economic loss of another catastrophic fire?

Hayward Blake for Dimond Park– There is a slope above the parking lot, untouched in 75 years; there are 10 dead trees. To take a look, drive down Park blvd, to left on El Centro go down to the bottom by Rec Center; at Hanley get out of car to look. There is about 70% fuel load on ground with great big dead trees that drip wood. Many houses 10 or 15 abut this area. Remember the name of Parks & Rec Director Michele Doppelt who is tireless working at Dimond Park. Mona is leaving Mayor’s office. Hayward plans to attend the 11/20 VM Plan meeting.



Oakland Firesafe Council  
Draft Minutes – November 17, 2018

Sue Piper – recommends a press release to newspapers following the 11/20 VM Plan meeting to express dissatisfaction with process. It should be short & concise, Jon and Jeff both advised; the issues are complex. Should meet one and one with reporters (David Debolt and Matthais Gaffney) for background & the status of the current process.

Jeff Kahn – this is the time to get Mayor’s attention (after Camp fire in Paradise): no funding mechanism, no timelines, no specificity, “runs out of gas” at south end of Oakland hills. Apocalypse in the air.

Sue will review with Jeff & Jon

c. Parking in the Hills/Evacuation: get out your red paint!  
Evacuation is a separate issue from parking and painting red curbs.

Oakland’s evacuation routes should emulate Marin County’s best practices; City should review evacuation routes & have OFD engine companies drive their routes. There are only 9 routes that work.

Oakland should update its transportation studies, make them available to first responders and agencies.

4. Organizing Neighborhoods Update: Doug Mosher has applied for a 2 yr grant through Diablo Firesafe Council (Cheryl Miller) \$100,000

5. Claremont Canyon Strategy: a pilot program to do pre-OFD inspection consultations with neighbors on Claremont Blvd behind Claremont Hotel.  
- Look at the home —not just the surrounding vegetation!

Bob Sieben & Barbara Goldenberg to plan & train OFSC members to do these consultations - use one of our houses as a test  
- Bob is a certified home inspector by International Association of Fire Chiefs  
- Barbara has been trained by Cal-Fire for landscape/exterior

6. Outreach – House Parties



Oakland Firesafe Council  
Draft Minutes – November 17, 2018

a. Ask Bob Strayer for the first house party walk-through —his house is on Rispin backing onto Claremont

- To do after the first of the year

OFSC members then able to do consultations with neighbors

b. Budget Process starts Tuesday November 27<sup>th</sup>

OFSC needs to know what OFD (Vince Crudele) needs for staffing & resources

- Members of SEIU Union 1020 objected to combining OFD Building & Veg Management Inspector position based on overtime issues. There is a continuing revolving door for staffing Vince's unit, the overtime issue is an impediment to what is involved.

Sue Piper to meet Loren Taylor to discuss

#### New Business

Jon Kaufman— Requests OFSC to endorse a regional vegetation management agency. This would be a regional wildfire prevention management agency, with expertise, guidelines from the State, and a budget to manage all properties - private, city, and university. The proposal is written up in the Claremont Canyon Conservancy newsletter.

#### Reasons:

- the lack of ability of Oakland to really address the problem.
- each East Bay city has its own focus within its boundaries.
- fire departments are not fire prevention agencies.

#### Discussion:

There is an on-going subcommittee dealing with this concept. It has been communicated to the State Office of Public Resources at a policy planning level.

Jon Kauffman - has discussed it with Buffy Wicks and Nancy Skinner. This is just the beginning of getting this through the legislature. Not ready for legislature yet.

Ken Benson - Air Quality Management District a good model legislatively.



Oakland Firesafe Council  
Draft Minutes – November 17, 2018

Motion approved: that OFSC endorses the proposed regional wildfire prevention management agency for the East Bay hills (Alameda, Contra Costa counties)

OFSC members should take this to our own groups to build a ground swell of neighborhood support.

Jon Kauffman will draft a short statement.  
Sue Piper will distribute the OFSC endorsement.

Action of next meeting: to create a subcommittee on policy direction.

7. CalFire grants-

- no real plan about what we are going to do in parks and open space
- Martin Matarrese will serve OFSC liaison with the local Oakland urban forest citizens' group to help advise on the CalFire grant for the City's urban forestry plan

8. PG&E Shut-off

Nick Vigilante – educate public about why it is important.

- But a PG&E shut-off could be a burden - raises concerns about the cost impact on City of Oakland, re: overtime. City should find a way to be reimbursed for overtime costs and expenses.
- Concerns also about what is the City's plan to coordinate across all departments and within departments.

Bob Sieben handed out what steps to take when power is turned off

Sue to ask Bob for pdf

Bob Sieben recommends that OFSC be in support of PG&E shut-off, when needed in extreme circumstances.

9. Bad Air Quality red alert

Bob Sieben



Oakland Firesafe Council  
Draft Minutes – November 17, 2018

- The SF Chronicle had good information on the long term effects of smoke containing lead in car parts, asbestos, computers, toxic metals, etc.
- Satellites will be in place to diagnose ignitions from space
- Bad Air Quality red alert

10. Eucalyptus danger at Hiller Highlands entry on Tunnel Rd

Bob Sieben

- sprouted eucalyptus trees are not being maintained on private property; they are leaning out over the street = a choke point for evacuation
- wants some “legal language” delivered to property owner

January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2019 - at Piper house

Adjourned at 12:20 pm