



info@oaklandfiresafecouncil.orgOakland Firesafe Council

Board Meeting Minutes

March 20, 2021

Via Zoom Conference Call

Present

Lin Barron

Ken Benson

Bob Borek

John Brega

Valerie Brown

Carolyn Burgess

Richard Cowan

Chris Cullander

Sue Duncan

Barbara Goldenberg

Jen Grimm

Jon Kaufman

Jerry Kent

Kathryn Levinson

Neil McElroy

Steve Mendelson

Bob Meyers

Gordon Piper

Sue Piper

Kay Starkweather

Elizabeth Stage

Nick Vigilante

The meeting called to order at 10:06 am by the Chair.

1. Minutes of February 20, 2021 approved as mailed.
2. Treasurer's Report: Bank Balance \$1027 added from Paypal \$55,432; no outstanding checks, but unincumbered 15,849, 65000 in a cal fire grant, JPA fund18100, Donner Foundation grant 20,000 earmarked retainer for Placeworks. 33,075 encumber \$39,500.
3. Old Business
  - a. **Oakland CP&R**--Neighborhood Organizing Update- Jen Grimm
    - a. 1-2 presentations a week. Working with OES on joint programming and awaiting \$125,000 grant from city , newsletter once a week, Richard Cowan: my neighborhood association had a presentation last week, wonderful. GenOak Exercises on March 24 with RACES at noon



- b. **Regional Vegetation Management District Update**-Jon Kaufman  
Good progress building support among local public officials., hired Placeworks, a consulting firm to reach out with officials we have not been able to reach. Goal to get all cities and 2 counties and special districts to pass a resolution to authorize sending a rep to discuss forming a Joint Powers Authority (JPA).
- c. **City of Oakland Wildfire Prevention Interagency Team**—When Rebecca Kaplan proposed a resolution to move forward with local Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) legislation for the City, she thanked the Oakland Firesafe Council for pointing out the need to address density and impact on evacuation. Gordon: City previously submitted grant proposal re North Oakland Sports Field—talked about replanting—problems going into 4<sup>th</sup> year, no water. Needs to be resolved or we won't be able to restore. Problem with Vegetation Management Plan—calling for removal of fire prone vegetation, lack of support from CalFire and City tree planting to restore—redlining most of Berkeley and Oakland Hills submitted a grant application to Alliance for Community Trees to make those available---Sue to send a letter. Barbara--How gratifying to hear Joe Devries report, how different that feels than in the past—to feel the implied support and commitment from the city to wildfire prevention. A big leap forward. Ken: Funded a state practices study—assessed up to 50 districts statewide. Found Marin had the best model of across agency planning; Marin County Board of Supervisors instituted a resolution that Wildfire Prevention would be a priority.
- d. **The Savvy Homeowner in our Fire Prone Community series**
  - i. Thursday, March 25, 2021, 5:30-7 pm The Savvy Homeowner: All About Defensible Space—Video, Vince Crudele, Assistant Fire Marshal, OFD, and Travis Hansen, Acting Vegetation Management Supervisor, OFD.
- e. **Update on East Bay's Tree and Shrub Mortality**—John Brega  
[Bay Nature Article—hope some have gotten out to OFSC.](#)  
Some to Oakland City staff, very responsive. Led tours through JMP to show what is going on—for Kevin Charles, O Park Supervisor, USDA US Forest Service, UC Berkeley Extension and CalFire. In a wait and see stage, because of rain and Spring is here. Seeing a rebound of some plants in the park, and recent rain and future rain may accelerate the decline of some of tree and shrub species—rebound: Monkey flower; deciduous trees with strange behavior in the fall, are coming out with new leaves. The Oaks of great concern to me exhibiting a variety of responses in Spring—some halo of new leaves; sickest ones have some new leaves, remains to be seen. Acacias don't seem to be rebounding, similarly the eucalyptus haven't experienced significant thickening of their canopies. Not sure the same pathogens for Acacias impacting other trees. Barbara—if PG&E aware—they are doing Lidar along their power lines—can analyze species and estimated life span of stands of trees, they should be aware – are they participating.



PG&E might be willing to share what they have done. Take a look at the end of Matteo Garboletto's report.

#### 4. New Business

##### a. **Legislative Update**—Bob Borek and Elizabeth Stage

Agreed to monitoring what is happening in Sacramento and locally—SB63 Sen. Stern in Sept. sitting with housing committee—implements new guidelines for clearing defensible space and building standards—how you deal with adjacent property homeowners when you have to clear 100 feet. Need consent, want to augment government resources – allowing certain qualified entities to supplement CalFire and home hardening assessments, training and certification program. A grant program for fire threatened community, 50% of grant award for anyone taking on these fire prevention efforts. Authorizes Calfire to do resiliency work on federal lands. Making El Cerrito Safe written a letter with recommendations—adjacent homeowners need to consent, not be unreasonably withheld; California plant list grants for planting, provisions for low-income households to encourage people to take on fire prevention and home hardened.

AB1500, SB45—bond issuances

Barbara – making grants available to individuals—the accountability for how it is spent, whether matching funds are required, fairly complex and burdensome that recommendation, need not go through known entities, need a fiscal sponsor; a lot of wariness to grants to not known entities—perhaps apportioned

Val Brown—County of San Diego- upgrade vents—did as a reimbursement program, limited other areas that were eligible for a certain percentage, not cost prohibitive- people have to front the cost to get reimbursement

Elizabeth Stage—found legislation about low income and disadvantage community—like the vaccine distribution criteria—is nothing north of San Jose qualifies—no community in Oakland as low income or disadvantage. Subcommittee—Bob, Sue Elizabeth should look into eye of the needle- some legislation sets aside 25% for such communities, wildfire resolution SB45—all the legislators who have introduced the bill, all live in Southern California—need to work through the politics. SB 9 and SB 10 single family zoning—a key word search would not show up. Keep our ear to the ground on past policies related to housing—to get to the authors early to point out the unintended consequence of excluding whole areas of state in WUI that serve as buffers to disadvantaged communities that we want to protect.

##### b. Oakland City Council Activity

- i. Resolution re allowing multi-family residences in single family zones in Oakland
- ii. **Budget**—Budget summit at 1 pm with Mayor Schaff—town hall – find it on the city website—links budget process-- because of infusion of 10 million from Coliseum and



federal rescue plan—pretty fluid, nothing too definitive yet. A lot of markers on the table for restoration. Do plan to restore fire services in current year. Special city council on Monday, March 29.

Ken on budget advisory commission—a number of these bail out items—Uptown station sold another 13 million -- one time infusions—not ongoing;

- iii. **CalTrans**—Adopt a Highway—Gordon—article in SF Chronicle, discussed how Caltrans changed policy re volunteers working on steep slopes. Statewide, only Caltrans employees and contractors on those slopes. Submitted multiple requests from North Hills Community Association to CalTrans re steep slopes in Highway 13, 24 along the service road. Complained to Fire Department and city—not gotten Caltrans to address it. No community representatives involved. Many adjacent to freeways and frontage roads – like Tunnel Road, south side of Highway 13, forest of French Broom regrow. Send to Joe Devries—who meets with OFD and CalTrans on a monthly basis. Bob Meyers, trash removal on CalTrans have to prompt City of Oakland to tell Caltrans each time. Oakland 311. Steep slopes on Highway 13. Barbara—before shut down, highway 5 to see how clearance had been done—tactics to get CalTrans to respond trucking industry/ has lobbied Cal Trans to keep those places open, the fires so wild, halt the truckers—are going to speak louder. Tunnel a bigger risk to commerce—not paying attention. Find a hook – need to get outside ourselves to get other voices requesting/demanding that that segment gets taken care of. Can go to Caltrans website. Elizabeth Stage—OFD doesn’t have authority to make CalTrans do anything—inadequate funding for activity for vegetation management—need to focus on Sacramento. Use the 311 app on your phone because it gives exact location. OFS survey and submit 6-10 areas that are steep and need maintenance ask city to lean on Caltrans and –Sue-Gordon, Nick—30 parcels along 13- 15 parcels from Broadway Terrace to Redwood Road—do face residential areas; most visible access and entry ramps along SR 13 along Park Blvd. Richard Cowan—if we need an outside force, Doug Block of the Teamsters as a rep of – government relations for teamsters.
- iv. **Keep Oakland Beautiful Advisory Board**—OFSC should send a letter to the Keep Oakland Beautiful Board to change the name to Keep Oakland Beautiful and Firesafe-communicate support for changing the name, once a year, support on promoting a fire safe project in Oakland to reduce fire risk Yes.

5. Next Meeting :April 17 , 10-Noon

6. Adjourned 11:38.