



Oakland Firesafe Council  
Board Meeting Minutes  
April 27, 2021  
Via Zoom Conference Call

Present:

Ken Benson  
John Brega  
Carolyn Burgess  
Chris Cullander  
Glen Dahlbacka  
Sue Duncan, Make El Cerrito Fire Safe  
Barbara Goldenberg  
Jon Kaufman  
Jerry Kent  
Steve Mendelson, Crown Ridge Homeowners Association  
Robert Meyers, Piedmont Pines Neighborhood Association  
Doug Mosher  
Gordon Piper  
Sue Piper  
Bob Sieben  
Elizabeth Stage  
Nick Vigilante  
Doug Wong

Guests:

Michael Hunt, OFD  
Tom Maiorana, UC Davis

Meeting called to order at 10:05am.

1. **Approval of Minutes** March 20, 2021 as mailed
2. **Treasurer's Report** – \$51,632 beginning balance: 1249 unencumbered, \$39583 encumbered
3. **Evacuation Simulation Game Partnership with UC**—UC Davis Professor Tom Maiorana, working with 2 Civil Engineering professors at UC Berkeley and a professor from the University of Pittsburgh specializing in resilience in disaster scenarios, received a Phase 1 National Science Foundation (NSF) grant to develop a series of evacuation scenarios that local residents can

work through to practice evacuation thinking. They have been working closely with OFSC and the Oakland Fire Department and have produced a series of 7 minute “Choose Your Own Adventure” games that the Oakland CP&R program will test with small groups of neighbors over the coming months. They are eligible to apply for a Phase 2 NSF grant in which they plan to develop a more robust video game project that is tailored to the specific streets and neighborhood of the people playing the game. People were asked to contact Doug Mosher, OCP&R coordinator, if they want to schedule a session to test the game out with a few of their neighbors.

#### 4. **Old Business**

- a. **Oakland CP&R**—Doug Mosher shared that OCP&R has completed its Cal Fire Grant and the California Fire Foundation Grant. They are waiting for the City of Oakland to release the \$125,000 matching grant that had been approved in the current 2-year budget. Plans call for continuing to build the OCP&R program, expanding outreach to local merchants. He is working on submitting a second CalFire Grant in May.
- b. **OCP&R continues to make enhancements to their website and newsletter, 1 hour workshops-** contact Doug to schedule.
- c. **Promoting Oakland’s CERT Training**—the first 40 participants have just about completed the coursework—the final is a weekend onsite training in May. CERT is a national program, supported by FEMA, and replaces Oakland’s CORE program. CERT is a 23-hour program—OCP&R’s 1 hour program is offered to those who aren’t yet ready to dive into CERT.
- d. **GenOak**—is working with the Berkeley Office of Emergency Services today on a radio drill, simulating an earthquake. Oakland has a plan for a similar drill in May and June.

#### 5. **Regional Vegetation Management District Update—Jon Kaufman**

Working on this for about a year—generated some funding and moving forward. Thanks to all for endorsing. Enough elected officials have signed on as endorsers to that can go to next stage-- getting councils and boards of supervisors to approve a formal resolution as willing to send a delegate to a regional meeting to discuss formation of JPA.

We continue to seek more dollars—we’ve raised \$35,000, need more funds to keep PlaceWorks, our facilitating consultant, going. And we will need to hire a law firm to write the language one the details have been worked out. Please donate through OFSC.

#### 6. **The Savvy Homeowner in our Fire Prone Community series**

Thursday, April 29, 2021, 5:30-7 pm: The Savvy Homeowner: A Matter of When, not If—

Earthquake Preparedness Mark Benthien, Executive Director, Earthquake Country Alliance.

Webinar on April 29 5:30 pm sign up –register on website- focus on earthquakes 2 experts: PhD Seismologist with USGS, worked on Hayward Fault (Haywire simulations), followed by Earthquake Country Alliance speaker. OFSC – earthquakes potential risk to our area.

#### 7. **Legislative Update-**

- a. **State Activity-** Elizabeth Stage
  - i. **Joint Powers**—Jim Woods carrying legislation provide grants to regional planning and wildfire prevention—language makes sure that some of this state money will actually accrue to urban areas as well as rural, LRA as well as SRAs—Buffy Wicks jumped in as a supporter. . We talked with Buffy’s office, have a pipeline there. Scheduled to speak with Nancy Skinners’ Office in coming weeks—nuances and subtleties

- ii. **Ballot Measure SB 45, AB1500**—provide local assistance grants—get some understanding regionals needing different approaches—prioritized in high fire risk over other community characteristics
  - iii. **Make El Cerrito Firesafe** working on vegetation bills AB63—mt veg management related to state land,
  - iv. **Zoning issues**—Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)—some legislation as prohibitions for Very High Fire Severity Zones, unless they have home hardening plans and comprehensive evacuation plans—there’s a way to be in support of increased housing, the consequences of sheer density is a threat to evacuation, infrastructure cannot support surge, adding more people is not an equity—safety issue
- b. **City Issues**—Sue Piper
- i. Oakland held a Zoning Commission hearing on its ADU legislation. Same issues as above. There will be additional opportunities to comment. Our concern is that the entire evacuation route must be considered, not just road widths along the way, because the issue is vehicle density, not road width.

## 8. Open Forum

- i. **Gordon Piper**—what efforts are underway to go after funding to replace aging or fire prone trees? With the city’s vegetation plan, the tree division and city aren’t planting nor maintaining trees. There appears to be a fall-off in tree groups—such as Urban Releaf, Sierra Club tree planters in East or West Oakland. It is going to be a challenge since the current Federal round of grants focus on environmentally disadvantaged communities, and prefer 3 partners in a disadvantaged community per a new EPA guideline. We need to revitalize our tree groups, and our city’s efforts in maintenance and tree planting. PWA and tree section are vulnerable— with die off of trees and Global Warming. We need to find ways from Feds or state to get funding for important tree planting or maintenance.
- ii. **John Brega**-- he posted a blog on the OFSC website about the tree die off and he continues to watch developments in Joaquin Miller Park. He learned that Oakland came late to the party—other areas in hills and other parts of CA doing much worse and started getting bad much earlier. There’s a lot of acreage that is very distressed or dead. We are in a wait-and-see period right now--some foliage is coming out in the spring. Whether trees keep those leaves is unclear; Acacias and eucalyptus do not appear to be doing well. Last June was when everything went sideways. If we don’t get a rebound in those distressed trees now, and things may go sideways again in June. EB Parks had a meeting 2 weeks that dealing with the die off in Chabot Regional Park is a \$30 to \$40 million proposition. If all eucalyptus in EBRP were addressed, it would be a billion dollars. Jerry Kent added that eucalyptus are a vulnerable species and this time it is due to drought. Albany Hill looks terrible. It is a problem no one wants to do anything with. Taking it out a eucalyptus is not a simple matter as it costs \$1000-3000 per tree. Eucalyptus are too dense – there are 1000 stems an acre when it should be 35 in Chabot park. Barbara Goldenberg suggested that the current dieback situation forestalls planting in these areas until we know more.
- iii. **Elizabeth Stage**—City Council has restored money to OFD and most to OPD in current budget.
- iv. **Robert Meyers**--Piedmont Pines thank Doug and Joe DeVries for using cut logs cleared for fire safety behind University being placed along Skyline near Chabot at the overlook where people have historically made fires, shot off guns, held 4<sup>th</sup> of

July fireworks parties. By blocking parking it's gotten quiet at night. More thanks to 311 people in Oakland who removed a huge cache of mattresses at the overlook.

- v. **Robert Meyers** re Accessory Dwelling Units—it still costs \$\$ 500 a square foot to build anything in the hills—so it's unlikely renters in these unit will be low income.
- vi. **Gordon Piper**--Highway 13 to Caldecott Tunnel—French broom no longer maintained by Caltrans contractors who installed landscaping as part of the 4<sup>th</sup> Bore Mitigation effort. CalTrans doesn't have sufficient maintenance staff. We need OFD in meetings with Caltrans to move on getting Caltrans to address the French Broom. A real fire risk. John Brega added that French Broom is the most affected species by the pathogen, next to Acacia and eucalyptus. Some is greening up a little bit this spring, but there are 6-10 foot piles of dry fuel in the hills. In addition, tics infected with Lime Disease are apparently all over Joaquin Miller Park. Ken Benson said they are also in Knowland and Chabot Park—strongly recommend stay on non-brushy trails.

**9. City of Oakland Wildfire Prevention Interagency Team**—Michael Hunt, OFD Chief of Staff

- a. Will put a more complete report into a long Next Door post next week—'
- b. Change in Vegetation Management Leadership: Adam Ball is the new acting vegetation management supervisor, and Felicia Bryant, the new Assistant Fire Marshal. We are in a — transition period.
- c. Inspection season: Engine Companies are getting trained now; Inspection will start June 2 go for 39 days; will be focusing at outset on non-compliant properties year before, and City public parcels.
- d. A question came up on why the city doesn't differentiate between highly flammable trees next to homes an less flammable trees. We focus on combustible material and volume and defensible space.
- e. Goat Schedule- is in the final stages. Michael will post the goat schedule in the OFD newsletter.
- f. CalTrans—Joe DeVries, who leads the City's Interagency Wildfire Prevention Task Force, had a meeting on Thursday and he was pushing hard on that issue.
- g. Contracts for roadside clearance are in the final stages, some of it that would have been in sequence has been delayed do the COVID and the transition. Michael will ask if the parcel next to Corporate Yard that is not part of Public Works, but is City property will be cleared as part of this upcoming Roadside Clearance?
- h. Gordon Piper reiterated that there was disconnect between OFD and veg management and Tree section—OFD can't control PWA, and the City itself doesn't have the resources to manage fire-prone forest one. The City needs to come up with a way to manage its aging and fire prone forest—in terms of VMP—question come up with huge burden and fire risk these aging trees. Michael responded that he, Joe DeVries met with the City Administrator yesterday to discuss the urgency of identifying responsibilities. He noted that PWA and OFD have never been working better than in past 4 years Dying trees present a serious issue— There is a Webinar—UC Berkeley on the tree dies off on April 23, to get the latest info on the issue—sharing notes and collaborating on these phenomena.
- i. Michael added that there used to be position in PWA for grant management The Wildfire Working Group is interested in reinstating this position to identify a template of shovel ready projects and go get grants to implement them. We are bringing David Moore, Tree Services Supervisor, into conversations more often.

- j. Re the tree die off-- Working closely with new EBRP General Manager Sabrina Landreth, who used to be City Administrator at Oakland
- k. Budget—had money restored to OFD—experienced before budget restoration at least 3 instances of delay due to closed stations. We’ve had several multi alarmed fires already and you may see 3 alarms in High Fire Severity Zone out of caution
- l. Evacuation planning—meeting weekly, as soft opening – web content to be rolled out in May to get people aware of terminology, instructions and how to use Zonehaven.. All the governance worked out in ZoneHaven—may impact other jurisdictions. Thanks to OCPR for helping fill in data points in ZoneHaven. Sue Piper offered to have OFSC/OCP&R preview the messaging before it goes live.
- m. Nick Vigilante asked if Michael had the capacity to issue regular newsletter about wildfire developments: Vegetation Management efforts, roadside clearance and goat clearance. It would answer the public’s questions and we can help push it out ad a rapid, predictable tool. Michael said he thinks it is possible.
- n. Stephen Mendelson asked it if were possible to know ahead of time when inspections so residents can meet with inspectors. It was explained that you can find the scheduled date of inspection in the Acella program now;
- o. Gordon Piper asked Michael to look into the lack water service at the North Oakland Sports field and the lack of progress between City and EBMUD—A million dollar proposed trail head project may have to be put off because there is no water. What can fire department or City to deal with lack of water service. Michael said he would raise the issue at the internal working group.
- p. Testing Hydrants—this week to get a sense of flow
- q. Grizzly Peak overlooks—working on MOU with regional law enforcement agencies; good start to conversation last year, improve this year with Berkeley, UC Berkeley, Kensington, El Cerrito, Contra Costa County , EBRP formalizing roles and responsibilities with Berkeley and Oakland. They plan to close Grizzly Peak 4<sup>th</sup> of July – and do a heavy June 1-Thanksgiving campaign. Elizabeth Stage suggested that the City consider using shot spotters to differentiate between gun shots or fireworks.
- r. Michael Hunt said the City is a week and a half from hearing about selection of fire chief.

#### **10. Announcements**

- a. There is a Zoom meeting at 6 pm with Council Member Kalb on Monday, May 11 at 6 pm featuring Adam Ball and Felicia Bryant, as well as OES staff.
- b. Montclair Neighborhood Council meets Thursday, May 6 at 5; 30- 7:30 pm

11. Next Meeting: May 15, 2021, 10-Noon.

12. The meeting was adjourned at 11:41 am.