

Oakland Firesafe Council Meeting
August 16, 2023
Final Approved Minutes

Attending

Michael Alvarenga, Lin Barron, Ken Benson, Louise Comfort, Olga Crowe, Damon Covington, Alec and Benay Dara-Abrams, Sheryl Drinkwater, Bobbi Feyerband, Joelle Fraser, Jen Grimm, Adam Hensleragh(?sp), Jon Kaufman, Kathleen Kelly, Jerry Kent, David Kessler, Barbara Kluger, Gary McCormick, Doug Mosher, Peter Reed, Dale Ridsen, , Elizabeth Stage, Nathan Stalnaker, Susan Silverman, Allene Warren, Stan Weisner, and Doug Wong and screen name Emmalina and phone number ending in -9399.

Called to Order at 7:03pm.

1. Minutes

July draft minutes, moved by Doug Wong, seconded by Susan, were accepted as presented.

2. Treasurer's Report (Ken Benson, on behalf of Treasurer Michael Kilian)

As of July 18th, the bank balance is \$17,176, doesn't reflect contributions received yesterday of \$850. There are outstanding checks totaling \$2,445, therefore an effective balance of \$15,581, of which only \$670 is unencumbered. There are donations via Network for good and by credit card that are not yet reflected in that balance.

The encumbered balance of \$14,911 is for the MOU; consulting fees to Place Works and the attorney who drafted the MOU have been paid. Moved by Susan and seconded by Gary, the report was accepted as presented.

Old Business

1. Neighborhood Organizing Update-Doug Mosher

Because we didn't receive continuation funding from the City of Oakland; Doug is stepping down as program manager so that the program staff (Jen and Joelle) can continue with their work. The good news is that Doug will remain on the board and there are several fundraising efforts underway. In the last month they have provided wildfire and emergency preparedness and radio workshops, have a District 4 town hall scheduled later this month and a similar event is being organized for District 7 in addition to a few community groups.

2. Firewise Update-Joelle

Joelle did her first assessment with Adam Ball, lead for the OFD vegetation management unit; there was a good turnout and they already have a draft plan so they can apply for recognition soon. There are two more neighborhoods tentatively scheduled for meetings, Parkridge Estates (~70 homes) and Kaiser/Hiller Highlands (~27 homes). More neighborhoods are reaching out.

3. MOU Update- Jon Kaufman

The MOU is circulating among the jurisdictions where they will be presenting it to their governing bodies for approval. It's been three years of effort, led by Lisa and Jon, with our thanks, to City staff, donors and volunteers, and the work of Jerry and Elizabeth who serve on the community advisory group. If you know fire officials in the jurisdictions, please urge them to encourage approval; get back to Jon if there are concerns that need to be addressed.

Role of UC and Berkeley Lab, since they're national laboratories, not local agencies, cannot "join," but the meetings are open and they'd be welcome to attend. They already meet with neighbors and participate in the Hills Emergency Forum, so this is consistent with those actions.

4. City of Oakland updates-Olga Crowe, EMSD,

CERT 3-day weekend workshops are expanding their reach, including Civic Corp participants, with simultaneous translation in Spanish and English. Another first-time event was a 2-hour workshop in collaboration with the Little Saigon Community, conducted in four languages (Cantonese, English Mandarin, and Vietnamese) and a second workshop is already scheduled. Zack is taking a personal leave for a few months and Olga will be filling in. They're also hiring for three open positions, hopefully within a month.

5. Initiative on Climate Change –Louise Comfort

As they move from community organizations towards the responsible officials, they're looking forward to meeting with Acting Chief Covington. They're planning a report to the community on the initiative's progress, perhaps in January.

6. FOJMP and pursuit of CalFire Forest Health Grant - Dale Risdén

Got turned down for the CalFire grant, they'll try again next year. They had an excellent meeting with Council Member Ramachandran, discussing how difficult it is for friends groups to interface with the City. They're going to get dumpsters! They're working on repairing the damage from the winter rains.

7. Update from OWLs – Lin Barron

Lin participated in the meeting with Janani which left Lin more optimistic, given the press to fill Tree Services staff and hoping to out more funding in the mid-cycle budget. The friends of Sausal Creek have a database that works better for the Friends of Montclair Railroad Trail (and others) than the City system, so they can track the number of hours that volunteers have worked.

New Business

Berkeley Firesafe Council Alec and Benay Dara-Abrams reported that Berkeley Fire Safe Council had received a Chancellor's Community Grant, involving the Cal students and a fire scientist, along with the students from his fire science research lab to measure before, during, and after the clean-up work.

Fundraising Ken urged members to donate early and often so that we can continue the emergency preparedness work, hoping to raise \$15,000.

Doug Mosher introduced Gary McCormick, longtime volunteer with Juaquin Miller and Dimond Parks; he's interested in removal of dead logs that have been cleared from trails, getting them to dumpsters.

Elizabeth Stage gave a brief Advocacy report, no news from Vegetation Management Unit or PG&E, mentioned the upcoming North Hills Ice Cream Social and Plant Sale and the upcoming D4 town hall, including representatives from the Insurance Commissioner.

David Kessler reported on a meeting of Save Our Claremont with new executives of the Claremont Hotel; they have dropped the residential portion of the proposed plan, are interested in restoring the hotel to its former greatness. They're concerned about the hotel's impact on emergency evacuation, are aware of the dangers of the eucalyptus grove behind the hotel.

Peter Reed wants to pick up some of Doug's work as a volunteer. He retired in September to the Bay Area after serving as a data scientist for the Southern California Edison wildfire mitigation plan.

Meeting adjourned at 8.35pm

Next meeting Wednesday, September 19, 2023 at 7pm via Zoom.