

Oakland Firesafe Council Meeting
June 21, 2023
Minutes

Attending

Michael Alvarenga, Lin Barron, Ken Benson, Louise Comfort, Olga Crowe, Joelle Fraser, Jen Grimm, Michael Hunt, Lisa Jacobs, Jon Kaufman, Jerry Kent, Shelly Levinthal, Jocelyn Mapp, Doug Mosher, Robert Meyers, Steven Parker, Dale Risdien, Peter Seidl, Barry Stallard, Nathan Steinaker, Elizabeth Stage, Doug Wong, Anne – NorCal

Called to Order at 7:05pm.

1. Minutes

May Draft minutes were accepted with one typo corrected.

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

Moneys are starting to flow again. That said, please consider donating to OFSC; we need to rebuild the OFSC foundational funding stream. See the [donation page on the OFSC website](#).

As of June 21, bank balance is \$36,836 (still awaiting a payment of the most recent invoice to the City of Oakland). Of that, 18,630 is unencumbered. Total in the JPA fund – \$17,166; total in the CalFire fund: \$360.

3. Community outreach and education (Doug Mosher)

Continuing to do workshop (rebranded as WEP Wildfire Emergency Prepared - see [this link](#)), presentations and tabling – to over 5,000 individuals so far. Wildfire monitoring and reporting section on the website. Sending Biweekly newsletters. Supporting Firewise – two groups are in process. Also working on fire scaping workshops – for better information about how to landscape properties. Planning for community preparedness day in August with a focus on wildfire but also covering other preparatory activities. Buy-in from Alameda County D5 and D4 supervisors’ offices as well as great support of course from Oakland’s emergency department. Asking for suggestions about anyone working in event planning that would like to work on this project please let Doug Mosher know.

Firewise USA – Joelle Fraser. Two recognized Firewise neighborhoods in Oakland, with 20 in process. Reaching out to new neighborhoods such as Hillcrest and Melrose. Working with Piedmont Pines. Working on applying for a grant to the Firewise Foundation. This effort is focused on home hardening – practices to safeguard insurance coverage. Whereas Doug’s WEP program is focused on education and

4. MOU Update (Lisa Jacobs & Jon Kaufman)

Moved from JPA to MOU because it is a simpler process. At a meeting of a smaller working group two weeks ago they all agreed on a draft MOU to be shared with the wider network of interested jurisdictions in the East Bay Hills.

The success of this effort is largely due to the commitment and hard work of Jon Kaufman, with support from Lisa Jacobs, Ken Benson and the rest of the MOU citizens' committee.

OFSC, via the Bay Area Council, is set to receive grant from the California Coastal Conservancy, in light of our work to build a regional collaboration, to explore the potential of offsetting the costs of tree removal through a process to create biochar. EBRPD has a much more significant grant for biochar exploration; the Conservancy would like our project to be in line with theirs.

5. City of Oakland updates

EMSD Update (Olga Crowe)

Local Hazard Mitigation Plan is open for public comment through July 2. See Oakland website page [at this link](#).

Held Golden Eagle Exercise this past month. The team is now part of the national CERT conference planning committee. The conference is next week; more information can be found [at this link](#).

OFD Update (Michael Hunt)

Contribution to MOU efforts by OFSC will be considered in a resolution going to the City Council in early July.

The departure of Chief Freeman is a loss but the new interim leadership team taking over is highly qualified, extremely experienced,

Inspections started in the past couple weeks. Some of the information on the website is being updated – see this page [at this link](#).

Budget – Council President Bas' two presentations of her proposed amendments to the Mayor's Budget have rejected the option to 'brown out' some of the stations in the city.

Station 10 is still out of service; Station 15 and other nearby stations are stepping up.

City Admin Update (Joe Devries)

Caltrans work on Highway 13 will finish June 30. The Northbound side will not get extra clearances.

City will be assessing problem spots on Skyline and other locations in the hills to be considered for treatments such as done on Grizzly Peak.

New WPAD - Looking at placing a new WPAD on the ballot. Effort will take a huge community component. It was noted that the new WPAD will operate much differently than the old one did largely due to the much better collaboration with community and other stakeholders on wildfire prevention.

Grizzly Peak will be closed on July 4th; log barriers will be assessed and managed as necessary.

PG&E have confirmed that undergrounding in neighborhoods in the Oakland Hills is not a high priority for PG&E.

Vegetation Management Plan – Consultants have promised a June delivery date for review; still on schedule for a fall 2023 adoption.

6. Initiative on Climate Change – Louise Comfort

Interviews have begun; and it is striking the amount of inter-connectedness.

7. Advocacy (Elizabeth Stage)

Oakland budget is converging; Mayor's draft budget and City Council President Bas's budget are pretty well aligned. Budget meeting is next Monday – helpful if community members weigh in about their support for vegetation management.

8. FOJMP and pursuit of CalFire Forest Health Grant - Dale Ridsen

Waiting to hear about CalFire grant. Meeting with CM Ramachandran and staff from Oakland Public Works. His neighborhood has decided to become a Firewise Community.

9. Update from OWLs – Lin Barron

There are still problems with City of Oakland not doing vegetation management work in OWL sites. Staff turnover is making this even more difficult. Dale Ridsen confirmed this experience.

ACTION: Ken promised to follow up with Joe DeVries and Michael Hunt

10. Other Business

Ken and Elizabeth worked together to provide letter of support to the Berkeley Firesafe Council defensible space grant proposal.

Jon Kaufman updated the group on the litigation decision regarding the lawsuits filed against UC Berkeley – the judge decided in favor of UC Berkeley moving forward on tree removes. Claremont Conservancy filed a lawsuit in order to counteract a lawsuit filed by HCN to enable UC to move forward.

Doug Mosher updated the group on the July 4th Patrol – an annual effort by the Oakland Amateur Radio Group to be additional eyes and ears on the hills and patrol the hills looking for illegal fires, smoke and wildfire.

Michael Alvarenga introduced himself as the new community representative for Treva Reid's district 7 office.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be Wednesday, July 19, 2023 at 7pm via Zoom.

Meeting adjourned at 8.30pm