

Oakland Firesafe Council Draft Minutes
May 17, 2023 via Zoom

Present: Karen Asbelle, Lin Barron, Ken Benson, Louise Comfort, Olga Crowe, Alec Dara-Abrams, Emmaline, Brian Eubanks (and his colleague Diego), Joelle Fraser, Jen Grimm, Jerry Kent, Veronica Melrose NCPC, Robert Meyers, Doug Mosher, Bruce Nye, Dale Ridsen, Elizabeth Stage

The meeting was called to order by Ken Benson, President, at 7:02 pm

1. **April 2023 OFSC Minutes:** Moved by Lin and seconded by Doug, the minutes were approved unanimously as distributed.

2. **Treasurer's Report:** Bank balance as of May 16th was \$28,511. There are outstanding checks totaling \$3,923, leaving \$24,588. \$17,559 is encumbered for the Cal Fire grant and for the JPA/MOU (reflecting contributions from Alameda and Contra Costa Counties and from Pinole). The remaining \$7,029 is available for other expenses since we have paid back the Wells Fargo line of credit that was used when there was a delay in reimbursement from Oakland. The acceptance of the Treasurer's Report was moved by Louise, seconded by Lin, and approved unanimously.

3. Old Business

A. Oakland Neighborhood Organizing--Doug Mosher, they've tabled for Earth Day at Chabot, presented to Montclair Neighborhood Council and Piedmont Pines, and posted fire monitoring resources on the webpage. Coming up they will be working with EMSD for their Golden Eagle exercise doing the radio communications—GenOak and ham radio--and the EBMUD 100th anniversary at Lake Temescal.

B. Fireescaping—Jen Grimm has been distributing the EBMUD brochure; welcomes newsletter contributions.

C. Firewise--Joelle Fraser has been working closely with Hillcrest Estates (they're meeting with CalFire re: boundary when she returns from Hawaii); updating Hiller application; and another neighborhood is doing an assessment. Louise Comfort, Rockridge resident, and Veronica from the Melrose Neighborhood Council (Beat 27X) expressed interest.

D. Regional Vegetation Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)--Ken Benson for Lisa Jacobs and Jon Kaufman, the draft MOU is being circulated and ratified by the governing may be signed by the end of June

E. City of Oakland and Wildfire Prevention Interagency Team—Michael Hunt (OFD), Joe DeVries, Olga Crowe (EMSD). Olga Crowe EMSD, Oakland will participate their first comprehensive regional simulation. Part 1 is "commodities point of distribution" with walk-up and drive-through components, distributing emergency preparedness kits (as if they were water and meals), involving city workers and CERT and GenOak volunteers for EOC communication. Part 2 will be EOC training on planning. Upcoming are a new CERT training, updating the LHMP, and co-hosting national CERT training in Burlingame.

Ken on behalf of Michael Hunt and Joe DeVries, inspections mailers have been received by WUI residents, inspections start with previously non-compliant parcels. Chief Freeman said that he's enjoyed working with Oakland activists and regional partners. Joe said that there will be goat grazing this summer, contracts already signed as normal despite budget shortfalls. They're confident that things will go well.

The Fire Department received a \$27 million grant to hire firefighters, <https://oaklandside.org/2023/05/17/grant-offset-oakland-fire-department-cuts/> It's likely that the need for mandatory overtime will be alleviated. Not yet sure the extent to which it can be used to offset the mayor's proposed cuts to OFD. She proposed freezing a few positions, a new engine on hold, one rotating brownout will be decided in July if budget isn't amended.

Lin Barron reported on a meeting with Adam Ball. The contracts for 100 city parcels have been signed but he doesn't know when and where they will be cleared. OWLS are concerned because restoration sites and protected species have been damaged, trying to figure out who in Public Works would help the OWLS get the information. It appears that there's a breakdown in communications which should be called to Joe DeVries' attention.

F Initiative on Climate Change – Louise Comfort. The website is up and running, <https://geomechanics.berkeley.edu/scc/> They had a community meeting in Marin. Found it interesting that most of the Firesafe Councils aren't included in the city and county plans. Likely to hold a second Alameda County meeting in September.

G. Advocacy issues—Elizabeth Stage. The Piedmont Pines Neighborhood Association held an excellent Public Safety Forum on May 16th, strongly recommended re: wildfire prevention and the Oakland budget, <https://youtu.be/RqoT4vSRIKU>

H. FOJMP and pursuit of CalFire Forest Health Grant – Dale Riden. They're waiting for notice of their second grant; they're not waiting to improve the park, pick up debris, etc. The city allowed them to use rototillers and have given permission to spread clean fill. Dale has been invited to speak at the Eagle Scout celebration about ways that they can help in the park.

I. OWLs update and information – Lin Barron. Adam gave Lin and Doug a list of the parcel numbers for the contractor to work on, said they needed to go to the Assessors site to see if any of them are parks. Privacy issues make that difficult, so he'll accept documentation from Google Maps for places that need to be protected. There isn't wording in the contracts that are already signed, hope to see that in the future. Meanwhile, the OWLS are using tape, flags, and cages to mark the area, then they will work on the maps.

4. New Business

Local arborists interested in getting involved: Brian Eubanks introduced himself and his colleague Diego; they are working locally with PG&E, want to get involved as volunteers, perhaps providing consultation on trees or vegetation management. Sometimes it helps with the intimidating tree experts to have a knowledgeable assessment. The best way to communicate with them is by email, arboristalliance@gmail.com.

5. Open Forum

Doug Mosher got Adam Ball to agree to make a video of his presentation since he cannot attend meetings outside of business hours, will distribute to community groups when available.

Alec Dara-Abrams introduced himself as a representative of the Berkeley Firesafe Council, noted that Chief Sprague is no longer acting which is good for wildfire prevention. Asked if the sale of the Claremont Hotel presented an opportunity. They have been good neighbors, taking down their eucs, doing some restoration work on their own property, trained landscaping staff with the Conservancy, and have sent staff to volunteer at Garber Park and provided a thank you lunch. The Conservancy is reaching out to find out if they'll continue to do what they've been doing and perhaps expand from immediate neighbors to a broader area.

Meeting adjourned at 8:38pm

Next Meeting – June 21 7pm