

## OFSC Minutes Final Approved November 15, 2023

### **Attending**

Ken Benson, Lin Barron  
Olga Crowe  
Joelle Fraser  
Judith Geisser  
Jen Grimm,  
Michael Hunt  
Robert Meyers  
Ed Orre  
Peter Reed,  
Dale Risdén,  
Peter Seidl  
Susan Silverman  
Elizabeth Stage,  
Nathan Stalnaker,  
Doug Wong

Meeting called to order 7:01pm

### **1. Minutes**

Moved by Doug Wong, seconded by Dale, the minutes were approved as submitted.

### **2. Treasurer's Report**

Bank Balance on November 14<sup>th</sup> was \$15,450, paid of which \$7,616 is encumbered for the Regional MOU project, leaving \$7,834 available to spend. Moved by Elizabeth and seconded by Susan, the report was received and accepted.

### **3. Old Business**

#### **a. Oakland—Neighborhood Preparedness,**

Joelle reported that she's supporting potential sites and there are three locations that are in various stages of formation, two communities in Montclair--Cabot Drive and Aspenwall—and Estates Fountain is moving forward with a survey of 107 homes. The revival of the area by Kaiser Elementary School in the Hiller area is underway; the school district has made tremendous progress and Adam Ball is scheduling an assessment. She expects that there will be two newly recognized FireWise communities by the end of the year.

She's also partnering with the Diablo Firesafe Council on a home hardening pilot, five easy actions that people can take (gutters, decks, fences, vents, and hardscaping); there will be demonstrations on a home on Skyline (part of a recognized community) and Adam Ball will attend. Suggestions were offered about ways to involve others, inviting members to attend and sharing the information with other firesafe councils.

Ken applauded these efforts, especially since the activities are currently unfunded, "Great Job!"

b. Advocacy Update---Elizabeth Stage reported that she, Ken and two Shepherd Canyon activists were the only public speakers at the Planning Commission hearing on the revised draft of the Vegetation Management Plan, that the commissioners asked informed and supportive questions. Her comments included the support from the Claremont Canyon Conservancy and the North Hills Community Association, noting that along with OFSC, we had been very critical of the prior draft and were now standing together to encourage approval of the revised plan. Many of us would like highly flammable trees removed, rather than thinned, and there are detailed recommendations from OWLS, particularly Friends of Knowland Park. Consensus was that the plan is sufficient to serve as the basis for going forward with its implementation. The response to Council Member Ramachandran, Deputy Administrator DeVries, and Chief Covington at the Claremont Canyon Conservancy Annual Meeting earlier this month was cautious optimism and reasonable questions.

The approval process at City Council will be calendared once the extent and nature of public comments received earlier in November would be studied and potentially incorporated. Michael Hunt said that the responses will need to be addressed, but they will be limited to the changes in the recirculated plan, so that should reduce the number that need to be included prior to City Council review. He's hopeful that that their consideration will occur in February or March.

c. Regional Vegetation Management MOU, Ken reported that ratification by governing boards is underway, with votes scheduled in Berkeley and Richmond this month and expected in December at the Alameda County Board of Supervisors and Oakland City Council

d. City of Oakland, Michael Hunt

Chief Covington was sworn in on November 13<sup>th</sup>; there's an air of enthusiasm and he's galvanized support on the issues he's prioritized, such as apparatus, infrastructure, and behavioral and mental health, also the tools needed to support department goals. He's looking forward to working with department leaders and the community.

CalFire grant deadline in January, Michael is happy to have our input and support. Ed Orre from CalFire mentioned that the Forest Health program might be a better fit than the Wild

\$3 million maximum grant and only \$4 million total so it will be very competitive, so smaller requests are more likely to be successful. One of the criteria is how well does the project fit into their unit's fire plan?

Michael reported on the 3-alarm fire along Highway 13 between the Redwood Road on ramp and the Joaquin Miller Avenue off ramp; although it was reported as one incident, it was four separate vegetation ignitions. The response was speedy, no people or

properties were involved, no evacuations, and an investigation into possible arson is underway.

Olga Crowe, EMSD, CERT training concluded for this year, will be doing “train the trainers” sometime next Spring; have identified ~12 CERT team leaders who will have teams around the city. Have been monitoring the activities around the international APEC meeting in San Francisco and happy that there hasn’t been spillover into Oakland. They’re hiring positions for community engagement, training, and planning; still need applicants for program analyst.

Ken reported on his conversation with Joe DeVries. There’s likely to be completion of the draft EIR in January or February. While it’s making it way through Council, the planning for what’s next, a revised Wildfire Prevention Assessment District (informally called WPAD 2.0), can begin. The effort will need a community-based campaign committee. As a 501c3, OFSC cannot lead a committee for a ballot measure campaign. Ken pre-empted his report on the October 23<sup>rd</sup> OFSC board meeting (on the agenda as item h). In addition to voting unanimously to support the Recirculated Vegetation Management Plan and considering Ken’s professional retirement and probable move out of state in 2024, the board elected officers for 2024— President Elizabeth Stage, Vice President Doug Mosher, Secretary Ken Benson, and Treasurer Michael Killian. Since Ken is stepping down as OFSC president, he would be happy to take a leadership role in the campaign committee for the ballot measure to fund the vegetation management WPAD 2.0.

e. Initiative on Climate Change, no report.

f. FoJMP and OWLS updates.

Dale reported several productive meetings with Tree Supervisor David Moore and they are beginning the process of cooperation, in essence partnering with the city. For example, FoJWP volunteers can take away the debris that falls in storms and the city will follow up with the trunks. Other sources of optimism include Ed Orre’s conversations to see how CalFire and/or Alameda County Fire may be able to help. Lin noted that poison oak is native and the birds eat the berries, so it’s okay to leave it growing in places where it’s unlikely that people will be exposed.

She asked the OWLS to read the draft EIR and pay attention to points in chapter 2, Provide Adam with boundaries of their areas, including sensitive areas that should not be disturbed. The challenge is determining where protected species are present; they need the help of a botanist to identify the protected species.

Ken noted that there’s agreement that WPAD 2.0 needs an arborist and a botanist and project manager around these issues based on the mitigation that would be called for in the plan; no short-term solution on the horizon.

Lin noted that the contracts for the goats are already under development, may need to find some money for manual weed whacking. There’s concern about indiscriminate goat grazing, specifically the potential for erosion and eliminating rare or protected species.

g. No partner reports.

#### **4. New Business**

In October, Peter had raised the issue of cellphone service outages in emergencies; they can last for many days, even weeks (think of Hurricane Sandy). The major carriers are conferring with the Federal Communications Commission to work on the problem which is called “cellphone redundancy.” In normal circumstances, each cell phone carrier only provides service to their own customers. The FCC is considering a proposal from AT&T, Verizon, and T-Mobile—they would provide “roaming under disasters.” The goal is that any carrier that’s able to provide service to their own customers would also provide service to the others’ customers to the extent that it’s technically

possible. **Wireless Network Resiliency During Disasters** <https://www.fcc.gov/wireless-network-resiliency-during-disasters>

The industry proposal didn’t address Public Safety Power Shut-offs and that should be the next step for our area. It appears to him that agency that would have to work with the industry would be the Governor’s Office of Emergency Services, specifically the Advisory Board on 9-1-1 Reliability. One of the members is Rebecca Ramirez of California Chiefs Association and Peter was wondering if anyone could make an introduction to Rebecca.

The engineering to make the cell towers have more than 24 hours of back-up is too expensive so the Montclair Neighbors proposed legislation for several days isn’t going to work.

An alternate approach is to get FirstNet in the VHFHSZ to complete 911 calls, public safety alerts, and text messages,

#### **Open Forum**

Ken is scheduling a carbonator tour at EBRPD sometime in December.

Next meeting December 20, 2023 at 7pm on Zoom; cancelled. (Next meeting January 17, 2024, 7pm on Zoom.)

Meeting adjourned at 8:50pm.

Respectfully submitted,

s/Elizabeth Stage for Lisa Jacobs