

OFSC Minutes Final for June 19, 2024

Attending

Elizabeth Stage, Ken Benson, Joelle Fraser, Jen Grimm, Dale Risdien, Jessica Feil, John Brega, Lin Barron, Louise Comfort, Nick Zamarano, Lynn Derderian, Joe DeVries, Peter Seidel, and Stan Weisner.

Meeting called to order 7:04pm

Chair asked if there were any changes to the Draft Agenda and there were no changes made from the participants. Chair also mentioned that wanted as much time as allowable to discuss the pending Wildfire Prevention Special Tax initiative for the November 2024 ballot.

1. Minutes

The minutes for May 15th were not available and were to be submitted in July.

2. Treasurer's Report

Bank Balance was \$10,926 and OFSC had \$4,802 unencumbered as of June 18th. OFSC Treasurer continued his efforts to encourage the city of Oakland to make their past due the reimbursements of approximately \$28,000 for the OFSC and \$6,000 for the WPCG. She also assured that our contractors and invoices will continue to be paid, using our line of credit, if necessary, until these funds are received. Joe DeVries commented that part of the delay was in getting the extended contract approved and vetted and he assured those on the Zoom call that despite the City's General Fund situation that the City would meet its obligations for both OFSC invoicing and the MOU. Accepted as read.

3. Old Business

a. Community Preparedness and Neighborhood Organizing – Jen Grimm, Joelle Fraser, and Doug Mosher (absent)

Jen provided the link to the latest OFSC newsletter in the Chat for the latest OFSC Newsletter, reminded participants to forward the link to their List Serv's and networks, and encouraged everyone to send her newsworthy items at outreach@oaklandfiresafe.org.

Joelle Fraser reported that there's continuing interest in Firewise recognition. She is working with 5 neighborhoods with their Firewise processes and potential application needs. In addition, she heard from the Crocker Highlands neighborhood and though they are not in the High Fire Severity Zone they wish to seek Firewise recognition. Joelle tabled at the Hillcrest Estates Homeowner's Improvement Association annual meeting, adjacent to the refreshments table, thus getting lots of foot traffic and interest; they want to start along Skyline, will continue the communities in that area. She met with the Grandview neighborhood, adjacent to the relatively new Hiller Highlands group and the Valley View neighborhood is moving forward, deciding on their boundaries. She presented at the Piedmont Pines public safety meeting in June and thanked Peter Seidl and team for a great session. She plans to submit a grant to CalFire Foundation for 25K for Firewise and our October 5, 2024 Preparedness Day event with Supervisor Keith Carson's office. She was also interviewed by East Bay Express on difficulties with homeowners getting fire insurance and will make that write up available through Jen for or website and

newsletter. July 8th with Diablo Firesafes Sheryl Drinkwater she will be participating in another Home Hardening Demonstration at 2pm. Email Joelle if you wish to attend and she placed her email in chat. Stan Weisner thanked Joelle for doing such an excellent job on the Piedmont Pines Fire Preparedness Zoom that had 100 participants.

b. OWLS update – Lin Barron

OWLS had no new updates but Lin had spoken with Adam Ball the Vegetation Management Supervisor and he is committed to clearings within City Parks despite the City's Budget shortcomings/issues. The goats are now grazing at Skyline and will be at Knowland Park soon.

c. Oakland – City update – Joe DeVries

The City's Budget situation is the worst that Joe has seen or experienced in his 27 years with the City of Oakland. It will be resolved and he assured all that Funding would be there for the Goat Contract and the City is not insolvent and will meet its obligations to OFSC and on the MOU approval once it has a passed two year budget which must be done by July 2, 2024 this year.

Wildfire Special Tax 2024 Ballot initiative- Joe discussed the current updates that would be added for Council Approval and those are to include:

- A cap on annual increases at 5% to the \$99 dollar assessment
- Sunset though he truly believes that this will be needed forever due to Climate Change will be set at 20 years. 10 years to work the VMP priorities and projects and then to operate over a 10 year additional timeframe is more than acceptable.
- There will be no costing for Administration/administrative costs.
- Will not add language that City Auditors Office will do annual Performance Audits as requested by the Oakland League of Women Voters. Too difficult and constraining for the Oakland City Auditor was the driving reasoning.
- Ove 50% of the Advisory Oversight Board would be from the community within the High Fire Severity Zone.
- The Annual Progress and Performance Report would be shared with the Advisory Oversight Board.
- Annual Inspection process would still be done and funded by the City's General Fund and not by this Special Tax.

He then covered the rapid schedule to get final approval by 7/02/2024. The updates, the special tax, and the updated maps would be published and available June 21st, and he was confident we would get approval by the City Council at its June 26th special council session. There is a City Council Meeting also scheduled for July 2nd and that could be used if not approved on the 26th and keep it on course for the November Ballot. He then entertained numerous questions regarding the \$99 dollar amount, and about both private vacant lots and the quality of OFD vegetation management inspections/compliance rates.

Money will be set aside from the 2 million dollars per year raised by the Special Tax for Outreach and Education and the language specifically notes as provided by Oakland Firesafe Council as an example.

The Chair sought help from those on the call that would assist in a Keep Oakland Firesafe ballot initiative campaign and asked that those willing and interested should contact her via email.

d. Initiative on Climate Change – UC Study Group Update – Louise Comfort

Louise thanked Lin Barron for sending maps of the Montclair area and they will be included in their Evacuation simulations later this summer. They have sent out their Newsletter and are planning to participate with OFSC and others at the October 5th Preparedness Day event. Modeling is advancing and they have developed board game simulations that are geared to evacuation planning/simulations. Joelle Fraser commented that the Firewise Neighborhoods would be interested in participating in those and she put her email in chat for Louise to setup a follow up meeting.

4. Open Forum

Lin Barron raised concerns that even with the approval of the 2 year City of Oakland Budget that the Vegetation Management unit was still a unit of 1, Adam Ball and that he was struggling to keep and meet all Vegetation Management commitments and follow-ups. Staffing is a genuine concern.

Next meeting July 17, 2024, 7pm on Zoom

Meeting adjourned by President/Chair Elizabeth Stage at 8:55 pm