

Oakland Firesafe Council Meeting, August 20, 2022 draft Minutes

Attending

Lin Barron, Ken Benson, John Cornell, Joe DeVries, Sheryl Drinkwater, Jessica Feil, Barbara Goldenberg, Jen Grimm, Jon Kaufman, Jerry Kent, Joel Laucher, Jocelyn Mapp, Robert Meyers, Sue Piper, Elizabeth Stage, Nathan Suslow, Kyle Trambley, Allene Warren

Called to Order at 10:35am.

1.Minutes Moved by Jon, seconded by Jerry, approved as distributed.

2.Treasurer's Report Bank balance is \$37,524 of which \$24,709 is unencumbered. The JPA balance is \$12815, including a recent payment to Placeworks and receipt of \$3,000 from PG&E. Moved by Barbara, seconded by Sue, approved as reported.

3.Old Business

a.Oakland Neighborhood Organizing Update Jen on behalf of Doug Mosher. There's a transition taking place, sunsetting the "Oakland Community Preparedness and Response (OCP&R)" name, in collaboration with OFD's Emergency Management Services Division (EMSD) and changing the focus from general preparedness to more-in-depth wildfire preparedness. The OCP&R materials will still be available on the OFSC website <https://oaklandfiresafecouncil.org/programs/> where there are two new campaigns "Don't Give Embers a Chance" and "Adopt-a-Hydrant."

Ken noted that Doug's Jefferson Award resulted in some good coverage and led to some conversations, not only in the Hills, but also other locations including Jack London Square. (See <https://www.cbsnews.com/sanfrancisco/news/doug-mosher-oakland-disaster-preparedness-jefferson-awards/>) Fireescaping is under development. The team has been appearing at Neighborhood Council meetings, also doing "mitigation moments" as follow-ups; please give Jen contacts for more groups and more diverse representation. Allene Warren would like something to insert in the League of Women Voters Easy Voter Guides, wants people to know that fires aren't limited to the hills; Jen will follow up.

b.Firewise update, Ken on behalf of Macy Cornell. There are several communities in development. Sue Piper gave a shout-out to Macy for keeping the Hiller/Kaiser School area activities moving forward and the school district has been clearing the property.

c.Regional Vegetation Management Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), Jon Kaufman Still working to find a capable attorney whose firm doesn't have conflicts of interest with all of the jurisdictions to draft the MOU.

d.City of Oakland Wildfire Prevention Interdepartmental Team, Joe DeVries. Cal Trans was delayed in their vegetation management program due to restarting contracts across fiscal years, will resume soon. For example, they started removing trees along highway 13 but the job

is incomplete. Sue asked if they had revised the vegetation management plan to match Oakland and/or state requirements and Joe said that he would look into that.

The logs that were rolled downhill along Grizzly Peak have been replaced and rechained; there's delay in that process because they are using the dead tree removal grant to generate the logs that are used in this way.

The Fire Department is still struggling with contract management and Joe is part of a conversation that is considering returning contract management to Public Works (had been reassigned during the assessment district tenure) since Public Works that has more capacity for the contracting activities. Fire expertise would still provide guidance.

Elizabeth mentioned the difference in priority level for wildfire issues in Public Works and Fire, using the example of BBQ grill removal for which Fire doesn't have to get permission; they can act immediately to remove what looks like the start of an encampment. Joe explained that encampment rules for noticing, giving people time to leave, etc. are streamlined for any City department that is reducing the likelihood of fire. Joe also mentioned an innovation in Public Works, considering forest health and the likely increases in dead and dying trees; they're working with the Center for Employment Opportunities to give formerly incarcerated individuals an opportunity to learn the job and contribute to their community's safety.

Nathan asked about completion of the removal of an encampment near Sheffield Village. Ken said that he'd recently done a walk-through of the area and was impressed by the well-maintained fire trails, agreed that this was important. Joe said that he was disappointed that the work hadn't been completed and he'd look into it.

d. Advocacy Elizabeth congratulated the Emergency Services Division for their recognition by the National Association of CERT Programs as the best CERT program in the nation. As part of a triennial review of state codes, a new fire code was prepared by Cal Fire and is apparently available to local jurisdictions that have until the end of calendar 2022 to conform. From information available about changes, it looks as if the areas adjacent to structures are a focus. Title 24 (Building Standards), Part 9 (Fire), Chapter 49 (Wildland Urban Interface), item 4902 provides definition of plants that are less likely to ignite, contribute heat, and spread flame. The jurisdictions that are part of the regional vegetation management planning MOU are gathering in September to collaborate on their efforts to incorporate the changes. Watch this space! Finally, of the bills of interest in this legislative session, Mark Levine's AB1141, using the General Plan updating process, will require jurisdictions to take climate change impacts (e.g., evacuation routes for increasingly likely floods and wildfire) when proposing increased low- and moderate-income housing to meet state quotas. Note that Oakland's Local Hazard Mitigation Plan has already moved this idea into the Housing Element in Oakland's General Plan revision process; Jessica confirmed that EMSD and other jurisdictions are working in this direction. The bill has good support in the legislature, except from builders and developers who say that the General Plan process needs to be streamlined if the state wants more housing to be constructed.

Joel Laucher from United Policyholders reported that they and the insurance industry have increased their attention to strategies for avoiding catastrophes and avoiding losses. Insurers are starting to consider mitigation efforts by homeowners in their underwriting and are using

tools such as Better View and Zesty for scoring eligibility and rates. By using aerial views instead of satellite imagery, they can get details about individual homes, e.g., presence or absence of branches overhanging roofs. Farmers is using Zesty, a couple more platforms are coming into use, allowing insurers to see the vegetation conditions immediately around the home. The individualized view of mitigation includes going beyond using code from the date the home was built to gathering data that includes installing ember resistant screens, etc. Homeowners' tools include: Better View and Red Zone are moving in this direction, also Guide Wire, Hazard Hub, and Black Swan will be able to allow a homeowner to see how his or her home is perceived.

Ken noted that United Policyholders does good work and has a fundraiser September 9th at Buena Vista Winery.

f. Network for Good Ken and Jen are working with Network for Good to get the OFSC database in shape for the Network for Good transition, to develop the two campaigns that will take place this fall—our regular annual campaign and our new sustaining member campaign. Mailing checks to 6114 LaSalle Avenue, Suite 462, Oakland CA 94611 is always an option at any time. Robert recommended writing checks for an IRA's Required Minimum Distribution.

4. New Business

a. Volunteer Days and Volunteer Vegetation Clearance, moving forward since Gordon Piper moved to Oregon. Ken framed Sue's idea of replacing Gordon's coordination of volunteer activities with the idea that since pandemic has turned endemic, we need to re-introduce the idea of volunteer days, need a volunteer coordinator. Elizabeth noted that the North Hills Garden Committee has been reconstituted by new board members Dan Conolly and Vickie Oliveira and the Firestorm and Gateway Gardens have been brought back into good shape. It might be a good strategy for OFSC to work with representatives from Oakland Wildlife Stewards (Lin Barron's their representative to OFSC), North Hills (Elizabeth is the representative), and other community groups involved in OFSC to coordinate these activities. Sue offered to share a PowerPoint that she and Gordon prepared for the West Linn Garden Club that has suggestions about working with volunteers; see attachment to the minutes below. Ken thought that OFSC might use its website to provide information, list volunteer days, etc. to this end.

5. Open Forum

Jessica reported on several EMSD activities taking place this month. They participated in National Night Out; Kyle was the organizer and the team attended ~24 official and ~6 unofficial gatherings, are following up with the 200+ people with whom they connected. Their primary messages were awareness of AC Alert and Zonehaven. EMSD are planning city-wide Zonehaven trainings for first responders and dispatch staff. EMSD is partnering with Piedmont on a fire and evacuation exercise, planning a tabletop exercise September 28th and a functional exercise on November 5th. (Ken will put this on the September meeting agenda.) They will be taking the revised Emergency Operations Plan to City Council in about six months after an equity impact analysis. In the General Plan Transportation Annex, priority evacuation routes will be coming.

They were pleased by the national recognition for CERT. Kyle reported on a 3-day hybrid version of CERT where they will include leaders of co-governed encampments, enhancing the training for open-air and close-quarters. Lin asked about eligibility for CERT training; from the map it appears that none of the hills areas above highway 13 are given priority. Kyle said that they are trying to serve areas that have not been served by CORE/CERT thus far, that they have not turned anyone away since they have been able to serve all of the people on the waiting list. They're also considering a "team captain" idea and in September will be training additional trainers. Jessica also announced that there will be a Great Oakland Shakeout event on October 20th at 10:20am, more information to follow.

Meeting adjourned at 11:57am.

6.Next Meeting September 17 at 10:30am

Shoestring Gardening, Gordon and Sue Piper, West Linn Garden Club, May 2022
Excerpts on Volunteers

Build Relationships with volunteer sources: church groups, Scouts (Eagle Scout Projects), local service clubs, corporate volunteer programs (e.g., Home Depot, Salesforce, Waste Management), local colleges and universities (fraternities and sororities, environmental clubs)

Managing volunteers: Confirm schedule with volunteers and finalize # of volunteers, provide instructions (e.g., wear long pants, long sleeves, sturdy shoes, a hat, bring own gloves, sunscreen and water, and mask, if necessary), have volunteers sign in (name, phone, and email address, signed waivers), set up a database for future use; break up projects into segments that teams of up to 5 can work on, assign a team supervisor from your group to supervise each team, engage with volunteers during the workday— explain purpose of the project, answer questions, write a thank you after the event and try to engage them to come again in the future.

Volunteer teams: assign a supervisor, appoint a safety coordinator who reminds volunteers to take hydration breaks and keeps track of tools, orient volunteers to the work plan and tool safety, assign one or two volunteers to remove green waste to the common dump spot.

Managing tools: Where to get them--borrow from tool lending libraries, rent from commercial tool lending libraries, encourage your volunteers to bring their own, maintain your own cache; always count them before and after the volunteer event;

Marketing tips: Develop a brochure for your organization that people can take home with them, hand out business cards so they won't forget, develop a website and use social media to get the word out, set up a sign board with your organizations' name to publicize the workday

Schedule workdays on known "green" event days: Martin Luther King Day of Service— January, Earth Day—April, Arbor Week- April, Wildfire Prevention Day-May

Fundraising: Take a letter and walk around the neighborhood near the site, use personal Christmas Card List, send out solicitation on local listservs, if permitted, send out solicitation to previous volunteers, seek out grants from service clubs, online review of potential grants from local foundations, corporations, etc.

Fundraising Pitch: Share what you have accomplished in the past, share goals for the future, include a remit envelope and/or instructions for sending checks, sign up with Paypal for online donations on your website

Fundraising isn't only about real dollars: Nurseries might be throwing items out at the end of the season or going out of business, ask for free wood chips and other materials, look for used materials on Craigslist or NextDoor— ask if seller would consider donating, sometimes it takes more than one request---- reach out to multiple stores or ask one store several times!