



**Wildfire Prevention Assessment District Citizens'  
Advisory Committee Meeting**

**Thursday, June 17, 2010 7:00 p.m.**

Richard C. Trudeau Center ~ 11500 Skyline Boulevard Oakland, CA  
(Wheel Chair Accessible)

*Barbara Goldenberg, Chair, Doug Wong, Vice Chair; Lilah Greene, Treasurer; Chuck Bowes;  
Chris Candell; Don Johnson; David Kessler; Dee McDonough, Dinah Benson, Vacancies - Council District 1 & 6*

**Present:** D. Wong, C. Candell, D. Johnson, D. Benson, L. Greene

**Absent:** B. Goldenberg, C. Bowes, D. McDonough, D. Kessler

## N O T E S From Meeting without A Quorum

### Call to Order 7:05

#### 1. Roll Call & Determination of Quorum – no quorum

#### 2. Open Public Forum

- Gordon Piper, Oakland Landscape Committee and member of Fourth Bore Coalition discussed \$8m settlement with CalTrans. He's requesting consideration by Advisory Committee, OFD, CEDA, and City hired consultants. He's concern about, "junky vegetation" on state properties.

G. Piper encouraged a partnership for City of Oakland to work with Caltrans. Replacement trees would be spread throughout Oakland. Monies could be used now to get city staff to work with CalTrans to enhance the landscaping. This would be beneficial to the city by strategic location for trees to be planted. Homeless encampments on both sides of the freeway need to be abated as smokers provide fire danger. He recommended staff and consultants to advise for landscape improvements other than concrete.

A recommendation was made that he attends the next Parks & Receptions meeting and through Public Works perhaps secure a "champion."

- Based on discussion about Hills Conservation Network HCN verses East Bay Regional Park District's plan, when WPAD has a quorum discussion will continue regarding WPAD's support and participation in the litigation between Hills Conservation Network/HCN vis a vis East Bay Regional Park District vis a vis our district in supporting wildfire prevention and whether we need to allocate funds for a legal opinion to express that support and/or file an amicus brief.

#### 3. Approval of Minutes of the [May 20, 2010 Meeting](#)

Did not occur due to the absence of a quorum.

#### 4. Financial Report Related to the Monthly Financial Update – Pauline Feng

- Ad Hoc committee Report - None
- As of June 10<sup>th</sup> revenue is \$1,675,807 99.12% of budgeted amount. Last year \$1,632,232 95.67% of budgeted amount.  
\$4,938 has been paid for Vegetation Management program services.  
There was an inquiry regarding a low figure for Public Outreach funds spent.

A lengthy discussion regarding the cost of goat grazing occurred. Information similar to the discussion posted in the March 18<sup>th</sup> Minutes and beyond was reviewed. On the current year financial statements in the category of goat grazing, there is a charge of \$223,885. P. Feng clarified that this amount was a current year charge and was unrelated to the discussion of the adjustment from 2004. For purposes of the discussion of the prior year possible audit adjustment the note regarding this amount is to be ignored.

No quorum – acceptance next month.

- Action Item - Fund Performance Audit - deferred

#### 5. Public Works Agency, Tree Division – Presentation

May be scheduled in July or later date.

#### 6. Staff Report - AFM L. Griffin Absent (Fire Safety Education Coordinator gave updates)

- Inspection Program Process and Update - Training complete, inspections to start this weekend
- Training - Advisory Committee Members who attended the training along with fire fighters gave a briefing and suggestions. Viewers were impressed with introduction video of 1991 Fire Storm. Many of the fire fighters who fought it are now retired so it's legend to newer staff. The training included inspections, vegetation management and state codes for property owners to be in compliance. Different presenters conducted the training so some topics may have been covered in other sessions.

Suggestions included more detailed info when time allowed, fire arrestors being included along with information about vents, mesh, bottom of siding, mulch against structures – items that staff cannot cite but could make recommendations. Also suggested was that fire fighters in the field could take cell phone photos, email them to AFM L. Griffin and ask how to cite.

Attendees learned that when inspectors go out and make notes about problems, they are looking at vegetation and being made aware of possible problems at the location should there be an emergency. Committee would like to know if this information goes to a data base?

The format provided WPAD Advisory Committee Members an opportunity to help staff understand their motivation and involvement based on personal experience during the firestorm. It was felt that this made the training more relevant for staff. All who attended thought it was a good exchange of information, the training was well done, and helpful.

- Goat Grazing Update - Seven Different vendors received requests to bid – July 6<sup>th</sup> due  
Discussion regarding the time it starts and a delay due to having a late fire season with much rain and not having to do an area more than once. Further explanation from a technical perspective includes OFD looking at temperature, weather, fire season start date, budget constraints.

Several members of the board and attendees inquired if there was a better way to plan in years when it rains during June. The question was raised for further discussion with staff –can contracts be stacked to unleash immediately when the rainy season ends? The emphasis is that for perception and PR, residents want to see dry grasses and vegetation cleared before July 4<sup>th</sup>.

City Stables - June 4<sup>th</sup> the ground was wet with 6" of mud and 3 days later, it was a red flag day. Turns quickly and we should know this from history.

Regarding Oakland PWA, EBMUD, Cal Trans as property owners in the benefit district with multiple parcels needing inspection: If any of those parcels are out of compliance, there must be mitigation and each parcel out of compliance must be classified as "not passing." We need to show that every property owner including these agencies is being treated equality.

There was concern regarding Golf Links Road when it went from wet to red flag day. Hand crews weed-whacked both sides of Golf Links. The areas went from no work having been done to the tiger mower removing it all in one afternoon. Suggestion that we need to communicate with calendar or schedule on website so it doesn't look like we're conducting work as reaction to red flag days.

There was question about policy restrictions for doing two cuts per year. It was reported that Martin Matarrese pointed out that it's better to do two cuts. That would reduce volume later with an earlier cut. It was also reported that Bill McClung suggested two cuts a year.

There was a description of work performed at Hiller Highlands. They do first cut higher to protect underneath and encourage natives. 90% of mowing was done 2 weeks ago. Cal Trans' property & EBMUD had their goats two weeks ago; it was thought that if done early, there's mulch and no need to rake which saves time.

There was a question related to holding a discussion about having a budget for two cuttings and doing a test. Input was shared about a goat program experiment with double clearings; it was stated that it works during a dry year when grazing starts late March or early April. With a long wet season of extended rains, early cut is not done. Dick Otterstad, the owner of Oakland Hills Brush Clearing and a City of Oakland contractor for a generation, stated that his company has evaluated the cost/benefits of two cuts a year and his experience has shown that the earlier cut increases re-growth so weeds stay green longer before the second cut. It can be viewed as attractive but not beneficial. It actually increases the amount of weeds/vegetation that grows and needs to be cleared.

- FEMA Grant update – Notice of Intent posted with Federal Register, we're official & registered, public notice. AFM L. Griffin's 2<sup>nd</sup> Federal Grant was accepted. He's applying for another grant, CWPP approved and in the making. B. Sieben - 12 -18 month delay because of CEQA / NEPA
- Use of power tools on city property by non city employees  
Discussion ensued included D. Wong explaining that everyone would need to be trained; it's a liability. There are safe and not safe workers who when hurt, expect to be treated by Workers' Comp as regular employees. It's a risk management issue so people filing a claim need to be limited. Discussion continued with information that Oakland Parks Coalition encourages steward groups of open spaces. They can't use power tools but if trained, they're certified and can then use them. It was suggested that there's research to see if there's a legal ruling on it.
- Discussion regarding expectations made within parks and ball fields - non city staff, using Volunteers of America, and people having experience with weed eaters. Arthur Watson, PW, in the past had work release and people connected with the prison system; these crews are no longer available. Median / freeways in horrible shape; we need public/private partnerships to assist. It was pointed out that it's not WPAD's Advisory Committee Member's policy to pursue; it's city policy.

## 7. Ad Hoc Committees Reports

None met

## **8. Education, Outreach & Marketing Update – Fire Safety Education Coordinator**

- Annual Notices Update – was mailed out. Requests were made to attend Community and/or homeowners association meetings to conduct open discussion regarding vegetation management.
- Farmer’s Insurance, Door Hanger Project update – 24,000 were delivered and arrived in 3 pallets. They will be distributed to fire stations along with inspection notices.
- Signage Project (No Smoking Signs & Hazard Level Signs)  
Is with Public Works and sample sign should be ready next week.

## **9. Advisory Committee Open Forum**

Discussion and suggestions regarding the inspection process: In terms of public relations, instead of alienation about 10’ft and crown of tree/state code -- try to be uniform in enforcement so people who like feeling as though they live in the woods don’t feel singled out. OFD needs to do a better job of applying standards and a solution. It was pointed out that things will be stricter this year and that point was made at the training. Examples - When a tree is touching a chimney, structure or overhanging the roof; call attention to the state code when the out of compliance is written and the inspector to instruct that vines be kept up and pruned back.

Recommendation regarding allocating money and Gateway Emergency Preparedness for a panel with contacts information and WPAD’s website. The purpose is to assist constituents because people in the hills may not know what WPAD is about or what the Advisory Committee does. If they can learn with the information on a new panel, they may strongly approve of keeping the WPAD. Prices for the panel are about \$1,500 - \$2,000 for production and frame. Public Works will charge about \$400 to install.

An opportunity was suggested for the advisory committee, City, and OFD to develop a program to recruit and hold volunteer days during the year to help with vegetation management. Input should be emailed to AFM L. Griffin and PW for work performed at Montclair Park or sports field and an event in October with dates within the year

Discussion about inspections, compliance, passing rate 85-88%, need to be uniform, request for monitoring with a field test and how a Performance Audit may help.

## **10. Pending List of Future Agenda Items:**

- Request from Scott Hill, EBMUD to present to board on weather data with real time report
- Insurance Debunked Myths – Scott Halbrook
- Creating a fire safe landscape that looks good – Bob Sieben.

**Adjournment 8:50 PM**

Note: Type in blue underline indicates a link to a report attachment available at [www.Oaklandnet.com/WildfirePrevention](http://www.Oaklandnet.com/WildfirePrevention)