



**Wildfire Prevention Assessment District Citizens'
Advisory Committee Meeting
Thursday, January 19, 2012 7:00 p.m.**

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

Doug Wong, Chair, David Kessler, Vice Chair; Chris Candell; Don Mitchell; Dee McDonough, Dinah Benson, Diane Hill, Bob Sieben; Sean Walsh

Present: D. Wong, D. Kessler, C. Candell, D. Mitchell, D. Benson, D. Hill, B. Sieben
Staff: L. Griffin, P. Feng, Y. Altez
Absent: D. McDonough, S. Walsh
Guests: 13

MINUTES JANUARY 2012

Call to Order 7:08 PM

1. Roll Call & Determination of Quorum

2. Open Public Forum

October, Gordon Piper worked with Oakland Unified School District, (OUSD), CalTrans, and private homeowners at Hiller Highland in an area that abuts to school property. They removed broom with UC and Civic Corps who also cut unwanted vegetation. OUSD funded \$5,000. The goal is to remove unwanted vegetation from private, Caltrans, and municipal properties. It is also important for Caltrans in its planning for the 4th bore to remove the broom, weeds, and high grass that could possibly catch fire and move to Hiller Highland for a repeat of 1991 the Firestorm. He also stated that it's important that the committee works to see a collaborative vegetation plan for Earth Day and work with volunteers. It was recommended that some of the 4th bore mitigation funds go towards fire resistant landscaping instead of trees that may add to the fire risk.

Shelagh Brodersen – Reported that she spoke with AFM Griffin before the meeting about Garber Park. She would like to know when the project will begin. AFM will meet with her concerning this matter.

Jerry Baer – Announced that cutting eucalyptus trees bothers him. Residents of Garber Park and Hills Conservation Network met with AFM Griffin at the site. Both times AFM indicated the fire risk and the need to remove undergrowth and trim trees. A letter was written to AFM requesting specifics for the scope of the program. Bay trees in the park need immediate attention so that they don't infect the Oak trees. Jerry felt confident with AFM's work and wants the specifics of the scope in writing in case AFM isn't available. AFM Griffin reported that Carol Rice, a noted fire management specialist is assisting with the design scope.

Shelagh Brodersen – Lead volunteer for Garber Park Stewards, explained that they have worked for two years with Lech Naumovich to get clarification; Jerry signed-off and participated with this process that AFM Griffin incorporated into the original version. AFM explained that the design parameters remain the same along with what will be given to the botanist to achieve the design goal. When the botanist is on board, we will have another meeting with Garber Park Stewards for a final scope and primary purpose of doing the work.

Bob Sand – Because there's usually a surplus of funding each year, he suggested a "Return of the surplus to the residents." AFRM Griffin responded that the funds in the reserve account are assigned for specific projects and for work that has to occur prior to the start of the new fiscal year.

Lee Rutter – Hillcrest Estates, President of the Homeowners Assoc. Regarding Skyline’s project , she requested a map and schedule of what the project encompasses. Are we ready to schedule public meetings? The project has been ongoing for years with 1,500 pine trees from Redwood Road, to almost Keller. AFM Griffin responded about a presentation that he delivered last month. There was a \$212,000 funding awarded from Western State Wildland Interface Grant. Diablo Fire Safe Council was hired to oversee the project. The initial meeting was a design meeting; it is expected to start this June. Lee requests to be on a notification list and AFM suggested she become the point of contact.

B. Goldenberg explained that a presentation originated by Bob Sieben, was held in Hiller Highlands and titled, “Beyond Vegetation Management.” It covered how to harden your home against a fire, 38 attended, it was video and audio taped. The board and AFM need to decide if it will be made available to the public. She believes it’s a worthy topic for homeowners, safety organizations, and school groups. The information covered homes and structures. It gave an awareness of what added to the disaster 20 years ago and an understanding of what we learned from significant fires across the nation. She reported that AFM Griffin did a marvelous presentation. An announcement was made: Sunday, May 20th UC Botanical Garden with Diablo Fire Safe Council, will have a morning program for people redoing their gardens or planning a fire safe garden. Getting residents interested in WPAD’s goals and that people see this as an annual or twice a year program is fabulous.

Jim Dexter, District 4, is looking for direct support from WPAD to insure that we have enforcement of non-compliant private properties and if possible, would like a status report tonight. He reported that we have had no vegetation control in Shepherd Canyon and other local areas because of the weather and a very late contracting sequence. There has been significant cutting of broom that has been done by whacking the top of bushes to a foot above the ground. He states the problem with this is that it’s worse than leaving it alone. J. Dexter wants language in the 2012 contracts from biologist and vegetation management to include how broom should be pulled by the root.

AFM L. Griffin spoke about Shepherd Canyon. The roadside treatment was done. He is following up with botanist, guidance from the group, and working with Mike Petouhoff. Lopping vegetation this year had to be done during fire season. Contract at Shepherd Canyon calls for pulling and will be required. Regarding non-compliance, in handouts there is a document that’s a notice to abate 35 identified properties with owners who have not responded. We must post to avoid legal trouble; it’s ongoing this week. On the back of the same handout, there is a form about short-staff and self inspection forms. This is the first process in conducting enforcement. In an inspection summary report it is noted how we are tracking this important effort. The posting is for five days; one day after it lapses, we will start the process to remove unwanted vegetation. The property risk is also based upon the location of a house in a crowded neighborhood that can impact many closely surrounding structures. We’re also targeting properties that ignored the non-compliant vegetation notices from last year. The cost is \$2,500 – \$7,000 per parcel and chipping is costing about \$1,000 per pick-up. The Fire Safety Education Coordinator is encouraging residents to hold Block Chipping Parties to enhance cost effectiveness that occurs when the chipper does more than one household simultaneously. The Financial Liaison confirmed that money to abate the non-compliant homes is a little over \$100K and comes from the city. AFM explained the benefit of the bid to one contractor who can work these properties and if there are legal issues, only one contractor is involved. The handout is a sample of the database.

3. Approval of **December 15, 2011 Meeting Minutes** - Approved

4. Financial Report & Budget Adjustments

Monthly Financial Update – 2011-2012 P. Feng

Final review of last year’s audited report – Prepared Jan 10th

Financial reports are on the WPAD website – www.OaklandWPD.org

Expenditures remain unchanged

Audit for last year (2010-2011) completed, no outstanding issues.

Discussion about financial included a question about \$29,000 adjustment that was collected and may be due to late payment or sales of properties with liens. P. Feng will research details and report back at the next meeting.

AFM L. Griffin spoke about the budget planning committee meeting that was held in the morning. There was discussion about monies set-aside for Chabot Space and Science Center's project. It was recommended that staff contact Chabot Space Center to move forward with the project or the funds will be allocated for something else. Assistance was secured from Sue Piper. When AFM met with Fish and Wildlife, discussion of Pallid Manzanita transpired. It was to bring back open canopies to allow light for better growth. This is one of the few places where they exist.

- Financial Liaison Ad Hoc Committee Report/Presentation

Don Mitchell reported that the ad hoc committee went over the proposed budget work sheet. Changes were made to the budget based on the upcoming fire season with an abundance of vegetation growth from last year's record rainfall. There may be an increase of fuel load and a possible drought in 2012.

Proposed budget will be worked out for the next meeting.

D. Mitchell proposed the topic as an agenda item for the next meeting and to go over budget for 2012-13.

5. Advisory Committee Officer Nominations

The following nominations were made by the committee for the WPAD Executive Board

Chair - David Kessler.

Vice Chair – Bob Sieben

Financial Liaison – Donald Mitchell

Approved unanimously

6. Advisory/Ad- Hoc Committees – 2012 Annual Notice

Suggestions were made related to updating the annual notice, oversized postcard, promoting the chipping program, and chipping block parties. There was a brief discussion about these projects. D. Wong, B. Goldenberg, and C. Candell volunteered for the Ad Hoc committee; meeting date to be set.

B. Sieben – shared info about a presentation that he gave with North Hills Community Association. He reviewed the timing of vegetation management activities and suggested the oversized calendar postcard and schedule of activities be revised. He is holding meetings on the 2nd Thursday of odd numbered months. The last meeting was about protecting homes from flying embers. The March 8th meeting will take the next step from structure of the house. It will concentrate in the Zone II area which is the non-ignition zone within the first 6 ft of a structure. Subjects to be covered are mulch (good or bad), decks, and the materials or contents under them. Carol Rice is invited to speak and the WPAD Committee is invited to attend. The meeting in May is about defensible space, how it's done, French Broom removal, and evacuation procedures will also be discussed. After reviewing with AFM Griffin, the notes will be available. The video tape helps educate residents and is an appropriate venue for WPAD to get its presence known.

There was a brief discussion about the information that came from North Hills Community Association. All are encouraged to send information to their respective groups.

7. Education Projects – Fire Safety Education Coordinator

WPAD's new DVD - Needs to be reproduced. Through the Chambers of Commerce there may be possible sponsors who could have their logos on the DVD label and/or packaging. If we could secure enough support for the 20,000+ they could once again be distributed with the inspection forms. The next phase would be having a small card or part of a flyer that encourages viewing. The 6-7 minute video will soon be posted to the WPAD website. Other projects: Update of Annual Notice, Update of Calendar Post Card, Committee Member Orientation books.

8. Staff Report – AFM L. Griffin

- 2010-2011 Property Inspection Summary Report was distributed to demonstrate a sample of the new database to better track inspection data, violations by public agencies, city, and residential properties. AFM L. Griffin hopes to have data transposed into the new format; it's now about 100 pages but will come back with a survey. Inspectors, engine companies, and location will be better tracked. Also being tracked is how many times and what types of violations are being noted; this provided more audit control over engine companies and internal inspectors. It will be important when bringing on seasonal inspectors and how to be able to quickly audit their work. The data base funding is from the hazardous materials program. With reduction in staff, the department is trying to move to a centralized data base.

Funds need to be allocated as line items at \$45,000 for each of the park projects. The initial cost is expected to be high. Discussion followed concerning each park project as a line item and the estimated working amount. AFM Griffin replied that he will look back four years to see the costs. The amount may be adjusted because the initial work may have been completed; it can be adjusted as needed when it's a line item.

The city has responsibility for the North Oakland Sports Field; a question was asked about “adopting” a partner. It was noted that the west end hasn't been cut for years and probably won't be cut this year. Rationale is that the city could be sued by Federal Agencies or Fish and Wildlife Agency. There was concern about this area and how many other city properties are not being maintained. What are we going to do to change this to reduce the fire risk?

AFM Griffin replied – North Hills area, is being looked at by FEMA, CEQA analysis has been done for Shepherd Canyon and moving to Golf Links. The removal of certain species needs rational with fire being the main one. The center of the park has no structures around it and no way to get to it; this is not good use of the funds. It was noted that we need to be strategic; just cutting without maintenance makes things worse along with not using herbicides. We need to pick ignition sites close to homes/properties and do the required maintenance. By cutting one broom stump instead of removing by the roots, means several more may return.

AFM L. Griffin – vegetation management has software that can present chaparral and older shrubs during a fire and how grass moves fires faster as does the younger chaparral

Speaker and several WPAD committee members congratulated outgoing Chair, Doug Wong for pulling the group together and being instrumental for helping the community learn what they need to do for fire prevention. He's been an exemplary Chair.

Announced Piedmont Pines – Annual meeting at Chabot Space & Science Center, Mon., Jan. 30th

Feb 8th State of City can be viewed on KTOP

Feb. 22nd 11 AM - 1 PM Community Wildfire Prevention Plan (CWPP) Stake Holders/community Meeting.

- Discussion/Action – Funding for the following projects:
 - a. Garber Park
 - b. Beaconsfield
 - c. Shepherd Canyon
 - d. Skyline

9. Pending List of Future Agenda Items:

- Creating a fire safe landscape that looks good – Bob Sieben

10. Other Business

Adjournment

Next Meeting Feb. 16, 2012

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