



Wildfire Prevention Assessment District

Citizens' Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes for
Thursday, September 17, 2015, 7:00 PM



Trudeau Center, 15500 Skyline Blvd., Oakland CA (Wheel Chair Accessible)

Committee Members in Attendance:

Susan Piper, Chair (District 1)
Doug Wong, Vice Chair (At Large)
Lin Barron, Recording Secretary (District 4)
Steve Hanson (District 1)
Martin Matarrese (District 7)

OFD Personnel in Attendance:

Mark Grissom, Inspector

Absent:

Mike Petouhoff (District 4)
Clint Johnson (District 6)
Vince Crudele, Acting Asst. Fire Marshall & Vegetation Management Inspector Supervisor

Meeting called to order at 7:00pm

NB: Due to OFD Crudele's unexpected absence, a formal staff report was not given.

1. APPROVAL OF WPAD DRAFT MEETING MINUTES FOR August 20, 2015

The Board M/S/P the "Draft WPAD Meeting Minutes" from August 20, 2015 meeting.

2. OPEN PUBLIC FORUM

G. Piper: Cal Trans allowing "garbage" plants to proliferate on (eucalyptus, broom, pines, cyprus)

- CalTrans planting native plants but not removing the junk patches in between
- Should have a plan for clearing Highway 13 and 24 corridor and to eradicate broom!
- Must have an aggressive plan on State properties that lie within the heart of our community

B. Kluger: Whom to contact if there is a problem of accumulating debris from a neighbor's adjoining yard?

Answer: Call the Vegetation Management Dept.

C. Burgess: What to do about illegally dumped chips on Thornhill near swim club?

Are funds available to remove these?

- Mark Grissom, OFD Inspector: is aware of the problem and is looking into it.
- Suggestion: Fire Prevention Bureau to remind tree companies officially about illegally dumping chips
- Martin Matarrese: it's probably better to address the issue from the State level
(Could Nayeli Maxson, Council Dist. 4 look into this?)

How to remove the pile of dry brush on Skyline Rd (north of Marlborough Terrace)?

Mark Grissom: will follow-up

(upslope is private property, downslope is either UC Berkeley's or EBRPD's)

- G. Piper: What will happen with 5-6 piles of chips on east side of service road in No. Oakland Sports Field?
- Fire Prevention Dept plan to have these piles spread out

K. Benson & others discussion: Current Lake County Fire is a wake-up call! Rapidly moving fire due to extremely dry brush & weather.

- Have a disaster plan!
- Decide what you'll take and know where it is.
- Be ready to evacuate and packed early – Don't Wait to be told.

Question: What does one grab to go?

- Scan documents & photos and upload to the Cloud
- Consult CORE, Red Cross
- Consult United Policyholders for tips (a non-profit group to support disaster survivors)

3. REVIEW OF FINANCIALS

a) Chair Piper reviewed current September financial report:

Error on Grant Matching for the "Current Year" report page 2. Incorrectly listed last year's FY 2004-15 amount as \$70,000; it should be \$20,000.

Also a charge of \$236 "Assessment Engineering" still remains in the report, but this was not budgeted for this FY 2015 -16 and should not appear.

Sue has sent a message to Pat Lee in OFD Administration.

b) Project Budget Review:

The actual number of outstanding invoices was not reported, but the board assumes there are more to come in for the Chipping program and some contracts.

Spending as of July 1, 2015 = \$78,972

Remaining Balance = \$1,645,698

Of course, the Vegetation Management balance will continue to decline over the course of the year.

c) Annual Audit (available on line)

<http://www2.oaklandnet.com/oakca1/groups/fire/documents/report/oak054388.pdf>

4. PUBLIC OUTREACH

a) FEMA Grant Communication:

Chair Piper stated she has been on a small internal committee to plan the communication about the FEMA Grant in Oakland to a few talking points. In the next few weeks there will be a FEMA-specific page on the OFD website.

FEMA grant three points:

1. There 120 acres on two pieces in an area of Oakland that has fires every year – it is near a big wind tunnel, Caldecott Tunnel area. A proactive approach and will protect the fire zone and anything south. thinning trees (like Lake County fire has shown) everything is so dry
2. Fire needs three things: Fuel, an ignition source, & air. Fuel is the only thing we can really control.
3. The City is working on an RFQ is for a CEQA process, required by the Grant and City; it will take approximately 2 years. Peoples' questions about herbicides, etc will be aired in a public process.

The plan also is to get out general messages about Wildfire Prevention to raise public awareness, not specifically about the FEMA Grant. Some ways to increase public awareness:

1. Firestorm 24th Anniversary: Mayor Schaaf plans a week-long media campaign for a 24th Anniversary commemoration of the 1991 Firestorm. This is in development.
2. Working with OFD for what to say: given the opportunity of media interest in recent fires in the hills, the Battalion Chief will have talking points to support the general message of wildfire prevention.

Eg: if the press talks to the Battalion Chief when a fire in the hills happens:
We hope the Battalion Chief can say the fire was kept small due to defensible space around the private home (or city property).

There is a Twitter account in OFD that allows photographs to be exchanged.

b) Accessible Roads & Parking in WPAD:

Small internal inter-departmental committee to work on this; one meeting held the week

Good reminder to neighbors to park off the street or in the garage.

c) High Fire Danger, No Smoking on heavily used trails: no report yet. For next month's agenda.

Mark Grissom comment: State Fire Code 4900 series there is No Smoking in designated high fire danger (like at Grizzly Peak, etc). Oakland should adopt it and enforce it.

Sue Piper & Martin Matarrese: We already have this regulation in Oakland Parks.

Doug Wong: If no enforcement, doesn't matter how many signs there are.

5. WPAD Grant request (Piedmont Pines – Ascot property owners)

Michael Hill represents a group who has removed some eucalyptus on their properties.

Cleared up rumored problems with a separate project nearby

The grant application incorrectly included grant for work that was already done.

But in section 7 there is still more work to be done. (grant application attached below)

Chair Piper: Come back to the WPAD board with a new application for the planned work

Provide a simple map of properties involved, outline them.

Review with City (fire prevention) and get sign-off

Estimate the budget – what neighbors will contribute

Provide city-approved contractors' estimates

No Board action taken.

6. STAFF REPORT

Due to Officer Crudele's absence, there was no formal staff report.

Mark Grissom, OFD Inspector, answered a few questions posed by Chair Piper about items on the Staff Report portion of the agenda. Some discussion ensued:

Staffing is critically low:

1 FTE permanent

2 Part-time

1 very Part-time 2 days/week (also part-time with CalFire)

Private Property Inspections:

Engine companies are all “finished” with 1st round compliance inspections

BUT there are 2000-3000 missed properties due to an error and have not been inspected at all

- Data entry is 95% done
- Inspectors working on 2nd round inspections

Chair Piper has requested the Staff Report should include a simple matrix* every month view to track: both the \$ and % for 1st, 2nd 3rd round inspections for private homes, institutional properties, City properties, and vacant lots

How many properties have been ordered for abatement?

How many abatements have been done?

*(-- But the software being used is not reliable.)

Inspection Issues –

Inconsistent 1st inspections: homes are passing compliance without backyards being inspected.

(OFD has the right to access properties)

Mark Grissom, OFD Inspector, says it’s an access issue, slopes of yards, dogs

This creates 2 problems:

- Destroys trust with neighbors who know things aren’t being done
- Reinforces false impression Residential Inspections have been done

New Construction Compliance: Officer Grissom has noted construction sites do not have water source, extinguishers, Defensible Space

(example of new construction on Elverton & a recent fire – no one had inspected)

- There must be compliance with Fire Code Chapter 33
- Building Permit Dept. should have fire prevention compliance with new permits on their checklist
- Chair Piper requested a list (with appropriate code references) to draft a letter to the City Administrator; Mark Grissom, OFD Inspector, will bring that next meeting

Vegetation Management

Schedule Status for City properties: no statistics available

- Mark Grissom: “most parcels have been done” with a few stragglers of pieces of properties

Chair Piper has asked also for Vegetation Management statistics in each month report:

- What was done last month with goats & where?
- What is planned to do with goats for the coming month?
- What was done last month with contractors & where?
- What is planned to do with contractors & where?

CalTrans has announced it will work on Saturdays to be doing 50 feet of clearing in these areas:

- Along Broadway and Golden Gate to Sports Field, including on-ramp to Highway 24 from Highway 13
- Around PG&E stations
- Bicycle trail around Lake Temescal from Broadway to Broadway Terrace

These areas will protect a fire from spreading to Montclair

Highway 13 & CalTrans: Trees are looking very bad and will eventually die and fall over

(due to bark beetles & drought)

Chair Piper: “CalTrans should be proactive and remove those trees;” El Nino could cause them to fall

PG&E: Mark Grissom, OFD Inspector, met with PG&E about clearing around transmission towers south.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Planting Day September 19th in Gateway Memorial Garden Workday

Workday cleanup on October 10th in Joaquin Miller Park organized by Wendy Tokuda

Sponsors: Police Activity League, Friends of JM Park, Friends of Sausal Creek, District 4 council office

Time: 9:30 – 1pm

RSVP: wendy.tokuda@yahoo.com

ADJOURNMENT – 8:00pm

WPAD Request for Grant (presented by Michael Hill September 17, 2015)

7/19/15

To have your project considered for funding

please complete the following information:

1. Designated Project Coordinator: Valerie Peck

Phone: (Daytime) Evening) 510 655 6511

(Cell) Email: 510 206 6946

2. Neighborhood/ Street Names: Piedmont Pines/ 6045 Ascot Drive, Oakland, CA

3. Project Address: APN: 0480-7254-011 area

4. Number of households or volunteers involved (minimum 5): 7

5. Names and address of household or volunteers involved

(attach an additional sheet if

necessary)

1.

Names/Addresses:

Valerie Peck/Michael Hill – 6045 Ascot Drive, Oakland 94611 brush removal – dead Pine removal – funding source

Kevin Maguire 6077 Ascot Drive, Oakland, 94611 – brush removal – funding source

Jay Stock 5883 Ascot Drive Oakland,94611 – Property where Eucs are being removed

Paul Grossman – 6041 Ascot Drive, Oakland 94611 – limbing/brush removal

Richard Qui 6117 Ascot Drive, Oakland CA 94611 – funding source

Jim Caulfield 6107 Ascot Drive Oakland, CA 94611 – funding source

Describe your project and what you plan to do to achieve Defensible Space within 100 feet of your homes, anticipated tasks and timeframe (attach an additional sheet if necessary)

:

Chipping of homeowner cut material

Green waste removal of homeowner cut material

Weed whacking/ mowing*

Needle/ leaf removal

Tree thinning (cutting of small trees)*

Brush cutting*

Tree “limbing up”*

Grazing*

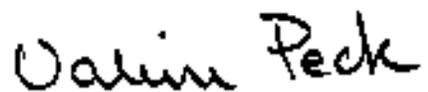
X Removal of Eucalyptus Trees and re-landscaping with native fire resistant plants. Across the shared border of 5 houses.

We will be able to fund at least 3/4 of the amount to be paid through direct payment. We will organize and manage the effort. Kevin Maquire is a general contractor who will supervise the work.

7. Briefly describe how your project will help protect your neighborhood from wildfire.

The canyon that is included in this work has a step upslope and is very difficult to access from any side due to the houses top and bottom. In addition there is a steep ravine at the top of the area that would encourage the updraft of a fire and include many more houses up hill if a fire was to start. This removal of 'torchwood' would protect at least a dozen homes and perhaps more as we are located in the middle of the Ascot hill/Piedmont Pines area where there is much old growth Pines, Acacia and brush that his highly flammable.

I certify this information to be true and correct and that the information provided is subject to verification. If my group is selected, we agree to work with Diablo Fire Safe Council to further define the scope of the project. We understand that we will be responsible for hiring a contractor for the work.



Signature:

Date: 7/19/15