

**MINUTES FOR A MEETING OF THE
WILDFIRE MITIGATION COMMISSION**

Wednesday, November 14, 2018

11:00AM to 1:00PM

Training Room, Ashland Fire Station #1
455 Siskiyou Blvd

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Stephen Gagne, Dan Dawson, Tonya Graham, Bruce Moats, Hazel Wheeler, Steve Jensen, Alison Lerch, Chris Chambers

II. INTRODUCTIONS

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: October 10, 2018

Change the IX. B to November 19th at 5:30pm

Daniel moves to approve the minutes, Bruce second, all in favor.

IV. PUBLIC AND GUESTS FORUM

V. ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA

-Change Item IX. to December 19th

-Tonight's in-service may only go until 7:40.

-Hazel brought a summation sheet for the smoke events and a document on how to cope with smoke.

VI. CITY COUNCIL CHECK IN (Steve)

- A. Weed abatement has been going on since the 1950's and it includes noxious weed species and dry grass. The Weed Abatement program has always been on a complaint basis, but in the past couple years bigger hazards were identified and a more proactive approach was done in 2018 with a mailing to 35 high hazard private landowners. There has been push back from one property owner and the issue has escalated to the City Council. There are City and Park lands in need of clearing or at least creating buffers where there are bordering private property lines. There is an avenue for assisting a landowner with financial assistance if they are already on the City's energy assistance program.
- The Wildfire Commission could assist with public relations on this issue to soften the tone. What education is the Commission going to take and how are they going to take it on? The Wildfire Commission could review letters that the fire department will send out to see if they can be tweaked to create a new tone.
 - The community needs to be more engaged in the reality of a fire storm like the Camp Fire in Paradise, CA. We need to elevate the community's understanding their role in wildfire evacuation. Tonight, we can look at this piece.
 - Can we put extra effort to the Code Compliance piece with existing flammable vegetation? We also need a code that addresses flammable vegetation and vacant parcels.
 - Chris proposed to Fire Chief D'Orazi that we need to put a package together for the City Council that includes a list of priorities for Wildfire Risk Reduction, Fire Prevention, Suppression.
 - Outreach to the schools and school age children.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Insurance/Rebuild Issue

- A local building contractor gave Stephen a glimpse into the recovery process in rebuilding homes. Larger fire storm wildfires like Santa Rosa and Paradise will have a shortage of contractors to rebuild homes. In some cases, insurance will only pay for two years of alternative living while a rebuild is in process. Some of these areas may take up to four years to rebuild. DEQ cleanup is required and may not be covered by the insurance policy. This is brought up because there are still many unknowns about wildfire

insurance

B. Tree Commission update (Stephen)

- a. Stephen attended the November Tree Commission meeting. Steve Jensen is the Tree Commission City Council liaison. The Tree Commission recommends planting large conifers close to homes. With the expansion of the Wildfire Lands Ordinance, there needs to be a more cohesive working relationship.

- i. Action Item: Set up a meeting early 2019 with Stephen Gagne, Chris Chambers, Steve, Derek, Brandon Goldman and Roger Pearce about this issue. Steve and Chris will set up the meeting.

C. Commission name change (Stephen)

- a. A name change needs City Council vote. Steve proposes a new name to the Wildfire Safety Commission.

Bruce moves to change the name to the Wildfire Safety Commission, Tonya seconds, all in favor.

D. Plant List Subcommittee suggestions for new members (Doug/Tracy/Bruce)

- a. There is a change needed to the Resolution already, making it clear that normal size lavender and rosemary can be planted outside of 5 feet of the house.
b. If there are any other changes they can bring them to Alison.

E. Wildfire Mitigation Commission Retreat (60 min)

- a. Overview of Wildfire Mitigation (Alison) (FACnet, AFR, EDU, Firewise, WMO)
Presentation about in what ways the WMC can be useful for Wildfire Risk Reduction in the city of Ashland. What are the challenges that WMC will likely be involved in and how do we get there? What are the essential components that Ashland Fire & Rescue wants the commission to be involved in? (Alison/Chris, 15 min plus questions)

- i. Chris and Alison identified 6 main areas that the Commission could assist AF&R with in the Fire Adapted Ashland umbrella. This includes:
- Existing Home Risk Reduction
 - Evacuation Outreach
 - Present and Future Ordinance
 - Transient Population
 - Alternate Recognition Program
 - Post Fire Recovery Outreach
 - Contractor Education Training and Outreach

b. Commissioner hot topics (All)

- i. Organize the education piece. Which groups do we want to reach? Contractors, real estate and schools.
ii. Looking at Paradise and the parallels with Ashland, the biggest things are the condition of existing buildings (wait until it is passed) and existing landscaping, the condition of the electrical services.

- Touch on irrigation and how our landscapes are underwatered

iii. Contractor training- how can this happen in 2019?

iv. Community efforts outside the community (thinning, prescribed burning)

v. Individuals taking responsibility for their property. We need to communicate this to all Ashland citizens.

vi. Expanding or clarifying the definition of a nuisance

vii. Community Ambassadors to help educate what a safer property looks like

viii. Communicating clearly what an effective evacuation looks like. Ashland has not been preparing for a Camp Fire moment. We want the entire community prepared for all degrees of wildfire. Fundamentally transforming our relationship with wildfire. (Tonya used the Mississippi River example.)

ix. In Summary:

- Evacuation – What’s our role?
- Expansion of ordinances, related to vegetation and how contractors work

- Expanding the definition of nuisance
 - **Education/Outreach**- what are the priorities in the coming year
 - Contractor/Landscaper Training
 - Assisting the Fire Department with the Firewise USA Program
 - Overcome the “Not going to happen to me” mentality
 - Pre-Planning for the evacuation
 - Making our population more responsible during an evacuation
 - Engaging with the Chamber of Commerce
- c. Brainstorm framework for process/structure of the Retreat (Tonya)
- i. Identify where Ashland is now in the relationship with fire
 - ii. There are many pockets of work that we can focus on and the commission can look at the list and see what topics they can take on themselves.
 - iii. How do we track our progress on Wildfire Safety? Thermometer/fundraiser example.
 - iv. Tonya will start: The risk is outpacing our ability to prepare.

VIII. REVIEW AND SET COMMISSION CALENDAR / NEXT MEETING

- A. Wildfire Commission Retreat: November 14, 2018 4pm-8pm (Station 2)
- B. Evacuation Study Session: November 19, 2018, 5:30-7:30pm (Council Chambers or online)
- C. Tree Commission: December 6, 2018, 6-8pm (Siskiyou Room, COMDEV)
- D. Next WMC Meeting: December 19, 2018, 11:00am (Station 1)

IX. AGENDA ITEMS FOR December 19, 2018

- A. Firewise USA Community discussion (All)
- B. Update on Evacuation Study Session (Chris)
- C. Report from Hazel about Fire Season, road blocks (Hazel)
- D. Appendix W (Ralph Sartain)
- E. Presentation on Rogue Valley Wildland Fire Resources (Chris)
- F. Code Compliance Process (Andrew Barrow)
- G. City Attorney report on fire proof building materials
- H. Invite Jason Minica, Parks Department

X. ADJOURN: 1:00pm

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the Public Works Office at 488-5587 (TTY phone number 1 800 735 2900). Notification 48 hours prior to the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to the meeting (28 CFR 35.102-35.104 ADA Title I).