

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

Wednesday, January 9, 2019

11:00AM to 1:00PM

Training Room, Ashland Fire Station #2

1860 Ashland Street

I. CALL TO ORDER: 11:02am

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

II. INTRODUCTIONS

Andrew Barrow, City of Ashland Code Specialist Officer

Pricilla Franco, Interested Citizen

David Lane, Interested Citizen

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: December 19, 2018

Hazel motioned to approve the minutes with corrections, Bruce seconded, all in favor.

IV. PUBLIC AND GUESTS FORUM

Pricilla attended the City of Ashland listening session on Monday as an interested citizen. She wanted to city to focus more of evacuation during a wildfire incident. She is concerned about the city streets handling an evacuation with emergency vehicles on the same routes. She wants to raise an awareness level with the public. Dan attended the Emergency Preparedness presentation at the Bellview Grange on Sunday and evacuation was also the highest concern during that meeting. Chris mentioned the road width issue. Southern California cities have rules about parking on the street during high fire/red flag warning days to keep the roads more open. In addition, there are community development standards for wider streets. Hazel mentioned that there are several people in the city without transportation, and these individuals need to also have a strategy. Stephen suggests that the February or March commission meeting focuses on this issue.

V. ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA

Move D. Code Compliance Process to A.

Sneak Preview best of section in page 44.

Add Wildfire Commission Name Change to New Business K.

VI. CITY COUNCIL CHECK IN (Steve)

- A. The City Councilors are putting in their requests for Commission liaison positions for 2019. This is the last meeting where two City Councilors are present at the Wildfire Mitigation Commission. The Council is currently in the process of major goal setting. Stephen asked Steve and Tonya if they were willing to sit in on Commission meetings when pertinent information is being discussed and they both agreed.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Code Compliance Process (Andrew Barrow)
 - a. Andrew is not an Officer but a Specialist, so his focus is solution oriented not citation focused. Andrew prefers to educate instead and acts as a mediator for problems in the city. Chronic Nuisance properties (Chapter 9) are declared by the Police Department. For vacant lots or landowners that do not live on the property, Andrew will connect with them through mail or phone, sending certified mail, or contact the property management company. Weed Abatement is all worked through Ashland Fire & Rescue. Andrew gets a lot of calls for wind chimes, etc. There were over 20 cases for dead trees. After having a meeting with the City Attorney, Community Development Director, etc. he now has a courtesy letter for these people if the tree is not posing a threat to life and property. He has had a 90% response rate to this letter and they want to act. If a tree does poses a threat they have to act on the hazard. Falling trees and branches are a civil matter. If citizens

have complaints they can do so online, over the phone or in person at 51 Winburn Way.

- i. Who determines if a tree is a hazard tree?
 - You need a letter from an arborist that states the tree is a hazard to life and property.
- ii. If a citizen wants to find the link to the complaint form, they can type in code compliance complaint form. There was a suggestion to make the link to the complaint form more accessible.
- iii. Is it a nuisance to have aged and dying Leyland cypress trees in a fence hedge that are more than 6 ft high?
 - It technically violates the fencing ordinance but may have to go to court
- iv. In terms of Weed Abatement, what is the process for properties not in compliance?
 - Letters are sent to all repeat offenders from the previous year. Non-compliant properties are sent a certified letter. If they do not abate, then the city will cut the grass and put a lein on the property.
 - ***ACTION:*** Chris will investigate how much money the city recoups after abating a property for weed abatement.
- v. With the new ordinance, we talk about new plantings at the time of being built. Does the city have a way of addressing newly planted flammable plants?
 - Currently, it is all complaint driven.
 - Andrew suggests the City write up a general letter to the landscaping companies with the ordinance language, prohibited flammable plant list and Firewise Plant List.
 - ***ACTION:*** Ashland Fire & Rescue will create a list of all landscape companies and nurseries throughout the Rogue Valley. They will craft a letter and send all the ordinance information to them.
- vi. Are complaints anonymous?
 - They are anonymous but do become public record at some time.
- vii. Is there any way to keep the complainant aware of the complaint process?
 - Andrew has a process in place but can make the complainant aware when the certified letter is sent out. Some people want immediate action and 24-hour notice.
- viii. Do we know the primary reason that the last 10% do not respond?
 - Most likely a financial issue. The City of Ashland is hesitant to offer financial assistance since they have not been paid back in the past.
- ix. What do you do about hoarders?
 - If people fall under the poverty threshold, Recology Ashland will drop off a 20 yard bin, Andrew organizes a team of volunteers, and they cleaned up the outside of the house. Recology is willing to donate up to four bins a year.
- x. What is missing in the Code compliance/Weed Abatement toolbox?
 - How to deal with vacant lots that are a high fire danger.
 - Expanding the definition of nuisance?

B. Presentation on Rogue Valley Wildland Fire Resources (Chris)

- a. Chris will prepare a summary of the Rogue Valley Wildland Fire Resources and email it to the Commission. Answers regarding how resources are outsourced during wildfire season will be answered at Representative Pam Marsh's Wildfire Forum on Thursday, January 17th, from 6-8pm at the Smullin Center in Medford.

C. City Attorney report on fire proof building materials (Chris)

- a. We have not heard anything from the City Attorney on this issue. Oregon is working on

adopting the already approved California building standards. There is a vote today in Salem on whether a community can adopt a stricter fire safe building material code. Chris will send an email update if this is approved. California has had these standards since 2008 and surely some of the homes built under these standards have experienced fire. In a LA Times article, there was a 10% increase rate in home survivability when built under the 2008 standard. There is a major difference between a home's survivability from an ember storm than a fire storm.

D. Forest Service Agreement Report (Chris)

- a. The Forest Service has eliminated the Cooperative Law Enforcement Agreement. The drone protection idea is the best on the table. Chris is soliciting a bid from a local drone contractor to move this project forward for the 2019 fire season. This company is doing surveillance already on federal land in the Ashland watershed for burn projects. Pricilla is willing to ask her Forest Service partners the following questions:
 - i. Why Cooperative law enforcement agreements are not allowed anymore? If they are not, what do they have to use to establish joint patrol?
 - ii. Does the Federal Government have a mechanism on using drones for detection on federal lands?

E. Appendix W (Ralph Sartain)

- a. Report from Ralph Sartain: Appendix W as an appendix has now been moved to chapter R327 of the Oregon Residential Structural Specialty Code (ORSSC). For the past 6 months we have been working with building officials, and the homebuilders association to make a document that all can live with. As with everything we did not get everything we wanted, and we did not budge on items we felt were the most important sections of the code. We created a draft document which was presented on December 9th. Because of overwhelming communications and testimony, they continued the public comment to this Wednesday the 9th. The current sticking point is on application (When the code is applied). The fire service wants all new construction in the wildland-urban interface to meet the new code, the homebuilder's association only wants it applied at 20 or more buildings in a subdivision, BCD tried to compromise it at subdivisions of 5 or more. A multitude of testimony to the state was in support of every new structure in the wildland urban interface. So as of right now it will be in the hands of the ORSSC this Wednesday.
- b. Ralph mentioned that Ashland is guaranteed to apply it at any level within the city.

F. Unhoused Population Fire Adapted Communities Network Call (Who wants to attend the call)

- a. February 4th at 1pm. Alison will send information. Tracy will attend this call.

G. Presentation to Real Estate Agency (Tracy)

- a. Tracy spoke to the principal of Gateway and they are interested in a presentation this winter. The presentation can include a snapshot update of the expansion of the wildfire hazard zone with a question and answer session. It could also encourage clients get a Firewise Assessment before listing their property. February 5th at 8:30am.

H. Plant List Subcommittee (Alison)

- a. Alison needs Annette Pugh's information so she can send an invitation to the Subcommittee.

I. Oregon Ready, Set, Go! Website (Dan)

- a. Dan is constantly digging around the internet for making his property safer from wildfire. He found an Oregon Ready, Set, Go! Website that is sponsored by Klamath County fire departments. It is an excellent website that has tactical information on evacuation planning including videos of bark mulch on fire. He found the Intterra data of all sidewalk assessments that Ashland Fire & Rescue completed in March 2018. There is also an embedded GIS section where you can turn on and off layers. There is also a mechanism to print out the report of all the information in the assessment.

J. Ashland Fire & Rescue Pending Proposal with Budget Specifics – Report from City Administrator (Chris)

- a. Stephen talked to Kelly Madding at the listening session and she mentioned that she will have information from the City Attorney within a week and would like to meet with Stephen, Chris and the Fire Chief in early February.
- K. Wildfire Commission Name Change
 - a. Stephen and Alison will attend the City Council meetings to move this forward. They are scheduled for February 19th (first reading) and March 5th (second meeting).

VIII. REPORTS IF TIME ALLOWS (2 min each)

- A. Illegal Campfire Issue (Chris)
 - a. Coop Agencies/Mutual Ordinance
 - b. Budget Partnership Parks and Rec
 - c. Drone Operations
- B. Wildfire Mitigation Funding Sources (Stephen)
- C. Electrical Utilities
 - a. Chief D'Orazi is working on this issue with the Director of the City of Ashland Electrical Department.
- D. 2019 Fire Season Meeting – OHRA? (Tonya)
 - a. Tonya is interested in engaging non-profits, churches, the hardware store, Recology, etc. to participate in a larger fire season campaign (help get the word out, run sales, offer information, host events, etc.). If organizations are offering a training to this issue (more than just distributing information). Alison will schedule the meeting after this meeting.
- E. Evacuation Study Session (Chris)
 - a. Nothing to add at this time.
- F. Chamber Wildfire Task Force (Smoke/Evac/Business) – Alison
 - a. The Task Force met on January 8th and set a date for the Regional Business Resilience Forum, inviting 100-150 key leaders in Jackson and Josephine Counties to a 2-hour brainstorm session on how to collaborate on messaging and future regional projects during wildfire summer events. This workshop hopes to create proactive resources and ideas for businesses to stay open during the smoke season and create resiliency across the region.
- G. FEMA Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant
 - a. The FEMA grant was submitted on January 4th. Alison is expected to hear back from the state representative this week or next week with edits. The final grant is due January 31st.
- H. Tree Commission Report
 - a. The Commission is going through a revitalization and now has enough Commissioners to have a quorum. A conversation needs to take place with Ashland Fire & Rescue and the Tree Commission about the Wildfire Safety Ordinance.
- I. WMC members attending other committees- anything pertinent to report?
 - a. The CEAP AD Hoc Committee is no longer meeting.
 - b. Tracy is moving to Medford in March so February will be her last commission meeting.

IX. REVIEW AND SET COMMISSION CALENDAR / NEXT MEETING

- A. Chamber Wildfire Task Force: January 8, 2019, 12:00pm (Station 1)
- B. First Reading for Commission Name Change: February 19, 2019, 7:00pm (Council Chambers)
- C. Next WSC Meeting: February 20, 2019, 11:00am (Station 1)
- D. Second Reading for Commission Name Change: March 5, 2019, 7:00pm (Council Chambers)

X. AGENDA ITEMS FOR February 20, 2019

- A. Oregon Ready, Set, Go! Website Overview (Dan)
- B. City Emergency Preparedness
- C. Large discussion on evacuation
- D. Expanding the definition of “nuisance”

- E. Drone Program/Cooperative Agreements with Forest Service Law Enforcement
- F. Presentation from City of Ashland Electrical Department (Maintenance within the city and outside of the city)

XI. ADJOURN:

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).