

MEETING MINUTES OF THE WILDFIRE SAFETY COMMISSION

Wednesday, July 21st, 2021 11:00AM to 1:00PM Zoom

As the July 21st Wildfire Safety Commission (WSC) meeting will be held electronically, any public forum testimony is to be submitted in writing by members of the public by 10AM the day before the scheduled meeting. Staff will compile all written testimony into one document and send the document to the Commission members and post the testimony on the agenda the day before the meeting after 10AM. The written testimony will also be included in the minutes.

Members of the public are welcome to listen or view the Wildfire Safety Commission meeting live. Please contact brian.hendrix@ashland.or.us if you would like to listen to this meeting live.

Meeting protocol via Zoom: raise hand to chime in and Stephen or Katie will facilitate when you can begin speaking

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Stephen Gagne, Brian Hendrix, John Scarborough, Dan Dawson, Doug Kay, Chris Chambers, Steve Asher, Charisse Sydoriak, Cill Franco, Kent Romney, Tonya Graham

II. INTRODUCTIONS –

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (Minutes from 6.16.21 meeting unavailable for approval)

IV. PUBLIC AND GUEST FORUM

A. **Introduce guest:** Cheryl French introduced herself.

V. ADJUSTMENTS TO AGENDA (Tom)

A. Kent Romney gave update regarding fire season. Currently on a fire.

VI. CITY COUNCIL CHECK-IN (Tonya Graham)

1. *Tonya spoke about WSC presentation at last council meeting.*
2. *Umpqua Bank loan program update: Umpqua Bank seems to seek a default protection (still researching).*
3. *I-5 access at MTN AVE proceeding forward (update from Adam Hank's report).*
4. *Budget comments: larger community conversations about general fund to happen (Aug-Sept) – regionalization of some elements of service requirements.*
 - a) *Expressed need to engage community*

VII. OLD BUSINESS

A. Working Group List

1. FAC Expansion/integration (BH, KR, CS, DK) [*no updates at this time*]
2. CWPP (CS, PB, KR) [*no updates at this time*]
3. Nursery/Landscaper Education (CS, BH) [*fleshing out project- Brian suggested 'letting go of biz. License aspect at this time. Outreach and education are our biggest tools. How to get landscapers involved is the biggest challenge.' CS and BH will confer in efforts to report back for August WSC Meeting.*]
4. Nuisance Ordinance Expansion (DD, CS, CC, BH) [*Discussion about an official inquiry to Katrina to try to get a timeline, before next meeting. Tonya recommended waiting until September. Brian agreed to contact Katrina before the September meeting to request a time estimate for legal review.*]

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5. Wildfire Risk Assessment Program (KR, CS, PB): *BH- WRAP Volunteers Task Book certifications in progress. Goal is to have all signed off by mid-August*
 6. Fire-Safe Business License Program for Landscapers and Contractors (KG, SG) *Chris commented that he agreed with Brian: forget license part and focus on ed.*
 7. Electric Utility Risk Assessment (SA) *Tom McBartlet (Electric Dept.) gave updates and information to the commission. Requested by commission to confirm existence of back up power for cell towers.*
- B. Farmer's Market (DK) – *Doug updated – table not there due to covid and his schedule. Armory scheduled to close after this season's market.*
1. [Added] Sandwich boards – Storage - *BH looking into storage options and will reach out to DK.*
- C. Evacuation Planning (Homeland Security Grant)
1. Zonehaven - *Chris C. gave short update, will have more info from Zonehaven soon.*
- D. Real Estate Engagement Program (SG, BH) - *Short discussion on progress to date. Brian reported Katie's feedback that last class went well. RE contact stated there is interest in another class. Possible Winter training for realtors by Brian. Brian will reach out to realtor that emailed him.*
- E. Intterra/WiRe Program rollout (DD, BM, BH, KR) *[no updates at this time]*
- F. Spring Wildfire Preparedness Campaign (BH, KR, CS, DK)
1. CERT door-to-door *[John gave update – Shared that info gathered at multi-tenant dwelling residents was alarming (Many didn't know what to do, couldn't easily use phones, email, computers. Just don't know what to do). Chris gave update on how CA strike teams helped with this process.]*
 - a) *Getting through zones 1-4.*
 - b) *[Chris mentioned disaster registry (RVCOG)] Disaster Registry discussion with John, Tonya, Chris.*
 2. *Discussion: CERT has a program called Map Your Neighborhood, due to budget cuts has dropped away.*
- G. Illegal Camping Ignition Sources (BH, CC)
1. Drone update [Chris] *Just started this week. RVCOG hired contractor and pilot. No illegal camping or fires seen on first runs on Tuesday 7/20. IAG RVCOG*
- H. New working group: Firewise Garden Tour (CS, DD) *Chris/Brian – comments on working groups and workloads. Comments by Chris, Kent, Charisse: Could happen without staff assistance.*
1. *Taka-aways:*
 - a) *Removal of workload from FD and utilize volunteers.*
 - b) *Evaluate all working groups (CS)*

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VIII. NEW BUSINESS

1. *Tom's Discussion – Electric Department*
 - a) *Relationship with Pac Power – some sections feed part of Ashland.*
 - (1) *Discussed challenges/COA relationship. Current practice is power shut off instead of line maintenance (PSPS)*
 - (a) *PAC Power was working with ECSO & Jackson Co. Emergency Management regarding disaster registry.*
 - (b) *They have updated their website for customers being able to monitor (6 days out).*
 - (c) *COA Elec. Able to shift around P.P. supply. Covid slowed COA process to evaluate and try moving fringe Ashland customers to COA power away from PP.*
 - (i) *Upper Elkader – County – Power line maintenance – lots of debris and VEG next to trail*
 - (2) *(Tom will prompt action from PPL and encourage his team to keep an eye out regarding vegetation clearances/maintenance concerns around poles.)*
 - b) *COA power lines, in town, maintenance.*
 - (1) *Chris's question: how to prevent poles from burning/falling + Tom's answers*
 - (a) *Replacing wood with steel as they age*
 - (b) *New fuses (Non-expulsion fuses)*
 - (c) *2nd tree crew started.*
 - (d) *Making efforts to grub out ground veg around poles*
 - (e) *RFP for engineer assessment for prioritizing issues, building out plan and budget.*
 - (f) *COA Electric permissioned to remove things around poles.*
 - (2) *Boneville has no lines within Ashland marked for PSPS (considered threatened)*
 - c) *Cell tower back up power*
 - (1) *Tom- all towers he is aware of in town have a generator. Will ask Verizon for list of towers, that are maybe without generators.*
2. *WSC Report to City Council – recap by Stephen*
3. *How to help homeowners fund FEMA match requirement (SG, TG) Tonya can reach out to Marsh and Golden. Tonya “what happens when homeowner can't handle their 25% load? State Wildfire Bill passed and included home hardening. There may be some resources that come available from state and might qualify as a match. HOW DO WE COORDINATE THIS? With the FEMA money just coming,*

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maybe in 2 months we could work on this. Council DID pass climate loans interest loans just recently.

TONYA Will contact our state reps.

4. ODF Grant

5. What is available regarding resources for those who need help evacuating. *(partially discussed during evacuation preparedness/CERT door-to-door discussion under Old business.)*

6. Update on Schedule for mulch and fire retardance for fences (SG) *rescheduled for 2022 (Spring/summer – April: drying, August: burning.)*

7. Continue on Zoom for next meeting in August?

a) Stephen presented the question to Commission. *Commission voted unanimously to remain on Zoom for next meeting.*

8. Scheduling next In-service

a) *Moved up on agenda. 11/17/21 afternoon after WSC meeting, from 2-6pm*

IX. REPORTS AS TIME ALLOWS

A. Forest Lands Commission

B. Chamber Wildfire Task Force

X. NEXT MEETING

A. Wednesday, August 16th, 2021. 11AM-1PM, Zoom

XI. ADJOURN