



MOUNT VEEDER FIRE SAFE COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

DATE: Saturday, November 24, 2012

LOCATION: Gary Green's residence, 5410 Dry Creek Road

ATTENDANCE: Wayne Cain, Gary Green, Gary Margadant, Carole Meredith, Bill Robertson, Larry Russell, Joanne Sutro, Kelly Wallace

REVIEW OF THE MINUTES: October 27 minutes were approved

ADDITIONS/REVISIONS TO AGENDA: Joanne Sutro requested that we add items regarding thanking Community Projects and Napa Communities Firewise Foundation for their support. Gary Margadant asked to add an item about missed chipping.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT: Gary Green said that it was time for new elections of officers. Gary said that he had served one year as president and that he did not want to continue as chair because he was now an active volunteer firefighter again and also that he was willing to be the project manager for our shaded fuel break projects during 2013.

He called for nominations. Carole Meredith nominated Kelly Wallace to be President. Kelly accepted the nomination and was elected by acclamation. Gary Green nominated Gary Margadant to continue as vice-president and Gary M. agreed to serve. Carole Meredith agreed to continue as secretary but admitted that she had not been able to keep up with the MVFSC website updates that she had agreed to do. Gary Green volunteered to take over the website management from Carole. Bill Robertson will continue as treasurer since he has that role ex officio as treasurer of the DCLVFD Board..

TREASURER'S REPORT: Bill Robertson reported that the current bank balance is \$21,524.01. It was noted that the budget does not include any income, so Kelly said he would work with Bill on QuickBooks to get an income number showing on the budget. Kelly will also work on expanding the memo column so that more information about each item is visible.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

1. Grants:

- a. **California Fire Safe Council Grants Clearing House:** Our proposal was not funded. The feedback was minimal, saying only that our request was “unrealistic”. Gary Green has asked for more feedback. Gary G. will also look at the total requested vs. total awarded from the Clearing House.
- b. **2012-13 Napa Communities Firewise Foundation grant award:** NCFE awarded us less than our request, saying that we could use our other grant. They expressed concern that the use of a masticator could raise concerns with CEQA and suggested using hand labor from the Delta Camp crew instead. If our plan changes, we must obtain approval from NCFE.
- c. **Community Projects grant award:** We have received a \$5,000 grant from Community Projects. How should we use it? It was proposed that we set it aside for now. It was also suggested that we use it for the green reflective address signs project. Gary Green said he will estimate the total cost of that project.

Joanne Sutro said that if we are interested in applying for support from the Napa Valley Community Foundation, we should ask for a meeting. Individual donors put money into NVCF. The NVCF has typically focused on safety net programs but they might have donors who are interested in fire. Marla Toffel and Terence Mulligan are key people. Gary Green said he would contact them.

- d. **CEQA conference report:** Gary Green and Bill Robertson attended this conference in Oakland on November 13. Stephen Gort from NCFE also attended.

Gary Green showed some information from the CEQA website (California Environmental Quality Act), including a very long checklist for projects. Gary has started filling out this check list for our Old Ridge Road shaded fuel break project, including questions regarding erosion impact and endangered species.

Kelly Wallace asked whether there is any minimum project size below which CEQA does not apply. The answer is not clear because the “lead agency” must determine whether a project is subject to CEQA. All projects undertaken by a public agency are subject to CEQA. Projects undertaken by a private party are subject to CEQA if a permit is required. (But this does not apply to ministerial permits.)

Our group was of the opinion that Napa County has determined that CEQA does not apply to our project because in 2012 no one mentioned the need for CEQA review.

Gary Green suggested that we may be able to avoid the CEQA issue by following Stephen Gort’s advice and not using a masticator in our project. The \$10,000 we have been awarded will buy 45 days of labor by the Delta Camp crew.

Gary Margadant said that perhaps we can still use the masticator but mitigate damage as the fire department does. He said that Greg Holquist has had experience with this but Greg was not present to comment.

If we use only hand crews instead of the masticator, it was suggested that we might want to focus on the north end of the Old Ridge Road project. The slope is very steep there so hand crews are a better choice anyway. But we should also consider that at the north end, the Old Ridge Road deviates to the east side of the true ridgeline. So we might want to place the fuel break along the true ridgeline rather than along the Old Ridge Road.

Bill Robertson suggested that we hire a consultant like Carol Rice to look at the possible CEQA issues. Gary Green proposed that we assign a Project Manager to consider all this and determine whether we need a consultant. Kelly Wallace moved, and the group approved, that Gary Green be appointed Project Manager.

We discussed whether Carol Rice would be an appropriate consultant. She is a fire ecologist and would bring that perspective to the job. We would show her what we've done in the past at The Cove and Enchanted Hills and the part of the Old Ridge Road that has been completed. We would ask her what we should be concerned about and tell her that we've never been subject to CEQA before.

Joanne Sutro pointed out that since Carol Rice is on the Napa Communities Firewise Foundation Board, they should be able to get her view on our possible CEQA issues. Gary Green said he will contact NCCFF about this.

Gary Margadant reminded us that we must not forget the need for maintenance of our shaded fuel break. Gary Green said that if we use herbicides to control re-growth, we will be subject to CEQA.

2. Events:

a. 2013 Golf Tournament:

- i) Action list of tasks to be accomplished along with target dates: Nothing to report because Greg Holquist was not present.
- ii) Press release: Joanne Sutro agreed to work on this.
- iii) High school student community service help: Kelly Wallace's daughter is in the Napa High School leadership class. Students might be able to help us sell raffle tickets, put up sponsor signs, take photos, etc.

3. Project Updates:

a. **Move sign on Dry Creek Road near Orchard:** It was proposed that the sign be moved south to near the Napa city limits sign. Gary Margadant will discuss the matter further with Tony Spleen, the resident who objects to the current location near his home.

b. Firewood Sales:

- i. Diane McKay's cord shortage: Gary Green reported that he took more wood to Diane but that she is still short of a cord. Gary Margadant said he has some split wood that he will take to her, which will save us from having to cut and split more wood.

- ii. Cooperative arrangement with Enchanted Hills: Deferred because Greg Holquist was not present.
- iii. Next year's firewood project: Are there service groups that we can get to help? The Next Door work party was excellent. Could we get high school kids to stack split wood 4-feet high on 4 x 8 sheets of plywood (1 cord)?

OLD BUSINESS:

1. **Fire road access point update:** No progress
2. **Possible bicycle ride fundraiser:** Gary Green has continued to communicate with Carlos Perez at Bicycle Monkey, who is enthusiastic about our proposed event. We would have to keep the event on Cove property to avoid crossing Mount Veeder Road. Bicycle Monkey would put up signs and time the race, etc. But it is not clear how much they would charge for this and whether, in the end, this would be worthwhile for us.
3. **DCLVFD and NCFD logo additions to website:** This has not yet been done. Gary Green will do this and will enlist the assistance of Sue Santos if needed.
4. **Upcoming FSC workshops for MVFSC board education:** Bill Robertson reported that there are no upcoming local workshops. The Wildfire Prevention Regional Conference will be held in Anderson, CA on 1/30/13. Kate Dargen will participate.
5. **Green reflective residence sign update:** No progress
6. **Website updates:** Gary Green agreed to take over updating the MVFSC website with meeting minutes and newsletters.
7. **Follow up on documenting in-kind services as done by Circle Oaks Home Association:** Bill Robertson reported that the Circle oaks Homeowners' Association contributes \$40,000 in chipping labor and volunteer time on their Fire Safe Council. We need to track our volunteer time.
8. **Napa County Fire Safe Councils email addresses:** No response has been received to our request to Stephen Gort for the email addresses of members of the other Fire Safe Councils in Napa County.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Letter of thanks to Community Projects and the Napa Communities Firewise Foundation Board:** Gary Green agreed to do this.
2. **Missed chipping:** Gary Margadant reported that Frederick Holzknacht signed up for chipping in late September but his material never got chipped. CalFire is responsible for scheduling chipping and we need to know who is managing the chipping program now. The phone number for chipping is 967-1426. CalFire had been having some problems with their chipping rig.
3. **DCLVFD Holiday party:** Larry Russell reported that there will be a holiday party from 5 to 8 pm on 12/8/12 at Enchanted Hills. The MVFSC can have a slot on the

agenda if we want. The DCLVFD will also hold a fundraising event at Enchanted Hills in Spring 2013.

OTHER BUSINESS FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER: We need a proposed new budget for 2013.

ADJOURNMENT: 11:14 am

Next Meeting: Saturday January 26, 2014 at 9:00 am
Kelly Wallace's house, 5269 Dry Creek Road

TO DO LIST:

Kelly Wallace:

- a. Work with Bill Robertson to get income number showing in the budget
- b. Work with Bill Robertson to widen the memo column in the budget

Gary Green:

- a. Work with Carole Meredith in order to take over website management (DONE)
- b. Investigate total requested vs. total awarded from California Fire Safe Council Grants Clearing House.
- c. Estimate total cost of the green reflective address signs project.
- d. Contact Marla Toffel and/or Terence Mulligan at the Napa Valley Community Foundation regarding funding for MVFSC
- e. Contact NCFE about CEQA and whether Carol Rice can offer advice in her capacity as an NCFE board member.

Greg Holquist:

- a. Continue to prepare an action list of specific tasks to be accomplished for the golf tournament along with target dates, including developing a publicity schedule
- b. Talk to Tony Fletcher at Enchanted Hills about a cooperative arrangement for firewood sales of wood they already have cut and split

Joanne Sutro:

- a. Prepare a press release for the 2013 MVFSC golf tournament

Carole Meredith:

- a. Work with Gary Green to transfer responsibility for MVFSC website updates to him. (DONE)

Gary Margadant:

- a. Talk to Tony Spleen about an acceptable new location for the road sign on Dry Creek near Orchard.
- b. Investigate whether the old fire road access points are still viable