



MOUNT VEEDER FIRE SAFE COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

DATE: Saturday, January 24, 2015

LOCATION: DCLVFD Firehouse, 5900 Dry Creek Road

ATTENDANCE: Greg Holquist, Evangeline James, Joe Nordlinger, Kelly Wallace, Gary Green, Ken Van Oeveren, Gary Margadant, Darren Drake, Carole Meredith

ADDITIONS/REVISIONS TO AGENDA: Added Napa Communities Firewise Foundation report by Darren Drake

REVIEW OF THE MINUTES: The 11/29/14 minutes were approved

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT: Greg Holquist reported that he had met with Mike Wilson and Megan Scheeline of Cal Fire regarding our pending application to the Cal Fire SRA Fee grant program. They like the project (Lokoya) but there are still some ambiguities about the process.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Gary Green reported that we currently have \$23,097.65 in our checking account.

NAPA COMMUNITIES FIREWISE FOUNDATION REPORT

Darren Drake, NCFE board member and President Emeritus, reported on their recent activities. The current chair is Stephen Gort. The NCFE board will hold a retreat in March.

Fire Safe Councils: They are trying to get some new communities to form Fire Safe Councils. Some meetings were held in Angwin but there was no follow up by the community. (Evangeline James suggested that NCFE work through the "Save Rural Angwin" group, since they are an established community group.) They are also working toward a Calistoga group. And there is nothing on Spring Mountain. The Atlas Peak and Soda Canyon Fire Safe Councils have been successfully working together, notably to establish escape routes across private property. The Berryessa Estates group has been successful in getting a fire station for their neighborhood. The Gordon Valley group is also underway.

Greg Holquist asked whether Fire Safe Councils could be on the NCFE board and Darren Drake said yes. Kelly Wallace asked whether NCFE prioritizes the various

FSC's. Darren replied that their emphasis is on startup groups. The NCFE considers the Mount Veeder Fire Safe Council to be a very successful established group. Evangeline James noted the importance of interacting with groups in adjacent areas, such as Sonoma and Browns Valley and the area to our north. The group agreed that a joint meeting with the Sonoma group would be beneficial because we share such an extensive wildland border.

Chipping Program: This program is operated by the NCFE in conjunction with Napa County. Several MVFSC members relayed concerns they have heard from our community. In 2014, residents were unclear on when the chipping program stopped for the year and kept putting vegetation out for chipping. Evangeline James suggested that the program should run longer because some residents don't want to risk clearing vegetation until the rattlesnakes have become less active. Darren Drake responded that the season must end before the rains are expected to start, but he acknowledged that more flexibility is needed.

Unfortunately, there is only 1 chipping crew for the whole county. Ken Van Oeveren asked whether Mike Wilson (Cal Fire) could run an additional crew, as part of his vegetation management efforts. Greg Holquist proposed that we see whether Davey Tree would be willing to chip piles that are close to where they are already working. Davey could then bill the county for the incremental effort. Communication is also a problem because a resident who puts in a chipping request is never told when their pile is going to be chipped, if at all. Ken Van Oeveren suggested that a volunteer administrative person could communicate with residents.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

1. 2015 Budget Review:

Gary Green presented a draft of the 2015 budget. Anticipated income is \$11,303 and anticipated expenses are \$9,340. We will need to insure our newly purchased equipment. And we need to plan for non-reimbursable expenses related to our projects.

We also need to budget for maintenance of project work already completed. There is already a lot of regrowth along the Old Ridge Road. Who will do the work? MVFSC members or outside contractors? Much could be accomplished by spot spraying Roundup but that can only be done with the permission of the property owner. Darren Drake mentioned a vegetation maintenance person who is experienced and knowledgeable with regrowth issues. We agreed to invite him to look at our projects.

We also need to consider buying another shipping container for storage. We could split the cost with the Dry Creek Lokoya Volunteer Fire Department. The older storage containers are leaking. We can buy a 10-foot freshly-painted container for \$3,112 or a 20-foot unpainted container for the same price. To split the cost with the Fire Department, the DCLVFD Board would have to agree to it. If the fire department board does not approve, then we would buy a 10-foot container. The county needs to approve the installation. They may require us to install the containers on a

foundation for earthquake safety. It was moved and approved to put \$3,200 in the 2015 budget for a container.

The amended 2015 budget was approved.

2. Grants:

a. **Napa Communities Firewise Foundation funding:** Greg Holquist will meet with Darren Drake and Megan Scheeline on January 26 onsite (Lokoya roadside), Mike Wilson likes the idea of hiring private contractors for this roadside clearing work.

b. **Cal Fire State Responsibility Area (SRA) Grant Program:** The proposal for this project (Lokoya Community Fuel Reduction Project) is due on January 27. Evangeline James and Greg Holquist are working on this. CEQA compliance is required and a Registered Professional Forester (RPF) must be involved.

With regard to the sale of firewood from our projects, Megan Scheeline said that when we have federal or state money, the RPF must fill out a 1038b form (exemption from Timber Harvest Plan) to allow the commercial use of wood to make money.

c. **14-USFS-SFAX0063 Old Ridge Road Shaded Fuel Break grant:** Kelly Wallace asked Liron Gallionao for an update regarding our grant funds but has heard nothing. It was agreed that we need a different contact person for this program.

3. **CWPP:** Evangeline James reported that she has been working on organizing the document by roads instead of by watersheds. She asked for help with the discussion of vegetation types.

4. **Napa County Fire Services Advisory Committee (FSAC):** Gary Margadant explained that this is a subcommittee of the Board of Supervisors. Gary Green and Ken Van Oeveren have participated in the past. County staff members participate to cover procedural and risk management aspects. Homeowners insurance was a recent topic. Gary Margadant wants the FSAC to put together a document to help homeowners deal with homeowners insurance rates. Darren Drake stated that NCCFF could also help with this. Supervisor Keith Caldwell is an expert in this area because of his fire background.

5. **PRC 4291 evaluations:** Greg Holquist proposed that we do more with regard to looking at homes and informing residents of what they need to do to provide the defensible space that is required by state code. This would also generate useful information for us and for Cal Fire. Furthermore, a property inspection is an opportunity to tell people about the MVFSC. It's an opportunity for us to increase our public outreach.

Greg showed a map of the 2014 defensible space inspections conducted by Cal Fire, most of which were on Mount Veeder Road. If Cal Fire observes a code violation, they will eventually enforce it. ("First they ask you, then they tell you, then they make you.") However, if MVFSC does inspections, we will only inform the resident, not enforce the code.

Greg cited the example of the Colorado Springs Fire Department Wildfire Mitigation unit (<http://csfd.coloradosprings.gov/public-safety/fire/prevention-and-safety/wildfire->

mitigation) which has conducted wildfire hazard evaluations on more than 36,000 homes and used this information to produce an interactive Wildfire Hazard Ratings map. Greg pointed out that this kind of public information can exert peer pressure on residents to improve the defensibility of their own property, and thus contribute to the safety of their entire neighborhood.

Bill Robertson related that he had developed a Homeowner's Defensible Space and Fire Hazard Management Plan 20 years ago, but that he couldn't keep up with the demand.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. **Equipment storage:** Gary Green reported that all the keys for our equipment are in the firehouse. Gary wants to take the spare wheel off the trailer. He will also label all the new equipment.
2. **Napa Valley Community Foundation Report:** no update
3. **National Firewise Community status:** What we previously submitted was unacceptable so Kelly Wallace is working with Stephen Gort to revise the application.
4. **Napa County Corrections crews:** no update

NEW BUSINESS: Bill Robertson reported that he has ordered 2 A-frame signs.

OTHER BUSINESS FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER: none

ADJOURNMENT: 11:20 am

Next Meeting: Saturday, February 28, 2015
Joe Nordlinger's house
4297 Dry Creek Road