

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
of
THE WEST CONTRA COSTA FIRE SAFE COUNCIL

The board of directors of The West Contra Costa Fire Safe Council (WCCFSC) held a videoconference meeting via Zoom on **June 26, 2023 at 7:00PM.**

The following directors were in attendance at the meeting and constituted the entire board:

Soheila Bana	[X] Present	[] Absent
Marilyn Saarni	[X] Present	[] Absent
Ra Criscitiello	[X] Present	[] Absent
Rebecca Orona	[X] Present	[] Absent
Angel Montoya	[X] Present	[] Absent

Present: Joyce, Steven Parker, Royce Saunders, Diane Richwine, Susan, Marilyn Williams, Heidi Barberio, David, Will Plutte

AGENDA

1. *Updates and Announcements*
 - a. *Consider time change to 5-6 OR 7:30-8:30pm? (4th Monday of month)*
 - i. *Some folks have conflicts, so we need to find a new time. Chief Montoya prefers 5-6pm. Others were silent so can make anything work.*
 - b. *Inspections by County after June 5; Inspections by Richmond after June 30.*
 - c. *Marilyn finally got a website proposal today*
2. *Propose Wildfire Mitigation Budget for City of Richmond (\$500k)*
 - a. *Chief Montoya and Public Works need to work together to get this \$500k. Chief Montoya has been working on this internally, and he will collaborate on this in the next week. He's looking at the costs of the various items on Soheila's list. Large dying trees that are threatening evacuation routes need to be taken care of. We are requesting help from Measure X and want the city to match with their funds.*
3. *Evacuation Drill in Brickyard Cove: Awards to 1st and last evacuees by WCCFSC*
 - a. *On Sat. July 15th the Richmond Fire and Police Depts and WCCFSC will conduct a test of the community warning system and Nixle. Brickyard Cove will largely be evacuated (5 HOAs, commercial area, marina, and yacht club).*
 - b. *In past drills, folks who arrive at the check-out station early get gifts for participating. There will be 5 prizes this time, too: 2 2-pack radios, 3 solar-powered hand-crank radios with portable flashlights (total price \$162). Steve suggested that it would be nice to have plastic fire hats for the kids. Chief Montoya has a new stack of hats and will bring them. If you're free, please volunteer to be there to represent the WCCFSC. Chief Montoya said all the flyers have been printed and he will contact Rocky to decide how to distribute them.*

They want to incorporate the ham radio operators into the exercise. There's now an SOP in place for how ham radios interact with dispatchers.

4. *FireWise Campaign - Joyce Forte*
 - a. *Joyce presented to the May Valley Neighborhood Council and it went great. Plan to continue to do general info sessions to neighborhood councils. These meetings generate great interest in creating FireWise communities. There are now 6 interested groups at various stages of the application process. It's been very valuable for neighborhoods to develop localized action plans. Among other perks, 10% reduction on insurance is a great motivator.*
5. *Emergency Exit Route in Hilltop Green*
 - a. *Soheila explained that before she was a city council member, she applied pressure broadly. But she now needs to be more careful. For instance, she can't directly contact Public Works. It's the Public Works Director who needs to apply for the Measure X funds, so we are hoping Chief Montoya can make contact.*
6. *Mesh for Vents - Program with Measure X - Soheila Bana*
 - a. *Excellent program. Rolls of 1/16 mesh are purchased in specific widths. Price per household is about \$80-\$120. Trying to get \$10k Measure X funding to give to 100 households. Then homeowners can install or hire a contractor to install.*
7. *Fire Danger signs*
 - a. *El Sobrante & Richmond: not yet installed. Delivery was supposed to be June 15th, but delayed to June 30th.*
8. *Requests for Measure X Let's do it!*
 - a. *[Programs for individuals and Firewise](#). Soheila urges us to make as many requests as possible so our voice is heard.*
9. *Event planning - Table at El Sobrante Stroll, Sept. 17th. We need someone to take lead on coordinating. This is a time-limited and fun project. Steven Parker can help out, and he's also CERT.*
10. *WCCFSC T-shirts for volunteers. Would be great to have our logo on shirts, good for visibility at events. Soheila can cost this out.*
11. *Status Capacity Grant (Feb 1-Jun 30, 2023) - Sue or Marilyn*
 - a. *We've gotten most of our \$20k funding. Everything was supposed to be spent by June 30th, which is impossible since funds didn't start flowing until May. We will document this in our grant documentation.*
12. *Fundraising for open house. We need to draft a letter with different sponsorship levels. We want to raise money for a grant-writer. Ra and Steve can help with this.*
13. *HOMELESS in Wildfire areas - Chief Montoya*
 - a. *Deputy Fire Marshall is on vacation until mid-July, so Chief Montoya is working with Dante Wiley on this, but it's not yet clear what the plan is. Collaboration with the county is critical. Soheila widely sent out request for urgent help on this issue. 60% of fires start from encampments. The homeless as well as nearby residents are in danger. Most of the encampments Soheila identified are in the unincorporated area. Soheila asked Chief Montoya to coordinate with Chief Bachman on an immediate solution before we have red flag days. Chief Montoya explained that dealing with synthetic drugs is the main issue. Will suggested we talk with the [El Sobrante MAC](#). Soheila will include the MAC on this issue.*
14. *Measure X FireSafe coordinator*

- a. *They're doing background checks and should have someone in the next couple weeks. This will be someone who knows about marketing!*
15. *PG&E contractors (ACRT) currently inspecting vegetation near residential power lines*
 - a. *PG&E app to report problematic trees and vines threatening power lines, transformers or pole access - https://www.pge.com/en_US/safety/electrical-safety/report-a-safety-concern.page*
16. *East Bay MOU: https://eastbaywildfire.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Proposed-MOU-for-Coordination-of-Wildfire-Prevention-Activities-in-and-Around-the-East-Bay-Hills_06012023.pdf. There's a presentation this Wed. afternoon. Chief Montoya explained that once the MOU is presented, folks can apply for funds. In Marin County, they have a collaboration with various cities in Marin that's working well, so Chief Montoya is going to call them to learn more (it's not as constricting as a JPA or MOU).*
17. *Firewise Demo Garden [**DEFER**—nothing new; waiting to meet with Bontempo and PW Director Chavarria]. Marilyn explained that we have newly trained firescaping volunteers, so we have a group of experts who can start a home visit program once we have a framework. [Fire Aside](#) is an app used by several FireWise groups that lets you generate reports, and is customizable for your community. We may be able to use some of our capacity grant for this. Marilyn will talk with Chief Bontempo and Montoya about how to get this done.*