

**COASTSIDE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
VEGETATION MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING**

**September 9, 2021
1:00 p.m.**

LOCATION:

Pursuant to Governor Newsom's Executive Order N-29-20,
the meeting was held by teleconference and Zoom video conference.

MINUTES

1. OPEN SESSION

Deputy Chief/Secretary Jonathan Cox opened the meeting at 1:05 p.m. The purpose of this meeting is to finalize a presentation for the Board at the September 22nd meeting.

2. ROLL CALL (All participants were present via Zoom.)

Present were Directors Steve Stockman and Cynthia Sherrill as well as Deputy Chief/Secretary Jonathan Cox. Also present were CalFire Deputy Fire Marshall Captain Austin Seeley and Fire Marshall Chief Gary Silva. Jean Headley took minutes.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Led by Director Stockman.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

5. CONSENT CALENDAR

- A. Approval of Minutes of September 2, 2021 Special Meeting – Vegetation Management Committee Meeting

ON MOTION by Director Stockman, seconded by Director Sherrill, by the following Roll Call Vote, the Committee approved the Consent Calendar as submitted:

Director Stockman	Aye
Director Sherrill	Aye

Motion passed 2-0.

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6. NEW BUSINESS

A. Review Vegetation Management Action Plan

Director Sherrill said that the Committee would like to review the Staff Report that they received today. She praised Staff and the Fire Marshal's office for the outstanding report, done in record time for the Committee to be able to review it in time for the September 22nd Board meeting.

Deputy Chief Jonathan Cox put the Staff Report on the screen. This will be placed in the Board packet under the Vegetation Management Committee update. It will include this Staff Report and a Resolution declaring a public nuisance for those identified parcels that Captain Seely has prioritized. The public will be able to see the entire Staff Report as part of the Board packet for the September 22nd meeting.

Director Sherrill asked Deputy Chief Cox his recommendations for the next steps. She indicated there's a funding portion, consultant's existing manpower, and additional costs for contractors. Deputy Chief Cox said they have put approximately \$200,000 in the final budget for a contractor, assuming \$12,500 per lot for 16 lots. He said part of this is the possible long-term need for additional staffing in the Fire Marshal's office to manage Weed Abatement and additional unimproved parcels and assessments during that process.

Director Stockman asked Deputy Chief Cox what the time frame is between an Ordinance being adopted and work actually beginning. Deputy Chief Cox said it would probably be a couple of months.

Director Stockman asked what is the availability of contractors in this current climate to do this kind of work. Captain Seely said that some people do want to comply and he has had to extend correction notices to accommodate scheduling issues. He said that the availability of tree and landscape crews at the drop of a hat will be difficult. It could take several months.

Director Sherrill asked if there have been conversations about how a contract would work. Deputy Chief Cox said they put it out for bid, open the sealed bids, and document the lowest bid. Director Sherrill asked if the contractors should be local to keep the revenue in our region. Deputy Chief Cox said that is a legal question and he doesn't know the answer.

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B. Discuss Current Vegetation Management Activities

Director Sherrill indicated the next steps will be to present recommended actions at the September 22 Board meeting, and also talking about perhaps rephrasing, adding to, or substituting in the Vegetation Management Action Plan in light of the Staff Report, and the responsibility to complete our response to Ms. Casey's letter. We are inviting Ms. Casey to attend the next Board meeting.

Deputy Chief Cox said if the Board does take action to abate these lots, it might be okay for Captain Seely to follow-up with Ms. Casey as opposed to another letter from the Board.

Captain Seely responded that as to the eight lots mentioned in Ms. Casey's letter, we would need to prioritize the lots as to which needs to be addressed first.

Director Stockman requested that Captain Seely follow-up with an email after the Board meeting that he has spoken with Ms. Casey.

Director Sherrill asked what we will present at the Board meeting, and what changes are to be made to the Action Plan. Or are we more interested in describing the plan as we go forward for the public, or are we more interested in what we need next to go forward? We need to be able to give the Board the facts about resources and what it will cost for them to be able to make decisions.

Deputy Chief Cox said we could amend the Action Plan to include the expansion of this Vegetation Management Program as an action item, as well as exploring the Wildfire Assessment Report for the entire District and bring that to the full Board along with the Staff Report, the Resolution for declaring a nuisance, and adding the desire to have CalFire to come back with a Staffing proposal to meet the challenges we have.

Director Sherrill initiated a discussion regarding perhaps finding other funds to help pay for this, and Deputy Chief Cox said that this would be using public money to pay for private property.

Director Stockman asked regarding the Board's relationship with the community and the Vegetation Management Action Plan. Has anything been received by Deputy Chief Cox or Chief Silva from the community saying this is what we think you should be doing or actions we think you should be taking?

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Chief Gary Silva said that in this current fearful climate, if everyone had their way we would have nothing but green grass and every tree would be gone. So we're just trying to keep them happy and tell them what we need to do. He feels we need to get more public information out there and explain what defensible space is.

Director Stockman asked if we have a plan to communicate to the public the changes in the Ordinance and the positive results that will come from it. Deputy Chief Cox said not currently, but he will do whatever necessary to shed a light on what we're doing. Director Stockman suggested we bring it up with the entire Board during discussion of the Vegetation Management Action Plan.

Director Sherrill discussed maintaining vacant lots, and she said the people who weren't maintaining their lots may have abandoned them. She asked Deputy Chief Cox what are the points where we could make the most effective public messaging campaign. Deputy Chief Cox said it's a matter of putting the information out there in different ways, i.e., website, social media, newspaper.

Director Stockman asked if it would be appropriate for the Committee to meet with the Unit's Public Information Officer on this issue, or would it be more of an operational role that wouldn't be purposeful to his and Director Sherrill's current actions. Deputy Chief Cox responded after we get through this phase, then it would be a good idea to deal with how to get the message out.

Deputy Chief Cox reminded the Committee that the mailer going out in the near future to all District residents with defensible space and evacuation information. The people who won't get that are the property owners who don't live here. Director Stockman asked if those absentee property owners will get a separate letter, and Deputy Chief Cox said they will get a notice to abate.

Director Sherrill asked if part of this plan is to follow-up after three notices and the process that follows that. Captain Seely discussed the step-by-step process that occurs. He also discussed fire prevention as opposed to weed abatement.

Director Sherrill asked if everyone is comfortable with what we are taking to the Board on September 22. Deputy Chief Cox responded that the path forward looks clear, and he will discuss the legal side of things with Jean Savaree and Kai Ruess. Director Stockman said he feels comfortable that we will take action on September 22 to move things forward. The other Board members will be able to review the Staff Report before the meeting.

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Deputy Chief Cox put on the screen a photo of a fire danger rating sign, and he discussed the contents of the sign. This will be placed on the corner where the engines come out of Station 41, and the ratings will be updated by the on-duty crew.


Director Sherrill asked if there are plans for the brush between Station 41 and the ocean that has wires running through it. Captain Seely responded that this has been discussed numerous times in the past, but it is designated as a riparian area so a lot of the brush removal is restricted, and the wires are communication lines, not power lines. The Fire Marshal's office doesn't have any enforcement because it's not a fire hazard.

Director Stockman asked Deputy Chief Cox if there is a need for additional meetings now that a Staff Report has been prepared for the Board. Deputy Chief Cox said that everything needs to be done by Friday, September 17, to go in the Board packet for the September 22 meeting.

6) ADJOURNMENT

Director Stockman adjourned the meeting at 2:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

DocuSigned by:

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7/23/2024

Deputy Chief Jonathan Cox, Secretary
Coastside Fire Protection District

Note: Audio and video tapes of meetings are available for inspection during regular business hours.