

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

**August 19, 2021  
9:00 a.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 9:00 a.m. The purpose of this meeting is to review the Vegetation Management Action Plan and discuss Susan Casey's letter in order to prepare a response.

**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. Jean Headley took minutes.

**3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Led by Director Stockman.

**4. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**5. NEW BUSINESS**

A. Review Vegetation Management Action Plan

Deputy Chief Jonathan Cox explained the defensible space program as well as the weed abatement process for weeds on undeveloped properties. Ms. Casey's letter is referring to undeveloped lands that have weeds but don't fall under the weed abatement process.

He indicated there are about 200 of such parcels that would require extensive work to remove heavy brush, which could cost \$20,000 to \$25,000 per lot, or up to \$5 million. This is very substantial and would be a recurring issue. The question is where does the District's enforcement end and the property owner's responsibility to adhere to the ordinances begin.

B. Discuss Current Vegetation Management Activities

Director Stockman asked where we stand on the solution and when do we move forward. Do we work with the county? What do other communities do? Deputy Chief Cox said it depends on what the Board wants to do regarding engaging on undeveloped parcels that are beyond weeds. Is the Board looking to start a large-scale vegetation management program for all of those undeveloped parcels that includes staff and a significant amount of money to abate them? It is a policy issue. Deputy Chief Cox said he feels it is the landowner's responsibility.

Director Sherrill asked how successful we are in collecting weed abatement fees from homeowners. Deputy Cox said we can sue them which takes a lot of time and could be expensive, or we can send it to the District Attorney and let them take on the case.

Deputy Chief Cox said the abatement process must be followed. The property owner first needs to be notified in order to have the opportunity to abate the issue, and then we hire a contractor and take action. Then we recoup the cost on the tax roll for the following year.

Director Stockman initiated a discussion about how to hold the homeowner responsible and what conversations have happened at the DA level. What are the homeowner responses in those community meetings that have been held? What is the practicality of trying to litigate these property owners? Deputy Chief Cox said our Fire Marshal's office is in contact with the DA's office about this. It's really a bandwidth and priority issue. There is no easy fix.

Director Stockman asked if Staff or the Board will respond to Ms. Casey's letter, and what is the message from the Board through Staff regarding Ms. Casey's concern about the abandoned lots.

Deputy Chief Cox replied that Staff has been working with Supervisory Horsley and others regarding the removal of eucalyptus trees. He also said that as Ms. Casey's letter is directed to the Board, she will expect to hear from the Board, either written by President Gary Burke and/or run through legal counsel. He also discussed the possibility of a vegetation management flyer.

Director Sherrill discussed the contents of Ms. Casey's letter. Deputy Chief Cox suggested we don't talk about specific lots in case it goes to litigation. If we need to discuss specific lots, that should be done in Closed Session.

Director Stockman asked what responsibility we have as Directors on what action to take. Deputy Chief Cox said the Board members represent the constituents and it depends on what the constituents want. He read from the Fire Code that we have the authority to notify landowners to clear their lots of vegetation. But it would be a massive undertaking and it would have tremendous cost to do the work.

Director Stockman asked how we would be repaid if we undertake the work ourselves. Deputy Chief Cox recommended that this committee start the scoping process at the next committee meeting of what an RFP would look like and then take it to the Board. Director Sherrill said that we need to show the public what we are doing to address their concerns.

Deputy Chief Cox said we need to also think about Staff capacity to be able to take on the work.

Deputy Chief Cox put on the screen and discussed a flyer regarding San Mateo County Wildfire Safety Preparation. There was discussion about a possible letter from Deputy Chief Cox to the citizens saying what we are actually doing.

Deputy Chief Cox indicated speaking with Nick Calderone from Parks about perhaps holding a town hall forum to get all the agencies together to discuss our different roles. Director Stockman said that could serve as a forum for other agencies to say what they are doing.

Director Stockman said he spoke with Michele Ortiz yesterday regarding getting more information on the website. He asks Directors Stockman and Sherrill to let him know if either of them have any sites or references on line that they'd like to see.

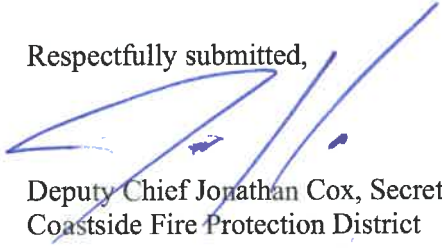
Deputy Chief Cox suggested two more Vegetation Management Committee meetings before the next Board meeting. The dates of September 2 and September 16 at 9 a.m. were agreed upon.

Note: Subsequent to this meeting, the September 16<sup>th</sup> meeting was moved up to September 9<sup>th</sup>, and the time was changed to 1:00 p.m.

**6) ADJOURNMENT**

Deputy Chief/Secretary Jonathan Cox adjourned the meeting at 10:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long, sweeping stroke that extends upwards and to the right.

Deputy Chief Jonathan Cox, Secretary  
Coastside Fire Protection District

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