

**Minutes - Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors  
Fire Safe Council of Santa Cruz County**

December 5, 2019

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Location: Santa Cruz County Office of Emergency Services  
5200 Soquel Avenue  
Santa Cruz, CA 95062

**1. CALL TO ORDER:** At 10:08 by Paul Horvat

**2. INTRODUCTIONS & WELCOME**

**Directors Present:** Paul Horvat, President  
Ed Hayes, Vice President  
Joe Christy, Vice President  
LizAnne Jensen, Treasurer  
Andy Hubbs, Secretary  
Bob Loveland  
Zeke Bean (in for Chris Berry)  
Becky Steinbruner  
Ian Rowbotham  
Lizzy Eichorn

**Directors Absent:** Chris Berry  
Tim Reilly  
Felix Sorrentino  
Lisa Ehret  
Rick Rogers

**Attendees:** Dave Cordano  
Ron Dornseif  
Marco Mack  
Greg Vandervoort  
Leigh Wunce  
Betsy Stiefelmaier  
Mike Gagarin

**3. AGENDA REVISIONS/ APPROVAL**

3.1. No changes made to the agenda.

**4. CONSENT AGENDA**

4.1. Review and approve 10/3/19 meeting minutes. Lizzy noticed that Paul is missing from the directors present list. Lizanne moved approval of the minutes pending addition of Paul's name to the directors present list, Ed seconded the motion. Becky abstained having not read the minutes. The motion carried.

**1. PUBLIC COMMENT 10:15-10:30 (3 min. each)**

Hidden Glen HOA (Ron and Dave): Their HOA consists of 16 acres of dense forest on a ridge which connects to other ridges. They have been in contact with Andy to determine costs for a shaded fuel break and want to know who they should be talking to regarding developing their fire plan and applying for grant funding.

Marco Mack: Marco is the new Deputy Fire Marshal with Aptos La Selva/Central Fire. He is working to address concerns around unmanaged greenbelts and is hoping to establish a process for treating these areas. He wants to work with the FSC to raise awareness and would like to take his findings and plan to the Fire Chiefs Association and Board of Supervisors.

**2. ACTION ITEMS**

None.

**3. REPORTS 10:30-11:45**

**3.1. Executive Steering Committee**

The ESC met last week. The need for a base funding source has become very clear. In early January the committee will have a focused meeting on how to approach the Board of Supervisors. A change in insurance carrier for Directors and Officers insurance may be in store as a more economical policy has been identified. The group aims to have a draft policies and procedures manual developed by the end of the year. The doing “business as process” to change the FSC’s name to the Fire Safe Council of Santa Cruz County has not yet been completed.

**3.2. Treasurer**

Recent financial activity has mostly revolved around the CSAA grant. \$13,535 of the \$30,000 awarded has been spent. Currently, grant funds are being used to edit a video of one of the recent home hardening events. The FSC has received \$3,148 in contributions so far for Fiscal Year 19-20 and there is \$19,958 in the checking account.

**3.3. CSAA Grant Committee**

The committee completed six outreach events this fall and reached approximately 400 people. Much was learned about how to reach the general public in the county. Committee members also conducted 6 radio interviews, two podcasts, and hired a publicity firm to distribute advertisements. In the future, we will need to distribute our information to news media outlets at least three months prior to events. The committee also worked to develop contact databases and a Mailchimp account. The FSC now has banners and table runners, literature specific to Santa Cruz County, and good signage and name recognition. A number of other valuable projects were generated as a result of this work. Committee members will meet with the CSAA grant manager to discuss additional funding for these projects and a plan for the current remaining funds. The remaining funds will be used to circulate mailings, gather feedback, and continue home hardening related website work.

LizAnne, Joe and Marco went to the home hardening presentations that Marin FSC put on with their CSAA grant. Their training program works to introduce contractors to best management practices when building in fire prone areas. The presentation covered code compliance and local ordinances. The presenters also conducted live fire demonstrations on houses that were hardened vs. unhardened. Marin County has the highest number of

Firewise communities in the United States. Becky suggested communicating Marin resources to the Cabrillo trades program to increase awareness. The group agreed that we need a coordinated initiative to help bring Firewise support into Santa Cruz County.

#### 3.4. Education and Outreach Committee

The last two meetings were cancelled for various reasons. At the next meeting, the group will discuss opportunities for our next outreach event. Becky hopes to provide support for Firewise community development (i.e. trainings). There is a good training video on the Firewise website to help people organize. Editorials continue to be disbursed, but it's unclear how many are actually published. If anyone sees an article published, please let LizAnne know. Zeke recommends requesting to be members on community group Facebook pages and posting articles there. Ian offered to link to the articles from the Sempervirens Fund website. LizAnne would like to use CSAA grant funds to develop a communication network so it can be used for whatever we need.

#### 3.5. TAC (grant application updates)

The FSC will not be moving forward with the CAL FIRE Fire Prevention grant. Andy will follow up with Joe so that we let landowners know. The CA FSC grant is the next grant that will open. Lizzy mentioned that it has onerous reporting requirements and costs must be paid by the grantee prior to invoicing.

#### 3.6. Development Committee

There are still no official committee members but the Community Partners Program has been developed as a mechanism to build the FSC's funding base.

Becky suggests engaging with realtors for potential funding sources. LizAnne mentioned an online quiz tool that the CSAA grant committee is developing, which could potentially be marketed to real estate agencies.

There is a recognized need to develop an FSC communications plan for engagement with potential funders and the public. Some talking points have been developed for interviews but not yet for general engagement.

#### 3.7. RCD

The Cliffwood Estates ladder fuels reduction project will go in in mid February. The CAL FIRE Forest Health grant application is due 12/6 and the RCD is on track for submittal. The chipping program is scheduled to run in March 2020. People who received chipping assistance in 2019 are allowed to receive assistance in 2020. All people who have submitted an online form will be notified of the program reopening. LizAnne will share the contact database generated from the home hardening events with Lizzy so she can send a notification to them too. Lizzy will organize a call in January with a few board members (namely Becky, Joe, and Ed) and program participants to discuss chipping program efficacy and how to streamline the process moving forward.

#### 3.8. Other director reports

Paul: His department has working to educate people on Christmas tree safety. With CA FSC funds, they have finished the De La Veaga shaded fuel break. In the wake of the recent PG&E Public Safety Power Shutdowns, his department is putting together a management

plan to help navigate power shutdowns. They are happy to share the plan they develop to help other agencies cope with PSPS.

Becky: She attended the Board of Supervisors special legislation meeting. All four legislative representatives were there. Becky made a public comment regarding the Department of Insurance report that showcases issues with folks losing their insurance in WUI areas.

Andy: CAL FIRE is wrapping up the Hinckley Ridge project. 220 ac have been treated since mid to late summer and the remaining 5 acres are currently being completed. The shaded fuel break work was performed by private mastication contractors. He mentioned that there are currently only 3 Ben Lomond Camp crews and they have low availability, but communities can still try to get their help. Ed mentioned that other groups may be available to similar work like San Jose Conservation Corps, the California Conservation Corps, and American Conservation Experience.

Zeke: The State of the San Lorenzo River Symposium coming up on February 29<sup>th</sup>. Bill Monning will be the keynote speaker. There will be a session on wildfire and the FSC is invited to table at the event.

#### **4. DISCUSSION ITEMS 11:45-12:00**

##### **4.1. CalMatters Article**

CalMatters published an article on 11/26/19 titled “When it comes to wildfires, should California be more like Australia?”. Joe gave an overview of the article. The horrific 2007 Black Saturday fires in Australia spurred the Australian government to mandate that all power lines be buried. In California, burying lines is complicated due to risks of earthquakes and extreme costs. The group agreed that more temporary refuge areas need to be created across Santa Cruz County, especially in the San Lorenzo Valley. Training is essential to make this approach effective.

Becky recommended inviting Public Works and Rosemary Anderson to the next meeting to talk about evacuation and shaded fuel break needs in the San Lorenzo Valley. Next Tuesday, the Board of Supervisors will be discussing updated building codes and the County Emergency Management Plan. This is a good time to have discussions about home hardening requirements with local regulators.

#### **5. ADJOURN at 12:04**

The next Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors will be February 6th, 2020 at the County EOC building.