

STNC YEAC

Wild Fire Town Hall Meeting

MINUTES

Wednesday, February 23, 2022

1. Call to Order – Lallah Rowe, Chair. (18 attendees)
 - a) Lallah Rowe, Karen Moran, Cheryl Schmidt
2. Opening Comments by Chair. Purpose of the meeting was to understand how our community can protect their homes and families with presentations given by the Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains (RCDSMM) and the L.A. Fire Department.
3. Presentation by Pauline Allen, with RCDSMM, about ‘Home-Hardening’ and ‘Defensible Space’ (landscaping for fire resistance).
 - a) The RCDSMM is a special non-regulatory agency for the State of California which can focus on land ownership.
 - b) Pauline showed a video on how a house can catch on fire. The RCDSMM supports all areas in L.A. county that are assessed to be ‘vulnerable communities’ and this includes Sunland/Tujunga. Embers are the primary way that fires start, with winds extending the fire-season and carrying them distances quickly. Detailed suggestions are available on-line in Defensiblespace.org
 - c) Pauline and members of the group can provide a free home-evaluation which is about a 45-60 minute review of the house and landscape areas with a report provided to the home resident and suggested mitigations.
 - d) A Wildlife Preparedness Training is also offered. This is a community effort and neighbors can be trained to provide evaluations also. Community preparedness is important. Zones may overlap with neighbors and everyone needs to work together.
 - e) A landscape consultation by a landscape professional is offered as a follow up for the home inspection.
 - f) A Wildfire Plan should be developed on a local level with pre-preparation steps.
 - g) One question addressed materials for fencing/decking: TREX is may be better for as opposed to natural wood because TREX (or similar material) does not need maintenance over the years. Wood will decay and become vulnerable to fire, although any material is susceptible to burning.
 - h) In summary, be sure to sign up to get Emergency Alerts (notifications and information), share what you learned, attend the Wildfire Preparedness Training (date TBD).
 - i) Contact info for an inspection: Pauline Allen, Grizzly Corp Fellow at pallen@rcdsmm.org or Antoine Kunsch, Community Resilience Coordinator at akunsch@rcdsmm.org. Antoine is Pauline’s supervisor. Pauline will provide registration forms to Lallah for inspections.
4. Presentation by Captain Greg Linton, Tujunga Fire Station

- a) Captain Linton provided information about fire prevention and evacuation. Preparedness is imperative; Pets, Papers, Prescription drugs; Personal items; Plastic (credit cards, etc.) are the “6-Ps”. Much good information which will be uploaded on the STNC.org website, for example if evacuating, position a ladder on the side of house away from where fire is approaching for the potential that a fire fighter can access roof to fight the fire.
- b) Discussion about evacuating early due to experience where Foothill Blvd and the 210 Freeway can back up and traffic cannot move; S/T has limited ingress and egress.
- c) Officer Herrera in the Foothill office offered comments about informing the PD about seeing our homeless camps that have fires to keep warm/cook which can be dangerous. Land is owned by different owners such as Edison, city of L.A., private property, etc. and removing camps can be a challenge, particularly in more remote areas where the PD does not have the equipment to access the areas. Training a neighborhood ‘Block Captain’ would be very helpful; CERT classes will be offered again in the future and they provide excellent training opportunities. Officer Caloca suggested that a call to the L.A. Building and Safety to report may be a good option in identifying home-owners. Non-emergency numbers are encouraged, but 911 should be called if emergency.

5. General Public Comments

- a) Probably no punitive measures for homeless if fires started that are not arson caused; the FD determined if arson or not.
- b) CERT training excellent, and other ‘pop up’ trainings (e.g. CPR, etc.).
- c) Need identified for an evacuation plan, coordinating with neighbors to see who is at-risk for evacuating (e.g. elderly, handicapped), need update on CERT availability, pre-planning essential.
- d) A “Public Safety” committee should be formed that offers neighborhoods a plan for pre-planning and evacuation. Lallah requested volunteers to form the committee. Contact info for Lallah is write2lrowe@yahoo.com. Officer Caloca is on-board to assist if committee is started. Pauline Allen also volunteered to support as she could.
- e) Comments and suggestions from one participant for the “Public Safety” Committee: issues need to be very neighborhood oriented for evacuation routes and alternate routes; plan for worst case scenario (no power, middle of the night, windy, etc.); need a master check-list; pre -planning and getting community involved are essential. Plans should be coordinated with each other; each neighborhood should have someone designated (every block or two) as focus person. If someone doesn’t drive, need a resource to help them, give them updates/notifications. Need a choreographed way (checklist) to do it and a list of people who can assist. It’s a complex issue but can be solved at a local level.
- f) The LAFD is developing a program that can be tailored to unique neighborhood needs, needs to be run by local neighborhood watch groups. The Rylan Plan provides information (for information and to schedule emergency preparedness training, see emergency.lacity.org/Rylan).
- g) Super Scooper fire-fighting planes are leased from Quebec annually; they are stationed at the Van Nuys airport.