

FireSafe Sonoma
Minutes
May 26, 2004

Attendees: Board members: Tamara Boulton, Marjorie Conley, Tim Doherty, Jack Rosevear.
Guests: Bill Andrews (Foothills Homeowners Assoc.), Lonny Haskins (State Farm), Kathleen Kraft, Scott Moon (Santa Rosa Fire Department), Stefan Parney (Deputy Agricultural Commissioner-Sonoma County), and Ed Shriver (CDF.)

The meeting was called to order by President Rosevear at noon.

Ed Shriver gave an update on the status of board member, Harry Martin, who is recovering from a bad accident and now has a metal plate and screws in his arm. He should recover 95% use and strength of his arm.

Treasurer's Report – no activity since last month. Balance on hand in multiple categories (organizational funds, West County grant, Living with Fire publication, etc.) is \$12,443.94.

Guest Speaker - Stefan Parney from the Ag. Commissioner's office gave a talk on Sudden Oak Death – an update on the status of the disease, ongoing research, plants affected and its role in vegetation management. Advised that website, www.suddenoakdeath.org prepared by COMTF (California Oak Mortality Task Force) has a wealth of up-to-date information. Thirteen counties are affected and those areas cannot move any material out of the area but no restrictions for movement within the thirteen areas. It is recommended that all diseased material be left onsite; however, if that is not possible then there is a group called Sod Busters with a site in Marin County and Santa Cruz that will take the material and convert it to electricity. He felt that most tree companies left chipped material on site but expressed his belief that there was little danger if taken off site. (Coast live oak, black oak and tan oak are three most widely affected tree species.)

Research is ongoing. Question raised about possibility of contamination through burning of debris. Mr. Parney felt that was highly unlikely although a burn permit would still be needed and his office does grant exemptions for pest control. Another question raised was about the form of transmission. He stated that researchers are still conducting research but it is believed that the disease is transmitted via spores by water in the air and the soil. Also, there is a state funded program for agencies and homeowners that can be used to compensate for cost of removal of an identified and verified infected tree that is deemed to be a danger to human life. The Ag Commissioner's office has a handout that explains the process . . . they don't get involved they just facilitate . . . it is the homeowner's or agency's responsibility to do the leg work. Paperwork goes first to Marin then to CDF then back to Marin and finally his office. It is a long, often frustrating, process to get the funding. Question raised about the process for determining if tree is actually infected . . . does his office have testing facilities. Response was that no lab work is required, only that the Ag commission's office makes the determination based upon symptoms and that personnel in his office have gone through training put on by COMTF.

Question raised about number of infected sites in Sonoma County. Too many to enumerate . . . some are Sonoma Mountain, Cazadero, back side of Annadel. In response to question about preventive measures, Agrifos has been approved for use in early stages of disease . . . nothing yet has been found to kill SOD. His recommendation is that susceptible trees would benefit especially if closely located to host plant such as California bay laurel but it's hard to predict as he has seen oaks located very close together where one is dead and others are healthy. Mr. Parney was thanked for his time and information. Jack Rosevear noted that the FireSafe Sonoma website has a link to the SOD website.

West County Project Update – Kathleen advised the group about opportunities for involvement and learning. Tim Laughlin will be assisting with vegetation management. An informational meeting will be held on May 28 @ Bodega Fire Hall preliminary to starting the chipping project for Joy and Willow Creek Road residents. She said that the major question raised is whether property will have to be "cleared" . . . she felt that it would be helpful for someone to provide information regarding proper screening of structures from the roadways.

Jack asked about adequacy of documentation. OES seems to be satisfied and Kathleen will keep copies of all receipts. As for insurance, those acting within the scope of FireSafe Sonoma would be covered by the OES insurance policy. Must be very clear that a project is in cooperation with or associated with FireSafe Sonoma. There has to be that association. Concern was expressed that any handout or flyers identify the connection with FireSafe Sonoma, which the flyer brought to the meeting did not have. Kathleen thought that it had been include in the flyer but will ensure that FireSafe Sonoma is identified from now on. Lonnie Haskins, State Farm, talked about

his company's loss mitigation grant program which might be helpful in the future. Does require an educational tie-in and be under the auspices of a 501c3 organization. All projects need to be submitted together. Discussion on what sort of insurance issues Kathleen should ensure is covered for any projects and it was suggested that she speak with Supervisor Reilly's office for assistance. Kathleen is handling the reporting on the West County Project.

County's website now has a link to FireSafe Sonoma's website via the Living with Fire publication. Also Jack called Lonnie @ So. Co. website to establish a new link for insurance issues –www.iinc.org.

Old Business: Vegetation Management Seminar is scheduled for Sat. June 5 at the CDF facility on W. College in the training room. Didn't get as many tree company reps as anticipated so leaves room for more homeowners and/or homeowners groups. Sign-ups via Atlas Tree (8 am – 4 p.m.: morning-class session, afternoon-a field trip to Fountaingrove.) Cost: \$25, includes lunch. Continuing education credits not available for tree personnel. (Atlas sponsoring lunch so \$25 would go back into FSS account for reprint of Living With Fire publication.)

Home Safety Fair @ Home Depot in Rohnert Park is also scheduled for Sat., June 5. Will have trailer and flyers there with FSS logo. Fire department personnel will handle trailer presentation, Soroptomists will handle getting people in and out of trailer.

Jack asked about situation with Lynn, an accountant, as to auditing, etc. Tamara explained that her conversation with Lynn was primarily about any questions we might have . . . she thought we had questions about QuickBooks but did not discuss doing any auditing for FSS. As for tax forms, it is Tamara's understanding from speaking with IRS etc. that no tax form is required unless 3 year average exceeds \$25,000. Marge will check with Lynn on her level of willingness to get involved.

New Business: Tim gave a report on Fountaingrove and their activities related to vegetation management and distribution of the publication Living With Fire. Motivational process is drawing a parallel to fire in 60's which burned the area where Fountaingrove is today and the conditions that exist are conducive to another fire. Also, Fountaingrove Master Ranch facilitated a meeting with a number of homeowners groups (also attended by Mike Foley, Scott Moon from Santa Rosa Fire Department and Steve Mosisuriak, (So. Co. Fire Services) to discuss concept of FireSafe Sonoma, defensible space, and use homeowners groups to motivate their members in that regard as well as ask questions of the experts in terms of questions on fire suppression. Tim wondered if FSS should send out a cover letter along with Living with Fire booklet to make public aware of FSS as a resource.

Had update on activities from other Fountaingrove homeowners group, Foothills. They were able to get Christopherson Homes to clear a fire break in an area 3,000 ft. long and 100 ft. wide. Another project is on other side of ridgetop. Kathleen asked about planting/replanting with native plants, concern about increased weed infestation. Arborist hired by group has been advised to do so whenever possible. Question about whether a worthwhile option would be to have PG&E right-of-way mowed as a good firebreak. Continued discussion about responsibilities, liability, etc.

Press Democrat insert-Scott Moon, SFRD gave a report on cost involved. Cost for PD to place insert is \$31.00 per 1,000 copies. For the 70,000 copies that would go out the cost would be \$2,273. We would need to supply the insert already printed up in 8 1/2 x 11" format but have no estimate for that cost. If PD does everything it would cost \$5,700. FSS doesn't have much money in their account to spend. L. Haskins suggested contacting Celebrate Community. Jack and Scott will coordinate re: day of the week, the Celebrate Community idea instead of insert.

Jack felt printing could be done relatively inexpensively by the county.

Marge broached the question of whether thermal imaging equipment was available for volunteer fire departments. It is not available via the county although Santa Rosa does have some. She also asked if the Soroptomist Club needed to help FireSafe Sonoma financially with reprinting of the Living with Fire publication. Jack said that it costs \$5-8000 minimum to do a full reprint and that we need to work out the kinks in the one we have had printed, then perhaps change the cover to reflect the area better, and then solicit sponsors.

Powerpoint presentation-Need to finish and make available. Pete should have it wrapped up by mid-June and then should be screened at the following meeting. Steve Cohen, Foothills Homeowners, is helping Pete with the computer generation.

Question period – Tim asked L. Haskins about insurance companies methodology of selecting the amount of clearance area they require to those they insure . . . in his opinion some of the numbers seem to defy reason, as he referenced an article from the So. Calif. fires. Tim will provide him with copy of article. L. Haskins will provide name of person in his office to assist with the flyer as was done previously with the Mariun Independent Journal. Other question raised was on certification of private inspectors.

Next meeting: June 30. Same time, same place.

Respectfully submitted,
Tamara Boulbee
Temporary Secretary