

Fire Safe Sonoma Minutes

10-1-03

12:00 PM

Attendees: Tamara Boulton, Marge (Soroptimist International of Santa Rosa), Miriam Hodgman (DES), Kathleen Kraft (West County Fire Safe Committee), Harry Martin (CDF), Jack Rosevear (DES), Ed Shriver (CDF)

Jack Rosevear opened the meeting

Tamara provided the Treasurer's Report, which doesn't include the latest grant money. The check for the grant has been received.

Tamara and Kathleen Kraft mention that they felt that FSS had not officially resolved the issue of the grant money channels between FSS and the West County Fire Committee.

Jack asked Tamara what she recommended.

Kathleen said that they could either turn the funds over to West County, or give the invoices to Tamara to process.

Jack stated that the check will have to be deposited, and also agreed that Kathleen could send invoices to Tamara to process. In the previous grants a similar process had been employed. Other agencies submitted the bills, and FSS paid them with grant funds.

Ed Shriver felt that the money channel was a short one.

The Board consensus was that this is a practical way to do it.

Kathleen said, "I can pay for small items, and be reimbursed from the grant for them."

Ed Shriver recommended that a list of what's been spent be recorded by West County.

Kathleen told FSS that she just completed the first quarterly report to the Foundation, and that Theresa Russo (DES) was a great help. Kathleen felt that the report was, "easy except for the budget." Kathleen had questions for the Pete Martin about the budgetary categories. Fortunately, Theresa's advice made sense, and helped Kathleen finish the first report on time. She hasn't had a response to the report from the Foundation yet.

"Have you been in touch with Pete Martin?" Jack asked.

Kathleen responded that, "Pete has been swamped until last week."

“What’s the next phase of the project?” Jack asked Kathleen.

“Tonight’s meeting in Graton,” Kathleen answered. The press release has been sent out. Kathleen also met with Mike Foley, and Fire Chiefs from Gratin, Monte Rio, and Occidental to discuss priorities of focus. Their consensus was to create a fuel break along Joy Ridge. They will hold a second planning meeting in December. Kathleen’s goal from tonight’s (10-1-03) meeting in Graton is to secure active participation in the West County Project from local residents.

Kathleen then raised the issue surrounding the title, West County Fire Council. Apparently, the semantics of the word ‘council’ had created confusion. Councils have a specific role in the State’s professional fire community. The FSS Board suggested alternate words besides council, such as team or committee. Kathleen felt that the word ‘committee’ would serve for the time being.

Kathleen believed that future fire safety committees would benefit from FSS creating start-up protocol.

Harry Martin agreed that a “startup” template would be useful.

Kathleen went on to discuss the issue of insurance. She went to Supervisor Mike Reilly, to see if the West County Fire Committee could be insured as a rider under West County Community Services. That wasn’t possible, and so Kathleen worked with the Occidental Arts and Ecology Center. West County’s first event was insured under the Occidentals Arts and Ecology Center’s insurance policy. A small fee is involved, but Kathleen doesn’t think it will be much.

Jack mentioned that the most critical immediate insurance need for FSS is board insurance. He described how working with West County Fire Committee is a new experience for FSS.

Ed Shriver noted that there is an advantage to the grant request being regional.

Kathleen responded that the West County Fire Committee is on the way to building a successful grant track record, and is also considering a US Fish and Wildlife Grant (Kathleen, was this Occidental Arts and Ecology Center? - M)

The issue of homeowners having their policies cancelled came up again, when Kathleen met with 5th District Supervisor Mike Reilly. The volunteer fire department Chiefs, who attended the West County Fire Committee’s event in Graton, also said that local residents are having their policies cancelled.

Kathleen spent time with Fire Safe Marin co-founder, Ray Moritz snapping photos of the West County for that night's West County Fire Committee event.

Jack revisited the issue of insurance companies canceling policies. He'd like to have a sense of which companies are canceling what policies. Apparently, in Schell Vista, All State conducted a survey that led to cancellation of policies.

Harry Martin stated that his home policy had been cancelled.

Jack said that County Fire Services is getting calls from citizens requesting pre-inspections from homeowners asking for advice on how to deal with insurance companies.

Tamara recalled homeowners receiving a guide from insurance companies done years ago that required heavy vegetation clearing.

All State inspected Marge's neighborhood, and the inspection had a lot to do with rates, and could also lead to cancellation.

Again, Jack brought up the need to get an insurance company representative on the FSS Board. Darrin DeCarli is doing outreach to State Farm, his former employer. Jack hopes this will lead to a source of State Farm's criteria and agenda for inspection.

Ed Shriver would like to know if they are going by zip-code. Also, he stated, "if you don't know what to improve, how can you prepare?"

Harry Martin has a connection with State Farm, and will also research the issue.

Jack asked Kathleen if there was anything else she'd like to report on.

Then Miriam briefly discussed her County-based efforts to secure the remaining funds for the Annapolis Volunteer Fire Department Fire Station. She is also presenting two options to County DES for the FEMA Fire Prevention Grant, out in November. Plan B is to conduct a fire prevention program for the Stewarts Point Rancheria.

Kathleen recommended approaching Native American, Dennis Martinez, to lead any possible presentations to the tribe about fire prevention.

Harry Martin has also had valuable experience dealing with fire issues on reservations, including the Hoopa Reservation in northern California.

Jack updated the group on the FSS web-site that will be built and hosted on the County web-site. It will be a significant way to get the FSS name out there. He is still looking at other web-sites as models. When the initial model is finished County ISD can set up a "shell" online for FSS to review for form and content.

The goal is to have the site up no later than the New Year. Further improvements can be made after the New Year. Items for review will include the following: aesthetics, links, and content.

Tamara asked, "how long FSS has the domain name?"

"It needs to be renewed," Jack responded. He believes the annual cost may be \$75, and that, "Vern [Losh] might pay for it."

Harry Martin recommended Yahoo's free group discussion service, and handed out flyers to the group.

Jack noted that having more links on the site increases its impact.

Tamara asked Harry Martin about the Home Show Exhibition.

He responded that it went very well. He distributed roughly 100 Living With Fire Guides, to those who expressed serious interest in fire prevention.

According to Jack, the fire prevention trailer was stationed at the Harvest Fair. The Santa Rosa Fire Department provided staffing. Friday at the Harvest Fair is a particularly good day for school children. The trailer will be stocked with coloring books. Marge offered to provide 100 more coloring books from the Soroptimists.

Tamara asked if there was anyplace to put literature.

Jack said that there is a booth, and Harry said that there is a literature rack.

Tamara returned the group's attention to the issue of FSS Board insurance, and asked if anyone was following up on it.

Jack answered that he has been planning to speak with Fire Safe Marin, and get more details to bring back to the next FSS Board meeting.

Tamara encouraged having insurance covered in future grants.

Jack raised the "old business" agenda item. He's still working with State Farm for contribution to the Living with Fire Guide. Darrin DeCarli is communicating with State Farm. Also, the Cities of Petaluma and Santa Rosa owe funding towards the next print run.

Harry Martin asked if it would be possible to include reimbursement for the cost of printing the Living with Fire Guide for the educational material used in other grant projects.

The group felt this was a good idea.

Kathleen noted that administrative costs could also be added in, depending on the grant.

She also briefly discussed the Joy Road area as a priority for vegetation management, based on the input of the volunteer chiefs who attended West County Fire Committee's event in Graton.

Harry Martin distributed colorful Baily the CDF dog trading cards.

Before the group dispersed, Kathleen recommended that they make strategic planning a formal agenda item at some time.

Jack stated that this will be a slow process, and recommended tabling it until after January. Before that time, his first priority is to get insurance company and PG&E participation in FSS.

Tamara requested that FSS obtain a copy of the resource list the group and Vern Losh had brainstormed several years ago.

Harry Martin believed that there was enough experience within FSS to set goals and objectives after the New Year, without hiring a consultant.

The group agreed to table the idea of strategic planning until January 2004.

Tamara asked if FSS would pursue accounting help.

Marge said that the Soroptimist account would return from vacation at the end of the month.

Harry Martin mentioned that Mendocino County is starting a Fire Safe Council.

The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, November 19th, at Noon.

- Meeting ends -

