

MINUTES

City of Pacifica
Emergency Preparedness & Safety Commission
2075 Coast Highway
Pacifica, CA 94044

DATE: August 16, 2023

TIME: 6:30 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM

ROLL CALL:

Commissioners Present: Johnson, Crawford, Taverna, Blackburn, Erbacher,
Salisbury, Gasanyan, Balestreri

Commissioners Absent: Guzzetta

Council Liaison Present: Council Member Boles

Ex Officio Members Present: None

Ex Officio Members Absent: Peppers, Fleming, Machado

STAFF PRESENT: Captain Clements, Sergeant Cumming

APPROVAL
OF MINUTES: The minutes for July 19, 2023 meeting was approved.

APPROVAL
OF AGENDA: The agenda for August 16, 2023 meeting was approved

SPECIAL PRESENTATION:

Rod Brouhard and Rick Ornelas, Regional Directors with American Medical Response (AMR) spoke about ambulance and emergency medical service to the County of San Mateo and the City of Pacifica. They spoke about the background of AMR, daily service, and their response during a natural disaster, what could be expected in a mass casualty event, or mutual aid situations. They also answered several questions from commissioners about ambulance resources countywide and response times.

COMMISSION COMMENTS:

Chair Johnson and Vice Chair Crawford attended and spoke about the San Mateo County Disaster Preparedness Day Event in San Mateo.

Commissioners discussed recent wildfires in Hawaii and how Pacifica can learn from these events and promote wildfire preparedness in the community.

EX-OFFICIO COMMENTS: None

COUNCIL LIASION COMMENTS:

Council Member Boles spoke about the following;

The August 05, 2023 Dog Surf Contest at Linda Mar Beach was very well attended. She talked about how city staff was reviewing the event and changes that could be made to improve the event in 2024. There were some concerns shared by community members about the large crowds and parking and traffic issues.

Council Member Boles talked about the non-profit CORA (Community Overcoming Relationship Abuse) and how they support domestic violence victims. She talked about the services and benefits the program provides. Additional information is available on their website at www.corasupport.org

Council Member Boles also talked about the water district office renovation and improvement project that was approved by City Council at a recent meeting.

STAFF COMMENTS:

Jun 15 SMCo Emergency Services Council meeting-

- Wildfire Season outlook presented by Chief Cox, CalFire
- Coastal Resilient Infrastructure Strategic Plan (CRISP)
Presented by County Supervisor Ray Mueller

July 27 San Mateo Co. Emergency Managers Association meeting

Aug 1 National Night Out – promoted disaster prep, SMCAAlert, Zonehaven, Map Your Neighborhood

Aug 5 SMC Co Disaster Prep Day Event, San Mateo Co fairgrounds

Aug10 CERT QTR Mtg- CERT Prepared for Wildfire (w/ Insp. Ryan Adams, NCFA)

Aug 24 San Mateo Co. CERT Coordinators meeting

Aug 24 San Mateo Co. Emergency Managers Association meeting

Aug 22 Pacifica CERT Leadership mtg

Sept 6 Monthly Tsunami siren test (local activation test w/SMCo. DEM)

Sept 21 SMC Co Emergency Services Council 5:30pm (Hybrid meeting format)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sept 23, 24 Pacific Coast Fog Fest

PUBLIC COMMENT:

A letter submitted to City Council on June 23, 2023 by Ken Miles was shared with the commission by Council Member Boles. This letter was shared with commissioners as part of public comments.

PUBLIC HEARINGS: None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Commissioners continued work on Fog Fest preparation.

NEW BUSINESS: None

ADJOURNMENT: 8:18 p.m.

Next Meeting: September 20, 2023

City Council, Oral Communications: "Wildfire Season" by Ken Miles

Once again, the Wildfire Season is here. Looking back, during 1929, the town of Montara burnt down during a wildfire. Recently, we had major wildfires in Paradise, Lake County, Santa Rosa, Sonoma, Yosemite, and in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Tragically, many lives were lost, and homes destroyed. Ask yourself, "Can that happen here?"

This year, heavy rains produced a bumper crop of vegetative growth and weeds. Within the past week or so, there have been recent grassfires in Napa, Sonoma, and East Bay counties. And, oh boy, the Fourth of July is around the corner. Hopefully, no one will set off dangerous rockets or fiery explosives. Soon the hot dry easterly winds of October and November will be here, and hopefully not to fan flames.

Many of us are concerned that large parts of Pacifica are still unprotected from wildfires, especially in the hills surrounding Linda Mar, Pedro Point, East Rockaway, Vallemar and East Sharp Park which are covered with dense groves of Eucalyptus trees, dead pines, thick shrubbery, and dry grass.

Several years ago, I met and communicated my concerns about wildfires to the City's Emergency Preparedness and Safety Commission. Several points I recall I mentioned to them were:

- Evacuation routes have not been communicated with residents.
- There's a need for firebreaks around Pacifica.
- Has the Commission established how firetrucks can get rapid access to wildfires when narrow roads are clogged with cars, RVs and trailers trying to escape the wildfire?

The Commissioners said, "Yeah, there's a plan", or "We're working on it". Since then, as far as I know, nothing has been done.

The US Parks / GGNRA created a firebreak around the east side of El Granada several years ago to protect the residents in the event a wildfire breaks out on GGNRA's parklands and threatens the community. Couldn't GGNRA provide similar firebreaks wherever the US Park lands that abut parts of Pacifica, such as Sweeney and Milagra Ridge? We could also learn from the Native Californian indigenous people, such as the Ohlone, how they conducted controlled fire burns

for centuries to maintain woodlands and coastal shrubbery, and to protect themselves from wildfires.

North County Fire Dept.'s Chipper Program held in Pacifica several years ago has been a great way for many of us to clear burnable wood and debris from our properties. Unfortunately, property owners with large, wooded lots did not participate in the Chipper Program.

Recently, we learned that insurance companies are going to discontinue approving new fire insurance policies in California. Undoubtedly, many people may see a sharp increase in their fire policies or be required to purchase California's "Fair Plan" and pay more than \$4000 a year for a fire insurance policy, instead of paying about \$600 a year. Oh, and property values could likely decrease !.

WHAT THE CITY SHOULD DO ASAP:

1. The City's Emergency Preparedness and Safety Commission must inform residents and public agencies detailed evacuation plans and instructions not to impede fire trucks and emergency vehicles.
2. Inform all residents about the County's Defensible Space requirements. Assign Code Enforcement Officer to survey priority properties as many jurisdictions do and inform owners to comply with the Defensible Space requirements or face fines or increased property tax fees.
3. Reestablish the City-wide Chipper Program.
4. Work with GGNRA to establish firebreaks where Pacifica residential properties abut GGNRA lands as they've done in El Granada. And/or have trained Native American specialists provide controlled burns where and when needed.
5. Recology Waste Management Company should be advised to acquire additional large green waste cans for residential living in wooded areas or with large lots to dispose of their extra green waste weekly as they have done in the past.
6. Revise building standards to assure structures are built using noncombustible exterior materials, and landscaping meet "Defensible Space" requirements.
7. The City should hold a Public Forum on Wildfires, ASAP, to address our concerns.