

**FIRE SAFE FOCUS GROUP
GENERAL MEETING
JANUARY 24, 2024**

ATTENDANCE: Cheryl McDowell, Baxter Boyington, Dan Turner, Dave Pierson, Kathe Turner, Jon Gee, Tony Church, Marshall Hamilton, Karin Argano, Chris Landgreen, Jeff Wilson, Keith Seydel, Tony Safford, Greg Alex, Chief Burkey, Roberta Vitols, Michael Thomas, Tom Gray, Kitty Connolly, Donelle Morgan, Taylor Hilden

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS: Dave Pierson called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM. No introductions were needed.

GRANTS UPDATE: The Rancho Marino projects are finalizing the contractor and then work begins. Dan Turner reported that the Fire Safe Council (FSC) has submitted a forest health grant for \$6.7 million that they hope to implement in 2025 through 2030. The focus is treatment and follow-up on new properties and those being worked on now, including thinning, invasives, etc. They have created a group of constituents including Fiscalini Ranch Reserve, CCSD, Fish & Wildlife, Hearst Ranch covering some 1400 acres to be targeted. Steve Auten's group as well as Alan Peters worked on grant preparations.

FSC has also submitted a Wildfire Prevention Grant for \$2.9 million on behalf of 9 different organizations including CCSD. The focus is management of treatments of CCSD owned lots, 140 in total. Some of the collaborators are Atascadero, SLO, Canyon Crest, Running Deer, Toro Creek, SOCSO, Cambria, CalFire, CalOES. These monies will address treatment of French broom, invasives, hazard tree removal, shaded fuel breaks, etc. If approved funding would be granted in late Fall 2024.

Dan noted that the Society of American Foresters will tour the Covell Ranch on Saturday.

EVACUATION ROUTE UPDATE: Tom Gray reported that an inspection of the proposed road and route is underway. The report will reveal information about its condition, permits needed, etc. Thereafter, Monte Soto will report to the CCSD committee. Tom has also contacted Mike Ellis, President of the homeowners association that encompasses the 5 properties on Harmony Ranch Road proper. He will be meeting with him soon.

POSTER CONTEST '24: The flyers have been updated and sent to Suzette Morrow, Art teacher at Coast Union High School. She plans to kick off the contest on February 8th with a demonstration by Cambria's firefighters and a presentation to students on campus led by Emily Torlano. Students will work on their posters in class. All posters will be submitted by April 5th, Joyce Renshaw is putting together a panel of judges to select the winning posters. They will be enlarged and displayed in the poster frames here in town. All posters will be on display at the FSFG Town Hall to be held on May 11th at the Vets' Hall. Winners will be announced at that time. Joyce is also planning to work with Kathe

Tanner to prepare an article for newspaper publication.

Chris Landgeen is working with Jennifer Pierce and the Cambria Center for the Arts to prepare an art workshop for elementary age children. The focus is making posters about fire safety. The workshop is planned for February 22nd from 3:30 to 4:30 PM. Emily Torlano and her team are planning an on-site presentation including one of the fire engines, providing motivation for participants to think about fire safety. Karin Argano volunteered to help out with the workshop.

We plan to invite some high school students to help set up poster displays prior to the Town Hall in May. It was suggested that we ask the Art Club to help out.

Discussion ensued regarding adding another sign here in town. Dan Turner noted that the signboard at Ardath and Main could be amended to include a second poster on the side facing Main Street. Dave Pierson asked Dan to send him the specs for that work. Another site under consideration is the land next to Cambria Drive.

'24 WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS EVENT: The date for the Wildfire Preparedness Event at the Vets' Hall is May 11, 2024 from 10:00 AM to Noon. Dave Pierson asked for ideas for keynote speakers. Suggestions included the following: Current state of homeowners insurance, programs designed to assist homeowners with home hardening, home inspection outreach, and a webinar Chief Burkey attended on where we are and how we got there. We plan to have the SIM table available as well. Volunteers are needed for planning this event. Bob Putney has presentations on home hardening and 'proofing' the home.

INSURANCE INFORMATION UPDATE: Dave Pierson reported about the work of Allied Disaster Defense. Insurance companies sponsor this group. They inspect homes; help with finding contractors to do needed work to make the home prepared for wildfires, certifies the home and reports directly to the Insurance Company. The Department of Insurance is swamped with requests for Fair Plan insurance. This is the insurance provided by the State if you cannot get any other coverage.

FIREMAN'S BALL: Dave announced that Debbie Hori has volunteered to Chair a committee to plan for a Fireman's Ball in 2025. Volunteers are needed to help out.

HISPANIC EDUCATION EVENT: Dave Pierson says that the first Hispanic Fire Safety event at the Catholic Church was a success. Going forward, the challenges include finding a time and place to offer more training are delaying the setting of a new date. (After this meeting, Baxter Boyington suggested that we invite a Spanish-speaking person from LISTOS to assist with translation at our Town Hall on May 11.)

OTHER: Dan Turner announced that Dave Pierson has been voted in as Second Vice President of the Fire Safe Council. Karin Argano announced that Greenspace is sponsoring Earth Day on April 21st at the Creekside Reserve from 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM.

FSFG will have a booth at this event.

ADJOURNMENT: Next meeting is on February 28th. Meeting adjourned at 4:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Roberta Vitols