



**CHRISTMAS TREE HILL
NEIGHBORHOOD RESPONSE GROUP**
www.cthnrg.org / cthnrg@gmail.com

AUGUST 25, 2019 MEETING MINUTES

ATTENDEES

Steering Committee Members: Mark Levie (ZC1 & BC Z1-B1), Anita Bock (ZC5 & interim BC Z5-B6), Cinda van Lierop, David Kunhardt (ZC3 & BC Z3-B3), Al Williams (ZC6 & BC Z6-B1&2), Beth O'Neill (ZC4 & BC Z4-B2), Nate Blomgren (ZC2), Mark Brooks (ZC7)

Block Captains: Kevin & Collin Woodall (Z7-B2 & interim Z7-B3) Leslie Cunningham (Z5-B2), Debra Sartell (Z1-B7), Mariellen Stern (Z5-B1), Jan Turner, (Z2-B7) Jean Schulz (Z6-B3), Cheryl Kosmas, Scott Thorpe (Z1-B2), Mark Rudy (Z3-B5)

Guest Speaker: Mike Warner, Open Space Park Ranger, Marin County Parks

Co-Chairs Cinda, Anita and Mark Levie convened the meeting at 4:05 PM and welcomed all attendees and guest speaker Mike Warner.

Ranger Mike gave an overview of the mission and purpose of Marin County Parks and explained the roles and responsibilities of open space park rangers. He explained the Park Department's role in wildfire prevention, mitigation and response and updated members on recent initiatives to reduce fuel loads. After his presentation he fielded questions about wildfire risks, mitigation and response. Ranger Mike and his colleagues are frequent visitors to CTH and he invited CTH NRG members to contact him if wildfire risk behaviors were observed on the Hill. In closing, he handed out information brochures. Ranger Mike was thanked for his attendance and informative presentation. Information handed out at the meeting can be found on the Parks Department's website at: <https://www.marincountyparks.org>



Mike Warner

Open Space Park Ranger

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Agenda Items:

1. **Budget update:** Cinda reported that the Hill Dweller's Association donated \$695.37 to CTH NRG and that current funding available for needed supplies totals \$3,403. The funds are earmarked for a generator the Command Team location,

for medical supplies for Zones 1, 2, 3/4, 6 and 7, and to hire a web master (see agenda item #2).

2. **Website maintenance:** Anita reported that in light of the fact that Simon Peel will be returning to the UK a pressing need exists to find someone to handle website maintenance and social media public relations tasks (like posting notices to Next Door). Due to the fact that CTH NRG has been unsuccessful in recruiting a volunteer to handle this important communications task, the co-chairs recommend hiring a qualified student for 5+ hours a month to perform needed tasks. Hearing no objection, an ad will be placed on Next Door and sent to local high schools and colleges in the hope of finding a qualified student as soon as possible. The CTH NRG team thanks Simon for his contributions in setting up and maintaining the website to date. He will be missed and we wish him and his family all the best.
3. **Medical supplies purchasing procedure:** Options for purchasing medical supplies for Zones 1, 2, 3/4, 6 and 7 were discussed and agreement was reached to move forward with using the Zone 5 medical supplies list as a template to stock the other zones (Zone 5's supplies have already been purchased). Once received, purchased supplies will be assembled by volunteers at Mark's house and packed in red medical bags for easy storage in the named zones. Anita reminded Zone Coordinators to store medical supplies in areas that can be readily accessed by ZCs and Block Captains, even if the owners of the properties on/in which the bags are stored are not home.
4. **Block Captain vacancies:** Mark reminded Zone Coordinators and Block Captains of the agreement made early on that people who volunteered to be ZCs and BCs were committing to:
 - 1) responding timely to email/text communications sent by CTH NRG,
 - 2) participating in radio tests and RSVP'ing promptly to radio test invitations,
 - 3) attending meetings, and
 - 4) participating in bi-annual drills.

When CTH NRG was formed, the Steering Committee adopted a policy that requires that ZCs and BCs miss no more than 3 consecutive meetings to remain in good standing, and that ZCs and BCs participate as regularly as possible in radio tests. After discussion it was agreed that ZCs would be asked to contact those BCs in their zones who have missed more than 3 consecutive meetings and/or who do not participate in radio tests to gauge their interest in continuing to serve as BCs.

5. **November 2019 drill plan and preparations:** Cinda briefed members on an alternate drill format proposal made by Anita and Mark (with the goal of increasing the number of residents whose data is listed in the CTH NRG data base) as follows:

In addition to inviting residents to evacuate to/gather at Menke Park (as done in the November 2018 drill and discussed and agreed to at the previous meeting), ZCs and BC would spend the first hour of the drill (10:00 to 11:00 AM) visiting residents in their block that have not as yet provided resident information for the CTH NRG data base, in an effort to gather and share information. At 11:00 AM ZCs and BCs will join residents at Menke Park.

Cinda asked for feedback on the proposal. After discussion consensus was reached to adopt the drill format proposed. ZCs and BCs will make resident visits in pairs and wear their official CTH NRG T-shirts and BC vests. Resident visitation packages will be prepared that include the resident information form and ZCs/BCs are encouraged to try their best to get the form completed at the time of their visit. Prior notification of visits will be made on Next Door and announced in the drill flyer.

Cinda, Nate and Mark Brooks will be coordinating the November drill and will be sending out task lists in the near future with a call for volunteers.

PLEASE SAVE THE DRILL DATE: November 3, 2019 10:00 AM to Noon

6. **Succession planning:** Anita asked members interested in taking on leadership roles in January 2020 please to make their interest known. Cinda announced that she will be stepping down as a co-chair at the end of December, Anita and Mark are, however, willing to continue serving as co-chairs in the absence of other volunteers stepping forward to assume the roles.
7. Anita asked BCs please to remind residents to carefully review the power shut down preparedness brochures recently distributed/mailed to residents by PG&E and the Marin Water District. The brochures contain important information. See also:
https://www.pge.com/includes/docs/pdfs/about/edusafety/naturaldisaster/prepare_dness/plans/outagehome.pdf and the FEMA brochure enclosed.

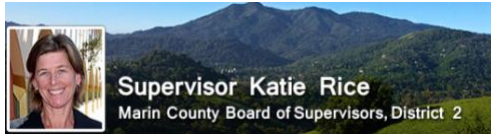
The meeting adjourned at 5:15 PM.

Next meeting date: Sunday, September 29, 2019 at 4:00 PM

All CTH NRG meetings, unless otherwise indicated, are held at the Corte Madera Town Hall in Council Chambers.

Important Reminders:

- **September 16*:** Radio Test @ 8:00 PM - Host John Wieck
- ***PLEASE NOTE: Radio tests will henceforth be held on Mondays.**
- **October 22:** Education event 'Disaster Planning for Pets/Animals' - Corte Madera Community Center 7:00 - 8:30 PM.
- **November 3:** CTH NRG Disaster Preparedness Drill 10:00 AM – Noon



FYI – From Supervisor Katie Rice:
415-473-7825 krice@marincounty.org
RE: MARIN'S WILDFIRE MITIGATION EFFORTS

Turning the page on August has long marked the end of summer. School goes into full gear, traffic too. But the end of summer has taken on more serious significance in the wake of California's series of cataclysmic fires. September signals that we are heading into the height of wildfire season. Hence fire is on our minds—individually and collectively — as it should be.

Marin Wildfire Prevention Initiative

The threat of wildfire has always been a reality here. Recorded history (and the growth rings of fallen redwoods) are proof. But that threat has grown as residential development encroaches more deeply into fire prone areas and our naturally fire prone landscape becomes more heavily vegetated after decades of successful fire suppression. Evolving fire science and analysis of recent wildfires in northern California have added to our understanding of our wildfire risk: mainly that climate change is exacerbating conditions that create the perfect storm for wildfire conflagrations; and, that wildfire does not respect jurisdictional boundaries. Under the right conditions, embers can fly miles and start fires far from the fire front. Homes in one suburban downtown are as at risk as their neighbors in the Wildland-Urban Interface when a wildfire is raging.

This understanding of our fire risk, of how fires can behave when conditions are right (conditions which are more likely to occur with climate change), has led fire professionals across the state to recognize the imperative that wildfire prevention and preparedness be approached at a regional scale and with a comprehensive, coordinated approach. Our new fire reality makes clear that every homeowner, business, public entity -- every stakeholder in a community, has a responsibility and role to play in reducing our collective fire risk. Communities must work together to prevent wildfire, to improve our ability to respond to a fire, and to recover from a wildfire should one occur.

Here in Marin, heeding this imperative, a cross-jurisdictional, multi-agency coalition comprised of [FIRESafe MARIN](#), fire agencies, municipal and county government have been working over the past year to develop a county-wide, coordinated strategy for wildfire prevention. Their proposal, dubbed the [Marin Wildfire Prevention Initiative](#) was informed by [2019 Marin Civil Grand Jury report](#) on Wildfire Preparedness, the [2018 North Bay Fires Lessons Learned report](#), and [2016 Community Wildfire Protection Plan](#).

The goal of [the initiative](#) is to create a comprehensive, coordinated countywide wildfire prevention program – [governed by one joint powers authority](#) which would be comprised of local fire agencies, cities and towns. [Key elements of the program](#) would include:

- Improving emergency alert and warning systems, and evacuation routes and preparedness
- Expanding and coordinating hazardous fuel reduction and vegetation management in open space, along evacuation routes, around critical public infrastructure
- Expanding defensible space and home evaluation capacity, and homeowner education and support for reducing the vulnerability of their homes to wildfire
- Providing grants and support to seniors, persons with disabilities, and low income homeowners who need assistance maintaining a defensible space, making their homes fire resistant, reducing combustible vegetation, and preparing for emergencies
- Creating and sustaining a coordinated local wildfire public safety and disaster preparedness program
- Creating defensible space and home hardening programs, expanding public education, and funding for specific local community projects

This proposal represents a significant expansion of current fire prevention and emergency preparedness efforts and a new level of coordination, cooperation and implementation. Hence the need for new funding and governance structure. While our fire agencies do a phenomenal job, they are not equipped, do not have the staff or resources, were never envisioned to take on the level of fire prevention, education, and preparedness work that we now know is needed to keep our communities as safe as possible.

Over the next several months, information sessions on the [Wildfire Initiative](#) will be held at local fire district boards, city and town councils to share the proposal and seek input from residents and community leaders. The proposal will then be fine-tuned and brought back to those entities with fire suppression authority towards taking formal action to join the JPA and to request that the County put a Marin Wildfire Prevention Measure on the March 2020 Ballot. I encourage residents to attend one of these meetings. Coming up in the Ross Valley next week, information sessions will be held at [San Anselmo Town Council](#) meeting on Tuesday, September 10 at 7pm and [Ross Town Council](#) on Thursday, September 12 at 6pm. Additionally, [Corte Madera Town Council](#) on September 17 at 6:30pm and [Kentfield Fire District](#) meeting on September 18, time TBD. *(please check town websites beforehand to make sure meeting info is most current and for placement on agenda).*

Marin's wildfire threat is real. The work needed to reduce our individual and collective risk needs to be done on every property, in every community across our county and will require our ongoing attention and investment for decades to come.

Meanwhile...Out in the Open Space: While we work towards establishing a much needed comprehensive and coordinated wildfire prevention program, [Marin County Parks/Open Space](#) (manager and steward of 34 open space preserves scattered throughout the county), continues to expand its fire prevention and stewardship efforts through collaborations with neighbors, other land managers, and local fire agencies. This past spring, Marin County Parks [formed a partnership](#) with [Marin County Fire](#) to help support a Fuels crew (making for a total of three crews of 12 members each) specifically to do fire fuel management work on County parks and preserves. Fuels Crew projects in District 2 this summer/fall include:

Loma Alta Preserve/White Hill School: The Fuels Crew has been busy in the vicinity of White Hill School on Glen Drive in Fairfax removing dead trees, clearing, chipping, and hauling brush. These efforts helped create defensible space near the school and surrounding residential areas. A shaded fuel break is also being established, to make firefighting efforts more effective, and allow students to shelter in place on school grounds safely in a fire emergency. [Marin County Parks](#), [The Marin County Fire Department](#), [FIRESafe MARIN](#), [Ross Valley School District](#), and [Ross Valley Fire Department](#) collaborated on this project.

Cascade Canyon, Fairfax: In September, the Fuels Crew will be working at Cascade Canyon in the vicinity of Toyon Fire Road. This project follows up on summer goat grazing coordinated with the Town of Fairfax, to clear poison oak and other shrubs in advance of the crew. The Fuels Crew will remove dead and dying trees, thin dense stands of native vegetation, and remove invasive species including French and Portuguese broom. Debris will be chipped, off-hauled, or set into burn piles as needed.

Bald Hill: Marin County Parks and Marin County Fire are coordinating with a new Firewise community group in the vicinity of Bald Hill. The goal is to set priorities for vegetation management work by the Fuels Crew, in order to maintain access routes in the event of a fire emergency.

For the past three years, Parks staff has been evaluating the effectiveness of animal (goats and sheep) grazing as a method to control invasive vegetation on **King Mountain Preserve, Terra Linda/Sleepy Hollow Preserve**, and other open space areas. With the third summer season coming to an end, Parks vegetation scientists will be gathering observations to gain insights that can guide future fuel reduction strategies. Vegetation management for both wildfire risk reduction and environmental health have and continue to be an integral part of Marin Parks management program.

Watch Doug O'Connell's [OpenRoad TV segment](#) focused on Marin Parks Fire Strategy to learn more.