

## FIREWISE COMMITTEE MINUTES

March 20, 2019

The first meeting of the HOA Firewise Committee was held on March 20, 2019, at Chairperson David Franklin's house. HOA residents/members of the committee that were present included Janet Johnson, Karl Simon, Stan Bishop, Tom Holmberg, Randy Bender, Bonnie Ozard, and Katherine Flaherty. Don Garner later called and said that he would like to be on the committee as well.

After an overview of the Firewise Program that was provided by David, much discussion occurred regarding Firewise certification requirements and how to achieve certified status, and problem areas generally and specifically regarding wildfire prevention within our HOA community. It was noted that several years ago, the "49er Fire" came into the Saddleback area and nearly burned homes and that there have been several smaller fires in the region that had the potential to cause huge damage. We were all reminded of the recent huge fires in Northern California.

Specific attention was then directed to the recent Firewise Assessment made by Ms. Luana Dowling with a focus on the 5 Observations/Recommendations she made for improved community fire safety, which are found on pages 8-9 of the Assessment. The recommendations and discussion points made are as follows;

1. Entry to the community off of Dry Creek Road has dense flammable vegetation right up to the edge of the road that in the event of a wildland fire could block evacuation efforts and hinder fire personnel from entering the community. Recommend clearing back all roads within the community at least 25' back to allow good ingress and egress.
  - a. It was mentioned that a certain residence was contacted by CalFire regarding having the County remove dead trees and highly flammable vegetation. David said that he would follow up to see if this was a County program that was going to be implemented.
  - b. David will contact Luana to see if there is any update about CalFire assistance.
2. Dense vegetation under powerlines and power poles. Recommend contacting PG&E and ask them to remove vegetation within 30' of poles.
  - a. PG&E contractors were contacted who are in the process of assessing power poles and power lines in the Saddleback HOA area. Many problematic trees and brushy areas have been identified for remediation and in fact some have already been removed/chipped.
  - b. An additional contractor was contacted who is currently assessing the structural integrity of all power poles within the HOA for remediation as required.
  - c. Additional brush or tree trimming or removal appears to be homeowner responsibility at this time.
3. Flammable landscape plants such as junipers are planted near many homes. Recommend contacting the Local Native Plant Society to ask what the best non-flammable plants are for the area.
  - a. Isley Nursery has provided information that is being reviewed.
4. Several homes were observed with flammable vegetation closer than 150' from their homes. Recommend removing flammable vegetation such as pine needles, dry grass, etc., within this zone.

- a. All homeowners in the HOA have been provided with Firewise literature that describes home ignition zones and the importance of removing problematic ignition sources such as dead plants, pine needles, etc.
  - b. Firewise type banners will be used periodically near the mail kiosk to remind residents of their property maintenance responsibilities.
5. Some homes/structures were observed with flammable vegetation such as leaves and pine needles accumulating on their roof areas.
- a. All homeowners in the HOA have been provided with Firewise literature that describes home ignition zones and the importance of removing problematic ignition sources such as dead plants, pine needles, etc.

*It was discussed that:*

- 1) CalFire could be consulted regarding questions about wildfire safety for specific issues. This could happen as the Firewise program evolves and questionable areas appear to still need to be resolved.
- 2) Since most HOA residents appear to be in their 60's or older, the concept of a Community Work Day may not be that effective in addressing issues. However, the "Chipper Program" is a low cost option that has real benefits for everyone.
- 3) CalFire will be consulted for examples of nearby close calls that could assist the HOA in pointing out existing fire danger in our area. Bonnie will coordinate this.
- 4) Sources of water for CalFire use might not be well documented for use in an emergency.
  - a) Could the HOA ask residents to self-report first responder water sources to CalFire and specify an access route?
  - b) Is the Cederloff fire pond still viable?
  - c) There were questions about the nearest fire hydrant on Dry Creek Road. Did the HOA pay for it?
- 5) Could we include a listing of tree trimmers, gutter "guard" and Landscape Company's on the HOA Website?

Reporting to Firewise of wildfire prevention hours. Different ideas were discussed, with a one page "checklist" type document seeming to be the most popular where a resident could fill out the date, check a box for the type of work completed such as mow weeds, indicate the number of hours and by a certain date submit to the HOA for calculating the labor hours spent toward Firewise certification. Perhaps Luana has an example.

**The next Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 3, 2019, at Bonnie Ozard's at 7:00 pm**