DATE: Saturday, September 28, 2019

LOCATION: Dry Creek-Lokoya Fire Station, 5900 Dry Creek Road, Napa

ATTENDANCE: Joe Nordlinger, Greg Holquist, Carole Meredith, Bill Robertson, Roger Provost, Jeff Enos, Paul Woodward, Ken Van Oeveren, Tom Knecht (Cal Fire)

ADDITIONS/REVISIONS TO AGENDA: Upcoming radio program

REVIEW OF THE MINUTES: The minutes of the August 24, 2019 meeting were approved with one correction

Cal Fire Funding for Current and Future Projects (Tom Knecht, Cal Fire):

Cal Fire is tending to support big projects now. The only 2 grants funded for LNU were both large -- a $1 million grant to the Sonoma Valley Fire and Vegetation Management Collaborative and $500,000 to the Lake Sonoma Watershed Fire Prevention Project. Cal Fire priorities for the Mount Veeder area are 1) public safety (egress and access), 2) shaded fuel breaks, especially on ridgetops, and 3) public outreach and education. A high priority was previously given to watersheds, but now the ridgelines that separate watersheds are considered strategically important.

With regard to our current Cal Fire funded projects, Tom said that MVFSC should include more detail in our proposals, including equipment to be used, dead tree removal, etc. so those details will get included in the contract and so that the appropriate environmental review will be done. With regard to the Bald Mountain project, the removal of dead trees was problematic because of restrictions on the removal of trees over 6 inches in diameter. However, MVFSC project manager Greg Holquist stated that he received explicit written guidance from the Registered Professional Forester involved in the CEQA approval for this project that the 6-inch diameter rule applied to living trees, not dead trees. Tom acknowledged that this issue was now in the past and that he and Greg had agreed on a path forward to get the project finalized and the invoices paid.

The Oakville Ridge Road project was originally focused on egress, but a lot of the road is actually midslope and the effort might have been better placed on the ridgeline. The Oakville Ridge Road project has been hampered by property owners who won't agree to the full extent of the needed work. If some owners don't agree, we can end up with a checkerboard of treated and untreated land. That can be OK but we should state at the
outset that some parcels may not have any work done. Is there a path forward to finalize the Oakville Ridge Road project and close it out? Tom says yes, with the use of the PG&E money that has been awarded to MVFSC. Although MFSC obtains funding from other sources (e.g., PG&E, CA FSC), Cal Fire doesn’t always know about that so they can’t factor that knowledge into assessments of our proposals.

For our projects that are funded but not yet started, Tom said we need to go back to the contracts and work within their parameters. We can probably get extensions but we must stay within the grant period. Greg Holquist and Tom will visit the project sites and review the work to be done to make sure it is consistent with Cal Fire policies. Because circumstances can change between the time a proposal is written and when the work actually starts (as was the case with the dead tree estimate on the Bald Mountain project), Tom stated that it is essential that we review each proposal and contract before beginning a project.

In light of Cal Fire’s current interest in large projects, the Oakville Ridge Road and Bald Mountain Legacy Fire Road projects were too small. Joe Nordlinger asked whether a large project along the Napa/Sonoma county boundary ridgeline would be of interest to Cal Fire. Tom replied that it would be, as part of the overall view of the watershed. Tom stated that what MVFSC calls LAR’s (Limited Access Roads, i.e., long private shared driveways that connect public roads to ridgelines) can also be useful projects as long as out-of-area firefighters are informed about these routes. For the upcoming funding season, Tom agrees that we should revisit our previously submitted but unfunded projects and combine them into larger projects.

CHAIRMAN’S REPORT (Joe Nordlinger):

**Napa Communities Firewise Foundation updates:** Joe (in cooperation with Ag Innovations) submitted a proposal to PG&E for the establishment of a Calistoga Fire Safe Council and for developing a playbook for launching Fire Safe Councils (FSC’s) and connecting them to the countywide CWPP. Tiny FSC’s are not useful and should be incorporated into larger FSC’s.

$90,000 was awarded to NCFF by California Fire Safe Council for project maintenance.

**PROJECT MANAGER’S REPORTS:**

**Neighbors in Need projects (Greg Holquist):** Greg Holquist met with the property owners at 3365 Mt. Veeder Road. We could remove one or two large strike trees that could fall on structures. The owners are concerned about felled trees that have fallen into the creek but that work is not related to fire prevention so it is outside the scope of our NIN program.

**Mayacamas Mount Veeder Community Outreach Education Grant (MMVCOEG) (Jeff Enos):**

The inspection team has started to evaluate the homes of MVFSC members to practice their procedures. They hope to begin evaluating community members’ homes by mid-October. The October 19 community meeting has been publicized by email and on Nextdoor. Carole Meredith will announce the availability of property evaluations by the
same means next week, with regular follow-ups. A hard mailing may be done later, to reach residents who we are unable to reach by email and Nextdoor.

**Home Winemakers Classic (Cindy Kerson):** The HWC is about to commit to Copia for the 2020 event. Gary Green has prepared a timeline for things that need to be done. A meeting will be held on November 4 for all those who are willing to help with HWC.

**ACTIVE FUNDING**

**California Fire Safe Council (CA FSC):** We are now in the pre-award stage for the $90,000 for Oakville Ridge Road. We still have the opportunity to change the map. The funds should be available in about 30 days.

**Cal Fire Fire Prevention and Forest Health Grants:** The application process opens in early October and closes in early December. A meeting to explain the programs will be held in Saint Helena on September 30.

**TREASURER’S REPORT** (Gary Green absent so no report)

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**501c3:** Kelly Wallace hasn’t reported any further progress. Evangeline James was asked to contact Kelly and convey to him the urgency of completing the 501c3 process and to ask that it be finished by the end of October. Evangeline was asked to take over the process.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Radio show:** Paul Woodward, Cindy Kerson and Perry Kerson will be on a local radio program on September 30 to discuss fire safety and the activities of MVFSC.

**ADJOURNMENT:** 12:15 pm

Next Meeting: Saturday, October 26, 9 am, Dry Creek – Lokoya Fire Station, 5900 Dry Creek Road