



Fire Safe San Mateo County

May 12, 2021

General Meeting Minutes

Online conference call. No in-person meeting

Commence 9:35 AM

Attendance:

Online Zoom conference call in lieu of in-person meeting due to COVID-19 meeting restriction due to sheltering-in-place order.

~75 members attended the meeting.

I. Introduction

Council President Denise Enea welcomed all members who called into the meeting. Introduced first presenter

II. Zonehaven: Evacuation Management: Charlie Cocker, CEO; Dan Bellville, SMC OES; Chief Jonathon Cox, CAL FIRE/SMC Fire

-Chief Jonathon Cox:

- We are blazing the trail on how evacuations are being done
- Challenges are changing for us as a fire agency and new challenges are emerging (Climate and population growth in WUI)
- Most fires can be kept small, but in the 5% outlier fires, we are not successful in initial attack.
- We have to evacuate more than we've done in the past
- Need to think more about traffic and where we would be sending people
- Disproportionately affects those who are less mobile, we need to think about this
- These massive offshore wind event fires are often not suppressible and are often among the most destructive fires
- Past evacuation communication systems can be time consuming and prone to error

- We worked on new ways to plan evacuations with Charlie and Zonehaven using technology and local knowledge.
- Supervisor Horsley and Canepa supported and funded the program
- System was in place for the CZU complex

-Charlie Crocker

- CZU complex grew extremely fast, and it took months to get folks back into units
- Great to have a single system to look at that spanned 3 counties--one common operating system with same information used by emergency response and shared on social media
- At community.zonehaven.com you can find out what zone you are in and the status of that zone.
- Agencies can share information immediately
- Takes a regional approach (evacuees may cross over into other regions)
- System is zone based. Set up to drive collaboration with agencies
- Know your zone campaigns in counties throughout California and Nevada
- More zones coming live in throughout counties in California

-Dan Bellville (Operations Section Chief)

- Downtown Redwood City Offices of Emergency Services. Open for 15 months which is unprecedented (Starting with Covid 19 and continuing with the fires, civil unrest, and Covid testing) Hoping to demobilize in a month or two.
- Wrapping up with those that were affected by the fires.
- There has been a tremendous collaboration across jurisdictional lines in San Mateo County

-Jeff Norris from Office of Emergency Services

- Chief Cox communicated the zones to Jeff at Office of Emergency Services, which streamlined the communications as Jeff could send out the messages immediately.
- Weeks after the CZU complex a smaller fire occurred. When fire agencies contacted, once again, all that needed to be communicated was the zones to send out the alerts
- ZoneHaven has dramatically improved how they are sending out alerts

-Jonathan Cox

- Where in the past, evacuation planning has taken 40 hours on incidents; with the CZU Complex, evacuation planning took 10 minutes with ZoneHaven
- Know your way out of your zone (you may not be getting direction on how to evacuate out of your zone)

-Q&A:

-Preparedness tips from the speakers:

- First step for evacuation: know your zone
- Sign up for SMC alerts
- County-wide know your zone campaign is great opportunity for Fire Safe Council (i.e., magnets)

- Do not wait to evacuate
- Think about our neighbors (building an evacuation plan is talking with your neighbors and taking accountability for those who are more vulnerable)

-Use of coastal tsunami evacuation sirens for fire evacuation?

- Yes-these could be used but only covers specific areas and might be hard to hear inside homes.

-How many people are signed up for SMC alerts?

- 100,000 opt in subscribers. Reverse 911 system ~ 360,000 phone numbers, and can submit through cell towers, but half of phones are not compatible and can only deliver limited messaging. Opt in subscribers can deliver most efficiently as they are providing the most up to date information.
- Exploring other ways to get access through social media platforms as well to increase the chances of folks getting the information

III. WPV Ready Woodside Fire District- Emerson “Chip” Swan, local emergency preparedness division leader, wpv-ready-org

-History:

- District was divided area into 25 geographic divisions with response plans to help neighbors respond
- Fire Department oversees these CERT volunteers.
- Put in supply units with radios, first aid, etc.
- Spent time troubleshooting gaps encouraging leadership in less organized communities.
- Was missing critical mass, and equipment in field could not be maintained
- There was an enormous level of community organizing required, and throughout the district there was not standardization
- How do we get out the initial message through community leaders?

-Changes to the program:

- The advent of social media changed the connectedness
- Radios are better now (but still need to be maintained)
- Program has been better defined and refined
- Cell phones are an added channel of communication

-Current and future program

- Goal to reach 100% of residents (SMC alert, to go bag, plan)
- CERT- keeps track of radios and equipment. Currently building out mobile incident command posts that can be refreshed in a day avoiding maintenance issues
- Building out the first trailer right now
- Getting folks in smaller areas signed up
- Getting messages out through social media

- Have been looking to raise money through grants and through a store where they sell first aid kits.
- Been doing regular marketing with webinars and social media
- Finalizing materials for community leaders
- Neighbors helping neighbors have been where things have worked well

IV. Updates

-Chipping Updates

- Put piles out by 8am by first day of chipping. Cut ends facing out
- Make sure you are on identified streets to participate; if streets are not listed on website but your community is, reach out to us if you want to participate and do not already know how.
- Contact Erica for questions about West side events and Denise for East side events
- Montara/Moss Beach 5/17
- El Granada 5/18
- Butano Canyon 6/1
- Loma Mar/Dearborn Park 6/14

V. Adjourn

- Meeting adjourned at 11:30 A.M.
- Meetings the second Wednesday of every month
- **Next Meeting: 6/9/2021**