

Harrison Grade Road Neighborhood Meeting: Emergency Preparedness June 13, 2021, 3:00—Meeting Notes

Held at home of Rob Thomas and Joanne Stein. Facilitators were Carol Swanson and Carolyn Sell. 45 people attended.

Welcome to new people

New people to the neighborhood were welcomed.

FIRE EVACUATION DRILL JUNE 19 at 9am. The evacuation drill is planned for the Bohemian Highway corridor, but HGR households can participate if they sign up. <https://socoemergency.org/get-ready/2021-community-evacuation-drills/camp-meeker-occidental-evacuation-drill-registration-form/> At 9 am, there will be 2 sheriff cars with Hi-Lo sirens and there will be a steady siren from the Occidental Fire House. The concept is that the fire is coming from the north, so people are to evacuate south to the Sebastopol Art Center in the Ives Park area (High St.), Sebastopol. If you decide to participate, this is a good chance to review what to put in a go bag, how you should leave your house (doors and windows closed etc.), and other steps to take before evacuating. It's important to have a working cell phone. A new law has been passed requiring cell phone companies to have 72-hour backup. Also, Google Maps will tell you the location of a fire and the best route to take.

Changes in our neighborhood

- Properties that are for sale in the neighborhood were discussed.
- Everyone should check out and make a note of their NEW fire zone designation. The fire zones have been revised and can be found on the Harrison Grade Road website (www.harrisongrade.org).
- Problems with home owner's insurance were discussed. Three people had had theirs canceled and others have had the price increase dramatically. For those having problems with their home owner's insurance, Carolyn suggested to contact Fawn Nekton at Open Door Insurance in Occidental (874-2666) to get advice. Someone called AAA in Utah and got coverage.
- Carolyn Sell has installed reflectors on HGR starting below 5101 and going down to Chenoweth winery, since the county doesn't seem interested in doing so. Thank you, Carolyn!!

Report on past projects

- 700 green address signs were procured and have been distributed and installed since last fall.
- Young people involved in AmeriCorps worked on 20 properties in OCSD neighborhood doing vegetation management and creating defensible space. Crews of 5-6 people worked 2-3

days a week. The program lasted several weeks. Hopefully, this program will be repeated. Tools were left over, and there are plans to procure a trailer so that people can borrow the tools. It's suggested that neighbors help each other with their properties and work days be established for this purpose.

- The free county chipping program was very successful and several homeowners used it during the winter/spring season.

New Improvements

- The Harrison Grade Ecological Reserve, which is a 40 acre parcel off of HGR down from Stoetz Lane managed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, has a new ranger who is very interested in cleaning up the land of dead trees, etc. There is a budget for this, and she and Carolyn Sell have met and staked out the areas that need cleaning. Work is planned to start in July.
- Grant money has been provided for road clearing mainly for Coleman Valley, Joy, and Bittner roads.
- Grants have been issued to cover 75% of the cost of home hardening and creating defensible space for Deer Meadow, Joy, and Willow Creek roads.
- The County will be opening all of Willow Creek Rd for evacuation purposes. There is now an egress for residents.
- Plans are in the works by the County to repave Morelli Lane; also, an improvement to create safer evacuation.
- Increased number of FSO newsletters during the pandemic.
- There's been a great increase in state funds for fire safety. Because of this funding the following fire safety actions have taken place:
 - 50 fire lookout cameras in North Bay. Money is being raised to build a new tower on Pole Mountain. You can contribute by going to polemountainlookout.org.
 - New helicopters for the entire state
 - 70 more firefighters have been hired. There is now a total of 545.
 - 2 extra strike teams with the use of 10 engines

Future opportunities:

- The free county chipping program is still happening. There will be several more opportunities to take advantage of it this summer and fall. The next event will occur the last week of June. Contact David Shatkin by emailing dshatkin@sonic.net if you have brush piles you want to have chipped. There are certain requirements such as no blackberry bushes.

- Large animal evacuation webinar 6/29 6 p.m. for the evacuation of large animals in Sonoma and Marin Counties. Go to www.sonomacart.org for details. If you have large animals and don't know about the program, volunteers for CART will come to your home to get the animals and take them to the Sonoma or Marin County fairgrounds. All you need to do is call.
- Fire extinguisher training last week of June. Fire extinguishers will be available to practice with. Details about it can be found on <http://firesafeoccidental.org/>
- The second Monday of each month, the Wild Fire Preparedness and Evacuation Planning group meets. If you're interested in joining, email Carolyn Sell carolynsell@gmail.com
- On Aug. 7, there will be a fire safe expo as part of the Cloverdale Citrus Festival.

Q & A for discussion:

- Road clearing is needed in our area, especially the Scotch Broom which is highly flammable and abundant on HGR going down to Green Valley Rd. Carolyn spoke to Amy Chenoweth whose property has the majority of the Scotch Broom.
- Reminder: Make sure your apps are turned on and working - NIXLE, PulsePoint and SoCoAlert.

Much gratefulness goes to Carolyn S. and Carol S. for all the work they've put in to planning for this important meeting. Also thank you Joanne and Rob for hosting.

VERY IMPORTANT: More help is needed to do this important fire safety work. If you have time to volunteer to be on the Occidental Fire Safe steering or education committees, please do so. The same people have been shouldering this responsibility, and it's necessary for others to step up and help out.

Submitted by Ann Gerber Sakaguchi