

CAMBRIA FOREST COMMITTEE

TO CONSERVE AND MANAGE THE NATIVE FOREST OF CAMBRIA

July 8, 2015, 6:30 PM

Cambria Rabobank, 1070 Main Street

A quorum was present and the meeting called to order at 6:30 pm. FC directors Crosby and Laura Swartz, Bruce Mumper, Amanda Rice, Alan Peters and Christine Heinrichs attending. Dan Turner, Business Manager, San Luis Obispo County Community Fire Safe Council, Vari McNeil, Land Use Committee of NCAC, Julie Jorgenson, landscape designer, Rick Hawley, Greenspace attended.

Minutes of Previous Meeting approved as written.

Treasurer's Report: Laura Swartz reports \$1,232.40 in the checking account, no outstanding checks. \$350 of the Cambria Community Council grant remains to be spent for the interpretive sign.

Education/Planting/Mitigation/Operations:

The Pine Forest Interpretative Sign Permit has been approved. Laura Swartz reports that Glenn Marshall waived all fees. The sign can now be placed next to the BlueBird Motel. It must be posted on wooden posts with no concrete. Everyone has been very cooperative along the way, including a unanimous vote from NCAC. The process gave the Forest Committee positive exposure in the community.

Website Updates and Additions: Christine Heinrichs has posted current minutes. The Greenspace brochure of native and non-native plant illustrations is posted but is distorted on some displays. Amanda Rice will adjust. Additional materials and FAQ are welcome.

Bruce Mumper reported that the Fire Safe Focus Group would like to include the Forest Committee's logo along with those of other community organizations on its letterhead. Following the unanimous vote of the Cambria Health District board requesting providers to upgrade cell service in Cambria, the Fire Safe Focus Group asked Dan Turner to write a letter to the county. Ken Topping is working with the county to fast track the request.

Discussion followed as to the need for cell service, which Bruce Mumper said emergency responders rely on. Other problems of siting cell network repeaters and towers, the use of the Forest Committee's logo on letterhead for other letters, and the difficulty of obtaining signatures from the 23 groups were discussed.

Laura Swartz made a motion to approve a letter recognizing the need for better cell service, seconded by Bruce Mumper. Unanimously approved. Dan Turner will write two versions of the letter, one with general wording and another with specifics, and submit them to the Forest Committee for approval.

Because approval is needed before the August meeting, the letter will be circulated to directors via email. Amanda Rice said that although the Forest Committee is not subject to the Brown Act, the committee has always been as transparent as possible. Her motion that the committee formalize the procedure for approving documents without a formal meeting was unanimously approved. Dan Turner's letters can be posted to the web site.

The problem of cars parked to limit access on narrow roads and the possibility of cars being abandoned in an emergency was discussed. Amanda Rice said that The CSD can give the fire chief authority to ticket cars but has not.

Forest Management:

Cambria Forest Health Project Grant Application (Greenhouse Gas): Dan Turner reported that no decision has been made yet but one is expected in July, with funds becoming available by September. If approved, the grant will pay for a portable sawmill to operate on Covell Ranch, to make wood shavings for horse bedding and wood chips. The remainder will go to a biomass landfill. Forests on the west side of Highway 1 (Fiscalini Ranch Preserve, Strawberry Canyon, Rancho Marino) require different permit processes from the forest on the East side, mainly Covell Ranch, which is in a conservation easement held by the Nature Conservancy. The West side is estimated to be able to conserve 4,000 tons of GHG, the East side 8,800 tons through Sanitation and Salvage operations.

PG&E Grant to Fire Safe Council: Dan Turner reported that PG&E gave the Fire Safe Council \$68,000 to identify and remove Hazardous Trees. Thus far 194 hazardous trees have been identified on Fiscalini Ranch Preserve. They will do the same for Strawberry Canyon.

PG&E also gave the Fire Safe Council \$17,000 for public outreach.

Rick Hawley asked that the fire danger talk be moderated. That led to a discussion of the problem of insuring homes for fire damage. Some companies already will not issue coverage, some are charging high rates. Some companies recognize Cambria is a Fire Wise Community, but others do not. Dan Turner reported that Oak Shores near Nacimiento Lake is having trouble transacting real estate because no company will issue fire insurance.

Laura Swartz reported that the CSD has widened a trail on Fiscalini Ranch to allow a chipper to have access to remove the 194 dead trees, leaving exposed roots of living trees.

Cal Fire will do some pile burning on Fiscalini Ranch Preserve as they remove dead trees there.

Fog Moisture Project Planning: Vari McNeil reported that Neil Ingraham has not responded to her inquiry. Rick Hawley reported that his fog catchers have not caught much fog. "The best fog catcher is a tree," he said.

CCSD Blanket Tree Removal and RePlanting Permit: Laura Swartz said that the drought declaration is a political act and that tree replanting should be ongoing. Tree replanting should

not wait until the drought has ended. Greenspace has 1,000 trees ready to be planted. Crosby Swartz said that Growing Grounds in San Luis Obispo has 2,000. Rick Hawley said that although the drought continues, Cambria received 15 inches of rain last year of its normal 18 inches and streams are still flowing. Alan Peters said that mortality to Monterey Pines is in the overstory. "The understory is doing well," he said.

New Business

Election of Officers: No additional candidates were nominated. Current officers: Crosby Swartz, co-chair; JoEllen Butler, co-chair; Laura Swartz, treasurer; Christine Heinrichs, secretary.

Recommendations to the county on New Permit Applications: The Statton deck extension at 1290 Ellis does not affect any trees. Galen Rathbun responded to Crosby Swartz prior to the meeting that the deck was built before the permit application was filed. Vari McNeil said that the NCAC Land Use Committee reviewed the application and that Statton would build the deck around the oak tree. She offered to check the date on the permit and report at the next meeting.

Forest Management District Description: Dan Turner explained about different administrative and legal structures for a Forest Management District. Minimum cost would be \$250,000. Amanda, who is familiar with administrative issues, had left the meeting early. She will discuss at a future meeting. Dan Turner knows of a company that could write a plan for about \$25,000. Rick Hawley said that dividing \$250,000 by 4,800, the number of households in Cambria, would not be too much of a financial burden.

Public Comment: Julie Jorgenson raised the issue of homeless encampments in the forest. Dan Turner said that removing french broom would help remove hiding places. Homeless people living in shelters that are removed re-establish in other locations. Shelters on private land without the owner's permission are trespassing and can be removed by the sheriff. Campfires on Cal Trans right-of-way are never legal and should be reported.

Rick Hawley deals with the homeless at the Greenspace Creekside Reserve and other Greenspace properties. "I deal with the homeless and walk these properties all the time and they know not to stay there," he said.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Next Meeting August 12, 2015