

Cambria Forest Committee December 15th, 2023 Meeting Summary

At 10AM a quorum could not be established. An informal discussion about forest related issues followed.

The first comment was by Treasurer Swartz, following up on a previous meeting, reporting that the Internal Revenue Service, after three years, has finally corrected their mistake of miscategorizing the nature of the Forest Committee, therefore the Committee can now finally apply for grants such as removing invasive weeds and non native vegetation. The grants will be for relatively small projects, but of course of value nevertheless.

Chair Swartz then mentioned that Jeff Wilson, a frequent Forest Committee attendee and activist, had recently brought to Crosby's attention an article about a UC Berkeley study on forest management that will be a topic of discussion at an upcoming Forest Committee meeting.

At this point a written report was read by Laura Swartz provided by Greenspace Executive Director Karin Argano, who was not available for today's meeting, mainly due to Greenspace activities taking place today, starting with over a dozen Sierra Club volunteers doing much needed trail work in Strawberry Canyon this morning, to be followed up by more projects being addressed at the Greenspace Creekside Reserve and Camp Ocean Pines.

Crosby then informed us that CCSD General Manager Matt McElhenie and Facilities and Resources Supervisor David Aguirre have contacted Dylan Theobald, Monitoring Manager of the Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo. Among other subjects, they will be addressing the Conservation Easement in Fern Canyon.

Around this time David Pierson, Chair of the Cambria Fire Safe Focus Group who had joined the meeting around 10:10, reported that the FSFG would not be meeting in December, but at their next meeting in January, 2024, a detailed mapping of vegetative areas to be worked on in San Luis Obispo County in late 2024-25 by Cal Fire and other agencies would be discussed.

Just before 10:30 Friends of the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve Executive Director Kitty Connolly joined the meeting and provided a brief report on FFRP activities. She told us about the new, wonderfully designed stone bench that would soon be constructed, replacing the Barbara Harootunian bench that will be replacing the Owls Roost Bench that is over 20 years old and in some decline. She also reported on the recent San Luis Obispo Fire Safe Council meeting, the discussion on Forest Health and Wildfire Prevention Grants, and the various Vegetative Treatments, essentially tree removal, that would be taking place as a result, including on the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve. We were also reminded that the FFRP Nursery was seriously damaged in the storms of earlier this year and would not be available for tree and plant seedling growing. However, arrangements have been made with the Santa Barbara Botanical Gardens, and they will be growing one thousand plants such as currant, coffee berry and toyon that will ultimately be planted on the Ranch in late 2024. Also, there was a brief comment made of the many trees that came down in the heavy storms of almost three years ago in the southern portion of the Ranch around Victoria Way that still need addressing.

At this point our informal but informative gathering ended at around 10:45, with wishes for a joyful Holiday season shared by all.

The next Cambria Forest Committee meeting will take place on Friday, January 12th, 2024 at 10AM via Zoom.

This summary written and submitted by CCSD Board Director and liaison Harry Farmer.