



# City of Rolling Hills

INCORPORATED JANUARY 24, 1957

2 Portuguese Bend Road  
Rolling Hills, CA 90274

**AGENDA**  
Special Fire Fuel Management  
Committee Meeting

**FIRE FUEL MANAGEMENT  
COMMITTEE**  
Wednesday, December 15, 2021

**CITY OF ROLLING HILLS**  
**6:30 PM**

## Executive Order

All Committee members will participate in-person wearing masks per Los Angeles County Health Department's Health Officer Order effective Saturday, July 17, 2021. The meeting agenda and live audio will be available on the City's website:

<https://www.rolling-hills.org/government/agenda/index.php>

Members of the public may come in to City Hall wearing masks, per the new Health Officer's Order. Zoom teleconference will not be available for this meeting, but members of the public can submit written comments in real-time by emailing the City Clerk's office at [cityclerk@cityofrh.net](mailto:cityclerk@cityofrh.net). Your comments will become part of the official meeting record. You must provide your full name, but please do not provide any other personal information that you do not want to be published.

### 1. PARTICIPANTS

### 2. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

2.A. [RECEIVE AND FILE A VERBAL REPORT ON THE FIRE FUEL COMMITTEE'S PREVIOUS EVALUATION OF STORMHILL PARK WITH RESPECT TO FIRE FUEL REMOVAL.](#)

**RECOMMENDATION: Receive and file verbal report.**

2.B. [REVIEW AND APPROVE LOCATIONS FOR THE NEXT COMMUNAL BINS EVENT SCHEDULED FOR JANUARY 24, 2021 TO JANUARY 31, 2021.](#)

**RECOMMENDATION: Review and approve communal bin locations.**

[Communal Bin 1st Event & 2nd Event Placement.pdf](#)

2.C. [CONSIDER ENGAGING THE SERVICES OF WILDLAND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT TO ASSIST WITH REVIEW OF DRAFT VEGETATION MANAGEMENT IN THE CANYON ORDINANCE AND PROVIDE EDUCATION CAMPAIGN ON THE PROPER WAYS TO MANAGE VEGETATION IN THE CANYONS.](#)

**RECOMMENDATION: Engage Wildland Resource Management for services.**

[Proposal from Wildland Res Mgt-City of RH.pdf](#)

2.D. [DISCUSS PUBLIC INPUT RECEIVED AT THE NOVEMBER 17, 2021 FIRE FUEL COMMITTEE MEETING ON THE DRAFT VEGETATION ORDINANCE FOR](#)

CANYON MANAGEMENT AND FIRE FUEL ABATEMENT.

**RECOMMENDATION: Discuss and provide direction to staff**

[2021-11-17-FFCommitteeStaffReport.pdf](#)

[FF\\_Meeting\\_11.17.21-\\_Fire\\_Fuel\\_Management\\_Draft\\_Ordinance.pdf](#)

- 2.E. **CONSIDER AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT FIRE FUEL MEETING AND SET THE NEXT MEETING DATE.**

**RECOMMENDATION: Consider agenda items and set next meeting date.**

3. **COMMENTS WILL BE TAKEN BY EMAIL IN REAL TIME - PUBLIC COMMENT WELCOME**

This is the appropriate time for members of the public to make comments regarding items not listed on this agenda. Pursuant to the Brown Act, no action will take place on any items not on the agenda.

4. **ADJOURNMENT**

**Documents pertaining to an agenda item received after the posting of the agendas are available for review in the City Clerk's office or at the meeting at which the item will be considered.**

**In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting due to your disability, please contact the City Clerk at (310) 377-1521 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting to enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility and accommodation for your review of this agenda and attendance at this meeting.**



*City of Rolling Hills*

INCORPORATED JANUARY 24, 1957

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**Agenda Item No.: 2.A**  
**Mtg. Date: 12/15/2021**

**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

**FROM: ASHFORD BALL, SENIOR MANAGEMENT ANALYST**

**THRU: ELAINE JENG P.E., CITY MANAGER**

**SUBJECT: RECEIVE AND FILE A VERBAL REPORT ON THE FIRE FUEL COMMITTEE'S PREVIOUS EVALUATION OF STORMHILL PARK WITH RESPECT TO FIRE FUEL REMOVAL.**

**DATE: December 15, 2021**

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**BACKGROUND:**

None.

**DISCUSSION:**

None.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

None.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Receive and file verbal report.

**ATTACHMENTS:**



# *City of Rolling Hills*

INCORPORATED JANUARY 24, 1957

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**Agenda Item No.: 2.B**  
**Mtg. Date: 12/15/2021**

**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

**FROM: ASHFORD BALL, SENIOR MANAGEMENT ANALYST**

**THRU: ELAINE JENG P.E., CITY MANAGER**

**SUBJECT: REVIEW AND APPROVE LOCATIONS FOR THE NEXT COMMUNAL BINS EVENT SCHEDULED FOR JANUARY 24, 2021 TO JANUARY 31, 2021.**

**DATE: December 15, 2021**

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## **BACKGROUND:**

During the last fire fuel committee meeting on November 17, 2021, Staff was still in discussion with Republic services for dates of the communal bin event designed to support and motivate residents for vegetation trimming and reduction in the community. During the previous event between August 20, 2021 and August 28, 2021 Republic Services collected a total of 15.64 tons which is equivalent to 31,280 pounds of green waste.

The first Phase of these bins were placed at the following locations:

1. Quail Ridge North just north of Crest Road West.
2. On the Corner of Crest Road West and Quail Ridge North adjacent to 1 Crest Road West.
3. On Spur Lane just West of Cinchring Road on Cal Water's- Water Tank Property
4. On Portuguese Bend Road across the street from 52 Portuguese Bend on the West-side of the street.
5. On Portuguese Bend Road just North of Ranchero on the East-side of the street.

## **DISCUSSION:**

The City's next scheduled communal bin event will take place Monday January 24, 2022 to Monday January 31, 2022. The bins will be dropped off in the morning and in place by noon on January 24th and picked up Monday the 31st sometime between 8:00am-5:00pm. The plan for placement of the communal bins going forward will be a consistent rotation for the East section, West Section, and Northern sections of the city. The previous phase was conducted in the western section of the city. Staff has already coordinated with RHCA & Republic Services regarding locations for placement of these bins.

This second phase will be placed in the eastern section of the city at the following locations:

1. On Crest Road E. Right before 30 Crest Road on the Eastside of the street
2. On Caballeros Road at the intersection of Crest Road E. on the Eastside of the street
3. On Eastfield at the corner of Open Brand Road (after the mail box of 79/81) after the Stop sign
4. On Eastfield Drive right after the intersection of Chuckwagon Road across the street from 28 Eastfield on the Westside of the street.
5. On Chuckwagon Road next to Upper Willow Spring Trail

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

These communal bins were negotiated with Republic Services as a part of the City's franchise agreement with the vendor at no additional cost to the community.

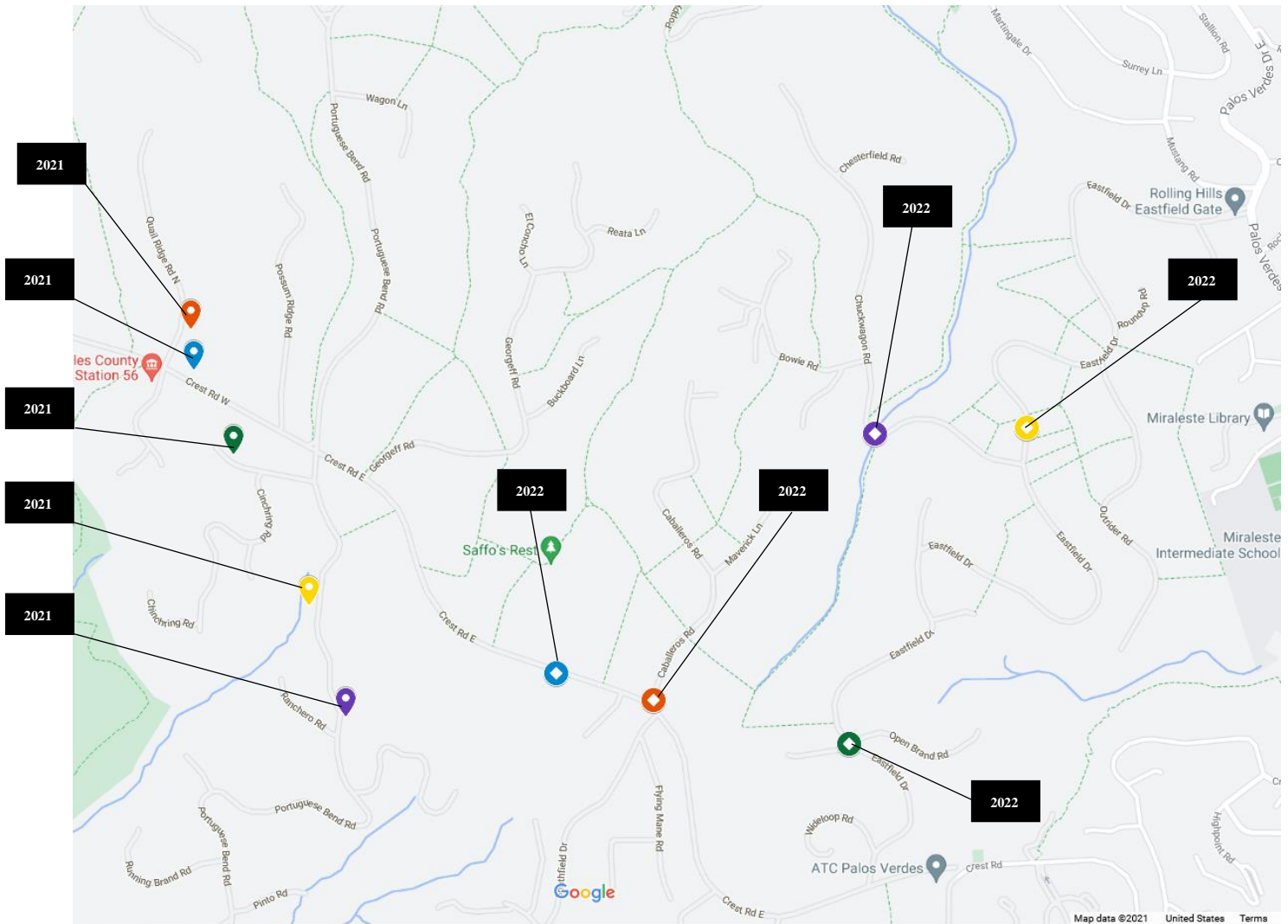
**RECOMMENDATION:**

Review and approve communal bin locations.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

[Communal Bin 1st Event & 2nd Event Placement.pdf](#)

**COMMUNAL BIN EVENTS 8/20/2021 - 8/28/2021 & 1/24/2022- 1/31/2022**



**Red Pin 2021:** Quail Ridge North just north of Crest Road West

**Blue Pin 2021:** On the Corner of Crest Road West and Quail Ridge North adjacent to 1 Crest Road West.

**Green Pin 2021:** On Spur Lane just West of Cinchring Road on Cal Water's- Water Tank Property

**Yellow Pin 2021:** On Portuguese Bend Road across the street from 52 Portuguese Bend on the West-side of the street.

**Purple Pin 2021:** On Portuguese Bend Road just North of Rancho on the East-side of the street

**Red Diamond 2022:** On Caballeros Road at the intersection of Crest Road E. on the Eastside of the street

**Blue Diamond 2022:** On Crest Road E. Right before 30 Crest Road on the Eastside of the street

**Green Diamond 2022:** On Eastfield at the corner of Open Brand Road (after the mail box of 79/81) after the Stop sign

**Yellow Diamond 2022:** On Eastfield Drive right after the intersection of Chuckwagon Road across the street from 28 Eastfield on the Westside of the street.

**Purple Diamond 2022:** On Chuckwagon Road next to Upper Willow Spring Trail



# *City of Rolling Hills*

INCORPORATED JANUARY 24, 1957

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**Agenda Item No.: 2.C**  
**Mtg. Date: 12/15/2021**

**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

**FROM: ASHFORD BALL, SENIOR MANAGEMENT ANALYST**

**THRU: ELAINE JENG P.E., CITY MANAGER**

**SUBJECT: CONSIDER ENGAGING THE SERVICES OF WILDLAND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT TO ASSIST WITH REVIEW OF DRAFT VEGETATION MANAGEMENT IN THE CANYON ORDINANCE AND PROVIDE EDUCATION CAMPAIGN ON THE PROPER WAYS TO MANAGE VEGETATION IN THE CANYONS.**

**DATE: December 15, 2021**

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## **BACKGROUND:**

In May and June 2021 the Fire Fuel Committee considered the 11 prioritized canyons based on directional winds. These Canyons were considered at risk from wind driven from the southwest and northeast conducted by the Los Angeles Fire Department. Based upon this assessment the community has brought up several issues of concern regarding which canyons to focus on first and the lack of education, proper procedures, safety, and expert opinion. The Fire Fuel Committee requested staff to research potential consultants & fire experts that could assist in supporting the community for education, training, and assessment similar to the hardening the home visits Deputy Forrester Trevor Moore conducts on a monthly basis but specifically for the canyons.

## **DISCUSSION:**

On August 30, 2021 at the 7th Fire Fuel Committee meeting the Fire Fuel Committee tasked staff with conducting research to find fire experts who could assist in the development of the new vegetation ordinance, potential training, and conducting site visits and education for residents on canyon management. Staff received information from 3 different consultants: Wildfire Planning International, Wildland Resource Management, and Firewise 2000.

## **Fire Wise 2000**

Fire Wise 2000 was founded by Retired Forresters and is comprised of a team of certified CEQA land-use consultants and Registered Professional Forresters (RPF). They specialize in the development of Wildland Fire Protection Plans for residential and commercial properties in the wildland-urban interface (WUI).

### **Wildfire Planning International**

Wildfire Planning International helps communities find creative ways to address their wildfire risk in the WUI (Wildland Urban Interface) through land use planning tools and strategies. They conduct master plans to perform community hazard and risk assessments providing insight into questions about evacuations, species of risk, topography, and providing tips and resources to help implement risk reduction activities.

### **Wildland Resource Management (Carol Rice) & Retired Forester Jay Lopez**

Wildland Resource Management & Retired Forester Jay Lopez plan to provide services by assistance with expertise knowledge of what constitutes a nuisance based upon fire science standards, CEQA procedures, and local regulations. For Canyon Management they plan to conduct research on canyons to develop BMPs (Best Management Practices) that will generate a curriculum to perform site visits/home inspections and train staff if needed for enforcement. Lastly, they will provide spot check inspections for any changes to the scope of work or environment that require updates for new evaluation and evaluation materials.

Firewise 2000 was not able to construct a specific cost estimate based on scope of work for this project and did not have the capacity to take on the scope of work presented and requires a site visit to provide a cost estimate. They will be available to conduct a site visit and have better availability starting January 2022.

Wildfire Planning International also did not have the capacity based on current project commitments to provide all necessary scope of work the committee has requested but they were willing to provide services for site visits/education for residents and staff training. For projects they have performed previously, similar to what the city is requesting they have estimates of between \$10,000-30,000. This estimate is dependent upon whether a site visit is required to look at existing conditions, how much initial content is required for drafting, and if a final in-person presentation is requested during the final presentation/adoption phase.

Wildland Resource Management is willing to provide services on all scope of work required and is still forming a more specific cost estimate that reflects site visits for residents on an as needed basis.

### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

Assistance with Ordinance Development- \$7,500

Canyon Management Education and home inspections \$13,690

**GRAND TOTAL \$21,930.00**

Wildland Resource Management is removing the \$740 charge and adding cost on a per visit basis for resident property inspection for canyons. (Please see the attachment with the cost estimates for reviewal of the \$740 charge)

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Engage Wildland Resource Management for services.

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

[Proposal from Wildland Res Mgt-City of RH.pdf](#)



November 5, 2021

Ashford Ball  
Senior Management Analyst  
2 Portuguese Bend Road  
Rolling Hills, CA 90274

*Sent via email to aball@cityofrh.net*

Dear Mr. Ball:

Thank you for this opportunity to submit a proposal for services that advance the wildland fire safety of the City of Rolling Hills. I appreciate the background provided from our virtual meetings and telephone conversations that builds a foundation of this proposal.

The services will focus on two different types of activities. The first is to guide code and ordinance development, primarily to assist the determination of what constitutes a nuisance. Tasks would include the description of a nuisance in terms of fuel volume, or arrangement of type (include possibly plant species). For this activity we propose an arrangement based on responding to the questions of the city and offering clarification and guidance. The need for clarification regarding CEQA can also be anticipated. Because of the uncertainty involved in this activity, an arrangement based on time and materials (with a set not-to-exceed ceiling of \$7,500) makes the most sense.

The second activity would be to offer consultations regarding canyon management. The overall goals would be to (1) provide guidance to the community about best practices and CEQA, (2) conduct canyon evaluations, and (3) train staff regarding how to evaluate the compliance and fuel management of canyons. Based on the tasks associated with site visits, meetings, and consultation, we estimate a cost of \$14,430,

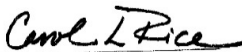
We would be pleased to expand the description of services and deliverables in following discussions.

These services would be provided by Carol Rice, with Wildland Res Mgt and J. Lopez, Los Angeles County Fire Department (retired). Both have been working in the wildland urban interface for decades, and are familiar with the environs and community of the City of Rolling Hills. Both J. and Carol are both natural resource managers and wildland fire managers. Our combined experience enables our ability to offer recommendations that minimize wildland fire hazards and environmental impacts.

The initial work can begin in as soon as agreements are reached.

On the following pages please find a description of services and costs estimated for each task. Please let me know if adjustments should be made so that we can better support the City of Rolling Hills.

Sincerely,



Carol L. Rice



<b>Task</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<b>Guide code development Time and Materials, NTE</b>	<b>\$7,500</b>
Work aimed at determining what constitutes a nuisance	
E.g., fuel volume, fuel arrangement, species	
Discussion of CEQA procedure and local regulations	
<b>Canyon Management</b>	
Identify/select good example of canyon mgt	
Site visit to identify/select canyon where lessons can be learned	\$4,440
Design event and demonstration	\$740
<i>Assumes City videos and produces youtube product</i>	
Develop BMPs for canyon management, considering local regulations	\$1,480
<i>Assumes work done by other entities, per BMP</i>	
Develop a checklist for evaluations	\$2,220
Site visits to inspect 2 canyons, while training others	\$3,700
Spot check other inspections next year	\$1,110
<b>Subtotal (Canyon Management only)</b>	<b>\$14,430</b>



**Agenda Item No.: 2.D**  
**Mtg. Date: 12/15/2021**

**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

**FROM: ASHFORD BALL, SENIOR MANAGEMENT ANALYST**

**THRU: ELAINE JENG P.E., CITY MANAGER**

**SUBJECT: DISCUSS PUBLIC INPUT RECEIVED AT THE NOVEMBER 17, 2021 FIRE FUEL COMMITTEE MEETING ON THE DRAFT VEGETATION ORDINANCE FOR CANYON MANAGEMENT AND FIRE FUEL ABATEMENT.**

**DATE: December 15, 2021**

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**BACKGROUND:**

The Fire Fuel Committee received nearly two hours of comments on the draft vegetation ordinance for canyon management and fire fuel abatement at the November 17, 2021 meeting.

**DISCUSSION:**

The community provided feedback on potential considerations, amendments and the need for a fire expert to review the ordinance. The community spoke on concerns of additional property regulations and expressed that a distance of 500 feet from structures may not stretch into the canyon on all properties.

At the November 17, 2021 meeting, the Committee decided to review the public comments and discuss the feedback at the December 15, 2021 Fire Fuel Committee meeting.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

The preparation of the draft ordinance by the City Attorney's office is included in the operating budget for Fiscal Year 2021-2022.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Discuss the public input received and provide direction to staff.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

[2021-11-17-FFCommitteeStaffReport.pdf](#)

[FF\\_Meeting\\_11.17.21-\\_Fire\\_Fuel\\_Management\\_Draft\\_Ordinance.pdf](#)



**Agenda Item No.: 2.A  
Mtg. Date: 11/17/2021**

**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

**FROM: ASHFORD BALL, SENIOR MANAGEMENT ANALYST**

**THRU: ELAINE JENG P.E., CITY MANAGER**

**SUBJECT: DISCUSS AND CONSIDER THE DRAFT VEGETATION ORDINANCE FOR CANYON MANAGEMENT AND FIRE FUEL ABATEMENT**

**DATE: November 17, 2021**

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**BACKGROUND:**

On June 30, 2021 the Fire Fuel Committee discussed ideas regarding mitigating fuel in the canyons after discussing an annual project for long term goals to resolve fire fuel in the canyons. From the discussion the idea of developing a new vegetation ordinance was prompted. At the next Fire Fuel Committee meeting on July 21, 2021 Councilmember Mirsch presented a draft recommendation intended for the City Council about fire fuel reduction in the canyons to discuss with her fellow committee member Mayor Pro Tem Black.

The recommendation consisted of the following:

**Property owners with hazardous levels of vegetation would be given the option of:**

- A) Performing the abatement work themselves, to be completed by the xx/xx/xx date**
- B) Joining a city-lead effort where the city would:**
  - obtain scope of work specifications**
  - obtain bids for entire job (by property) and select the vendor(s) to perform the work**
  - provide the cost of the work to each property owner**
  - determine start date**
  - ensure quality of work meets contractual specifications**
- C) Do nothing**

**If a property owner with hazardous levels of vegetation decides to do nothing, fails to authorize the city to work on their property, fails to remit payment due for remediation work, or does not perform their own abatement work by the specified date, then the property would be declared a nuisance, and the city would begin nuisance abatement process (Chapter 8.24). This process would be one time only, in each of the canyons specified as High Risk by the Fire Dept. Going**

**forward, all required maintenance will be the total responsibility of the property owner. If unsafe conditions re-occur on the property and a nuisance is declared, the city will begin the nuisance abatement process**

From this recommendation Staff was then given direction to assist with the development of the ordinance before presentation to City Council.

At the August 30, 2021 Fire Fuel meeting the Committee discussed defining a nuisance and amendments to the current dead vegetation ordinance. City staff and Councilmember Mirsch met with legal counsel on September 2, 2021. City staff, legal counsel, and Councilmember Mirsch discussed development of the ordinance and the details involved to construct it. On September 13, 2021 at the City Council meeting the Fire Fuel Committee presented a report from the August 30, 2021 Fire Fuel Committee meeting regarding the recent work the fire fuel committee had performed thus far and the Council provided feedback. The feedback from the City Council was discussed during the September 29, 2021 Fire Fuel meeting.

The feedback and details from this meeting lead to more research which resulted in a meeting with the Fire Department and Sheriff's department on November 4, 2021 to talk about more specifics for the draft ordinance.

**DISCUSSION:**

The City Attorney's office drafted the ordinance and the ordinance was provided to Los Angeles Fire Department Acting Assistant Chief for review and comment on Friday, October 29, 2021. The Assistant Chief circulated the draft ordinance to the Forestry Division and the Forestry Division provided feedback.

The feedback is summarized as follows:

- Defensible space is an area where firefighters may safely operate and may extend to 200 feet from structures.
- Areas beyond 200 feet from structures should not be characterized as defensive space.
- Defensible space is focused primarily on structure survival and does not identify distances for personnel safety.
- Defensible space of 200 feet is the standard for LA County and this is clear in the Fire Code.
- Fuel treatment beyond 200 feet should not be called defensible space; it could be called habitat enhancement, invasive species removal or visual quality improvement. Defensible space should always be related to structures, fire access and firefighter safety.

During the November 10, 2021 Fire Fuel meeting Staff reported to the committee that the ordinance was being reviewed by the Fire Department and that staff may have a draft ready by next week to present to the Fire Fuel Committee. The Committee received and filed the report. The Fire Department also noted that they will not be enforcing defensible space beyond 200 feet from structures. The City Attorney's office provided an updated version of the draft ordinance on Friday, November 12, 2021. Updates were made to areas that the City Attorney's office was still researching from the initial draft.

Today the committee will discuss the the purpose and details of the draft ordinance to decide whether they will make a recommendation to City Council.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

None.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Discuss and Consider the draft vegetation ordinance to make recommendation to City Council.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

[FF Meeting 11.17.21- Fire Fuel Management Draft Ordinance.DOCX](#)

## EXHIBIT A

### Chapter 8.30 Abatement and Management of Certain Vegetation and Waste Matter

Section 8.30.010 Purpose and Intent

Section 8.30.020 Definitions

Section 8.30.030 Minimum General Requirements for Parcel Maintenance

Section 8.30.040 Creating Additional Defensible Space

Section 8.30.050 Increased and Decreased Defensible Space

Section 8.30.060 Defensible Space Near Adjacent Property Improvements

Section 8.30.070 Fire Extinguishers

Section 8.30.080 Grading

Section 8.30.090 Exemptions

Section 8.30.100 Violation

#### Section 8.30.010 Purpose and Intent

A. Uncontrolled wildfires pose a serious threat to the health, welfare, and safety of the City of Rolling Hills residents and their animals and property.

B. The City is located in a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone and is almost an entirely residential community of large one+ acre parcels. It is characterized by California ranch style homes and an abundance of equestrian facilities. Early landscaping on these large parcels matured, rendering the City a heavily wooded setting.

C. The City values the wooded setting and recognizes the benefits that vegetation offers to the community, such as maintaining soil stability, fostering wildlife, and providing shade and privacy. The City also recognizes the inherent danger in allowing such vegetation to grow unchecked without maintenance recommended by fire officials and experts based on the unique characteristics of the City and environmental changes, which have resulted in hotter and dryer weather.

D. The topography of the City also increases the risk of fire transmission. The City contains canyons and steep slopes, which influence how fires behave. Canyons provide narrow openings that accelerate winds, making fires spread more quickly and easily. Further, when a fire ignites at the bottom of a steep slope, it spreads more quickly upwards because it can preheat the upcoming fuels with rising hot air.

E. The City Council has taken action to address this threat of uncontrolled wildfires through the adoption of the Fire Fuel Abatement Ordinance in Chapter 8.30 of the Rolling Hills Municipal Code, which prohibits the maintenance of dead and alive tumbleweeds and dead trees, shrubs, palm fronds, and other plants.

F. Despite these efforts, the accumulation of other flammable vegetation within the City continues to endanger the lives of the residents, animals, and property.

G. The California Legislature has found and declared that site and structure defensibility is essential to reduce the risk of structure ignition and for effective fire suppression

by firefighters. (California Government (“Gov.”) Code Section 51189.) California law currently requires property owners and others in control of property in the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones to maintain defensible space of 100 feet from each side and from the front and rear of a structure. (Gov. Code Section 51182.) California law also authorizes local agencies to require a greater distance than 100 feet of defensible space. (Gov. Code Section 51182.) California allows local agencies to declare a violation as a public nuisance, cause correction of violations to be made when a property owner fails to correct the condition causing the violation, and record a lien against the property to cover the expenses incurred in correcting the violation itself. (Gov. Code Sections 51187 and 51186.)

H. The County of Los Angeles Fire Code, which the City of Rolling Hills adopts by reference, requires property owners and others in control of property in the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone to maintain such defensible space. (See Los Angeles County Fire Code Section 4907.1; Rolling Hills Municipal Code Section 15.20.010.) It further authorizes a fire code official to notify all property owners of extra hazardous conditions which require removal of flammable vegetation up to 200 feet from any structure or building. (Los Angeles County Fire Code Section 325.2.2.) Due to the extra hazardous conditions within the City, the Los Angeles County Fire Department currently enforces a defensible space of up to 200 feet from any structure or building within the City.

I. Due to the conditions described above and the City’s large lots, additional defensible space is necessary to significantly reduce the risk of flame or heat transmission sufficient to ignite structures and buildings within the City. Requiring an expanded defensible space around improvements within the City from 200 feet to 500 feet of any improvement will ultimately protect the City’s valued wooded setting, increase community safety, and give fire suppression personnel sufficient area to conduct operations in the event of a wildfire.

J. This Chapter will allow for public nuisance abatement when property owners allow flammable vegetation to accumulate in violation of this Chapter.

### **Section 8.30.020 Definitions**

The following words and phrases, for the purposes of this chapter, are defined as follows:

“Flammable Vegetation” shall mean material that in its natural state will readily ignite (i.e., burn and transmit fire from native or landscape plants to any Improvement or other vegetation).

Flammable Vegetation includes the following plants or vegetation:

1. Dead and dry grass, brush, Weeds, and leaf litter, dead and dying trees, and other flammable vegetation that endanger public safety by creating a Fire Hazard in any portion of the City.
2. Sagebrush, chaparral, and any other brush or vegetation, which attain such large growth so as to become, when dry, a fire menace upon premises or to adjacent property.
3. Plants and vegetation otherwise considered a Noxious Weed or dangerous, including, but not limited to, oleander, castor bean, and poison oak and poison ivy.



4. Trees, if determined to increase the Fire Hazard due to mortality, insect infestation, disease, or lack of maintenance.
5. Dead and dying groves and forests.
6. Palm trees and all palm fronds with older leaves that persist on the tree, forming a “skirt” of brown thatch.
7. Any other vegetation that in its natural state will readily ignite as determined by the Fire Chief or his or her designee.

“Combustible Mulch” shall mean any layer of material applied to the surface of soil that will, in its natural state, ignite, burn, or be capable of transmitting fire to landscape or to any Improvement. Combustible Mulch shall include, but not be limited to, the following as defined:

1. “Composted Mulch” is defined as screened or refined composted wood chips and other organic materials.
2. “Chipped or Shredded Vegetation Waste, Wood Products, Bark, and Nugget Mulch” shall mean coarsely chipped or shredded organic materials that have been recently produced and have not undergone the composting process. Examples include chipped or shredded vegetation waste and wood products, logging waste, bark or wood nuggets, and needles.
3. “Rubber Mulch” shall mean chipped or shredded mulch coming from 100 percent recycled rubber.

“Dying or Diseased Trees” shall mean pest or pathogen infested trees, abandoned or neglected groves, and other trees which are in a dying condition.

“Defensible Space” shall mean an area, either natural or man-made, where material capable of allowing a fire to spread unchecked has been abated, treated, removed, or modified to slow the rate and intensity of an advancing wildfire.

“Fire Hazard” shall mean any condition or conduct which, in the opinion of the Fire Chief or his or her designee, (a) increases or may increase the threat of fire to a greater degree than customarily recognized as an acceptable condition or conduct by individuals in the public service regularly engaged in preventing, suppressing or extinguishing fire; or (b) may obstruct, delay, hinder, or interfere with the operations of the fire department or the egress of occupants in the event of fire.

“Green Waste” includes organic material including but not limited to yard trimmings, plant waste, untreated wood wastes, paper products, natural fiber products, mulch, and compost.

“Improvement” shall mean any building or structure, permanent or temporary, erected for the support, shelter, or enclosure of persons, animals, chattels, or property of any kind located in the City. For purposes of this term, "Improvement" shall not include fences or any similar barriers enclosing or separating areas of land.

“Noxious Weed” shall mean any species of plant that is, or is liable to be, troublesome, aggressive, intrusive, detrimental, or destructive to agriculture, silviculture, or important native

species, and difficult to control or eradicate, as defined in Section 5004 of the California Food and Agricultural Code.

“Parcel” shall mean any contiguous quantity of land in the possession of, owned by, or recorded as the property of, the same person or entity, and which is located in the jurisdiction of the City.

“Responsible Party” includes, but is not limited to, any person, firm, or entity owning, renting, leasing, or otherwise controlling any Parcel located in the City. The responsible parties for a property that is leased or rented by a person or entity other than the owner of the property includes the person or entity who is on record with the County Assessor as the owner of that property.

“Weeds” shall mean any vegetation growing upon streets or private property in the City, and may include any of the following, pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 14875:

1. Vegetation that bears seeds of a downy or wingy nature;
2. Vegetation that is not pruned or is otherwise neglected so as to attain such large growth as to become, when dry, a fire menace to adjacent improved property;
3. Vegetation that is otherwise noxious or dangerous;
4. Poison oak and poison ivy when the conditions of growth are such as to constitute a menace to the public health; and
5. Dry grass, stubble, brush, or other flammable material which endangers the public safety by creating a Fire Hazard.

#### **Section 8.30.030 Minimum General Requirements for Parcel Maintenance**

A. Dead and alive tumbleweeds and dead trees, shrubs, palm fronds, grasses, or other plants located on any Parcel in the City are prohibited.

B. Exception: Slope area approximated to be steeper than two units horizontal to one unit vertical (fifty percent slope).

#### **Section 8.30.040 Creating Additional Defensible Space**

A. In addition to the requirements of Section 8.30.020 of the Rolling Hills Municipal Code and the requirements of Section 4907.1 of the Los Angeles County Fire Code, which the City adopts by reference, Responsible Party for Improvements or controlling land adjacent to Improvements, shall at all times maintain an effective additional Defensible Space from two hundred (200) feet to five hundred (500) feet from any Improvement.

B. The Defensible Space zone from two hundred (200) feet to five hundred (500) feet from an Improvement shall be subject to the following requirements:

1. Flammable Vegetation must be removed by methods such as uprooting, mowing, disking, thinning and trimming. Mowing is preferred when it is desirable to leave the plant root structure intact to stabilize the soil.

2. Invasive Species. Any noxious or invasive weed or plant designated by a Federal, State, County, or City government as injurious to public health, agriculture, recreation, wildlife, or property shall be removed. Due to their flammable characteristics, potential to increase fuel density, and their ability to degrade natural and planted landscapes, invasive plants are prohibited.
3. Any Weeds or grasses shall be cut to a height not less than four (4) inches and no more than six (6) inches. This section does not apply to single specimens of trees, ornamental shrubbery, or similar plants which are used as ground cover, if they do not form a means of rapidly transmitting fire from the native growth to any Improvement.
4. All trees and shrubs shall be properly maintained free of deadwood, litter, and dying palm fronds.
5. Accumulated leaf litter and any Combustible Mulch may not exceed three (3) inches in depth.
6. Create horizontal and vertical spacing among shrubs and trees using the “Fuel Separation” method, the “Continuous Tree Canopy” method, or a combination of both to achieve Defensible Space requirements. Selection of the appropriate method should be done by reference to the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection’s “General Guidelines for Creating Defensible Space” (Feb. 8, 2006), incorporated herein by reference.
  - a. The Fuel Separation method is focused on horizontal spacing and accounts for slope as well as type and size of shrubs or trees. For slopes up to 20%, shrubs are to be horizontally separated by a distance equal to two times the height of the shrub and trees should be 10 feet apart measured at the widest part of their canopy. For slopes measuring 20%-40%, shrubs are to be horizontally separated by four times the height of the shrub and trees should be 20 feet apart measured at the widest part of their canopy. For slopes greater than 40%, shrubs are to be horizontally separated by six times the height of the shrub and trees should be 30 feet apart measured at the widest part of their canopy.
  - b. The Continuous Canopy Method eliminates ladder fuels by requiring a minimum vertical clearance of tree branches to 6 feet or 1/3 of the tree height, whichever is less. If shrubs are beneath the tree, the tree branches are to be removed providing clearance of at least three times the height of the shrub.
7. Liquid Propane Gas (LPG) storage tanks shall have the following minimum clearance: ten feet (10 ft.) of clearance to bare mineral soil and no Flammable Vegetation for an additional ten feet (10 ft.) around their exterior.
  - C. Exception: Slope area approximated to be steeper than two units horizontal to one unit vertical (fifty percent slope).

### **Section 8.30.050 Increased and Decreased Defensible Space**

- A. The City Manager or his or her designee may require an increase of Defensible Space due to topographical or geographical concerns. If a Parcel is required to maintain a

Defensible Space clearance greater than the required five hundred (500) feet from all Improvements, a notice to abate hazard shall be issued in accordance with Chapter 8.24.

B. The City Manager or his or her designee may allow a decrease of Defensible Space to less than the amount required by this Chapter due to topographical or geographical constraints on the Parcel upon a written finding.

#### **Section 8.30.060 Defensible Space Near Adjacent Property Improvements**

No Responsible Party shall permit any accumulation of Flammable Vegetation, Dying or Diseased Trees, Green Waste, or other combustible materials within five hundred (500) feet of Improvements on an adjacent property.

#### **Section 8.30.070 Fire Extinguishers**

Any person conducting brush abatement or mitigation with a mechanical device must have a fire extinguisher directly located on hand when working with dead or dry vegetation.

#### **Section 8.30.080 Grading**

The provisions of this chapter shall not be construed to authorize grading which does not comply with the rules of the City.

#### **Section 8.30.090 Exemptions**

This Chapter shall not apply to land or water area acquired or managed for purpose or use of the following:

- A. Habitat for endangered or threatened species, or any species that is a candidate for listing as an endangered or threatened species by the state or federal government.
- B. Riparian (stream side) zones or vernal pool depressions as recognized by the state or federal government.

#### **Section 8.30.100 Violation**

Any violation of this Chapter is deemed a public nuisance and shall be abated in compliance with Chapter 8.24.



*City of Rolling Hills*

INCORPORATED JANUARY 24, 1957

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**Agenda Item No.: 2.E**  
**Mtg. Date: 12/15/2021**

**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

**FROM: ASHFORD BALL, SENIOR MANAGEMENT ANALYST**

**THRU: ELAINE JENG P.E., CITY MANAGER**

**SUBJECT: CONSIDER AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT FIRE FUEL MEETING AND SET THE NEXT MEETING DATE.**

**DATE: December 15, 2021**

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**BACKGROUND:**

None.

**DISCUSSION:**

None.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

None.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Consider agenda items and set next meeting date.

**ATTACHMENTS:**