

BLOCK CAPTAINS MEETING

August 18, 2022

MEETING MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

In attendance were:

Arlene Honbo	Kay Lupo	Annie Occhipinti	Leslie Stetson
Gene Honbo	Dorothy Vinter	Sandy Sherman	Debra Shrader
Deputy Ben Russell	Marian Visco	Nicole Tangen	V'Etta Virture
Matt Biones	Judith Haenel	Bill Ruth	Baker Smith
Christian Horvath	Susan Collida	Rae Walker	Pia Raine
Elaine Jeng	Kathleen Hughes	Nadine Bobit	Mark Grindle
Leah Mirsch	Melissa McNabb	Nancy Hoffman	
Maureen Hill	Tuba Ghannadi	Marita Geraghty	
Arty Beckler	Colton Terry		
Arun Bhumitra	Kathy Patman		

There were five (5) people who were on Zoom.

2. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

2.A. CANYON MANAGEMENT IMPLEMENTATION "IDEAS" FOR THE FIRE FUEL COMMITTEE

On July 14, 2022, a total of nine Block Captains including Block Captain Leads Arlene and Gene Honbo, Carol Marone, Clint Patterson, Debra Shrader, Marian Visco, Judith Haenel, Leslie Stetson, and Kathleen Hughes participated in a Brainstorming Session. The purpose of the Brainstorming Session was to record as many ideas as possible and prioritize those ideas by consensus. Ideas would be translated into projects to incentivize and support residents to manage canyons of excess fire fuel using the management videos. The session generated 22 ideas and the results of those ideas were:

- Develop a Canyon Management model like "Hardening the Home" and "Annual Brush Inspections." The canyon management inspections and recommendations should be conducted by subject matter experts, LA County Fire Department Forestry Division.
- Establish a Canyon Management "Program Office" for residents to call, contact and/or access via the web for "one-stop shop" on fire fuel Canyon Management. Identify and incorporate tools and resources used by the LA County Fire Department Forestry Division.

- Define specific education and communication messages for residents on importance of Canyon Management.
- Consider other possible actions for City to take under “public safety”.

Results of the Brainstorming Session will be presented to the Fire Fuel Committee with a recommendation to implement.

On July 28, 2022, City Manager Jeng, Block Captain Leads Arlene and Gene Honbo, Los Angeles County Fire Department Chief Bennett and Trevor Moore from the Forestry Division (who was promoted to Assistant Chief) met to discuss whether the Fire Department would conduct inspections of the canyons similar to the “Hardening the Homes” inspections. The Fire Department agreed to the proposal.

There were several questions posed:

- What was the amount of money that has been allocated to the program? Answer: There is no money yet to be allocated because the Fire Fuel Committee has not seen the Block Captain recommendations.
- Will there be a prioritization based on the canyons? Answer: It is difficult to say. The size of the City is 3 square miles and ember cast can go as far as one mile. Fires start at different places and weather plays a factor (e.g., winds). All canyons are priorities.
- Why was American Arbor chosen? Answer: It was chosen because they were the first vendor who provided a proposal in a timely manner. The vendor was also asked to watch the Canyon Management videos.

Arlene expressed gratitude for those Block Captains who attended the Brainstorming Session.

2.B. ANNUAL ZONE MEETINGS – OCTOBER 2022

How would you characterize the Annual Zone Meetings prior to COVID? Those in attendance spoke on how much they enjoyed the socialization, getting to know their neighbors and the presence of First Responders at the meetings to answer questions they had.

Based on the discussion, there was a desire to resume the Annual Zone meetings in person. The objectives of this year’s Zone meetings are that they be simple, with a simple agenda and low tech (no zoom if possible). The flyer, which was distributed at the meeting, will serve as the agenda for the Zone meetings. Items to discuss at the Zone meeting include:

- Encourage residents to watch the Hardening the Home and Canyon Management videos

- Provide an update to the Brush Clearance specifically Zone 0 (0-5') requirements which are currently in development. The Fire Department will conduct inspections in Zone 0 next year; however, the Zone 0 requirements have not been defined and/or finalized by the State. The Fire Department will notify the City/residents once there is an update, which they anticipate in the Fall.
- Encourage residents and Block Captains to register on the City's Emergency Information System (EIS).
- Encourage residents to volunteer in the Block Captain program

The City offered the 2nd and 3rd week of October (October 11, 12, 13, 19, 20, and 25) for the Block Captains to host the annual Zone meetings at City Hall. Multiple zones can sign up for the same date.

There was more discussion on the fire incident in the City of Rancho Palos Verdes and the lack of notification to residents.

There were questions posed to the Fire Department staff:

- Where does the "clean and green area" come to play in deciding Zone 0.
Answer: Zones are specific to vegetation. Hardening the Home and other items described in the "Ready!Set!Go" brochure are action plans that you do to prepare home prior to an evacuation such as putting patio furniture in the swimming pool. The Fire Department will do a tactical patrol ahead of the fire to harden the homes but it's dependent on times and resources. Fire wood should be removed from the structure.
- Are there new guidelines for 5-200 feet? Answer: No, there are no changes.

There was also a discussion about the role of a Block Captain. BC Lead Arlene Honbo and City Manager Jeng reiterated that in case of a wildfire or any disaster, the Block Captain is responsible for his/her safety and the safety of their family and home.

2.C. HQE SYSTEMS - SIREN PROJECT UPDATE

At the last City Council meeting on August 8th, the City's vendor, HQE, provided answers to questions from the public and the City Council. By far it was the most informative discussion of the siren system and how it works. There have been three options presented to City Council ranging from basic, least expensive to a more sophisticated system. The Council has asked for locations that would minimize view impacts and one option that is being considered is to place the system at the gatehouses. Block Captains who have attended the City Council meetings generally feel that the outdoor siren system is still a viable option.

The Block Captains are encouraging its members to sign their names on a letter in support of the outdoor siren system project. Members can provide their own letters either in support or in opposition.

2.D. BLOCK CAPTAIN CELEBRATION EVENT – DECEMBER 2022

The Celebration Event is December 8, 2022 so mark your calendars! It will be evening event with activities; you are welcome to invite your spouses.

The Honbos will be transitioning out as the Block Captain Leads starting January 1, 2022. The Block Captain program has come a long way starting in 2019 where it was being built up. Since then, the Block Captain has evolved and have generally become more stable with programs established.

City Manager Jeng outlined a proposed Block Captain structure or a “Leadership Team” which consists of a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Project Manager to manage the Block Captain program moving forward. The City will advertise the new “Leadership Team” in the Blue Newsletter seeking volunteers and that there will be an interview process.

The Block Captains expressed gratitude to City Manager Jeng for her leadership.

2.E. BLOCK CAPTAINS MEETING SCHEDULE

The next Block Captain is November 17, 2022.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

No additional public comments were received.

4. ADJOURNM

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:15 am.