

Topanga Emergency Management Task Force

May 16, 2012

Task Force Members in Attendance:

Pat MacNeil, T-CEP and ARC
Keith Harrison, CEO, Office of Emergency Management
Susan Nissman, Cynthia Scott, Third District
Chief Anthony Whittle and Maria Grycan, Fire Department
Mary Lukins, County Animal Care and Control
Rebecca Barkin, Topanga Town Council
Joseph Rosendo, Topanga Chamber of Commerce
James Grasso, T-CEP
Brad Davis, CERT
Scott Ferguson, CERT
Michael Edwards, ARC
Susan Clark, Topanga Animal Rescue
Ryan Ulyate, N. TCB Fire Safe Council (newly appointed primary)
Marge Santos, CEO
Chase McMunn, Library

I. Introductions

The meeting was called to order by Co-Chair, Pat Mac Neil.

Review of the March 18, 2012 Minutes. The Minutes were not available, but will be e-mailed to the members.

II. Issues and Reports

A. Drill Debriefing by Maria Grycan:

Maria Grycan and Chief Whittle provided a recap of the Canyon-wide Drill which took place on April 28, 2012 and indicated that the Drill was very successful. She provided a written summary of the operational challenges and successes of the event:

- 1,125 people participated in the Drill (828 at Taft High and 166 at Palisades High, 141 at CSA's)
- 100 Access Cards were issued
- 5 Topangan's simulated evacuating their pets at Pierce College
- Gifts and prize drawing were a real positive incentive.
- Ready, Set, Go branding was a great benefit.
- The biggest challenge during the drill was the Alert LA mass communication system. Community members residing in Zones 8

and 2 did not receive the telephone alert about the Drill. Maria will look at the software mapping to identify if “Old Topanga” was excluded.

- Evacuation Centers needed one check-in point
- While Twitter and Facebook were great, texting could not be implemented in a timely fashion because of various service providers and locations.
- Some confusion over ending time change from 2pm to 1pm with SD call

Chief Whittle indicated that the Sheriff’s input is paramount in addressing this gap in the system, as reliance on one telephone system can be dangerous should that system fail, and a back-up is essential. He also indicated that the community needs education on the fact that the mass notification is not the only system that will be used during an emergency. In a real emergency the “door-to-door” notification by Sheriff would be implemented.

Further, many people did not know what Zone they reside in. It is critical that community members know their Zones as part of emergency readiness. Ideas were generated on how to get people to know and recall their Zone and understand Red Flag warnings:

- Send letter to residents with facts, tools, info on Alert LA, reiterating zone education
- Enlist community organizations to speak to their members. OEM can assist with staff and materials, as well as ARC.
- Request that Alert LA to send a confirmation of registration.
- Advertise CERT training starting in October
- Develop some free “apps”
- Obtain a Search Engine for T-CEP’s website
- Place a sticker behind Driver’s License that contains the Zone.
- Use Topanga Library as a center for messages and flyers and create bookmarks

Chief Whittle also indicated that residents need to know that although this Drill simulated a fire disaster, they should be prepared for disasters other than a fire and that education should emphasize preparation for all types of hazards. Perhaps the various organizations could coordinate a group discussion on disaster preparedness. To that end Susan Nissman indicated that a Town Hall meeting could be conducted on preparedness for all hazards.

Maria Grycan indicated that as a result of the Drill, it is apparent that better coordination with the ARC is recommended to obtain a good working relationship between the ARC and CERT volunteers. Maria noted that the volunteers were not allowed access to the gymnasium at Palisades High

School. Michael from ARC acknowledged that their SOP needs some adjustment. Based on feedback from the Drill, the ARC has identified numerous gaps that occurred which will be resolved internally.

Maria Grycan commended TCEP on their professionalism and the detail that was provided in the "Every 30-Minute Report" used for Drill participants check-in. Topanga CERT provided a "Close-Out Report," which was also an excellent tool. A questionnaire was also available for participants who went to the CSAs.

Becca Barkin from the Topanga Town Council provided the following feedback on the Drill:

- More coordination is necessary on the ground level. Community members have provided input and there are questions that require responses.
- Use of the Sign-in Sheets to investigate code violation issues.

Susan indicated that the issues and questions should be forwarded to the Third District Field Office so that responses can be prepared by SD3. Susan requested a meeting with Stacy Sledge to discuss how to handle the issues and concerns expressed to the Town Council by community members.

Susan also reported that allegations were made that Animal Care and Control Officers used the Sign-in sheet at Pierce College to target Topanga residents who were not in compliance with ACC regulations/licensing. The Director of ACC investigated this complaint and found that the claims were unsubstantiated. Residents who had ACC investigators checking on their premises in the days following the Drill were due to prior complaints, and not related to any information that they provided at the Drill. Susan emphasized that the Sign-In sheets are confidential and will never be used to enforce any code violations or for any law enforcement purposes.

- C. Final OEM Annual Report
Keith will send to the group.

III. Future Agenda Items

- Outreach Efforts: All Hazards Town Hall Meeting (including preparation of a one-page information sheet on "What You Should Know" in preparing for an emergency.) Maria Grycan will draft the document. SD3 will provide funding for mailers.

- Survival Guide Reprint – Susan Nissman provide the background on the release of the Survival Guide and its Supplement which were issued in 2005 and 2007. Both booklets will now be combined in a second edition. The Communication Committee will be re-established in order to formulate strategies for the publication and distribution of the combined guides. The Committee will be co-chaired by Maria Grycan of the Fire Department and Stay Sledge of the Topanga Town Counsel. It was recommended that the Education Committee convene to strategize and develop a timeline to complete the printing and distribution of the new guides.
- Volunteers are needed to participate on the Education Committee and can contact Maria Grycan or Stacey Sledge to participate. A report back to TEMP Task Force.

IV. Public Comments – None.

V. Adjournment

Next Meeting scheduled on Wednesday, August 22 at 9:30 am at the Topanga Library.