

TOPANGA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE MEETING

June 19, 2013

9:30 a.m. Topanga Library

In attendance:

Susan Nissman, Zuhey Espinoza, SD3
Pat Mac Neil, Co-Chair, T-CEP
Jeanne O'Donnell, Co-chair, OEM
Marge Santos, CEO
Michael Edwards, American Red Cross
Scott Ferguson, T-CEP
John Adkins, Lani Alfonso, DPW
Ali Acker, LACDACERT
Chase McMunn, Public Library
Beth Burnam, N. Topanga Fire Safe Council
Eric Fox, LASD
James Grasso, T-CEP
Stacy Sledge, Topanga Town Council
Mary Lukins, Fred Agoop, Animal Care and Control

The meeting was called to order by Pat McNeil. The meeting minutes from the last meeting were approved. No public comments were received.

Lani Alfonso, District Engineer at DPW was introduced and she will now be the primary DPW representative.

I. Issues and Reports

1. Animal Care and Control's responsibilities during an emergency:

- a. Assist with the needs of animals
- b. Maintain the knowledge that people do not evacuate without their animals
- c. Transport animals to temporary shelters (Pierce college has been used for animal evacuations)

2. Topanga Wildfire Evacuation Annex Update– (Jeanne O'Donnell)

OEM reported that the draft has been circulated twice and only three responses were received. Eric Fox of the Sheriff Department indicated that the Sheriff's Department has reviewed the document and will submit some minor edits on behalf of Sgt. Valerie Silgero. Jeanne indicated that in order for her to complete the final draft, she must have all input at least two weeks prior to the next Task Force meeting, or by August 26, 2013. The Task Force agreed that the next meeting should take place on September 19, 2013. Jeanne indicated that she will highlight any substantive changes which have been included since the last update. Task Force members were

encouraged to review the document and provide OEM with suggested changes/edits.

→ **Action Item:** Task Force members to provide Jeanne O'Donnell comments on the Wild Fire Evacuation Plan by August 26, 2013.

3. Communications Subcommittee Report (Susan Nissman)

Susan reported that no progress has been made on the update of the Survival Guide, as Maria had been focused on other critical assignments within Fire; however, Maria will begin working on the template upon her return from vacation. The expected date of completion of the final guide is March 2014. James Grasso was invited to join this subcommittee.

4. Report from the Exercise Design Team – Susan reported that Maria Grycan has the information and will report on the progress at the next meeting.

5. Topanga Canyon Boulevard Roadside Committee was created to deal with roadside brushes and related public safety issues. They have developed a vegetation management plan and have completed roadside clearance on Topanga. The committee is pleased that Caltrans has made a major commitment to assist in this effort. DPW is responsible for clearance around fire hydrants and road signs.

II. Announcements

North Topanga Fire Safe Council – Beth Burnam reported the following:

- They began fuel modification work on March 3.
- Will be removing eucalyptus row from Santa Maria Road.
- 69 trees were removed in the Canyon (included pines and eucalyptus trees).
- Cleared trees from the Community House driveway.
- Removed a tree from the School Road right-of-way (Susan requested Beth to provide her information on this activity). She noted that they have worked with the adjacent property owners and all trees removed were non-native.
- Began work on Entrada Road and will be working with DPW on this effort.
- Will be receiving \$88,000 funding from the National Parks Service.
- Began the home-hazard assessment program
- Reported that LADWP is replacing the potable waterline, a major project on "Dirt" Mulholland. The area is basically closed to through traffic; however the road will be opened on weekends. The project is expected to last for 6 months. DPW failed to notify the Fire Department and concerns were expressed about whether there is an

emergency plan for the project. The NTFSC sent a letter to Chief Whittle of the Fire Department. Chief Whittle indicated that he will notify Station 69 of this project. It was noted that the closure of Dirt Mulholland will impact the activities of Arson Watch, particularly on Red Flag days.

- During Maria's absence, emergencies should be reported to Rosemary Vivero at (323) 586-7039 (office) or (213) 215-2193 (cellular) or at rvivero@fire.lacounty.gov.

III. Other Reports

1. **LACDACERT** – Ali Acker reported the following: The Animal Rescue Team responded during the last two fires. Volunteers worked over 500 hours and 178 animals were evacuated.
2. **Topanga Town Council** - Stacey Sledge reported that they obtained new software for creating the Topanga Access Cards. The Town Council is making good efforts in trying to get seniors prepared for emergencies and becoming involved with the neighborhood network groups. Obtained funding from SD3 for their Website, One Topanga.
3. **Public Library** - Chase Mc Munn reported that the CERT lockers at the facility have been installed for emergency supplies. Sidewalk CPR training has been conducted in the vicinity of the Library.
4. **T-CEP** - James Grasso reported that the coming weekend is "National Field Day" and they have been working with MRCA to set up field stations at remote locations to transmit information. The focus is to increase the success of the neighborhood networks, and become a strong social media presence. They continue to work on these strategies so that TCEP can become a "virtual" place for residents to obtain timely, accurate, and reliable information. He reiterated that people should be educated about when to call 911. Additionally, T-CEP wants to stress that residents should be prepared for all disasters and not just for emergency situations. T-CEP is considering the development of an outline on its Website of the "do's and don'ts" during emergency situations.
5. **DPW Road** - John Adkins reported that the Department continues to do brush clearance, and for the next three months will be cleaning drains as well. Edison has been doing tree trimming and residents were not notified. DPW will be working with Edison to notify residents of their work.
6. **American Red Cross** – Michael Edwards reported that his organization provided support to Ventura County during the recent fire. Thirty structures were affected and shelters were opened to accommodate displaced

residents. There was some misinformation being disseminated on social media about potential health and safety issues occurring at the shelters. However, both Public Health and Health Services conducted daily visits in order to ensure the health and safety of the shelter occupants and to dispel rumors of health hazards.

- 7 **Sheriff Department** - Eric Fox reported that the Spring Fire did not reach LA County line. The Powerhouse Fire caught people off guard. 125 deputies conducted evacuations. The fire became dangerous and approximately 50% of the Sheriff Field Force was at the fire. Mutual aid was not needed; however it came close. Sheriff indicated that it will implement requirements that will call for officers who staff special events to wear reflective vests so that all first responders can be easily recognized.
- 8 **CEO/OEM** - Jeanne O'Donnell reported that she visited the Lake Hughes and Lake Elizabeth areas recently to survey the fire damage. In the Lake Hughes and Lake Elizabeth areas 35,000 acres of trees were affected, 30 homes were lost and 25 buildings were damaged. The residents in these areas do not qualify for financial assistance, since the areas were not declared as disaster areas, but rather treated as an emergency. The residents were fortunate that the nearby Southern Baptist Church provided food and other items to the fire victims. Jeannie emphasized the need for property owners to ensure that they are not underinsured for property damage in the event of a fire or other disaster. She encountered a few property owners who were underinsured and some who did not have any insurance coverage as the homes were paid off. She recommended that the revised Survival Guide contain information on proper insurance coverage.

NET MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR SEPTEMBER 18, 2013 at 9:30 A.M. AT THE TOPANGA LIBRARY.