

TOPANGA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE

November 13, 2019

10:00am – 12:00pm

Topanga Library

122 N. Topanga Canyon Boulevard, Topanga

MINUTES

Approved

Approved with changes

Co-Chairs: OEM, Jeanne O'Donnell and TCEP, James Grasso

I. Welcome from Co-chairs

Jeanne O'Donnell, Los Angeles County Chief Executive Office-Office of Emergency Management and James Grasso, TCEP

II. Introductions

See sign in sheet for full list.

III. Mission Statement

The mission of the Topanga Emergency Management Task Force, a partnership of designated public agencies, non-governmental organizations, and community organizations is to ensure the sustainability of emergency management efforts and strategies for the Los Angeles County unincorporated area of Topanga. The Task Force oversees the coordination and communication among governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations, and the community to improve preparedness, prevention, response, and recovery. It will develop, review, and monitor community-based emergency plans, facilitate emergency planning exercises, ensure community involvement and educational outreach, and evaluate and update emergency plans after a disaster.

IV. Public Comments (3 minutes each person)

- Michaela Apruzzea, resident: Ms. Apruzzea advocated for updated and clearer "No Smoking" signs. She suggested utilizing local artists to maintain the aesthetic of the area.
- Alisa Land, Topanga Elementary: Ms. Land introduced the new principal at Topanga Elementary, Kevin Kassebaum.

V. Review/Approval of Minutes of June 19, 2019 Meeting

The minutes were approved with no changes.

VI. Discussion of Woolsey Fire Task Force Findings

- James Grasso gave an abbreviated presentation of the Woolsey Fire Report. This included how the study was conducted, context of the fire, limitations in response, and an overview of some of the recommendations that apply to Topanga. For those that would like to reference the Report, the relevant key findings were numbers 1, 4, 34, 35, 39, 41, 80, 82, 84, 106, 112, 113, 116, 117, and 122.
- Susan Nissman brought up the problems of institutional memory and a lack of use of models such as Topanga.
- Jeanne O'Donnell informed us that there at least 6 areas, at least one in every County district, where models are being used to create coalitions. The hardest part is getting the community engaged. OEM is working on addressing the problems surrounding this topic and hopes more staff may help.
- Tessa Charnofsky reminded the group that the final community meeting for the Woolsey Fire Report before it is finalized will be held on November 17.
- Mark Winn mentioned that a decline in evacuation drills has been due to a decline in community interest. He also asked that LAUSD School Police be more involved with shelter in place at Topanga Elementary.

- There was discussion of PSR and PTRAs survival areas and when they should be used, as well as the preparedness of Pierce college.

VII. Continuing Discussion of De-energization During Emergencies

- Providers – discussion on back-up power
 - Spectrum (Steve Sawyer and Pat Odenthal): Their system will stay up on battery power backup for 3-6 hours unless there is physical damage. They can monitor and know where people have standby power. A problem that arises with generator use is the danger of one sparking a fire.
 - Frontier (invited, but no representatives present)
 - Edison (Dave Ford): Mr. Ford explained the PSPS process, which includes looking at the 7-day forecast and notifications for partners (Fire, County, LAUSD, etc.). He spoke of grid hardening and vegetation management as preventative measures.
 - AT&T (Dan Revetto): PSPS poses a challenge because their network relies on power. They work with Edison and sent out hundreds of generators throughout the state. They also provide charging stations and other services at evacuation centers. They've used credits to offer unlimited call, text, etc. to people affected by disasters. Cell on wheels (COW) can be brought in, but it usually supports the Command Post, and they would need to look around Topanga to see where one could be located.
 - Verizon (invited, but no representative present)
- California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) (Chris Moore): Mr. Moore spoke on investigations into PSPS, looking into microgrids and resilience (SB 1339), and AB 1336, which failed and will thus sunset protections for cellular telecom providers.

VIII. Southern California Edison Tree Trimming in the Canyon

SCE reported that they are working on the eastern side of the canyon. There about 2,000 left to trim. They explained the process of trimming: 4 feet for all trees plus a year's growth and some protected trees receive a different treatment. A concern was raised over notifications, and SCE will work to enforce their notification policy.

IX. LA County – Updates

- Fire: There were 6 October fires, 3 of which threatened Topanga. They are always working on information dissemination, and there was a suggestion to use the TCEP website and nextdoor.com. They spoke on the Relative Risk Program, ongoing communication with other organizations, and their overall preparation.
- Sheriff: Communication is key, and they would like more personnel on social media. They might train all watch commanders on social media use so there is 24/7 coverage. They are working on training for road closures and improved communications and directions.
- CHP: They are great for traffic information, but evacuations falls on the Sheriff. There are better ways to inform officers, but there is no perfect road closure. They are looking at involving CERT for better local knowledge and having other agencies help them.

X. SAGES

Michelle Johnson gave a report on senior concerns in Topanga. 15 seniors have self-reported that they need help in emergencies. There is a concern that the full vulnerable population has not been covered. We talked about the importance of communication, medical baselines, and soft closures.

XI. New Business/Announcements

XII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:45pm.