

TOPANGA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE

*October 20, 2021
10:00am – 11:30pm
Zoom Meeting*

MINUTES

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

I. Welcome from the Co-Chair

Jeanne O'Donnell, OEM. James Grasso, TCEP.

II. Introductions/Roll Call

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)

Resident

- Thanked Caltrans team for taking a look at parking signs along Topanga Canyon Blvd. Asked to consider adding parking sign issues to the agenda

V. Review/Approval of Minutes of July 21, 2021 Meeting

Minutes approved with no changes.

VI. NOAA Radio Update

Jeanne O'Donnell

- Have been testing the NOAA system; it's working and integrated into their arsenal live alert and warning tools, currently only available in the English language but plan to have it in other languages.
- The acquisition of the radios for distribution is being stalled by the state, hopeful the matter will be resolved by the end of the week, noted the complexity of the negotiations that need to be sorted out since it is now over half a million-dollar contract
- A name and address is mandatory to distribute radios (no phone numbers needed); this is how they track federal grant funds and use as a method for accountability
- Questions:
 - o Mark Winn, will there be an app for the radio?

- O'Donnell- No, radio is not designed for that; the radio is designed to reach hard to reach areas in the canyons
- o Unidentified- Are there going to be any tests? Are the systems up and running now?
 - O'Donnell- Yes, the handout will provide some guidance, and folks can purchase radio now and test it out now

VII. Fire Drill Survey Results

Jeanne O'Donnell, OEM

- Overall feedback was positive-people seemed to be interested in the content and reported that the information was valuable
- People heard about the drill from other residents and local networks
- Maps aren't readable, updating and distributing new maps
- 22% of the calls that went out were answered by a live person. 69% of them went to an answering device; there were a few that were either busy or timed out

VIII. Update from Fire

Megan Currier

- The drill was a big success, and it was noticed by other communities. Malibu requested a similar drill which is tonight (10/20). It will be a slightly scaled-down version, but it's going to be a similar format
- Drill on 10/19 at 69 Bravo went well

Chief Smith

- Asked folks to keep in mind that the largest fires are driven from October 1 to December 31 and highlighted the importance to continue to be vigilant
- Thanked Megan for putting out an information sheet distributed to the group, asked for folks to please share the document so everyone stays well informed
- Questions:
 - o Roger Pugliese-Inquired about the OEM zoning; he wants to ensure they stay front and center and stay abreast of the efforts to expand the system to the whole SMM
 - Smith- Acknowledged the complexity of the zoning issues and ensured that they are staying abreast of these issues

IX. CalTrans Brush Clearance Update

Rudy

- Started weed abatement on April 12, repetitious ongoing work
- Questions:
 - o Tessa Charnofsky: Are residents seeing that what has been done historically has taken place this year, or is there a sense that there is vegetation that continues to need to be trimmed?
 - Resident: Sees a sense that there is vegetation that needs to be trimmed continuously.

X. Wildfire Preparedness Survey, RCDSMM

Antoine Kunsch RCD SMM

- Survey results for the Santa Monica Mountains region: got over 250 responses (most from Topanga)
- Surveyed the number of years that people have lived in the Santa Monica Mountains in high fire risk zone- the majority have lived there 20 years plus; were relatively familiar with the concept of home hardening and landscaping
- The perception of fire risk was high
- People felt that they were not so well informed about wildfire preparedness, the average score is pretty low; four out of ten
- The survey showed TCEP's as the most trusted organization when it comes to evacuation emergency preparedness
- Trusted sources by the community were the local fire department, local fire safe Council, National Park Service, RCD state parks. Low trusted sources were news media, newspaper, radio, TV
- The preferred format to receive information is specialized website, email, and newsletters. The least preferred format to obtain information is social media
- Type of information that they feel they're missing to improve the wildfire resiliency on their property is the type of materials they need to get from Home Depot or Lowe's, and contacts of qualified and trained contractors that have knowledge about wildfire resilience
- Found that residents are familiar with the term ladder fuels and understand how a wildfire can move on a property, highlighted the importance of the first 5 feet of vegetation
- Questions:
 - Grasso: Will the survey results be on your website in the future?
 - Antoine Kunsch: They did the survey in partnership with CDI Conservation Biology Institute and are working together on producing a white paper that will be available online
 - Allie: Highlighted the importance to educate new residents and the potential benefits of using social media for the younger generations that are not as experienced with fires
 - Norma: Did the survey include the survey results from Calabasas?
 - Antoine Kunsch: Yes, but they did not get many responses from Calabasas

XI. CPUC-Communications Reliability

Chris Moore

- Taken special enforcement action against frontier; looking at potentially leveraging some heavy fines (up to \$14 million a month) for obligations that they failed to meet. Hopefully, this will mean Frontier will be more responsive.Re
- Update is regarding a communications resiliency plan-have expanded the 72-hour backup requirement to wireline providers; their sub-stations will be required to have a 72-hour battery backup
- LA County, Internal Services Division has applied with CPUC to form a microgrid agency to take advantage of any incentive, utilities have protested this effort. Not sure where that will go
- Questions:
 - Diane: Can someone address the break in the cell connection in the middle of the canyon?

- Grasso: The responsible parties are the cell phone providers to check their equipment; there may be individual micro repeaters down. Three different carriers each have their own micro repeaters along Topanga Canyon Blvd.

XII. Wildfire Mitigation and Undergrounding Project

Dave Ford

- Have completed covered conductor on two to three circuits and will do one more by the end of 2021. They have plans to complete another circuit in 2022

SCE

- Completed the underground wiring and equipment, and some of the trenching. The next step is to energize the underground system, then to cut over the overhead service properties, which include five properties and three cell sites
- Some of these properties include the First Office, businesses outside of Topanga road, and two businesses inside the road. Lastly, cut over the two overhead streetlights at old Topanga Canyon Road
- Working with Caltrans who has committed to upgrading the lights to decorative

XIII. Elected Offices Updates

Tessa Charnofsky

- Malibu Homeless Connect Day was a success; about 50 and 60 people experiencing homelessness showed up, and about 30 service providers were present
- Porta Potty, located on old Topanga Canyon, has been extended through June 2022
- LA County released its climate vulnerability assessment to identify the threats and vulnerabilities throughout the county, given climate change. Noted that within the 3rd District by 2050, sea levels may rise by two and a half feet at the local shorelines. Also, heatwaves in the valley will have a tenfold increase (added the copy of the report in the chat)

Nick Gaines

- SB 63, the senator's fire Resilience Program, was signed by the governor and will come into effect on January 1, 2022

XIV. Member Reports

Tam Taylor- Sages

- Need more assistance providing cooling systems and fans for seniors
- Funding for NOAA Radios applied for a grant through Edison, hoping to hear back soon
- O'Donnell- Assured Tam that Sage's is one of the first on the list for NOAA Radio distribution
- Tessa-Library in Topanga was able to provide a cooling center, and that should continue to be available to seniors

William Johnson-Waterworks 29 (New Area Engineer introduced himself)

- Conducting minor repair and maintenance projects in the canyon, residents that have been impacted have been notified door to door

Walt Young- MRCA

- Beta testing a program-have two forward infrared spotting scopes that are person portable

- During red flags, they have a drone funded by a conservancy grant which is another effort to mitigate fire risks

Ryan Ulyate-Topanga Fire Safe Council

- Hoping shelter in place topic could possibly be addressed in the January meeting

XV. New Business/Announcements N/A

XVI. Adjournment

- Meeting adjourned at 12:08 pm. Next meeting: January 19, 2022