

Rancho Bernardo Community Council
Public Safety Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, July 15, 2008, 7:00 P.M.
High Country West Community Center

1. Call to order. Meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm. Present: Frank Auwarter, Robin Kaufman, George George, Gary Carlson, Ralph Parris, Faith Berry, Kathy Howard, Larry Sieck, Nile Persson, Karen Herrerson, Jerry Mitchell. Excused: Andrea Thomas. Unexcused: Jay Riordan, Brandy Stemen.
2. Approval of minutes. Minutes were unanimously approved.
3. Guest: Jerry Mitchell from the Scripps Ranch Fire Safe Council gave an extensive report on the step by step procedures for starting a Fire Safe Council. Mr. Mitchell distributed various information covering these details, including information regarding 40 residents who attended their first meeting, various grants received for brush maintenance, and how they presently have 23 individual Fire Safe Council in Scripps Ranch, with one that oversees all of them.

Kathy Howard, from the County Fire Safe Council, encouraged us to start a group in RB and get involved with the County Fire Safe Council which can provide excellent networking with other Fire Safe Councils throughout the County.
4. Resolution regarding fire preparedness in San Diego and San Diego County. Frank distributed a proposed resolution to be sent, upon approval of the committee and the RB Community Council, to our Board of Supervisors, the City Council and Mayor. The proposal refers to the timely and effective action to improve the City and Counties combat of wildfires. The proposal was approved and will move on to the RB Community Council for final approval. A copy of the letter can be seen below.
5. Other Matters: Neighborhood Watch – Gary Carlson gave a report on their recent meeting which took place that morning. Included in the report was the fact that Neighborhood Watch was approached by Robin Kaufman who is seeking funding to reimburse class material fees for the first 20 RB residents who take the upcoming CERT academy. NHW agreed to finance the reimbursement upon completion of the academy.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Respectively submitted by Robin Kaufman

Proposed letter of resolution:
PROPOSED DRAFT

RESOLUTION

Of the

RANCHO BERNARDO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Directed to

The MAYOR, CITY OF SAN DIEGO, the CITY COUNCIL, CITY OF SAN DIEGO
and the SAN DIEGO COUNTY BOARD OR SUPERVISORS

The Rancho Bernardo Community Council wishes to add its voice to the increasingly urgent demands on the part of the public that our elected officials take timely and effective action to improve the capability of San Diego and San Diego County to combat wild fires. Our region has experienced two disastrous wild fires in the past five years, the most recent of which had a particularly devastating effect upon Rancho Bernardo. As the fire season lengthens each year we face an almost perpetual risk of another disastrous fire. Yet the fire fighting capability of the City and County remains grossly deficient.

We need not review the deficiencies. They are well documented and indisputable. Most importantly, the amount of the City and County's fire fighting equipment and facilities and the number of fire fighting personnel are far below those that are needed in the light of the danger and those that are possessed by comparable regions in California. Any meaningful correction of those deficiencies will require substantial purchases of equipment and augmentation of personnel and facilities. It will be expensive.

Therefore, in order to achieve adequate fire preparedness, you, as the responsible public officials, will be required to reorder spending priorities or raise new revenue, or both. This is the principal subject of the San Diego County Grand Jury Report 2007—2008 (filed May 29, 2008). The Grand Jury Report reviews the lessons learned in the Cedar Fire, and re-learned last year, and makes several recommendations, many of which relate to funding fire protection. Among other things, the Report recommends that the City prepare a ballot measure raising the transient occupancy tax, the revenue from which would be used solely to improve fire protection levels. As to the County, the Report recommends, for example, that the County should devote to fire safety some of the funds resulting from a 1993 ½ % increase in the sales tax earmarked for

“public safety” which the County currently uses entirely for the Sheriff, District Attorney, and Probation Department, as though fire protection were not a matter of public safety. The Report also suggests that interest on the County’s reserve fund could be applied to fire protection.

It is not the purpose of this Resolution to urge the adoption of any of the specific recommendations of the Grand Jury Report. Rather, is the Rancho Bernardo Community Council’s desire, and its request to you as the responsible public officials, that you carefully consider each and all of the grand jury’s recommendations in the light of the urgent need to improve fire preparedness in our city and county, and that you adopt such of those recommendations, or other measures, as may be required meaningfully to improve fire preparedness at the earliest possible time.

California statute requires the Mayor, City Council, and Board of Supervisors to respond in detail to the findings and recommendations of the Grand Jury Report by August 31, 2008. We will await with interest your response to the Grand Jury Report.