

**FOUNTAINGROVE II OPEN SPACE MAINTENANCE ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL FIREWISE MEETING**

OCTOBER 27, 2010

Fountaingrove Club – 1525 Fountaingrove Parkway

Board Members Present: Dennis Searles, Kim Nielsen-Glynn, Dan Cummins, Roy Thylin, Bruce McConnell
Focus Real Estate & Investments, Inc.: Leslie Cohen
Homeowners Present: Per sign in sheet attached

Guests Present:

Peter Martin - Sonoma County Fire and Emergency Services, retired, and author of OSMA's 2009 Community Wildfire Protection Plan
Scott Moon - Santa Rosa Fire, Senior Fire Inspector, Prevention Bureau
Ray Moritz - Principal of Urban Forestry Associates, Inc., and Consultant to OSMA for its Programs for Forestry Health and Fire Safety
George Morris III - Cal Fire Battalion Chief, Fire Prevention
Rob Doherty- Cal Fire Battalion Chief, Santa Rosa Division,
Caerleon Safford - Executive Coordinator, Fire Safe Sonoma

The Firewise meeting was convened at 7:11 p.m. It was held during a recess of the Annual Meeting of the Open Space Maintenance Association (OSMA). Dennis Searles acted as Chairman for the Meeting.

- I. Introductions:** Dennis Searles requested the panel to make a short introduction, noting they would have an opportunity to make a presentation and respond to questions from the audience. Following their brief introduction of themselves, they made the following comments in their presentations.
- II. Peter Martin, Sonoma Fire retired:** Pete stated the City had recognized the fire safety issues in Fountaingrove II, and it established a Plan for Fire Safety in the 1990's. In retrospect, it was a pretty good Plan. He was contacted by Bill Andrews, member of the Board and Chair of the Fire and Safety Committee in 2004. He worked with Bill and the OSMA Board at that time, to set up a Fire Safety Plan for Fountaingrove II. The Plan was similar to a classic Russian Model of having a 1 year, 3 year and 5 year Plan; with action points at each juncture. Part of the plan was to remove vegetation and extend the defensible space from homes from 30 feet to 100 feet. In 2008, Dennis Searles contacted Pete, and they began work on the 2009 Community Wildfire Protection Plan for Fountaingrove II. This led to the application for Fountaingrove II to become a FireWise community. The documentation for Firewise status was submitted to the state, and it was approved. He related that Firewise Communities is a private sector/public partnership. Pete commended the Board for all of the work in fire safety.
- III. Ray Moritz, Principal - Urban Forestry Associates, Inc.:** Ray stated that his firm began work with the Board in August of this year to provide consultation as to what type of work, i.e., tree removal, chaparral removal, etc., needs to be done in the fire breaks. He stated that he was amazed at how hard the Board and volunteers of the OSMA worked. Ray presented a slide presentation on the several fire safety issues. He explained how fire is dependant on topography. Slope intensifies fire and the direction of slope; especially those of a south to southwest nature that are more fire prone. The ascending drainage, also called chimneys by the Fire Department is also a factor. Weather plays an important part over which there is no control. The north to northwest winds, which are warm, contribute to the intensity of fires. The main goal of a fire break is to reduce the vegetation fuels, which is the only item that can be controlled.

Ray stated that the OSMA has done an excellent job to date, but there is more to do. At this point his firm is mapping Fountaingrove II in GIS, and inputting vegetation (trees, etc.) into GPS which will then be incorporated into the GIS maps. Ray stated that natural fires normally occur every 14 years in chaparral areas. In redwood and/or Douglas fir areas, fires occur every 20-35 years. These fires clean up the forest by eliminating overgrowth and returning the forests to their natural conditions. He mentioned that most homes catch fire from flying embers, not direct contact with fire. He noted that each home needs defensible space around it for protection. If there are too many plants, they may be stressed or diseased, and therefore more flammable.

Ray noted that Douglas fir became invasive after the 1964 fire, and has taken over the oak community. Many of these trees, especially small starts need to be removed, as well as those covering the canopy of oaks. Not all dead trees should be removed, as there are birds and other wildlife that utilize dead trees. Therefore, some dead trees are trimmed down and the limbs greatly reduced and left for this purpose. There are also hazardous trees that may fall on roadways or homes which need removal.

- IV. Scott Moon, Fire Prevention Bureau - Santa Rosa Fire Dept:** Scott stated that he has been working with the OSMA for 8 years and commended the Board for all of their work. He also acts as a liaison with the City of Santa Rosa Parks Department. This year in conjunction with Parks and CAL Fire's inmate crews, fuel reduction work was accomplished in the parks at Rincon Ridge and Parker Hill. Scott recommended that everyone view the fire safety websites, and pick up the Living with Fire brochure he left on the registration table. He urged homeowners to stagger their vegetation on their lots for fire protection.
- V. Rob Doherty, CAL Fire Battalion Chief – Santa Rosa Division:** Rob stated that CAL Fire is responsible for unincorporated areas of the State, but also works with the City of Santa Rosa Fire Department when there is a mutual threat zone. The Fire Department would react first to any call, and CALFire becomes involved if required. They bring the wildfire engines, tankers and bulldozers, if required.
- VI. George Morris III, Cal Fire Battalion Chief - Pre Fire:** George stated that it is extremely important for homeowners to keep their homes safe, and recommended removing any flammable items from around the exterior of their homes, such as under decks or next to the house. Homeowners should also limb up any trees to 6 feet or higher, depending on the height of the tree.
- VII. Caerleon Safford, Executive Coordinator (Fire Safe Sonoma):** Carleon stated that Fire Safe is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to increase awareness of fire safety. The organization obtains grants which they use to assist homeowners. One of the programs is a free chipper service. Carleon presented a short slide show on defensible space for the home, and noted that homeowners need to start at the house and move outwards in making their home safe. She reiterated that flying embers are the cause of house fires, so that if the home itself is constructed of fire retardant materials, then it is necessary to make sure the landscaping does not provide fuel. She urged everyone to pick up one of their brochures entitled: "Wildfire is Coming - Is Your Home Ready?" which provides information on how to create defensible space around your home, as well as "hardening" your home to make it less of a fire risk.
- VIII. 2009 FireWise Minutes:** A motion was made and seconded to approve the 2009 FireWise Minutes which were unanimously approved.
- IX.** A question and answer period was held with the panel members. After this, Dennis thanked all of the panel members for their presentations and attendance at the Meeting. The Community Firewise Meeting was then adjourned at 8:22 p.m., and the OSMA Annual Meeting was reconvened.
- X.** These Minutes of the Firewise Meeting were prepared for OSMA's documentation for its Firewise status, and to comply with annual meeting requirements per its Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP).
- XI. Sign in Sheets:** Copies of the Sign in Sheets for the jointly held OSMA and FireWise Meeting are attached.

Respectfully Submitted

Leslie Cohen
Focus Real Estate & Investments, Inc.
Acting Secretary for the Annual Firewise Meeting