

Bayside Acres Homeowner's Association

Board Meeting – August 5, 2020

The Board convened virtually using ZOOM software at 5:30 PM. Present were: David Tattersall, Ogden Hamilton, Joe Tyszkiewicz, Alan Schaevitz, Julia Glenister, Bob Lenz, Abbie Urban, and Stuart Brown. Absent: Laurie Favaro.

- It was moved, seconded, and passed (MSP) to approve the minutes of the Board meeting of April 20, with the correction that the reference to a Board meeting on March 25 was changed to March 26.
- Firewise Activity: Ogden reviewed the status of the Committee, and what could be done going forward. The final report of the Committee is included in these minutes as Attachment 1. With the attainment of Firewise Community status, the work of the Committee is done, and Ogden has disbanded it. Now the Board needs to decide whether or how to move forward. Opportunities are outlined in the attachment.
 1. Julia has been working with the City of San Rafael and Marin County to obtain grants for projects within Bayside Acres, such as brush clearing and tree removal.
 2. Ogden said more personal outreach is required to get increased neighborhood participation. Only 17% of homes in Bayside Acres reported to the BAHOA Firewise website on money spent on brush clearing and fire safety in 2019, although the amount was considerable (\$250 thousand). Delegation of contacts needs to be set up.
 3. Emergency evacuation routes need to be clarified and publicized.
 4. Ogden is the only contact signed up for Firewise USA and Firesafe Marin. Other people should register as community leaders on the Firewise website.
 5. David suggested forming a standing committee of the Board. Bob advised reconstituting the existing committee. Julia said the committee needs to restructure; Ogden could facilitate. David agreed: other committee members should be doing more; Ogden has been largely a one-man band.
 6. Stu suggested a committee with one board member and two other residents for each of the three sections of Bayside Acres.
 7. Alan noted that the Board has never had a standing committee. We need to decide on this, and what the committee should do – the ongoing work for us to be wildfire secure. David was not sure this is the way to go. Bob wondered if a committee could stand alone, apart from the Board.
 8. Stu asked Ogden how other neighborhoods (e.g., Loch Lomond, Glenwood) are handling it. Ogden replied that other neighborhoods do have committees, and their homeowner associations are more complex than ours.
 9. Joe wondered if the committee would need some authority to be effective. Ogden thought that communications outreach would be enough. Bob noted the opportunity for grants.

10. Alan suggested a standing committee with a chair and sub-groups. Ogden said he would be willing to organize people. Bob favored forming the committee. Alan proposed forming the committee and asking Ogden to chair. Alan would offer to handle technical / communications matters. Three other Board members would be needed. The committee would decide how to proceed. Julia said another person is needed for Bayview drive.
11. Bob said we need to assess interest. We need three members from each area. Julia said it is time to communicate the Firewise status and solicit interest in the committee. Alan said to tell people we want to explore the possibility of a standing committee, to include local contact. Ogden said a number of people have expressed interest in helping.
12. Action: David suggested we should post on the website and email that we are exploring interest in establishing a Firewise standing committee, and invite participation. Also will announce the August 27 chipping day. Stu to hand deliver the email to those without email. The consensus of the Board was to proceed with this.
13. A follow up Board meeting will be held to review the results of this outreach.

- St. Luke's Church Issues:

1. Cell Tower: Abbie reported that AT&T appealed the initial County rejection of their permit. A letter of objection was filed by a group of citizens from the community saying that alternate locations, including use of a Verizon tower, had not been explored by AT&T. Separate letters from people were effective. County staff wrote a report advocating rejection of the St Luke's site. AT&T has asked for an extension for its appeal.
2. Noise: The Urbans are continuing their efforts to require St. Luke and its tenant to comply with noise ordinances, and have sent a demand letter to St. Luke's.

The next meeting will be in a month or so to follow up the Firewise effort.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:56 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Stuart Brown, Secretary

Attachment 1

Final report of the Firewise Bayside Acres Committee

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Bayside Acres becoming a Firewise USA Nationally Recognized Participating Site was the goal for the committee charged in 2019. When a special committee, as opposed to a standing committee submits its final report it ceases to exist. Undertaking the challenge of “being” a Firewise site requires an action of the board of directors.

“**Being**” a Firewise site will be a very different undertaking from “**becoming**” a Firewise site. A description of things that are in the works follows. Which of those are eventually pursued and how is up to the Firewise committee, the board, and ultimately the HOA members. The recommended approach to reconstituting the Firewise initiative is informed by Bayside Acres’ successful opposition to AT&T’s cell tower permit, which relied on a leadership group rather than a single leader.

Late last week when Manny, the planner in charge of AT&T’s appeal, let us know that AT&T had thrown in the towel it became clear how important leadership of all the people in the Bayside Acres Action Committee had been in crafting objections to the cell tower that would lead to a first-round knockout of AT&T.

The in-depth objections concerning the Verizon Site and the loss of property value were written before Julia had organized BAAC. They would have been fine as stand-alone objections submitted by one couple. However in the context of all those other BAAC objections they became much more powerful.

Firewise Bayside Acres also is fine as it is and there are many good opportunities to pursue in 2020. Firewise could be much more than it is now if the sort of broad leadership used to oppose the cell tower developed those opportunities.

BEING a Firewise Site

These opportunities are on the table: (Experiences from 2019 that inform implementing an opportunity are in red type.)

1. This is the only time-sensitive opportunity. Do you want to take advantage of the free chipper day that FireSafe Marin has scheduled for Bayside Acres on August 27?
2. How you want to frame the announcement that Bayside Acres is a “Firewise USA Nationally Recognized Participating Site?”
3. Do you want to take advantage of the many resources now available to Bayside Acres from FireSafe Marin? Besides chipper days FireSafe Marin offers videos on fire resistant gardens, home hardening, clearing defensible space, and other topics that may be shared with residents.
4. Do you want to pursue getting the City and the County to apply for grants on behalf of Bayside Acres?

Preliminary contact has been made with the City with respect to removing the eucalyptus grove that could block the evacuation route from Manzanita Ave. and Main Drive. Preliminary

contact also has been made with respect to clearing the 40-acre open area between Bayside Acres and the wooded part of China Camp State Park

Preliminary contact has been made with the County with respect to removing eucalyptus trees on Bayview Drive and grading the two unpaved access roads to the Bayview Fire Road; the extension of Main Drive and the extension of a paved driveway off Inverness Drive in Loch Lomond. Both would have been valuable in fighting the 2016 fire.

5. Do you want to pursue getting financial help for clearing the four undeveloped lots between Bayside Acres and the open area below China Camp State Park?

Preliminary contact has been made with the County with respect to Stan and Abbie Urban's lot and also with respect to the lot off Inverness drive owned by Marka Hansen and Joe Brubaker. Marka Hanson has reached out personally to the County. Marka's and Joe's undeveloped lot burned in 2016. Abbie and Stan's did not.

6. Do you want to increase neighbor participation in clearing defensible space?

The quarter-million dollars in time and dollars reported for 2019 are impressive but it reflects the participation of only 17% of Bayside Acres residents. That reduced the Bayside Acres' aggregate vulnerability to wildfire, but that reduction certainly is nowhere near what the neighborhood needs to be as safe as possible.

Home hardening accounted for less than \$1,000 of the total. During the same period neighbors replaced roofs and siding with material that clearly was not fire resistant. Clearly there's a lot of progress that could be made in that area.

7. Do you want to assure that neighbors are informed of evacuation protocols and know how to execute them properly?

Sophisticated evacuation protocols have been developed with County Fire, SRFD, and Alert Marin. They are posted on the Firewise pages of the HOA website. That checks an important box but...

Evacuation protocols only work if everyone in the neighborhood knows what they say and how to execute them. That will happen only with ongoing one-on-one outreach. Without that, there might as well not be any evacuation protocols.

What opportunities you choose to pursue depends on the objective.

If the objective is simply to maintain the status quo, very little needs to be done. It's necessary to appoint a new chair of the Firewise committee and tell FireSafe Marin who that is. That person also would be the liaison with the folks at FireSafe Marin who work with us already. The same person would be responsible for knowing what Firewise USA requires and understanding how to work with those requirements.

The lead Resident Leader can learn all about Firewise USA at the [Firewise USA Website](#). Presently the username is ogden@johamilton.net and the password is Bayside@7. (Click on View Dashboard.) The username will become the email address of the new Resident Leader when Firewise USA updates the profile.

The information there includes Bayside Acres' profile, everything that was submitted to gain Firewise recognition. It also includes when renewal of the Action Plan and Risk Assessment will be due and the templates required to do that.

The Firewise committee would need only generate enough resident interest in clearing defensible space to meet Firewise USA's recognition criteria. That should require only the continuation of last year's promotional efforts.

This year the committee has the benefit of the spreadsheet that contains the names, street addresses, email addresses, and 2019 dollars and hours of everyone who contributed to the quarter-million-dollar total. That contact list may be enough to maintain Firewise recognition.

The reported data are held automatically in an online spreadsheet linked to the Firewise reporting form. **Be aware that many participating residents prefer not to go online to use the reporting form. They prefer to email the information to the committee chair, so that person must be prepared to enter the information into the online form for them.**

As well, the raw data must be massaged in a spreadsheet to be useful. That's not rocket science but the responsible person must be fluent in using spreadsheets.

If the objective is to build on the status quo, the opportunity listed above, "how you want to frame the announcement that Bayside Acres is a Firewise USA Nationally Recognized Participating Site," can be brought into play.

The announcement can be framed as an accomplishment that reflects the contributions of the whole neighborhood (*not* as an accomplishment of the Firewise committee.) (In truth less than one resident in five contributed, but this would not be the time to mention that. In fact that should *never* be mentioned. :-)

The announcement can also be framed as a call to action to live up to the commitment Bayside Acres has made to a national organization, Firewise USA which is a program of the National Fire Protection Association.

When Bayside Acres received Firewise recognition it also received two steel 24'x24" recognition signs designed to be attached to street signposts.

With two more signs at about \$21 each one sign could be mounted on the street signposts of all four entrances to Bayside Acres: Bayview Drive, Main Drive, Marine Drive, and Beach Drive. Beach Drive already has a (somewhat smaller) Neighborhood Watch sign attached to it (lower down than the Firewise sign would be attached).





Bill Guerin, the Director of City Public Works, has said that if Bayside Acres wants the signs installed just show him where and he'll have his crew install them for us.

The signs would provide a visual reminder every time someone turns into Bayside Acres that there is a Firewise Bayside Acres, that it's nationally recognized, and that it's something the whole community benefits from and should support.

Recognizing that not everyone is thrilled with signs 😊 it might be wise to poll the neighbors before installing anything. If neighbors were asked for a Yes-or-No vote on the signs as part of the email that announces Firewise USA recognition and stresses the importance of everyone participating in Firewise Bayside Acres, the outcome of the survey would be an unobtrusive measure of the value the neighbors put on Firewise Bayside Acres.

If the answer is "Yes," then the effort to increase participation will already be under way and the Firewise objective can be more aggressive. If the answer is "No," that would inform a decision on how aggressive an objective makes sense.

If the objective includes taking advantage of FireSafe Marin's chipper day and online resources the liaison with FireSafe Marin must put in the time to become current with those offerings and know how they can be used. For example, to take advantage of Chipper day it will be necessary to understand the online reservation process and the rules governing the event.

It will be necessary to determine how best to message the neighbors effectively. Only about 50% of residents open an association Firewise email and only about 10% of those click on any link contained in the message. One-on-one outreach substantially enhanced participation in 2019, so that approach should be employed in addition to email blasts whenever the response rate matters.

Because the online reservation process assumes that the resident makes the reservation it's necessary to determine ahead of time how to track who signs up. It might be wise to consider routing reservations through the committee chair, who would make the reservations for them. That approach also would address the reluctance of many residents to go online themselves exhibited in 2019 Firewise reporting.

If the objective also includes seeking financial assistance from the City and the County someone must be responsible for doing that. That wouldn't be a huge job but understanding how the Marin Fire Prevention Authority (courtesy of Measure C) works and then persuading City and County officials to support our grant requests requires a skillset that's different from those required for the other elements of Firewise named so far.

If the objective also includes increasing resident participation in home hardening and clearing defensible space the Firewise committee must develop a strategy for increasing awareness on the part of neighbors. In 2019 it was remarkable how many residents contacted one-on-one knew little or nothing about Firewise despite the email blasts and excellent website.

In view of the meager response rates of email blasts the board could consider adopting a one-on-one approach in which each member of the board and the Firewise Committee commits to email a share of residents personally. In 2019 personal outreach accounted for more than half the neighbors who reported clearing defensible space.

Presently there are nine board members and two at-large committee members. To reach 160 residents each of those would have to email only 15 residents. Each message should be sent individually, but all the messages would be the same.

Extending that line of thinking, there would be merit in restructuring the Firewise committee as a committee of the whole board plus at-large members. Firewise is the first and only undertaking by the board that involves a commitment to a national organization and also requires ongoing management to sustain it. Whatever Firewise Bayside Acres does is, by any name, a responsibility of the board.

As well, listing all board members as Resident Leaders with Firewise USA would allow them be informed real time of new priorities, initiatives and services from Firewise USA. That would make it easy for them to keep Firewise Bayside Acres operating at the state of the art. Presently the board is informed in periodic reports long after the fact.

Explicit involvement of the board in Firewise Bayside Acres also would support the suggest plan for accomplishing the most aggressive objective that follows:

The most aggressive objective also includes assuring that residents understand and know how to use the evacuation protocols. A suggestion for a detailed approach to that objective appears in the Firewise Committee Report in the minutes of the March 24, 2020 board meeting.

Suggested goals: The outreach effort should assure two things:

1. To the extent possible, every neighbor is signed up Alert Marin, knows what kinds of alerts to expect, and knows what to do when an alert is issued.
2. Small groups of neighbors (cohorts?) are established to take responsibility for being sure that everyone is educated in evacuation protocols, accurately informed, and accounted for in an evacuation.

Possible steps in the process: There are three:

1. The board recruits one person to lead the outreach effort. (The effort may requires two or three leaders.)
2. The committee, the board and the outreach leaders recruit, say, 20 neighbors to be cohort leaders. (Twenty cohorts of eight neighbors each would cover all 160 homes in Bayside Acres. Most cohort leaders probably will self-select because they have a natural cohort that they've known for years.)
3. Committee members meet with the cohort leaders, spell out their responsibilities, and educate them in what each neighbor needs to know, specifically
 - Sign up for Alert Marin, know the possible alerts and what to do when they are issued.
 - Understand who evacuates to where depending on the alerts given.
 - Exchange phone numbers and email addresses and set up a contact chain to be used whenever an alert is issued.
 - Establish a process by which new neighbors are invited into the cohort.

Each cohort leader will make a record of cohort members, including contact information that can be distributed to each member and also archived by the person responsible for the outreach program. The consolidated record would be updated as changes are recorded so no new neighbors don't fall through the cracks.

A routine should be established in which call chains are exercised periodically. That practice will identify any changes in membership or contact information. It also will keep the cohort pertinent to people—something that's necessary with preparation for anything that's extremely unlikely like an evacuation. The practice probably will increase the participation in reporting defensible space and home hardening as well.