

# San Rafael Fire Commission

## Zoom Meeting

December 8, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 4:05pm by Commission Chair Mizroch

Roll call documented those present: Chair Stephen Mizroch, Vice-Chair Larry Luckham, Commissioners Nadine Hade, Thomas Weathers, Ken Johnson, Dave Fonkalsrud and Stan Burford, as well as Fire Chief Darin White.

### Open Time for Public Expression:

San Rafael citizen Kyri McClellan, who sits on the Citizen Oversight Committee joined the meeting to offer her appreciation for the Fire Department and shared that her son, Nathan is a big fan of the team at Station 55. Kyri offered her willingness to volunteer to support department activities.

### November Minutes:

The minutes from the November meeting were approved without alteration. Stan Burford was thanked for his thorough and entertaining minutes.

### Fire Foundation Update:

Although the December Crab Feed was cancelled due to COVID 19 concerns, an outreach email has been sent to supporters of the Foundation. This email stressed the goals of the Foundation to directly support the Firefighters. The Foundation provides funds for equipment and technology that may not be provided by basic department resources. A prime example is the San Rafael Fire Boat. The foundation recently provided a Thanksgiving meal for the members of the visiting AmeriCorps crew. Foundation resources stand at \$72,000.

### Historic Subcommittee:

No new report. We continue to think through how this “Historical Display” in the PSC will be effectively and safely presented.

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### Commission Reports:

Vice-Chair Luckham joined our Zoom meeting from Chiapas, Mexico.

Commissioner Weathers noted references to Sonoma County Fires which have occurred in previously well-mapped “historic fire plains”. He asked whether Marin County has documented “fire plains”. Both Chief White and Commissioner Luckham noted historic fires in Mill Valley near Mt. Tamalpais that may qualify and also wildland/urban interface risks. Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority is actively addressing many high risk areas.

Commissioner Hade referenced the San Rafael Annual Commissions’ soiree held on December 7<sup>th</sup>. It was hosted by the City and Nadine reminded those who could not attend to pick up their “Thank you” gift at City Hall.

Commissioner Johnson (joining the Zoom meeting from Omaha, Nebraska) described some of the successes San Rafael has accomplished in its mitigation strategies and how that enhances our insurability. A link is provided to Mr. Johnson’s “Chief’s Tool Kit for Homeowner’s Insurance Insight”.

<https://storage.googleapis.com/proudcity/sanrafaelca/uploads/2022/01/Chiefs-Took-Kit-for-Homeowners-Insurance-Insight.pdf>

Commissioner Fonkalsrud spoke of the upcoming construction upgrade plans for Stations 54 and 55. Chief White provided a January 2022 start date for this work. Also, David noted the importance of updating “Seasonal Fire Safety Tips” on our Fire Commission website. Chief White noted that Senior Management Budget Analyst, Thomas Wong, will be working exclusively with the Fire Department and will assist with website enhancements.

Commissioner Burford noted that, since April 2020, we have been meeting on Zoom. While we look forward to meeting in person in the near future, he suggested that we maintain our Zoom connection for two reasons. A member can join from afar, as Larry and Ken did today and there is a video recording to document the meeting.

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Stan also referenced a Marin IJ piece by Dick Spotswood related to water availability in Marin. He then asked if alternative water sources for fighting fires were available, including cisterns, portable water sources, swimming pools, etc. The Chief and Commissioners agreed to look into the topic. Flexibility is attractive, but size limitations and maintenance are challenges.

### Fire Chief's Report:

- An update on activity of Marin Wildland Fire Authority in reducing excess vegetation and ladder fuel. Attention to CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) guidelines.
- References to "prescribed fire burns" in reducing excess fire fuels...referencing Indigenous firefighting practices.
- The demonstration of the portable "Air Curtain Burner" which reduces material to ash: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mo4K1dM2GH4>
- In depth discussion of COVID 19 challenges in operating the department, particularly the ability to keep everyone safe when a few fire personnel have opted to avoid vaccination.
- Finally, on 12/11/21, there will be a graduation ceremony for seven new San Rafael firefighters at the San Rafael "B" St. Recreation Center. Also, Fire Captain Bob de Lambert will be honored by the Fire Foundation and Battalion Chief Matt Windrem will be recognized for his years of service prior to his departure to Sonoma County Fire. Former Fire Chief Chris Gray is moving to Santa Fe, New Mexico this month.

See you in 2022!