

ACTION MINUTES

LAND USE & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

June 24, 2021

- MEMBERS PRESENT:** Frank Axe, Supervisor District 4
Richard Forster, Supervisor District 2
- MEMBERS ABSENT:** None
- STAFF PRESENT:** Glenn Spitzer, Deputy County Counsel
Chuck Beatty, Planning Director
Michelle Gallaher, Code Enforcement
Jack O'Brien, Public Works Superintendent
Mary Ann Manges, Recording Secretary
- OTHERS PRESENT:** Walt White, Fire Chief Amador Fire Protection District (AFPD)
Patrick Chew, Deputy Fire Marshal AFPD
Mara Feeney, Foothill Conservancy
Cindy Graham, Amador County resident

Supervisor Axe called the meeting to order at 2:04 p.m.

AGENDA: Approved

CORRESPONDENCE: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: May 26, 2021

PUBLIC MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA: None

ITEM 1: Continued discussion regarding the progress of General Plan implementation measures

Supervisor Axe introduced the item and welcomed Walt White, Fire Chief Amador Fire Protection District (AFPD).

Chief White shared that he is there to present information about emergency response and legislation that is in the preliminary comment phase that is probably one of the more concerning pieces of legislation during this legislative cycle.

Chief White began that Amador County has never completed a comprehensive standards of coverage study which includes best practices in strategic deployment. He shared that this study describes where resources should be placed to achieve the highest level of response to the public. He added that there are no national standards of response and shared that a consensus standard varies between urban, suburban, and rural response and is measured by fractal assessment which is the percentage of time achieving the goal. He added that it does not become a standard unless it is adopted by Board resolution. He commented that it is planned to adopt a response time goal that is consistent with NFPA 1710 & 1720 and to achieve that goal

90% of the time. He explained that a one minute turn out time is desired with an average 9 minute travel time so that 90% of calls are arrived to in 11 minutes. He added that another goal is weight of response where 6 firefighters are on scene of any working fire within 15 minutes 80% of the time and to contain those fires to either the building of origin or to 5 acres or less. Chief White stated that those are believed to be achievable response time goals and would be part of a larger performance measures management program.

Ms. Graham asked Chief White to clarify if the 6 firefighters on scene are AFPD or a cooperation.

Chief White responded a cooperation.

Ms. Graham asked if there are any financial advantages or if a goal is needed in order to achieve the most efficiency.

Chief White responded that it will assist with ratings such as ISO which can assist homeowners with insurance costs. He stated that it is desired to prevent this from being California's next housing crisis. He added that there is a stakeholder meeting in Southern California on September 14th with the intent to come up with unopposed policy because there now seems to be a lot of disconnected activity. He continued that there is shared responsibility with CAL FIRE with their primary responsibility being the land and AFPD's being the structures. He commented that CAL FIRE, AFPD and 5 other agencies cumulatively have 15 staffed engines and that there are other factors that affect the rating.

Supervisor Forster asked if an engine goes out on every call.

Chief White replied that for the most part fire personnel respond with either type 1 or type 3 engines and that American Legion Ambulance provides ground transport and air medical services provide transport for more critical calls that need definitive care.

Supervisor Forster asked if the Buena Vista station staffed by CAL FIRE paramedics respond with squad.

Chief White responded that he believes they respond on engines.

Supervisor Forster shared concerns about them being asked not to respond with medical staff for advanced life support unless they are called.

Chief White said that every action should be responded to in the public's best interest.

Mara Feeney asked if wildfire fighting funding is drastically underfunded.

Chief White shared that from his personal perspective, the more rural the county, the less property taxes there are to support essential services. He added that Amador County was very fortunate to receive Measure M funds which have dramatically helped paid or career local government paid fire fighters. He shared that his professional opinion is that they are still underfunded based on total obligations which is pretty common to rural counties throughout California.

Ms. Feeney responded that is too bad because we have fewer tax payers, more trees, and unthinned forests. She shared that staffing was fought for at the fire station in Fiddletown and

that many residents have asked if there is a service where someone comes out to their property to tell them what should be the next priority with fire safety.

Deputy Fire Marshall Chew responded that it falls under CAL FIRE who is also understaffed and that she needs to ask them. He shared that there is a local county ordinance being proposed that is not yet for public comment, but will be, where AFPD will have the ability to go out and do inspections. He continued that unfortunately there have been enough fires in communities for statistics where studies can be done. He explained that if a home is built before 2010 that there is a 25% chance of survivability and that if it is built to current building codes and everything is done based on the new fire code provision that there is a 50% chance of survivability.

Ms. Feeney commented that it is frightening and wonders if contractors can do some retrofitting.

Chief White explained that Fiddletown is a difficult area to access and that they partner with Pioneer Fire during the summer when there is a higher probability of calls. He continued that fires double in size every minute and that with initial mitigation the quicker response is extremely valuable. He explained that both CAL FIRE and AFPD are all risk and that CAL FIRE's primary responsibility is the state responsibility area of the land and AFPD's is primarily the private structures throughout that land. He added that they have a cooperative agreement where they support each other and that the Sheriff Department has the evacuation responsibilities. He stated that it is going to be required that the 3 of them work together collaboratively if there is a major incident.

He continued on with explaining Senate Bill 12, State Minimum Fire Safe Regulations for 2021. He shared that similar to moratoriums and restrictions where one cannot build in a flood plain anymore, something is being considered for high fire severity areas and that there is a process to designate these areas. He added that in concept it sounds like a good thing to not place structures in the path of fire, but there are multiple developers who already own large areas of land that have plans to develop them and passage of this could significantly devalue those areas. He shared that the Fire Districts Association of California (FDAC), California Fire Chiefs Association (Cal Chiefs) and California Professional Firefighters have formed a de-risk list legislative group and typically are in alignment on most issues. He added that on the other side of things, there are California State Association of Counties (CSAC), Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), and the Urban Counties of California who have expressed opposition to Senate Bill 12. The Amador County member on the RCRC board is Supervisor Oneto and the alternate is Supervisor Axe who do not totally oppose this, but have taken a position to amend this bill so it is not so damaging to rural counties and developers or development in rural areas.

Supervisor Axe stated that the Committee will continue to address topics of concern at later meetings and asked Ms. Feeney if she has any questions.

Ms. Feeney replied that she does not.

ITEM 2: Discussion and possible action relative to creating a stronger ordinance enacting more severe penalties for littering in Amador County

Supervisor Axe introduced the item.

Jack O'Brien, invited to speak on behalf of Public Works, stated that he has 50 load tickets just this year from taking things found on the side of the road to the dump. He shared that right now

the County can dump 100,000 pounds of garbage for free, but that tires will no longer be free and will be \$9 each. He commented that in the month of February alone that over 6,000 pounds of garbage was picked up. He added that in his 24 years with Public Works he has never seen so much dumping along County roads.

Supervisor Forster added that we can take it for free, but that it is taking a lot of staff time.

The Committee discussed that a possible reason is the increase in fees to dump.

Mr. O'Brien stated that even signage is being stolen using power tools and that signs run about \$50 each to replace. He shared that "No Dumping" signs have been placed at one frequently used dump site with much success and said that he is able to obtain game cameras at a reduced rate and would like to try them.

Ms. Gallaher shared that input received from the City of San Diego Code Enforcement is that signage and quality cameras that can also read license plates work well. She stated that 2 sets of person verification and license verification cameras (4 cameras total) are about \$3,300 and 3 sets (6 cameras total) are about \$4,600. She also shared how the City of San Diego has had a lot of lawsuits and appeals because violators need to be caught in the act. The City now sends the video to the Police Department or the Sheriff, they do the investigation, and then proceed, as applicable.

Supervisor Forster asked that Counsel Spitzer talk to the Sheriff's Department for their input on language and ask that Undersheriff Middleton come to speak at the next Land Use Committee meeting. He also asked Mr. O'Brien to send him a list of hot spots where items are frequently dumped.

The Committee discussed possibly beginning with one or two cameras in high problem areas. Prevention actions shared included possibly giving out dump vouchers and having periodic community clean up days.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:17 p.m. The next meeting date is tentatively scheduled for July 22, 2021 at 2:00 pm.