



**TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY**  
**Wildfire Preparedness Committee**  
**Tuesday, November 2, 2021 4:00 PM**  
**Virtual Meeting**

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**SPECIAL VIDEOCONFERENCE MEETING AGENDA**

**Remote Meeting Covid-19 Advisory:** On September 16, the Governor signed AB 361, amending the Ralph M. Brown Act (Brown Act) to allow legislative bodies to continue to meet virtually during the present public health emergency. AB 361 is an urgency bill which goes into effect on October 1, 2021. The bill extends the teleconference procedures authorized in Executive Order N-29-20, which expired on September 30, 2021, during the current COVID-19 pandemic and allows future teleconference procedures under limited circumstances defined in the bill. Portola Valley Town Council and commission and committee public meetings are being conducted electronically to prevent imminent risks to the health or safety of attendees. The meeting is not available for in-person attendance. Members of the public may attend the meeting by video or phone linked in this agenda.

**Join Zoom Meeting:**

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81718057015?pwd=ckNRSXJsU045cnQrNitEaytQY2tLUT09>

**To access the meeting by phone, dial:**

1-699-900-6833

1-877-853-5247 (toll-free)

*Mute/Unmute - press \*6 / Raise Hand - press \*9*

**Meeting ID:** 817 1805 7015

**Password:** 362880

**MEETING AGENDA**

1. Call to Order
2. Open Communications for Items not on Agenda
3. Approval of Minutes from October 5, 2021, Meeting
4. Follow-on Discussion of NFPA 1140 AHJ and Recommendation (D. Pfau)
5. Consider Recommendation to Adopt the NFPA 1140, Sections 12.2.1 and 12.2.2 (D. Pfau)
6. Status of Home Hardening Ordinance (J. Dennis)
7. Subcommittee Updates
  - a. Resident Communications and Outreach/Evacuation Routes
  - b. Home Hardening/Insurance/Infrastructure Back-up
  - c. Vegetation Management/Defensible Space
8. Consider 2022 Committee Membership (M. Tomars)
9. Standing Items- As Needed
  - a. Fire Marshal Update
  - b. Staff Updates
  - c. Review of Committee Correspondences/Items of Note
10. Adjourn

# Wildfire Preparedness Committee Minutes

## October 5, 2021

### **In attendance:**

#### **Committee Members:**

Michael Tomars, Chair  
Dale Pfau, Vice Chair  
Megan Koch  
M.J. Lee  
Karen Vahtra  
Jennifer Youstra  
Jeff Aalfs

#### **Town Manager:**

Jeremy Dennis

#### **Fire Marshall:**

Don Bullard

#### **Town of PV (Host)**

Sharon Hanlon

#### **Members of the Public:**

D. Carlson  
P. Dewes  
V. Schachter  
B. Turcott  
S. Liebes  
R. Younge  
U. Aldag  
S. Vandeputte  
M. Muffly

#### **Item 1 - Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order at 5:02 pm.

#### **Item 2 - Open Communications:**

There were no open communications.

#### **Item 3 - Approval of Minutes:**

A motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of August 17, 2021 was made by Dale Pfau and seconded by Karen Vhatra. Motion passes.

#### **Item 4 - Adoption of a Resolution Confirming the State of Emergency and Need to Continue Conducting Town Public Meetings Remotely**

Jeremy Dennis said that this needs to be on committee on every agenda to allow us to have the meeting in virtual settings until further notice. Motion moved by Jeff Aalfs. Seconded by Jennifer Youstra. Motion passes.

**Item 5 - Wildfire Best Practices: National Fire Protection Association 1140 Discussion (Dale Pfau):**

Dale Pfau opened with a discussion of 1140:

- NFPA is National International Org that creates standards.
- 1140 2022 is consolidation of standards that:
  - Lay out best practices for Wildland Fire Protection
  - Don Bullard will implement as many of these standards as he can

Dale explained that 1140 in it's entirety is densely packed with important information that he wants to review with the committee at each meeting. Tonight he wanted to focus on one question raised by 1140: Who is the Authority that has Jurisdiction (AHJ) over how the following should be managed in a fire-prone area:

- New development
- Vegetation
- Home Hardening

AHJ is the decision maker for all issues associated with wildland fire safety. It could be one person or a collection of people:

- A committee
- WFPD
- Other resource

Dale advocated for the committee to consider recommending that PV have an AHJ, though added that it's possible it would create additional steps for approval of projects.

Megan Koch commented that having a community-based local person as part of the AHJ is important.

Jennifer Youstra commented that the AFJ must include people who have to have front-line wildfire experience.

Karen Vahtra mentioned Rancho Santa Fe in San Jose. They had a community built that was completely non-combustible. Didn't lose a single home. She is open to having AHJ. Jeremy mentioned it took Rancho Santa Fe 4 years to adopt their code.

Jeff Aalfs asked if Fire Professional would overrule land development issues. You will change the division of labor we have right now. Dale said yes, the AHJ would have jurisdiction over land use.

Jennifer Youstra was concerned with the legal implications, and advocated for matching authority with responsibility. But, Dale mentioned, the Town Council could always overrule the AFJ if need be.

Don Bullard said he is looking at 1140 to identify what he/WFPD likes and what he/WFPD doesn't like, and then will adopt sections of 1140 to the fire ordinance. He expressed that he doesn't want to make the decisions for building in PV or Woodside.

Jeremy asked Dale if he was aware of jurisdictions that have adopted this authority? Jeremy is looking to understand the relationship between code and best practices, i.e., code is law and best practices is not law.

Dale's main interest in an AFJ is getting something done.

Don would probably be the PV specialist; CPAW grant has people available that are experts to us through this grant. They have been working on collecting building codes right now to look at fire resilience upgrades and how we can do things better. CPAW staff will work for us over the next two years.

- Jeremy mentioned that PV and others within the WFPD are the first in the Bay Area to get this grant. WFPD was an integral part in getting this grant.
- Dale wondered if CPAW would recommend the AHJ. Don will ask if they recommend it.

Dale asked to have the issue of an AFJ on the agenda the next meeting.

Dudley Carlson said this is an extremely well presented and valuable discussion. This juxtaposition of vulnerability and responsibility is analogous to COVID - it's a life or death issue and really important to get it as right as possible. She expressed support for a fast track approach for things like home hardening, where there is resistance and expense, to find a way to remove barriers.

Bob Turcott observed that the NFPA guidelines are widely adopted and fill the voids in code. Standards are objective and science-based, has been refined and integrated over many years. He echoed Jennifer's comments: we need to professionalize our approach to fire safety, staffed by a person who marines on a daily basis on fire; who is inspecting homes on a daily basis; who knows the terrain; who has years of hands-on fire suppression experience and directing it. This points to the Fire Marshal. We should defer to career professionals and possibly staff that reports to him if workload is high. Bob applauded the review of NFPA 1140.

Rob Younge has been worried about this for the last year, and has been working with his neighborhood. He couldn't agree more that it's critically important that we listen to people who have the experience in fire and listen to them about the decisions we'll make in the future.

#### **Item 6 - Town Relationship with Private Company to Perform Wildfire Mitigation Assessments (Staff):**

Michael, Jeremy and Karen have been engaged with companies to provide assessments of properties that do home assessments. This discussion was to consider how the Town could kick-start wildfire preventive efforts on private properties. \$100-500 is the typical cost. Some providers waive the fee and some don't if you buy products. Do we want a program like this?

Karen doesn't want to disrespect the work that WFPD does. People have to be firefighters, not salespeople with a checklist. They need to have an S-130 or red card and be a wildland firefighter.

- Jeremy said that is currently the case with providers they're considering

Dale is a little bit uncomfortable with the Town recommendations until they're vetted well.

Meghan wanted to share that she had All Risk Shield out They didn't charge for the visit and gave a comprehensive evaluation. Most items were things to do on her own. ARS told her about the best products that she could buy herself. The product he sold was FOS-Check service. The ARS evaluation didn't come with a fee. We need this in our community - the empowerment to protect home, family, and our community.

Don expressed that the process of home evaluation shouldn't change regardless of who does the evaluation. The only thing that changes are the conditions around the house. Don has a staff of 3 throughout the fire district. Feel free to use them. Small inexpensive things can make a big difference too. Contractors come into play to remove trees, change siding, windows, etc. But, as the number of home evaluations increases, it does get harder to handle them all.

Jeremy outlined a possibility that perhaps the Town purchases a group buy of home evaluation to help support the work of WFPD with private vendors.

Michael expressed a few desires for vendor qualifications: they should have a checklist approach and pictures. They should not just promote a product line.

Vic Schacter has experience with Ember Defense. They did an Excellent job for \$100. He went that route because they didn't want to burden WFPD. They offered good recommendations, pictures, and a good narrative. Maybe the Town provides a list of organizations that you can/should use.

Rob Younge started home hardening with WFPD. It was a rough shock for him. Looking back at the advice he got, WFPD was the most helpful on their evaluations compared to 5 other contractors. They gave great feedback that didn't kill him. It's taken him a year to get to a safer place. He highly recommended Woodside Fire.

Patty Dewes is leary of for-profit firms and expressed that it's not the problem of the initial assessment, it's the problem of getting them to follow up on the recommendations. The hard nugget is getting people to follow through on recommendations.

Don has also developed a self-guided assessment checklist. It includes three columns: 1. conditions around the house, 2: why it matters, 3: what you can do about each item. Feel free to call him for this. He may post on his web site.

Jeremy wants to know if we want him to do additional research:

- Michael said it's important to put on the list for prioritization and ease;
- Karen and Megan agreed;
- Jeff asked if we typically endorse these guys and recommend only those who do zero cost evaluations. Or, the town might consider an RFP buy and provide to home owners for free;
- Jennifer likes the proposal to offer to some home owners who get nervous about having WFPD on their property;
- Jeff had a caveat about doing free evals then there's more pressure to sell product; when evaluating vendors, we should have guide in hand they can refer to the guide to see it matches with WFPD.

**Item 7 - Funding for Additional Vegetation Management on Town-Owned Property (Karen Vahtra)**

Karen Vahtra opened up a discussion about vegetation management on Open Space lands and the ROW along the street. We've cleaned up brush, but have not cleaned up Eucalyptus and Pine trees.

Since fees to the residents won't work for roadway clean up, Karen proposed a couple of alternatives:

- A Utility User's tax: currently this tax is 4.5% and funds Open Space. The Town Council could increase by 1% and garner \$300k a year. It's not regressive and we could do this without voter approval. More than 1% would require ballot measure.
- Parcel Tax: Karen liked that this approach means the tax can be equitable/progressive. It requires  $\frac{2}{3}$  passage of voters. She felt confident it might be worth an effort.

Karen added the following details:

- The total estimated need is \$2-3 million for the initial cleanup.
- Any tax has to be related to things in town and on public property.
- Not included in the proposed cost:
  - Widening of Alpine because it's out of PV proper.
  - Shaded fuel break along Town
- The full proposal includes standards for accountability, administration, and a formal structure for managing the revenues.

Jennifer had two comments:

- She strongly advocated pursuing a Utility Tax because it's quicker, can be turned on and off by the Town Council more readily. A property tax would require a \$50k consultant study, and getting  $\frac{2}{3}$  of voter support is a long process and a heavy lift.
- The current Open Space utility tax should be tapped for land maintenance fees because it's the cost of land ownership and has been approved by Town Counsel. Taxpayers should not have to pay more to have land it owns maintained.

Jeff said that since the bulk of funds are needed more immediately than the Utility Tax would allow, we could look into a bond with pay back supported by utility tax revenues.

Dale preferred a bond preferred to the Parcel tax, with the utility tax used to raise immediate revenue.

Regarding tapping the Open Space fund:

- Michael asked if we access some of the open space funds
- Jeremy mentioned it is politically difficult
- Jennifer said it's a difficult thing to ask any resident to clean up their space, how can we do that and not ask the Town to clean up property it owns with money they have clear access to?

Karen pulled together the discussion, highlighting the preference for a 1% increase in the Utility tax over 10 years

- Jennifer advocated with take both steps: raise the Utility tax, then think about a bond to finance upfront access to revenues.
- Meghan agreed with that approach
- Michael liked the accountability of having a board spend the money.
- Jennifer mentioned that might be a role of the AHJ

Jeremy said to follow up on our recommendation and to vote on it, the committee has to put the proposal on the next agenda. Karen asked that we add on the next agenda an increase of 1% to the Utility Tax.

### **Item 8- Committee Status - Ad Hoc to Standing Committee**

Jeremy reported that we are now a standing committee.

### **Item 9- Discussion of Date/Time for Monthly Meetings (Michael Tomars, Chair)**

Michael said we need a predictable meeting schedule. It's been hard to do this so he proposed this same time going forward every month. Many members have occasional commitments on Tuesdays. First Tuesday of the month at 4pm but after some discussion decided it was the best alternative.

### **Item 10 - Subcommittee Updates**

- A. Resident Communications and Outreach/Evacuation Routes (Dale)
  - a. Contract was given to Fair and Pears.
  - b. Had preliminary meeting
  - c. Evac study will take 6 months
- B. Home Hardening/Insurance/Infrastructure Back-up (Jeff)
  - a. Has not met recently
  - b. The committee-proposed home hardening code improvements are now in the hands of a new consultant to get the language written.
  - c. The Planning Commission will review sometime in November
- C. Vegetation Management/Defensible Space (Karen)
  - a. Hasn't met formally
  - b. The Conservation Committee working on document about underbrush useful for residents.

### **Item 11 - Standing Items - As Needed**

- A. Staff Updates
  - a. Jeremy shared appreciation for MJ Lee and her role in communications from the committee.
  - b. The Town has hired new assistant Town Manager, who will be in charge of Emergency Preparedness and Wildfire (Melvin Gaines)
  - c. There will be an Emergency Exercise in early November. It will be the first test of our virtual tool.
  - d. ABAG gathered together like-minded cities to discuss nexus between housing and wildfire issues. It has morphed into a larger engagement. See: [https://abag.ca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2021-10/Slides\\_Session01\\_WildfireHousing.pdf](https://abag.ca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2021-10/Slides_Session01_WildfireHousing.pdf) and <https://abag.ca.gov/our-work/housing/regional-housing-technical-assistance/local-assistance-grants-collaboratives-and>
  - e. Jeremy shared a letter encouraging the committees to coordinate
- B. Committee Member Updates
  - a. Gary Chin is putting together information on fire safety for the Town picnic
- C. Review of Committee Correspondences/Items of Note
  - a. Dudley Carlson thanked committee members for the job they are doing.

### **Item 12- Adjournment**

The Committee meeting was adjourned at 8:34 p.m.





# Portola Valley Wildfire Preparedness Committee

NFPA 1140 AHJ

2 November 2021

Follow-Up and Recommendations

# NFPA 1140 Standard for Wildland Fire Protection (2022 edition)



- The **National Fire Protection Association** is an international nonprofit organization devoted to eliminating death, injury, property and economic loss due to fire, electrical and related hazards. It publishes more than 300 consensus codes and standards intended to minimize the possibility and effects of fire and other risks. NFPA codes and standards, administered by more than 250 Technical Committees with 8,000 volunteers, are adopted used throughout the world.
- The 2022 edition of NFPA 1140, Standard for Wildland Fire Protection, serves as a single wildland fire safety standard. Fire Marshal Bullard will be incorporating portions of NPFA 1140 into the fire codes during the next revision (end of 2022).
- NPFA 1140 is dense, comprehensive, and covers far more topics than are germane for our committee.
- However, there are several recommendations that could be appropriate for Portola Valley.
- NFPA 1140 lays out recommended “best practices” as currently understood.

# AHJ – Authority Having Jurisdiction

- AHJ – An organization, office, or individual responsible for enforcing all provisions for Wildland Fire Protection.
  - The AHJ is responsible for hazard and risk assessments, assessment of wildfire hazards in structural ignition zones, building design, location and construction, and fuels modification in hazard areas and areas surrounding structures.
  - Also (thru WUI coordinator) responsible for development of plans for the reduction of the fire risks and hazards associated in the WUI
  - Also responsible for processing proposed projects so that they are in accordance with applicable policies, procedures, codes and standards. The AHJ would be involved at the earliest stages of the proposal.
  - If the fire department is not the AHJ, the AHJ shall consult with the fire department on all matters relative to enforcement to ensure that the needs of the fire department are met in providing fire protections.
  - Essentially, the AHJ is the single point of contact and decision maker for all issues associated with wildland fire safety.

# Does Portola Valley need an AHJ (or equivalent)

- Pros

- Single decision point for all Wildfire related issues
- Removes jurisdictional and procedural bottlenecks, delays, and disputes
- Smoother incorporation of “best practices” and new information into decisions
- Quicker and more timely decisions
- Could be WFPD, this committee, or Independent group/person
- Safer Portola Valley

- Cons

- Possible additional steps for project approvals
- Possible additional costs for projects

## Portola Valley needs an AHJ

- Recommendation that Portola Valley assigns Woodside Fire Protection District as the AHJ for all Wildfire related issues.
- All new projects would require WFPD approval



# Portola Valley Wildfire Preparedness Committee

Building Separation

2 November 2021

Introduction/Discussion/Recommendations

# Background

**Current wildfire research on the survivability of a home during a wildfire has found the three most important variables are:**

- Defensible space/vegetation management ★
- Home hardening & construction materials ★
- Structure-to-structure proximity

# Introduction

- Our knowledge of wildfire and resulting best practices to mitigate community damage continues to evolve rapidly, far outpacing revisions to building codes.
- For example, the following paper, detailing a study of the Camp Fire in Paradise, was just published on October 4, 2021
  - “Housing arrangement and vegetation factors associated with single-family home survival in the 2018 Camp Fire, California”
  - <https://fireecology.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s42408-021-00117-0>

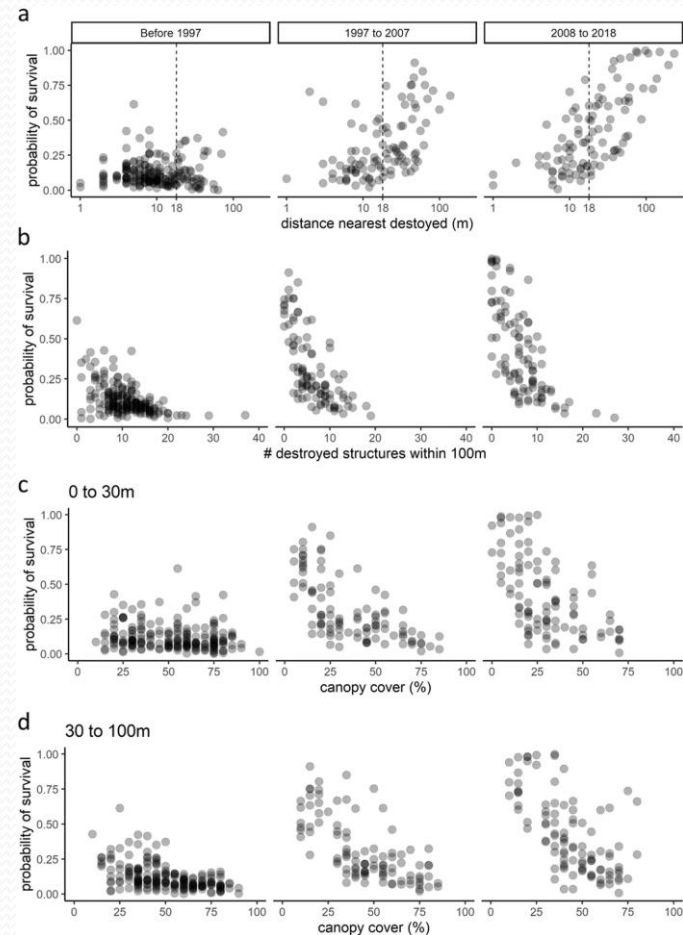


# Summary of Findings

- Distance to nearest destroyed structure and the total number of destroyed structures within 328 feet were consistently the strongest predictors of home destruction in the analyses. **The analyses identified a threshold of 59 feet from the nearest destroyed structure that best differentiated surviving and destroyed homes.**
- Based on the study sample, a majority (73.6%) of the destroyed homes in Paradise were <59 feet from a destroyed structure.
- Newer homes built after 1972, where the nearest burning structure was >59 feet away, and fuels associated with vegetation 98–328 feet from the home kept at moderate and lower levels (<53% canopy cover) had a **61% survival rate—an approximately 5-fold improvement** over the Paradise housing population as a whole.
- Between home spacing has been evaluated in post-fire assessments conducted after the Witch Fire in San Diego County, California (Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety [2008](#)), the Waldo Canyon Fire in Colorado Springs, Colorado (Quarles et al. [2013](#)), and the Black Bear Cub Fire in Sevier County, Tennessee (Quarles and Konz [2016](#)). **During each of these fires, home-to-home spread was observed with spacing less than 32 feet.**

# Survivability Data

- Survivability maximized at 73% with the following:
  - $\geq 59$  feet from the nearest destroyed structure
  - $< 53\%$  canopy cover within 98-328 feet
  - built  $\geq 1973$
  - slope  $< 8.2\%$
- Homes built prior to 1997 fared poorly, with only 11.5% surviving, compared with 38.5% survival for homes built in 1997 and after. The difference in survival percentage for homes built **immediately before and after the adoption of Chapter 7A in the California Building Code (37% and 44%, respectively) was not statistically significant.**



# NFPA 1140 Standard for Wildland Fire Protection (2022 edition)



- The **National Fire Protection Association** is an international nonprofit organization devoted to eliminating death, injury, property and economic loss due to fire, electrical and related hazards. It publishes more than 300 consensus codes and standards intended to minimize the possibility and effects of fire and other risks. NFPA codes and standards, administered by more than 250 Technical Committees with 8,000 volunteers, are adopted used throughout the world.
- The 2022 edition of NFPA 1140, Standard for Wildland Fire Protection, serves as a single wildland fire safety standard.
- NFPA 1140
  - **Section 12.2.1 “any building shall be separated from other buildings by at least 30 ft and be set back at least 30 feet from a property line.”**
  - **Section 12.2.2 “any building that exceeds 30 feet in height above the average adjacent ground elevation and that is not protected by an automatic sprinkler system, shall be separated from any other structure by at least 50 ft and be set back at least 30 ft from a property line.”**

## Recommendation

- **In light of the overwhelming data, it is recommended that:**
  - **Portola Valley adopt the NFPA 1140 section 12.2.1 and 12.2.2**
  - Section 12.2.1 “any building shall be separated from other buildings by at least 30 ft and be set back at least 30 feet from a property line.”
  - Section 12.2.2 “any building that exceeds 30 feet in height above the average adjacent ground elevation and that is not protected by an automatic sprinkler system, shall be separated from any other structure by at least 50 ft and be set back at least 30 ft from a property line.”

## Sharon Hanlon

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**From:** Bob Turcott <  
**Sent:** Monday, November 1, 2021 11:52 AM  
**To:** Sharon Hanlon  
**Cc:** MICHAEL TOMARS  
**Subject:** Letter to Wildfire Committee regarding 11/2 meeting

Hi Sharon,

Please forward to Wildfire Preparedness Committee members and, at the next opportunity, include in the public packet.

Dear Wildfire Preparedness Committee member:

**I urge you to vote to approve the two proposals** that are on the agenda of the Tuesday 11/2 committee meeting:

1. Recommend that WFPD be designated as the Authority Having Jurisdiction, as defined by NFPA 1140, and
2. Recommend that NFPA 1140 minimum building separation standards be adopted

The fire hazard we face is obvious and worsening. The data are clear: **vegetation management and home hardening are not enough.**

**We need competent, professional expertise** to implement and administer the duties of the AHJ as defined by NFPA 1140. This role must be filled by professionals whose priority and sole focus is fire safety.

We can't ignore the data that so clearly shows the importance of building separation, and that clearly shows that home hardening can't compensate for inadequate separation. In our high-risk wildland, **we must adopt these current, modest standards.**

There may be arguments against approving these recommendations, but I'm having a hard time thinking of any. Perhaps some will be concerned with competing demands, such as the need to plan for 253 new residences in our next housing cycle. Perhaps some will be concerned about administrative complexity or perceived loss of control.

Allow me to presume to say this: it's not the role of this committee to weigh competing demands. That's the role of the Town Council. **This committee is the only body that can give unfiltered, uncompromised recommendations about best practices for fire safety.** If you won't recommend best practices, who will?

thank you,  
Bob Turcott

## Sharon Hanlon

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**From:** Eugene Chaput <  
**Sent:** Monday, November 1, 2021 12:31 PM  
**To:** Sharon Hanlon  
**Subject:** Wildfire Preparedness Committee

Hi Sharon:  
Please forward to all Committee members. Thanks

Dear Wildfire Preparedness Committee members:

**I urge you all to vote to approve the two proposals** that are on the agenda of the Tuesday 11/2 committee meeting:

1. Recommend that WFPD be designated as the Authority Having Jurisdiction, as defined by NFPA 1140, and
2. Recommend that NFPA 1140 minimum building separation standards be adopted

Sue and Gene Chaput

## Sharon Hanlon

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**From:** Alice Schenk <  
**Sent:** Monday, November 1, 2021 12:36 PM  
**To:** Sharon Hanlon  
**Subject:** Wildlife Preparedness Committee Agenda

Dear Sharon,

As a 30 year resident of Portola Valley, and one who is increasingly anxious about our vulnerability in fire season, I vigorously support the approval of the two items on the Wildlife Preparedness Committee agenda. I do not see how there would even be any controversy about this.

Please copy and see that the members of this committee get my comment.

Thank you.

Alice Schenk

Westridge Drive

## Sharon Hanlon

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**From:** Dr. Sonya Mehta  
**Sent:** Monday, November 1, 2021 4:41 PM  
**To:** Sharon Hanlon  
**Cc:** mtomars  
**Subject:** Fire prevention

Dear Shanlon

Please forward this to the Wildness Preparedness Committee.

I totally agree and endorse what Bob Truscotts email below states. I hope the committee will go along with his recommendations

**I urge you to vote to approve the two proposals** that are on the agenda of the Tuesday 11/2 committee meeting:

1. Recommend that WFPD be designated as the Authority Having Jurisdiction, as defined by NFPA 1140, and
2. Recommend that NFPA 1140 minimum building separation standards be adopted

The fire hazard we face is obvious and worsening. The data are clear: **vegetation management and home hardening are not enough.**

**We need competent, professional expertise** to implement and administer the duties of the AHJ as defined by NFPA 1140. This role must be filled by professionals whose priority and sole focus is fire safety.

We can't ignore the data that so clearly shows the importance of building separation, and that clearly shows that home hardening can't compensate for inadequate separation. In our high-risk wildland, **we must adopt these current, modest standards.**

There may be arguments against approving these recommendations, but I'm having a hard time thinking of any. Perhaps some will be concerned with competing demands, such as the need to plan for 253 new residences in our next housing cycle. Perhaps some will be concerned about administrative complexity or perceived loss of control.

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Dr Sonya Mehta  
Sent from my iPhone



## Sharon Hanlon

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**From:** Karen Askey  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 2, 2021 10:48 AM  
**To:** Sharon Hanlon  
**Cc:** Dale R Pfau  
**Subject:** Comments for Wildfire Preparedness Committee 11/2/21

Hi Sharon,

Please forward to Wildfire Preparedness Committee members and, at the next opportunity, include in the public pack.

Dear Wildfire Preparedness Committee:

Thank you for volunteering your time and addressing top priority issues for the Town of Portola Valley.

The safety of our residents is one of the biggest concerns in our town. The threat of fire looms large, given climate changes and the topography of Portola Valley. We should be minimizing any risk to the greatest extent we can. This is, quite literally, a life or death issue.

I urge the Committee (and the Town Council) to designate the Woodside Fire Protection District as the Authority Having Jurisdiction, and to adopt NFPA 1140 minimum building separation standards.

Let's rely on the experts and best practices.

Thank you for your consideration.

Karen Askey  
Groveland Street

## Sharon Hanlon

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**From:** Matthew Muffly  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 2, 2021 11:45 AM  
**To:** Sharon Hanlon  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** Letter to Wildfire Committee regarding 11/2 meeting

Hi Sharon,

Please forward to Wildfire Preparedness Committee members and include in the public packet.

Dear Wildfire Preparedness Committee member:

**I urge you to vote to approve the two common-sense proposals** that are on the agenda of the Tuesday 11/2 committee meeting:

1. Recommend that WFPD be designated as the Authority Having Jurisdiction, as defined by NFPA 1140, and
2. Recommend that NFPA 1140 minimum building separation standards be adopted

**We need competent, professional expertise** to implement and administer the duties of the AHJ as defined by NFPA 1140. This role must be filled by professionals whose priority and sole focus is fire safety.

We can't ignore the data that so clearly shows the importance of building separation, and that clearly shows that home hardening can't compensate for inadequate separation. In our high-risk wildland, **we must adopt these current, modest standards.**

Allow me to presume to say this: it's not the role of this committee to weigh competing demands. That's the role of the Town Council. **This committee is the only body that can give unfiltered, uncompromised recommendations about best practices for fire safety.** If you won't recommend best practices, who will?

Sincerely,  
Matthew Muffly

**Sharon Hanlon**

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**From:** John Richardson  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 2, 2021 11:56 AM  
**To:** Sharon Hanlon  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** Recommendation for the Committee Tonight

Greetings Shanlon:

Please distribute this to the Committee for the meeting tonight.

Thanks.

John Richardson, Westridge Drive

+++++

Dear Wildfire Preparedness Committee member:

**I urge you to vote to approve the two proposals** that are on the agenda of the Tuesday 11/2 committee meeting:

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We can't ignore the data that so clearly shows the importance of building separation, and that clearly shows that home hardening can't compensate for inadequate separation. In our high-risk wildland, **we must adopt these current, modest standards.**

There may be arguments against approving these recommendations, but I'm having a hard time thinking of any. Perhaps some will be concerned with competing demands, such as the need to plan for 253 new residences in our next housing cycle. Perhaps some will be concerned about administrative complexity or perceived loss of control.

Allow me to presume to say this: it's not the role of this committee to weigh competing demands. That's the role of the Town Council. **This committee is the only body that can give unfiltered, uncompromised recommendations about best practices for fire safety.** If you won't recommend best practices, who will?

Thank you,

John Richardson, Westridge Drive

## Sharon Hanlon

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**From:** Barbara Vetter  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 2, 2021 12:30 PM  
**To:** Sharon Hanlon  
**Subject:** Concerns re wildfire risk

Hi Sharon,  
Please forward to Wildfire Preparedness Committee members and, at the next opportunity, include in the public packet.

Dear Wildfire Preparedness Committee member:

**I urge you to vote to approve the two proposals** that are on the agenda of the Tuesday 11/2 committee meeting:

1. Recommend that WFPD be designated as the Authority Having Jurisdiction, as defined by NFPA 1140, and
2. Recommend that NFPA 1140 minimum building separation standards be adopted

The fire hazard we face is obvious and worsening. The data are clear: **vegetation management and home hardening are not enough.**

**We need competent, professional expertise** to implement and administer the duties of the AHJ as defined by NFPA 1140. This role must be filled by professionals whose priority and sole focus is fire safety.

We can't ignore the data that so clearly shows the importance of building separation, and that clearly shows that home hardening can't compensate for inadequate separation. In our high-risk wildland, **we must adopt these current, modest standards.**

Thank you for your time and dedication,  
B Vetter

Sent from my iPad

## Sharon Hanlon

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**From:** Ron Eastman  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 2, 2021 12:31 PM  
**To:** Sharon Hanlon  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** 11/2 Meeting of Wildfire Preparedness Committee

Sharon,

Please forward this letter to the Wildfire Preparedness committee. Thank you!

Ron

Dear Wildfire Committee Members,

- I urge you to **recommend that Woodside Fire Protection District be designated as the Authority Having Jurisdiction**, as described the National Fire Protection Association standards proposal NFPA 1140. Wildfire is the greatest existential threat the community of Portola Valley faces, and it is essential that decisions pertaining to fire safety be made not by elected lay people, but by the professionals, utilizing the latest scientific research.
- I urge you to **recommend that NFPA 1140 minimum building separation standards be adopted**. The threat of fire is undeniable, and the science is clear.



(CZU Complex fire, Aug 20, 2021, burning 3 miles from the intersection of Alpine and Portola Road.

Sincerely Yours  
Ron Eastman  
Portola Valley

## Sharon Hanlon

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**From:** Ulrich Aldag  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 2, 2021 1:28 PM  
**To:** Sharon Hanlon  
**Subject:** Letter to the Wildfire Preparedness Committee

Hi Shanlon,

Please pass the following letter on to the WP Committee:

### **Re; Tuesday 11/2 Wildfire Preparedness Committee Meeting:**

Along with many neighbors I urge you to approve the two proposals you are considering this evening

1. Recommend that WFPD or its Fire Marshal be designated as the Authority Having Jurisdiction, as defined by NFPA 1140.
2. Recommend that NFPA 1140 minimum building separation standards be adopted

We need professional expertise to implement and administer the duties of the AHJ as defined by NFPA 1140. This role must be filled by a professional whose priority and sole focus is fire safety.

We can't ignore the data that shows the importance of building separation, and that clearly shows that home hardening can't compensate for inadequate separation. In our high-risk Town we should adopt these standards.

I trust the Wildfire Preparedness committee will make these recommendations to the Town Council with the emphasis commensurate with the importance of the matter for the Fire Safety of our town.

Sincerely

Ulrich Aldag

Westridge Drive

## Sharon Hanlon

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**From:** Andrew Thompson  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 2, 2021 2:42 PM  
**To:** Sharon Hanlon  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** Wildfire Preparedness Committee

Dear Sharon

Please can you make sure all of the Wildfire Preparedness Committee receive the letter below and that if possible it is included as part of the meeting minutes and or materials that are prepared for the public record.

Many thanks,

Andy and Sylvia Thompson

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Dear Wildfire Preparedness Committee:

**Re; Tuesday 11/2 Committee Meeting:**

We urge you to approve the two proposals you are considering this evening

1. Recommend that WFPD be designated as the Authority Having Jurisdiction, as defined by NFPA 1140
2. Recommend that NFPA 1140 minimum building separation standards be adopted

The fire hazard we face is obvious and worsening. The data are clear: vegetation management and home hardening are not enough.

We need professional expertise to implement and administer the duties of the AHJ as defined by NFPA 1140. This role must be filled by professionals whose priority and sole focus is fire safety.

We can't ignore the data that shows the importance of building separation, and that clearly shows that home hardening can't compensate for inadequate separation. In our high-risk Town we should adopt these standards.

***This Wildfire Preparedness Committee is the body that should give uncompromised recommendations about best practices for fire safety in Portola Valley.***

We appreciate your service and are extremely grateful for your efforts to protect the safety of Portola Valley residents.

Sincerely

Andrew and Sylvia Thompson  
Westridge Drive  
Portola Valley  
Residents since 1993

## Sharon Hanlon

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**Subject:** FW: Please share with all committee members for Tuesday 11/2 Committee Meeting:

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**From:** Maurisa Sommerfield

**Sent:** Tuesday, November 2, 2021 2:49 PM

**To:** Sharon Hanlon <shanlon@portolavalley.net>;

**Subject:** Please share with all committee members for Tuesday 11/2 Committee Meeting:

Dear Wildfire Preparedness Committee:

I urge you to approve the two proposals you are considering this evening

1. Recommend that WFPD be designated as the Authority Having Jurisdiction, as defined by NFPA 1140
2. Recommend that NFPA 1140 minimum building separation standards be adopted

The fire hazard we face is obvious and worsening. The data are clear: vegetation management and home hardening are not enough.

We need professional expertise to implement and administer the duties of the AHJ as defined by NFPA 1140. This role must be filled by professionals whose priority and sole focus is fire safety.

We can't ignore the data that shows the importance of building separation, and that clearly shows that home hardening can't compensate for inadequate separation. In our high-risk Town we should adopt these standards.

***This Wildfire Preparedness Committee is the body that should give uncompromised recommendations about best practices for fire safety in Portola Valley.***

We appreciate your service and are extremely grateful for your efforts to protect the safety of Portola Valley residents.

Thank you,

Maurisa Sommerfield  
Goya Rd



This email was received after the 3:30 pm cut-off. It was not included in the file that went to the meeting

## **Sharon Hanlon**

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**From:** Helga Lewis  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 2, 2021 3:40 PM  
**To:** Sharon Hanlon  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** To the Wildfire Preparedness Committee

Hello Shanlon,

Please pass the following letter on to the WP Committee:

### **Re: Tuesday 11/2 Wildfire Preparedness Committee Meeting:**

Along with many neighbors as a resident of Portola Valley I also urge you to approve the two proposals you are considering this evening.

1. Recommend that WFPD or its Fire Marshal be designated as the Authority Having Jurisdiction, as defined by NFPA 1140.
2. Recommend that NFPA 1140 minimum building separation standards be adopted

We need professional expertise to implement and administer the duties of the AHJ as defined by NFPA 1140. This role must be filled by a professional and expert whose priority and sole focus is fire safety.

We can't ignore the data that shows the importance of building separation, and that clearly shows that home hardening can't compensate for inadequate separation. In our high-risk Town we should adopt these standards.

I trust the Wildfire Preparedness Committee will make these recommendations to the Town Council with the emphasis commensurate with the importance of the matter for the Fire Safety of our town.

Sincerely,

Helga Lewis

Westridge Drive