

TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING NO. 707, NOVEMBER 29, 2006

ROLL CALL

Mayor Toben called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Willis called the roll:

Present: Councilmembers Davis, Derwin, Driscoll (5:10-5:45 p.m.) and Merk, and Mayor Toben
Absent: None
Others: Asst. Town Administrator Willis

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

SallyAnn Reiss, Portola Valley Community Fund (PVCF), reviewed her memo of 11/29/06 on the \$1 million donation from an anonymous donor for the new Town Center project. She discussed the four Town facilities and two support services that the donor was particularly interested in supporting. Mayor Toben commended the PVCF steering committee for their work and asked that the Council's immense gratitude be conveyed to the donor.

REGULAR AGENDA

STUDY SESSION: Town Emergency Preparedness Efforts and Activities

Mayor Toben said on each month with a fifth Wednesday, the Council would hold a special meeting to discuss emergency preparedness and response. The Emergency Preparedness Committee (EPC) and the Town's CERPP structure had been helpful in informing the Council of its responsibility in the event of a natural disaster in the community. Significant progress had been made this year, and he was pleased that the Town was on a path of continuing to improve readiness.

Marianne Plunder, Chair-EPC, introduced members of the committee and described their special qualifications. Using overheads, she discussed: 1) status of the Town's emergency preparedness goals; 2) recommendations made by the EPC in January 2006 and training/drills held; 3) interagency cooperation; 4) the EOC binder; 5) EOC forms; 6) EOC and alternate location; 7) Town containers/emergency supplies; 8) Sequoias triage center; 9) status of the medical reserve corps (MRC) and engaging local medical people; 10) new CERPP divisions and communications capabilities; and 11) areas in need of attention.

In terms of working with neighboring towns, Councilmember Driscoll noted that Palo Alto's border with the Town was largely grass, open and could easily be a source of fire. Ms. Plunder said the Town had not talked with Palo Alto at this point; they were not part of CERPP or in the same fire protection district. She agreed that should be pursued. Councilmember Driscoll added that Stanford had a sophisticated plan and should also be involved. Mayor Toben said a meeting with Stanford on fuel management should be conducted at a fairly high level with a member of the Council. The residents of Westridge were surrounded by Stanford land, and Stanford should be concerned about the potential liability in failing to manage fuel loads. Councilmember Davis noted that there was some reluctance to fuel management in areas where experiments were being conducted, such as Jasper Ridge. Responding to Mayor Toben, Ms. Plunder said the Westridge CERPP division needed quite a bit of work, but they just got a new division leader and progress was being made. She thought Westridge would be up and running during 2007. Councilmember Derwin and Bill Lane offered to assist. Responding to Councilmember Davis, Ms. Plunder said the EPC had been working with the Blue Oaks division for three years trying to get them tied in with radio communication.

Councilmembers and Ms. Plunder discussed areas in Town in need of wildland fire prevention. Ms. Plunder discussed how difficult it was for the Fire District to figure out how to access certain fire risk areas. Mayor

Toben suggested holding drills with the Fire District.

In terms of radio communications, Ms. Plunder said the recent exercise demonstrated that the County did not have any time or inclination to talk to the Town. They would be inundated with calls for help and would not be able to help the Town. Mr. Willis added that the radio link had worked perfectly during the entire exercise, but requests for help were not responded to. The Town would be participating in the debriefing of the exercise next week, and this issue would be pursued. Ms. Plunder said the Town needed to engage the local ham radio operators, of which there were plenty in Town. During the last exercise, there was only one available. Responding to Mayor Toben, she discussed the need for experienced ham radio operators.

Michelle Green, EPC, described a shelter simulation exercise. Ms. Plunder said the Town needed to get more training on setting up a shelter in case the roads weren't open. Responding to Mayor Toben, she said the Red Cross certified shelter sites in Portola Valley were the schools. Mayor Toben said the new Town Center community hall would also be a logical site. Bill Lane noted that the Mounted Patrol grounds would be a logical site for the residents of Woodside. Additionally, he said Bill Wraith who was with the Mounted Patrol as well as involved with the Alpine Hills Swim and Tennis Club thought the Club could be a site if the necessary equipment was installed.

Ms. Plunder said the Sequoias was very organized and had a plan for their residents. The safety of elderly people elsewhere in Town needed to be addressed. Councilmember Merk said how to deal with horses and pets also needed to be addressed. Ms. Plunder noted that Woodside had an Animal Committee and had done some work along those lines.

Councilmember Merk questioned how dependable the microwave link was. He suggested the Town have its own dish at the new Town Center rather than depending on the landline between Town Hall and the Fire Department. Mr. Willis said the Town had been putting money into the microwave system for some time. He said questions had been raised with the County as to the reliability, and he was expecting a report back.

John Boice said there were three primary functions of the EPC: 1) get information about what was happening in the Town; 2) provide whatever resources the Town had, such as building and road inspectors; and 3) provide help from outside sources, which was the most difficult. The Town would have to depend on its own resources for most of what could be done. As many people and resources as possible needed to be on tap to get the job done. Mayor Toben said Mr. Lane had indicated many times that Portola Valley would likely be the last city to get help after a major disaster for logical reasons. Lots of attention would be paid to the more populated areas. The Town needed to identify its vulnerability and maximize the volunteer corps.

Mayor Toben summarized action items: 1) schedule a meeting with Stanford to talk about fuel management; 2) ramp up the Westridge CERPP division, with Councilmember Derwin and Mr. Lane assisting; 3) connect with the Fire Protection District to do exercises on locating incidents in Town; 4) improve communications; and 5) identify medical personnel in Town who could function in the Medical Reserve Corps.

Responding to Mayor Toben, committee members commented on the ability of the EPC to handle this task: 1) it needed to be approached in a very structured way; 2) it could be accomplished—but not quickly; 3) committee membership was adequate providing no members were lost; 4) the work of planning and developing the systems was proceeding, but more people were needed to staff the actual functions that would be required in an emergency; 5) radio operators and people who would be operating the EOC were in short supply; 6) some kind of cadre of volunteers needed to be built up who could perform the functions in an emergency; and 7) Public Works Committee members had been used before in exercises and might be able to help as well as other committee members.

Councilmember Merk said almost all of the Committee members were active in CERPP. There were a lot of

things going on, but he felt depth was lacking. When the first twelve hours was over, he questioned who would be trained and available to take the second shift. Ms. Plunder said there would be a point in time when the CERPP neighborhoods would be under control. Each division leader could be asked who in their division could become a 2nd or 3rd level of defense for the EPC and EOC. They were interested and semi-trained. Responding to Mayor Toben, she it would be helpful if the Council could generate some interest in the community. It was a topic that a lot of people didn't want to think about. Mayor Toben suggested increasing publicity for the next emergency preparedness Council meeting in January. The agenda for that meeting should be shaped to attract people. A Committee member (?) said it should also be made clear that these people did not have to commit themselves to attending a series of meetings; they would be in a stand-by position.

Given the anonymous donor's interest in emergency preparedness, Bill Lane suggested money be drawn from the PVCF to fund emergency planning/preparedness. He noted that \$250,000 had been specifically designated for that purpose. There was \$25,000 for the Fire District, \$25,000 for CERPP, and \$200,000 for the Emergency Response Facility housed in the Town Hall. A disaster could happen tomorrow, and a lot of very terrible things could be mitigated ahead of time by using some of these funds. Mayor Toben concurred.

Mr. Willis discussed upcoming training including an introductory class on NIMS (IS-700) on December 20, 2006, 8:30 a.m. to noon in the Schoolhouse; Town and Woodside Councilmembers were invited, as were all the CERPP members. He discussed the recent Golden Guardian exercise noting that the list of "lessons learned" would be forwarded to the County as part of the Town's feedback. That had generated a variety of tasks for staff to address. Mayor Toben suggested sending the Town's comments directly to Rich Gordon.

Mr. Willis discussed the revised Emergency/Disaster Response Handbook, which was still undergoing revision/update. The focus of the first six sections was on those things that specifically pertained to the Town; the SEMS/NIMS material would be added as updates became available. He discussed the new quick task cards, which would facilitate getting the EOC and radios up and running. Color was also used in the binder; pink sheets needed to be focused on first. He asked Councilmembers to mark up their copies and make suggestions.

Councilmember Merk thanked Mr. Willis for his work, noting that the cards would be very helpful. Referring to Section 1, EOC Activation (p. 9), he said the "Open Issues" listed needed to be addressed; each one was quite crucial. Responding to Councilmember Merk, Mr. Willis said the items highlighted on the container inventory lists showed those items that were not up to planned inventory level. Referring to Section 1, p. 13, Councilmember Merk said the hand fuel pump was very sensitive and could only pump fuel. That should be marked and it should be tested annually with fuel. Ms. Plunder suggested that be added to the maintenance plan. Responding to Councilmember Merk, Mr. Willis said the contacts/telephone numbers were all being worked on. Councilmember Davis said some of these things needed to be completed as soon as possible. Mr. Willis pointed out that the material on the pink sheets was all current. Ms. Plunder reiterated that the focus was on how to get the EOC started.

Referring to Section 2 (pp. 13 and 19), Councilmember Merk said the contact info on p. 19 should come before p. 13. Mr. Willis said there was a variety of different sheets of contact numbers displayed slightly differently; at this point, they were all in the binder and would be weeded through. Responding to Councilmember Davis, he said "updated as of" dates would be added as the material was updated.

Councilmember Merk said a number of positions needed to be filled, but the staff was small; the same name kept coming up again and again. That got back to the issue of depth. Mr. Willis said the SEMS model applied to communities that were large and small. The Town's staff was limited and people would have to play multiple roles. In emergencies, people pitched in and you did the best you could. A Committee member added that flexibility and evolution of structure were key parts that were built into the incident

command system.

Council and Committee members commended Mr. Willis on his work.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Mayor

Town Clerk