

SPECIAL JOINT TOWN COUNCIL / EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS COMMITTEE (EPC) MEETING  
NO. 826 AUGUST 31, 2011

Vice Mayor Derwin called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Ms. Howard called the roll.

Present: Councilmembers John Richards, Steve Toben and Ann Wengert; Vice Mayor Maryann Derwin

EPC Members John Boice, Diana Koin, Anne Kopf-Sill and Ray Rothrock; Secretary Derry Kabcenell; Vice Chair Craig Taylor

Absent: Mayor Ted Driscoll, EPC members David Howes and Chair Chris Raanes

Others: Angela Howard, Town Manager  
Sharon Hanlon, Town Clerk  
Howard Young, Director of Public Works  
Jeff Norris, District Coordinator, San Mateo County Office of Emergency Services  
Dan Ghiorso, Woodside Fire Protection District Chief

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None.

REGULAR AGENDA

(1) Emergency Earthquake Simulation Exercise at Town Center

Ms. Howard explained that this meeting was called to exercise a more efficient plan dealing with an emergency, noting that the previous exercise in the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) revealed a "real bottleneck." She distributed an overview of the exercise to meeting attendees, and asked them to return after the exercise for a debriefing and discussion of needed improvements.

Mr. Kabcenell provided a more detailed explanation of the evening's plans. To avoid the bottleneck that Ms. Howard mentioned, he said the Committee worked on better ways to organize the exercise, crediting Councilmember Toben with the idea of holding the exercise in a different place. He said that the Historic Schoolhouse will serve as the EIC, or Emergency Information Center – the place where the public would come for information in the event of an emergency. The EOC will serve as the place where the incident is managed, and a triage/first aid facility, the EMC – Emergency Medical Center – will be in Community Hall. Serious cases would transfer to The Sequoias' infirmary.

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<b>EOC</b>
Town Center
<b>EIC</b>
Historic Schoolhouse
<b>EMC</b>
Community Hall

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The EIC, he explained, will serve volunteers, people with injuries, those seeking information or assistance, food, shelter – even consolation and companionship. Discouraged from going to the EOC, media representatives will be directed to the EIC instead. People role-playing in some of those capacities, Mr. Kabcenell said, would show up for tonight's exercise.

He also noted that the EIC will field calls from the EOC, including status updates and information about which Citizens Emergency Response Preparedness Program (CERPP) Divisions are operating, and follow up on requests from the Director of Emergency Services (DES), including requests for volunteers. Ideally, the EIC and EOC would communicate via telephone, he said, suggesting that the exercise would introduce options in the event telephone service goes out.

Councilmember Wengert asked about how staffing of each of the emergency centers would change protocols for handling situations. Mr. Kabcenell said that's something that the DES would decide on the spot, based on who's where and who's available. Ms. Howard, who serves in the DES capacity, said that she'd prefer Town staff in the EOC because they've been trained in those roles, with the Mayor, Vice Mayor and Councilmembers in the EIC to be available to citizens and "direct the traffic." She added that barricades and signage will direct volunteers and citizens to the EIC. If Ms. Howard isn't able to serve as DES, next in the hierarchy are the Mayor and Vice Mayor.

In response to other questions, Ms. Howard said that unless an emergency hits during working hours, it would take her – and other staff – time to reach Town, assuming travel is even possible. Still, she said, it will be helpful for Town Council and Committee members to know where to go. She indicated that the assigned ham radio operators could get into the EOC in any case.

Mr. Kabcenell said that basically the first person to arrive should do the best he/she can under the circumstances. Mr. Kabcenell compared it to the "hood of the car" phase when starting a search for someone who's gone missing on a trail. During that phase, the first of the rescuers to arrive, whether the necessary equipment is ready or not, starts mobilizing searchers as they show up.

For those who arrive first, Mr. Taylor added, the top priority will be to get the EOC operating. Once it's up and running, the EIC may begin to function. Ms. Howard noted that the Historic Schoolhouse isn't hooked up to the emergency power system, so the EIC might not have power. She indicated, too, that Mr. Ghiorso brought along portable lights to be tested.

Before departing for the tour and exercise, led by Mr. Young, Ms. Howard thanked Committee members, particularly those who pulled everything together for the exercise (Mr. Boice, Ms. Kopf-Sill Mr. Rothrock, Mr. Taylor and Mr. Kabcenell).

During the debriefing, participants discussed:

- Keeping logs
- Identifying specific maps and street directories needed, and deciding how they will be used and distributed
- Updating Quick Cards
- Assigning a public information officer (PIO) early on in the emergency
- Following a specific schedule for releasing information
- Periodically ensuring that everyone in each emergency center has the same information
- Understanding why it's important to avoid making commitments or promises to citizens/media that might be impossible to keep
- Knowing which extension to call at each emergency center  
Mr. Young pointed out that the phone should work unless the power is out, as there's a live electrical connection between the EOC and the EIC. The EMC will have walkie-talkies.
- Being prepared to use runners between emergency centers if necessary

- Deciding where to site the EIC if the Historic Schoolhouse doesn't survive the disaster  
Councilmember Toben suggested perhaps the Library. Ms. Howard said that another location in the Town Center building, even separated from the EOC, proved unworkable during the last exercise, but Community Hall, near the EMC, might be suitable.
- Remembering to keep Go Bags maintained, with working flashlights, etc.  
Councilmember Wengert reminded everyone to keep fresh batteries in their Go Bags, but not to store them in the flashlights.
- Proposed use of lights versus signs for night set-up
- Place a basic first aid kit in the Schoolhouse

Councilmember Toben asked for audience reactions to the exercise and the performance of the participants. In response, they heard:

- Good answers need to be worked out for some of the scenarios
- In a report of a tree down blocking the road, it was great that the volunteer asked whether any live power lines came down when the tree fell (good questions help prioritize responses to problem situations)
- The role-players were excellent, posing challenging situations
- Don't make promises you can't keep
- Consider including The Sequoias In future exercises  
Also to be worked out are more details in connection with the Town's memorandum of agreement with The Sequoias.
- Develop a plan to involve healthcare providers apart from The Sequoias  
Also suggested: CERPP Divisions might maintain lists of providers they could tap in an emergency, and being prepared to provide psych and pediatric services.

ADJOURNMENT [8:45 p.m.]

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Vice Mayor

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Town Clerk