

# San Bruno Fires Meeting

November 19, 2018 11am-12pm

[455 Golden Gate Ave, SF, CA Governor's Conference Room 14<sup>th</sup> Floor](#)

Attendees: Genesis Garcia (Assemblyperson David Chiu's Office), Thomas Crowell, Bill Owings, Kanwar Kelly (Neighbors) Chris Balingit (Caltrans), Jean Bogiages (MUNA, GBD), Mary Tse (SFFD), Mike Wright (CHP), Rebecca Strouse (MMI), Regina Hunter (Legislative Affairs), Debra Nelson (Legislative Affairs), James Hsiao (Maintenance Liaison D4), Brian Mackle (Caltrans Landscape Architect)

Absent: Randy Quezada (HSH), JR Eppler (Boosters), William Dolcini (CHP)

## Meeting Notes

The meeting opened at 11:05

### **CHP Report**

Sgt Mike Wright represented CHP and reported that CHP will not continue giving the committee written reports about monitoring the problematic right-of-way area. It is not the CHP process. If neighbors have a problem they should call 911 or use the online maintenance request. He reported that if there is an encampment in the area, CHP (his team of 4 that services a larger area) works with Caltrans D4 Maintenance (Chris).

### **Caltrans Maintenance**

Chris Balingit reported that D4 Maintenance had been proactively removing excessive plant material from problem areas in the Caltrans right-of-way. Jean noted that Chris's team is responsive and does the best it can, but the problem is larger than what they can handle because the landscaping was installed in the 1950's and has continued to grow and overgrow since that time, turning it into an area that encourages encampments and provides material for fires. Kanwar suggested replacing some of the foliage with rocks. Chris let us know that Neighbors had objected to removing weeds by using chemicals. Jean mentioned that we need to engage in a solution discussion. Brian Mackle let us know that "landscape specialist" was an open position that had not been filed yet. Brian is a landscape architect.

### **DHS problems identified**

Quezada was not able to attend the meeting.

### **Letter from CALFIRE Fire Marshall**

Five Caltrans representatives attended, the meeting to understand the issues and gather background so that they could respond to the letter which stated:

"Caltrans is hereby ordered to abate this hazard. Please provide this office with a work plan within 30 days from receipt of this letter outlining the measure Caltrans will be taking to resolve or abate these concerns".

San Bruno Neighbors spoke of specific issues that were problems ( encampment and fire at the corner of Mariposa and Hwy101, Trees that were overgrown and dangerous, fires on the 600 block right-of-way that occur yearly, fire on the 700 block that burned a back porch). Jean tried to focus the group on finding a complete landscaping solution that covered the right-of-way

area from the Vermont Street exit to 20<sup>th</sup> Street. Brian Mackle said that in order for him to work on that area there needed to be a highway project connected to his work. Tom Crowell suggested that the letter from CALFIRE could be used as a reason to re-landscape the area.

Mary Tse reminded us again that SFFD 's job is to put out fires, not to investigate or recommend corrective actions. Tom reported that at the last meeting we had learned that CALFIRE did not spend any time on the right-of-way, but rather addressed fire regulations on building on Caltrans land. Steve Guarini, CALFIRE Marshall, agreed that was a gap. Debra Nelson worked hard to understand the individual issues that Neighbors that were present had. Rebecca Strouse passed out the website address to use to request maintenance: <http://csr.dot.ca.gov>

The group went through the aerial photographs of the right-of-way sections under discussion.

Jean tried to emphasize that this was a multiyear problem caused by the condition of 60 year old landscaping that encouraged homeless encampments and produced hazardous fire conditions. Caltrans Maintenance tried to address the existing conditions, but a solution requires rethinking and re-landscaping for safety and low maintenance.

Meeting Closed at 12:10 with an agreement that we would meet again in January to discuss solutions.

**Action Items:**

- Jean and Mary Tse will meet and check the north entrance of the Caltrans area call the Hidden Garden.
- Jean will outreach to Debra Nelson and Rebecca Strouse concerning the response to the Caltrans letter
- Jean will discuss where the best place is to use chemicals to abate weeds with Joe Treinen and report back to Chris Balingit.