Meeting Notes  
Logtown Fire Safe Council  
March 11, 2017

1. Call to Order: Chairman Pat Dwyer called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. Board members present were Pat Dwyer, Rod Repschlaeger, John Erickson and Marc Regelbrugge. Dwyer began the meeting by informing the public of the passing of long-time Logtown resident Steve Morgan. Steve was retired from the US Forest Service, very well known in the community, and a constant, dedicated supporter of the Fire Safe Council. Dwyer paused the meeting for a moment of silence in Steve’s memory, and several members of the public subsequently commented on Steve’s legacy of service and support to his community.

Dwyer also introduced Austin Russell, the new Resident Firefighter at Station 44. Austin is now living at the Station with another associate. The two firefighters are assigned to different shifts, allowing the Station to be manned continuously.

2. Special Guest Speaker: Dwyer introduced District 2 County Supervisor Shiva Frentzen, who addressed the meeting on three main topics: the County budget, County roads and road conditions, and tree mortality issues.

On the County budget, Supervisor Frentzen noted that roughly 50% of the County’s $600 million annual budget is discretionary, and of that fraction approximately 70% is allocated to public safety. Going forward, approximately $2.5 million of that allocation will be earmarked for construction of the new Sheriff’s Office campus off Missouri Flat Road. Budgetary pressures are also increasing on other fronts. The County’s annual contribution to the CalPers retirement system will increase to $5 million within the next 2-3 years. Increases in the costs of retiree health benefits have not been funded in the past, leading to a looming increase. The County’s administration buildings are in need of repair and renovation – priorities are the District Attorney’s facility and expansion of the County Jail (which will also require approximately $1 million per year in additional personnel expense). Continuing pressure on the budget also comes from steadily increasing County employee costs and very slow rates of increase in County tax revenues. Frentzen stressed that shortfalls in prior-year planning have led to looming cost increases that threaten the County budget on many fronts. She is hopeful that the County’s new Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) will rectify those planning shortfalls and allow a more stable and predictable fiscal environment for the County in future years.

On the County’s roads, Shiva stressed that road maintenance is funded by sales and fuel taxes, and that those sources of funding are not keeping up with growing needs. In 2016, the County budgeted just $2 million from its General Fund for road
maintenance, and $0 in 2017. This budgetary squeeze comes with the backdrop of the three major storms the County has experienced this past winter. The Governor’s declaration of a State of Emergency following these storms has unlocked funding from CalTrans and the Federal highway Administration (FHWA), but these monies are provided in the form of reimbursement for emergency repair projects and are allocated on a competitive basis. The County presently estimates about $50 million is required to repair County roadways following the storms. The best-case, emergency funding scenario will leave the County with about $1 million unreimbursed expense, while the worst case could leave the County footing almost the entire $50 million bill. Shiva also mentioned that HOAs and CSDs can also apply for emergency funding from federal and state agencies, and the County website (edc.gov.us) has forms for such organizations to use in application for emergency-related funding.

Supervisor Frentzen noted that at least three “wet” years are required to restore capacity to resist infestation in trees compromised already by the bark beetle. As a result, tree mortality due to bark beetle infestation will be an ongoing concern in the County for several years in the future. The County has recently obtained a $1 million grant to address the tree mortality issue. This grant requires a 25% match, so a total of $1.25 million will be available to identify and remove impacted trees. The first phase of the project is to identify impacted trees along County roadways and assign priority for their removal. This phase will result in publication of a Request for Bids to remove and dispose the trees. Shiva anticipates that future-year grants will also be required to deal with the large number of bark-beetle impacted trees in the County. In District 2, most of the impacted trees are at higher elevations around Grizzly Flat and Camino.

Following her presentation, Supervisor Frentzen answered several questions regarding traffic mitigation and development along Missouri Flat Road, the sustainability of small, rural Fire Districts in the County, and threats and opportunities facing the County budget.

As a result of a ballot measures B and Y in the late 1990s, a Master Circulation and Financing Plan (MC&FP) was developed for the Missouri Flat corridor that included provisions for a Special Tax on developed parcels and allocation of sales and property taxes in excess of services costs to development of the commercial corridor along Missouri Flat road. This “investment model” of taxation now produces roughly $1 million per year in development funds for the Missouri Flat corridor, including Measure Y’s required traffic mitigation. The next phase of the project involves improvements at the Highway 49/Missouri Flat intersection. On June 18th, the Board of Supervisors will receive a Staff Report addressing progress and plans for the MC&FP second phase.

Frentzen noted that, in past years, the County had provided $1.2-1.8 million annual “Aid to Fire” to assist fire districts Countywide. This funding has been terminated, resulting in difficult times for many of the smaller fire districts in the County. County Supervisors are considering ways to assist small, rural fire districts, including assistance with merging and annexation of fire districts into larger, more sustainable agencies. Two Supervisors (Frentzen and Veerkamp) have been named to a newly constituted Fire Advisory Board, which has recently concluded its first meeting. The Advisory Board will address issues relating to ambulance services and rural fire
districts, and will develop plans and strategies to maintain and fund required services over the long term.

Finally, Frentzen noted that County revenues are threatened on many fronts. In particular, gas tax revenues are declining and are increasingly being targeted by the State. An Assembly bill to stabilize gas tax revenues is being worked, but the County needs to be proactive in reducing its costs as a hedge against stagnant or declining tax revenues. Some County savings are already being sought by improving operational efficiencies and reducing employee costs by adopting private-sector practices.

Dwyer thanked Supervisor Frentzen and presented her with a Logtown cap in appreciation for her visit and discussion.

3. Old Business: Dwyer mentioned that Logtown hats and T-shirts are still available (see John Erickson to purchase). Erickson discussed the design of the new, Logtown coffee mugs, which should be available for purchase at the April Spring Cleanup.

The annual Spring Cleanup will be held on April 8th in the parking lot at Bobby’s Market. There will be dumpsters for bagged household trash (no construction debris, tires or hazardous materials, please), a Snowline Hospice van to collect donations and e-waste, and Fire Wise literature to help you stay informed on wildfire hazards and preparedness.

The coming of spring in April kicks off our community’s Defensible Space construction and maintenance activities. In addition to the Spring Cleanup, residents are urged to clear 100 feet of defensible space per PRC 4291. The Fire Safe Council will be attending Defensible Space Evaluator Training on March 28th at the US Forest Service Office in Placerville (1:00-3:00 p.m.). Contact any Board Member to arrange for a free, advisory evaluation of your defensible space.

Dwyer and Regelbrugge also described progress on the Logtown East Side Fuel Break (LT-10). Right of Entry approvals are still needed from several affected residents. It is very important that owners of properties on the east side of Monitor Rd., Galena Dr., Dolomite Dr., and Sam Hill Mine Ct. grant permission for the Fire Safe Council to work on their property. If you are, or know, an owner of an affected property, please promote return of signed Right of Entry permissions as soon as practical. Questions can be directed to Marc Regelbrugge, Logtown’s Project Coordinator, at (415)640-3068 or marc@regelbrugge.org. The Project Manager expects flagging in the work areas to begin in late April/early May. The LT-10 project is funded under matching, $100,000 grants from Cal Fire SRA and U.S. Forest Service funds.

Dwyer also noted that Cal Fire has posted fuels reduction project success story: The town of Pine Grove undertook a fuels reduction project that allowed fire fighters to save the town when threatened by the Butte fire – just one of many examples of how fuels reduction and defensible space can provide a tangible, positive benefit to our homes and communities.

Finally, Dwyer discussed the new, Countywide Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), which collects planning information and maps for fuels
reduction/elimination projects throughout the County and integrates the inputs of all of the County’s Fire Safe Councils. The CWPP is presently under review for approval by the Board of Supervisors.

4. New Business: Dwyer announced that El Dorado Disposal will provide green-waste bulk collections in Logtown during the week of April 17-21. They will collect any amount of bundled twigs and bagged green waste set out on your regular garbage-collection day. Contact El Dorado Disposal at 530-626-4141 with questions.

   Dwyer also discussed possibilities for Logtown signage and monuments at entrances to the community, and noted that CalTrans’ District Coordinator responded positively to the suggestion of re-installing Logtown community signs on Highway 49.

5. Treasurer’s Report: Erickson reported the Fire Safe Council’s bank balance is $8,336.24 after the expenditure of $233.82 for Logtown coffee mugs, and has $40.00 in cash from treats-table contributions and hat/shirt sales. Total assets are $8,376.24.

6. County Fire Safe Council Update: Dwyer discussed the now-unfunded chipper program and noted the opportunity for a $75,000 grant from PG&E that could be used to re-start the program around the end of April.

   The County Fire Safe Council will also hear a presentation on use of Biomass Fuels, which offers an opportunity for economical disposal of wood culled from trees removed for bark-beetle damage mitigation.

7. Neighborhood Coordinator Reports: Erickson noted the Logtown residents should keep track of their time spent clearing and maintaining their residential defensible space. The Fire Safe Council can use the dollar-equivalent value of defensible space work as an in-kind contribution toward cost sharing for grants. A copy of a basic Timesheet for recording your work can be found attached to these notes, and will be available at the Spring Cleanup on April 8th.

8. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 10:24 a.m. The Spring Cleanup will replace our April meeting on April 8th in the parking lot adjacent to Bobby’s Market from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Our May meeting will be held on May 13th, 9:00 a.m. at Station 44. Please join us at these events.