

Glen Ellen Forum - Meeting Minutes  
Garden Court Cafe  
January 8, 2018

Called to order at 6:26 p.m.

Michael Furlong opened by reminding attendees about the website at [glenellenca.org](http://glenellenca.org), the Forum's [Facebook page](#), and the organization's e-mail address, [forum@glenellen.org](mailto:forum@glenellen.org)

Michael noted that fire victims have begun asking for specific items and make specific requests for help. The Forum website offers a place to hitch helpers to those in need. He also reminded people to talk to neighbors to ensure needs are met. He reiterated the goal of podcasts with web links for meetings for people who aren't mobile, are elderly, or have trouble attending meetings.

Michael provided an update on establishing a Municipal or Citizen's Advisory Council, a "semi-official group that will be in contact with Board of Supervisors" and separate from the Forum. Three people have expressed interest in serving on the Council, but more would be needed. For more information on this, and to read what came out of a separate meeting on possible formation of an Advisory Council to interface with the County, see documents under the [Governance Committee link](#) on the Forum website, and follow-on comments from Arthur Dawson and Michael Wray below.

Michael announced that nonprofit status for the Forum is being filed. The Forum's fiscal year from March to March. At the February Forum meeting, a slate of candidates for the Board of Directors (an oversight committee that might meet four times per year) and the Steering Committee of five people, which meets once a month, will be presented. An election is set for the March meeting. Some of the existing Steering Committee are interested in remaining in their positions. If you'd like to throw your name in the hat, please contact the Forum at [forum@glenellen.org](mailto:forum@glenellen.org) or contact any of the present committee members.

Additional committees to get up and running include a Community Garden Committee and a Fund-Raising Committee. Having a grant writer on the Fund-Raising committee would be ideal.

Stacey Vilas, Co-Chair of the Traffic and Safety Committee, gave a report on recent activities of that committee. Some pertinent points that came out of a meeting with the local Fire Department:

- On the night of Oct. 8-9, there were 250 fires in CA
- Cal Fire sent resources: 70 engines were requested. Napa and Santa Rosa got priority.
- The local telephone base went down in first hour
- Three cell phone towers went down in first two hours (173 in area)
- Santa Rosa was designated the Command Center; once that happened, familiarity with the local area was lost. The Command Centers was running off maps, not on-the-ground experience.

What we can do to help:

- Address labeling! “If they can’t find us they can’t help us.”
- Maintain access to your property: 15 feet of headroom to get down a driveway; 15 feet of width; need a turnaround
- Create a defensible space around homes and buildings. Information about creating defensible space is available from SCOPE/[Ready.gov](#) and on the [Halter website](#). Fire Department response is based on triage: They won’t go to a place that can’t be defended.
- Organize neighborhoods so members alert and support each other in an emergency, and include Sheriff’s Department in that planning.
- Embers started fires in the area days later. Install metal mesh on vents. Install vulcan vents. Prevent embers from getting under decks. Clear clutter and plants next to homes.

An email will go out for SCOPE training. Organizers will get trained by Captain Johnson. A volunteer database has been created.

SCOPE will formalize an alert system:

Honk horns; blow air horns and whistles. If you hear horns; step outside and figure out what’s going on. Turn on TV.

Sirens from Glen Ellen, Eldridge, etc. would be additional alerts.

When you hear an alert gather things; collect pets; meet family and friends to evacuate

The group is using Ready Ventura and Ready Marin as templates for Ready Glen Ellen, which will include links to the:

Cal Fire Ready for Wildfire app

Links to SVFD and Sheriff Department

Links to emergency preparedness kits and lists

Link to ask questions and get answers from the Sheriff’s Dept./Fire Dept.

Check out the [Traffic and Safety Committee page](#) on the website for more information.

Holly Bennett introduced John Diserens of Intermodal Structures, who described modular steel-frame housing units that can be installed on lots during the reconstruction process. The units are:

- Transformable
- 3 bedroom, 1 bath
- Have an external deck
- Can be installed and removed in a couple of hours
- Are code-compliant
- Are connectable to power, septic and water
- Built in China, installed from a base on Mare Island

The units can be leased for \$2500 to \$3500 a month over a two-to three-year range. The company will then take them back. After use in the fire zone, they can be accumulated and stacked as affordable housing in the next generation.

Diserens noted that the company is sensitive to insurance company payments and people’s needs. For more information visit <http://www.intermodalstructures.com>.

BJ Blanchard reported that the Community Projects Committee is working with Sonoma County Transit to upgrade the bus stops in town. The committee also has a design for a new information kiosk in town, but needs a builder. Contact the Forum if you can help, or [BJ directly](#).

Leslie Vaughn reported that, after the Community Dinner on Dec. 3, four Weber grills and accompaniments remain. Let Leslie know if you know someone who has lost their home and could use a grill.

Leslie and Michael also noted that the Social and Community Projects Committee would like to host quarterly community free meals as well as additional social events might be fund-raising. The Committee is also investigating investment in a marquee or tent for shelter during winter events or for shade in summer.

Tracy Salcedo reported on the latest from the SDC/Eldridge Committee. She noted that SDC will close in Dec. 2018. Among recent developments:

- The first meeting with stakeholders, including the state, county, and local organizations including the Forum, was in September. Primarily for the benefit of the state, Wallace Roberts and Todd (WRT), the urban planning design firm hired by the state, outlined the assets and some of the constraints on the property.
- A second stakeholders meeting, as well as a community meeting, were postponed by fire. A second meeting date has not been finalized. This will look at constraints and details more in-depth.

What's changed/what's urgent:

- Fire has impacted the status of the property and structures
- Housing has moved to the forefront

The two members of the Forum's SDC/Eldridge Committee met with stakeholder reps from other local entities including the Sonoma Ecology Center (watersheds and sustainability); Sonoma Land Trust (open space and wildlife corridor); and Glen Ellen Historical Society (historical buildings and legacy) to discuss moving forward in a coordinated way that would avoid duplication of efforts and fortify the messages of organizations.

The goal is to pull together a conceptual plan to present to the community, and then to the State and the County, that would address community priorities including preservation of open space, urgent housing needs, recreational access, preservation of historical assets, securing educational facilities, promoting community, identifying business and light industrial opportunities that will promote critical economic viability.

The next step is to present a conceptual plan to the Forum/community at a dedicated meeting. It would be the big picture, and a chance to incorporate the experience and expertise of the community.

Tracy encouraged the community to take a look at the resources on [glenellenca.org](http://glenellenca.org) under the "Committees" heading, and at the [Transform SDC](#) site. Her complete presentation is posted on the [SDC/Eldridge Committee page](#) on the website.

Kathy Anderson of Outcast Cat Help, a nonprofit animal organization based in Martinez, offered an overview of the services the group offers to rescue cats displaced or lost during the wildfires. Among the issues:

- Cats still out here and still missing. They are scared and hiding. But they do come home, even after months have gone by.
- The group can provide feeding stations and trail cameras to monitor who's coming to eat.
- The group can trap and return cats to owners, and knows how to trap the strays, not cats belonging to owners.
- Please leave food out if you have cats around.
- If you are missing a cat, let the group know.

For more information and to contact Outcast Cats, go to <http://outcastcat.org>

Tracy Salcedo also provided an update on the Sonoma Ecology Center (the SEC's Caitlin Cornwall had a scheduling conflict), and subjects that might be worthy of a dedicated Forum meeting. These included:

- History and ecology of fire in our area, going back to first human habitation
- Behavior of the October fires, and the factors that influenced fire behavior
- Ecological impacts of the October fires, including how the land is rebounding
- Environmental community's response to the fires: containment, policy engagement, research, monitoring
- Toward a fire-adapted community, and the many benefits of being fire-prepared

In addition, the SEC is spearheading a runoff containment program, using volunteers help protect streams through the Emergency Watershed Protection Program. It is also hosting Fire Recovery Walks at various locations throughout the valley, from south near Sonoma proper to SDC and Sonoma Valley Regional Park, and Sugarloaf Ridge State Park. The SEC has a Sonoma Valley Fire Ecological Relief Fund to finance its educational, "active response" and prevention programs. All resources can be found at [www.sonomaecologycenter.org/](http://www.sonomaecologycenter.org/) or by calling 707-996-0712.

The meeting was opened to discussion.

Arthur Dawson addressed the issue of the Advisory Council (see above), noting that Supervisor Susan Gorin was going to attend a meeting in October to provide more information about Advisory Councils and how they interact with County government, but then the fires occurred. He stated that the Advisory Council, by statute, must be separate of the Forum. He noted that the idea of an Advisory Council should be explored further. Michael Wray echoed that questions about what an Advisory Council is are still out there, and more information is needed. He suggested that Supervisor Gorin be asked to address the community at a meeting to see whether it would be suitable for the community's needs.

A question was asked about whether the Forum had been able to secure a warehouse for storage space. Michael said not at present, and added that space for a community venue/museum is also needed.

Jim Shere stated that he'd drafted a letter asking the Supervisors to rename the Eldridge Bridge in memory of longtime Glen Ellen resident and eminent geologist Jim Berkland. If you are interested in adding your name to the effort, contact [Jim Shere](#).

John Sanders, a resident on Warm Springs Road, asked about who was responsible for clearing brush left along roadways post-fire. It was suggested he contact Supervisor Gorin.

Stacey Vilas suggested that the Forum host a dinner specifically to thank first responders. Leslie noted the Social and Promotion Committee will put the suggestion on the agenda.

Sherry Gericke, a resident who lost a home on Warm Springs Road, noted she'd heard news that the Valley of the Moon Water District was planning to raise rates, and that a petition in protest was circulating. No one was sure what the status of the petition was.

Holly Bennett noted that donations of goods remain at the Valley of the Moon Rotary: It just needs to be sort through by volunteers and gotten out to those in need. Contact the [rotary club](#) to help.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30.

### Attendees

Poppy Darby	Julie Linford	Shannon Lee
BJ Blanchard	Kathy Anderson	Steven Lee
Lisa Hoxie	Carolyn Manzi	Betsey Moses
Steven Raffaini	Archie Horton	Cheryl Franzini-Pegan
Michael McClure	Marge Everidge	Ellen McKnight
Helyna Derickson	Anna Bryant	John Wilson
Amanda Shone	Gary Bryant	Steve Brett
Caden Long	Joyce Clover	Cheri Burgi
Jane Witkowski	Jim Shere	Diana Sanson
Mike Witkowski	Janie Soto	Tracy Salcedo
Bean Anderson	Rob Barnum	Leslie Vaughn
Marta Rich	Holly Bennett	Michael Furlong
Diane Jacobson	Barney Watkins	Arthur Dawson
Candice Ludlow	Dave Shefferman	Sherry Gericke
Cherie Chooljian	Sherby Sanborn	Stacey Vilas
Ann Frick	Anne O'Brien	John Sanders
Gwen Watson	Steve Thomas	Michael Wray
Ana Macedo	Catherine Grande	