

Glen Ellen Forum - Meeting Minutes
Garden Court Cafe
March 5, 2018

Chair Michael Furlong called the meeting to order at 6:30.

Stacey Vilas of the Traffic and Safety Committee presented “Love Our Town — Slow Down” window stickers for cars, available for \$1 or whatever a community member can offer. Boyes Hot Springs also has developed Slow Down signs, and Oakmont signs are in the works. Stacey inquired as to whether people would like more signs made, at \$20 each; a few responded affirmatively.

Stacey also announced that the Ready Glen Ellen plan for emergency preparedness has been completed, and includes information about defensible space, emergency planning, and an emergency alert system (Nick Brown sounded an air horn outside to demonstrate). The plan is posted on the glenellenca.org website [here](#).

Stacey noted that people have been stealing from neighborhoods, and advised residents to say “hi” to folks they see walking on the streets. She advised residents to watch out for people with strollers, which was a reported method of operation.

Tracy Salcedo provided an update on [SDC Redevelopment Plans](#). While things remain mostly in a holding pattern, the committee and committee members have been actively trying to figure out which proposals have been made and whether any are gaining traction. The next meeting of WRT, the firm hired by the State of California to assess the property, is set for March 22, and two members of the Forum’s SDC/Eldridge Committee will attend. Committee members have also been meeting with the Sonoma Land Trust, the Sonoma Ecology Center, and the Glen Ellen Historical Society to come up with a homegrown conceptual redevelopment plan for the property. A special independent Forum meeting dedicated to redevelopment of the SDC is planned for Monday, April 16, at 6:30 p.m., location to be determined.

Leslie Vaughn provided an update on the Community Engagement Committee. She noted that a [business directory](#) has been added to the glenellenca.org site. Updates are ongoing, and she invited those interested to submit information and images for inclusion in the directory.

Leslie also noted that the Forum is looking for a used tent, canopy, or marquee for outdoor community events. Julie Atwood cautioned that used tents may no longer meet Fire Code Requirements, and that the Forum should check with the Fire Department about compliance.

The Committee is also looking for storage space (a garage) for people who are donating things to fire survivors.

Leslie advised that the next Community Free Meal would probably be pushed back into April. The Committee is looking in to getting a permit that will allow four events to be staged. Community Social Events are separate events held at people’s homes. If you’d like to host a Social Event, let contact the [Community Engagement Committee](#) via glenellenca.org.

Leslie also reported on the latest from the Community Projects Committee. New bus stop benches will be installed along Arnold Drive at Madrone Road and Sonoma Glen Circle. If these are not vandalized the Committee will look at installing benches elsewhere in Glen Ellen. The benches will be made of teak or local natural materials.

The Projects Committee is also staging a Glen Ellen Clean-Up Day on Sunday, April 22nd, Earth Day. The event will take place over a couple of hours in the morning, beginning at 10 a.m., with staging at the Post Office. The hope is to have clean-up days quarterly or twice per year.

In May, the Committee hopes to make improvements to the existing kiosk by the Post office as a community billboard until a new one can be built.

Arthur Dawson announced that a meeting of the [Governance Committee](#) is set for April 5th at Shannon Lee's house. The plan is to bring in Susan Gorin and other County Advisory Committee members to help determine if an Advisory Council would be appropriate as a County-sanctioned community voice for Glen Ellen.

Shannon Lee announced that rebuilding of the stage at Dunbar School is underway. In addition, the [Community Garden Rebuild](#) has been scheduled for the weekend of St. Patrick's Day, 3/17 & 3/18 (weather permitting) starting at 10 a.m. The school garden has received funding to install new raised beds and other infrastructure that was lost in the October firestorms. If it is raining the Rebuild will be postponed to the following weekend.

Mary Chelton representing "Happiness is a Warm Quilt," and a Trinity Road area resident whose husband is a volunteer firefighter with the Mayacamas Volunteer Fire Department, announced quilt giveaways for those who lost their properties in the October firestorms. Quilts have been given away at our Community Free Meal in November, in Kenwood, Santa Rosa, and will be given away at the Glen Ellen Fire Department on March 24. Mary asked that fire survivors select "a quilt that means something to you . . . like a friend to give you a hug."

Representatives from Sonoma Valley Fire & Rescue Authority (Gary Johnson) and Cal Fire (Steve Millosovich and Paul Fleckenstein) talked about pre- and post-fire preparedness, as well as some of the issues that arose during the October wildfires.

Sonoma Valley Fire & Rescue Authority entered into a contract for service with Glen Ellen Firefighters Association on July 1, 2017. Valley of the Moon Fire Protection District is the parent agency; the organization does business as Sonoma Valley Fire & Rescue Authority and also covers the City of Sonoma. There are four staffed engine companies, plus ambulances, on duty every day. If mutual aid is needed, it comes from Santa Rosa, Petaluma, Napa, and other agencies.

Most of Glen Ellen falls under the purview of CAL FIRE, as a State Response Area. CAL FIRE's Glen Ellen Station is presently closed*, but is staffed from May through November. The sister station, staffed year-round, is in Petaluma. Sonoma Valley Fire & Rescue Authority responds to structure fires, vehicle accidents, and medical emergencies. CAL FIRE responds to wildfire.

The firefighters cautioned that fire season is year-round now in California. This was evident, they explained, in how the October fires burned. “For all of our aggressive fire suppression tactics, we have overgrowth in wildland setting,” the firefighters cautioned.

CAL FIRE has six Defensible Space Inspectors, who help homeowners identify hazards, but they cover six counties from Sonoma to Yolo. Residents can call the Petaluma Station (762-6262) or leave a message on Glen Ellen Station (May–Nov only 996-6900, Dec-Apr* 967-1400 Unit Headquarters) to have an inspector come by.

If CAL FIRE can come out for an inspection, they generally check out several properties in a specific area. They would like residents to have:

- An address, visible year-round. The firefighters noted that other rural communities have come together to make reflective green signs with numbers for residential properties. The Forum could facilitate a workshop where signs like these could be created.
- An exit plan that accommodates fire trucks getting in while residents evacuate. The example given was Jack London Estates, where a road that is “narrow at best” could be clogged with residents trying to get out while firefighters are trying to get in.
- A phone tree for residents and for vacation rentals/transient residents.
- Identification of TRAs: Temporary Refuge Areas. The example for Jack London Estates is back by the pond.
- Adequate access. Fire engines are bigger and taller these days, and driveways must be 12 feet wide, with 15 feet of clearance, to accommodate trucks. If that’s not available, a house will be passed by. It’s also the case for medical aid responses.

In terms of creating defensible space, Cal Fire is not there to cite, but to help homeowners. Pamphlets are available at fire stations and online to provide guidance.

In response to questions, firefighters offered this feedback:

- Will PG&E help with the creation of defensible space? PG&E will only clear their primary lines. They’ll clear along public roadways. They won’t clear lines leading to homes.
- To clear along private drives, folks should consider a community work day, where neighbors help each other cut the grass and trim the trees.
- There is “no history of fire on the west side of the valley.” (e.g., on Sonoma Mountain). But that’s not to say fire won’t happen. Everyone knew the Mayacamas Range would burn again.
- Prescribed burning on private properties used to happen on valley ranches three generations ago, and doesn’t presently happen due to restrictions and potential liability. However, prescribed burning on private land has history in the county, and is still done on an extremely limited basis on private ranches in the west county. Preemptive burning to lessen fuel loads is something that could be brought back.
- In an emergency, properties are inspected for water resources. When firefighters pull up to a structure, they do a “hot lap” to locate pools, a fire connections, and other resources. Property owners can put up reflective signs that designate FD connections.

- The county has fire safe standards for new construction that includes requiring a designated amount of water storage on a property—for example, a 25-gallon tank with a connection on certain residential parcels.
- Don't worry about providing a pump for pools or hot tubs; firefighters "can get water out."
- With regard to hydro seeding on burned roadsides, residents were advised to talk with the county about what is being used.
- With regard to mapping, about six years ago extensive mapping (runbooks and map books) were created for the Sonoma Valley floor, the southern area of the valley, and the Mayacamas Range. They include every known address at the time; every address with a pool is in blue; and places where engines could get through are shown. During the October firestorms these were available to firefighters on the east side of the valley; these packets were also handed off to firefighters in mutual aid.
- An equivalent mapping resource for the west side of the valley does not exist.
- If you are curious about whether the fire department knows where your house is, go to the department and ask.
- Drones were employed to track and map the progression of the October firestorms. These large "Predator" drones used satellite imagery as well as infrared imagery to create maps.

Stacey Vilas also provided this feedback, which dovetails Ready Glen Ellen with the firefighters' input:

- Read the Ready Glen Ellen plan, which discusses defensible space.
- Organize neighborhood groups.
- Designate meetup areas of both small and large scale. The Traffic and Safety Committee still needs to iron out a medical first aid area (or two) for the town.
- Sign up to participate in follow-up training sessions.
- Look for a Ready Glen Ellen website that will include links to resources.

Greg Carr, a former Glen Ellen resident, gave a presentation on behalf of the Sonoma Valley Groundwater Sustainability Advisory Committee. His points included the following:

- To comply with State law, agencies overseeing all groundwater basins in the State are required to do mandated planning.
- County and local water providers are in the process of developing these plans. A plan for Sonoma Valley needs to be in place by 2020.
- The Advisory Committee overseeing the planning consists of a representative from each of the following agencies: the City of Sonoma, Sonoma County, Sonoma County Water Agency, Sonoma Resource Conservation District, North Bay Water District, and Valley of the Moon Water District. In addition, the GSA Agency Board appointed six interest-based members: an environmental representative, a rural residential well owner, a business community representative, an agricultural interest (surface water or GW user), and two at-large community representatives.
- Residents should follow the process. At this point in time, there is a possibility of assessing fees to people who use groundwater in Sonoma Valley, to recover all costs of the planning program. While there is no proposal at present, the Board wants to recover

\$470,000 for planning. A decision on how these costs will be recovered, and when, will probably happen before August.

- The Advisory Committee was asked to comment. Should charges be by water use? Parcel size? Multiple parcel sizes? A hybrid fee system?
- Thus far response has run that gamut from “why hasn’t groundwater been managed better before” to “get off my property.”
- A workshop on the groundwater plan will be held on March 14 at Sonoma Veterans Memorial Building.
- The upshot: “We don’t want the State of California to tell us how to manage our groundwater. We should do it.”

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 a.m. The next meeting will be on Monday, April 2, at 6:30 p.m. at the Garden Court Cafe.

Attendees

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| Leslie Vaughn | Katherine Hargitt | Ritch Foster |
| Michael Furlong | Nick Brown | Margie Foster |
| Steve Millosovich | Judy Mikeska | Deb Pool |
| Sean Jerry | Dayna Wiebalk | Rachel Kligerman |
| Wendy B. Lindstrom | Diana Sanson | Kevin Gilbert |
| Blanche Mundy | Jane Witkowski | Jody Ketcham |
| John Mundy | Mike Witkowski | Arthur Dawson |
| Mary Ann Carr | Marge Everidge | Nick Dalton |
| Gary Johnson | Archie Horton | Julie Atwood |
| Rodd Kneeland | Bill Olson | Gail Edney |
| Paul Fleckenstein | Sydney Randazzo | Jim Bartelman |
| Anne O’Brien | Elizabeth Brand | Marta Rich |
| Carrie Castro | Jim Shere | Shannon Lee |
| Anne P. Teller | Tracy Salcedo | |