



Minutes
City of Laguna Beach
Laguna Canyon Flood Mitigation Task Force Meeting

Wednesday, May 11, 2011, at 4:00 p.m.
Community Center, Community Room, 380 Third St., Laguna Beach, CA

Staff: Steve May, Director of Public Works/City Engineer

Note: See the attached "Laguna Canyon Flood Mitigation Task Force Meeting Notes and Action Items" as prepared by William Lawson for detailed notes of the meeting.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Members in attendance: Verna Rollinger, Norm Grossman, Bob Borthwick, Susan Hamil, Eric Jessen, Karl Koski, William Lawson, Louis Longi, Carl Nelson

Members Absent: Kelly Boyd, Charlie Quilter

Staff present: Steve May, Director of Public Works

3. SELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

Eric Jessen was nominated and appointed as Chairperson by acclamation
Bob Borthwick was nominated and appointed as Vice Chairperson by unanimous vote.

4. AGENDA REVIEW

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF 4/20/11 AND 4/30/11

The draft minutes for the meetings of 4/20/11 and 4/30/11 were approved by unanimous consent.

6. STAFF AND TASK FORCE MEMBER COMMENTS

(None)

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS

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Public comments were not recorded

8. REGULAR CALENDAR ITEMS

- a. Task Force Mission: “To recommend measures to the City Council that can be taken locally or recommended to other agencies in order to be better prepared for the next flood.”
- b. Geographic extent of Task Force study: Laguna Canyon Watershed, including Downtown, Laurel Canyon and El Toro Road (AKA: Niguel Creek) Watershed.
- c. Discussion of watershed tour on 4/30/11.
- d. Discussion of fact finding needs. Aerial Maps of watershed needed; Steve May to provide. Verna Rollinger will prepare list of fact finding needs and questions.
- e. Discussion of involvement with other agencies (Caltrans, County, TCA, Army Corps of Engineers, FEMA, California Department of Fish and Game, Fish and Wildlife, Sand Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board, and California Coastal Commission)
- f. Discussion of questions to be answered:
 - i. What to do about vegetation.
 - ii. Other questions: The issue of walls and other encroachments was discussed.
 - iii. Carl Nelson will prepare a list of prior actions.
- g. Review list of potential recommendations. Verna Rollinger will accumulate list.
- h. William Lawson was nominated and appointed as Secretary by unanimous vote.

9. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

- a. Identify items for future agendas: (subcommittees and draft recommendations)

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m. to the regular meeting of Wednesday, May 25, 2011 at 4:00 p.m. at the Community Center, Community Room, 380 Third Street, Laguna Beach, CA

Minutes with attached Meeting Notes approved 5-25-11

Laguna Canyon Flood Mitigation Task Force

Meeting Notes and Action Items

Meeting Date: May 11, 2011

Meeting Location: Laguna Beach Community Center

Meeting Opened at 4:05 PM

Meeting Adjourned at 6:00 PM

1. The meeting was called to order by Task Force Member and City Council Representative Verna Rollinger.

2. Roll call was taken and recorded by Steve May, Director of Public Works/City Engineer

3. The first item of business was to appoint a Chairperson and a Vice Chairperson for the Task Force. Eric Jessen was nominated by Bob Borthwick and approved by the Task Force members to be the Chairperson. Bob Borthwick was nominated by Eric Jessen and approved by the Task Force members to be the Vice Chairperson. Later in the meeting, William (Bill) Lawson was nominated by Eric Jessen to be Recording Secretary and this action was also approved by the Task Force members.

4. and 5. The meeting Agenda was reviewed and then the Minutes of the April 20, 2011 regular Task Force meeting, and the Minutes of the April 30, 2011 Task Force Field Trip (Special Meeting) were approved. There was a brief discussion about the level of detail that would be included in the meeting Minutes which will continue to be prepared by Steve May. The Recording Secretary will prepare a more detailed record of the meeting's discussions and will also summarize any resulting Action Items; this record will be provided as an attachment to the meeting Minutes.

6. Staff and Task Force Member Comments were as follows:

- Steve May reported that the City has decided to postpone the Laguna Channel repair project between the ocean side of PCH and the channel outlet at the ocean until after the Task Force has prepared their recommendations. This repair work was originally scheduled to take place this fall, but can be delayed a year or two without too much risk.
- Steve May also indicated that any work on the channel within the PCH right-of-way would be the responsibility of Caltrans; repairs to the PCH reach currently are not a high priority with Caltrans, but the nature of the repair work needed is similar to that needed in the City portion of the channel mentioned above. Any attempt to increase the hydraulic capacity of the PCH reach to mitigate upstream flooding may meet resistance from regulatory agencies.
- Steve May also indicated that the County of Orange has no flood control projects planned for Laguna Canyon or Laguna Beach in the foreseeable future; however, there is a planned (Caltrans?) roadway improvement project at El Toro Road and LCR, but no flood control improvements are included in that project.
- Specific Task Force Member comments were not recorded in detail, but are addressed in the discussion of regular calendar items. Similarly, the few public comments that were made were not recorded in detail.

7. Public comments were made by a couple of the meeting attendees, but those comments were not recorded.

Laguna Canyon Flood Mitigation Task Force

Meeting Notes and Action Items

8. Regular Calendar Items:

- a. The Task Force Mission, as stated in the Meeting Agenda, has been established by the City Council and is to be followed as stated.
- b. The geographic extent of the Task Force study shall be limited to the Laguna Canyon watershed and to the downtown area through which it passes. This includes the El Toro Road tributary, Laguna Audubon Retention Basin, and Laguna Canyon and its tributaries upstream of the SJHTC/SR 73 Toll Road.
- c. The Task Force tour of the Laguna Canyon watershed taken on April 30, 2011, was discussed. The most significant revelations of this field trip were that the bottleneck in the channel at PCH is what limits the capacity of the channel downstream of Ocean Avenue, and that there are a number of temporary and permanent structures built adjacent to and even over the channel in the Big Bend area. Numerous other obstructions to the flow in the floodway were also observed, including fences and concrete masonry walls. Natural overgrowth in the channel at El Toro Road also greatly reduces the channel and culvert capacity in that area. Photographs and notes taken during the field trip should be combined and then made available to the Task Force for future reference on the City's website. Eric Jessen and Bill Lawson indicated that they had taken a number of photographs and would try to combine their photos and label them as to where they were each taken.
- d. Task Force fact finding needs were discussed. It was agreed that certain sub-committees should be established to facilitate information gathering. These committees would among other things: 1) divide the Laguna Canyon Channel into reaches, then break down each reach into its elements; 2) review previous reports on Laguna Canyon flooding and summarize the findings and proposals or recommendations of those reports; 3) a sub-committee should review the existing design and operation of the Audubon Retention Basin and other Laguna Channel facilities so that a clearer understanding of the function of these facilities can be had by the Task Force; 4) a sub-committee should address vegetation and removals; and 5) a sub-committee should review City enforcement of Flood Plain regulations and make recommendations with only the biggest offenders being noted in those recommendations. It was pointed out by Verna Rollinger that the City already has a Disaster Preparedness Committee so the Task Force would not need to address that in a sub-committee.
- e. The involvement of the City and Task Force with regulatory and other local agencies was discussed. It was suggested that both the LB City Police and Fire Departments be included in the list provided in the Meeting Agenda.
- f. There was a discussion of questions to be answered by the Task Force in the course of their work, such as what to do about vegetation and existing walls that hinder natural flood flows in the canyon.
- g. A list of LCFMTF Draft Recommendations (dated 5/2/11) for future submittal to the City Council was provided by Steve May for review by the Task Force. This list serves as a place to begin the Task Force's efforts and can be expanded and modified in the course of our work.

Laguna Canyon Flood Mitigation Task Force Meeting Notes and Action Items

9. Items for Future Agendas.

- a. Verna Rollinger indicated that she is building a list of things to be discussed in the Task Force meetings.
- b. The next meeting should include discussion of Carl Nelson's 5/6/11 memo, further discussion of the Draft Recommendations to the City Council, and the establishment of sub-committees. Also, Carl Nelson should report on the Laguna Beach Business Club Breakfast held on 5/19/11.
- c. The next Task Force Meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 25, 2011, at 4:00 PM at the Community Center.

10. Action Items:

- a. Eric Jessen and Bill Lawson will finish editing their 4/30/11 field trip photographs and combine them for reference by the Task Force (see Item 8.c, above).
- b. Those members of the Task Force that are available should try to attend the Laguna Beach Business Club Breakfast on 5/19/11 to hear Mr. Kevin Onuma, PE, of OC Public Works talk on the subject of Laguna Beach Flood Conditions and History. Carl Nelson will report to the Task Force on this presentation (see Item 9.b, above).

11. The LCFMTF meeting was adjourned at 6:00 PM.

Meeting Notes and Action Items Recorded By: William E. Lawson, PE, LCFMTF Recording Secretary

Handwritten Notes Transcribed on: May 12, 2011 and May 20, 2011