



City of Laguna Beach  
Laguna Canyon Flood Mitigation Task Force

**MEETING MINUTES**

Wednesday, July 27, 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  
Kris Head, Fire Chief

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 4:05 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

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

Members Absent: Kelly Boyd, Charlie Quilter

3. AGENDA REVIEW

No actions on this item.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF 7/13/11

The draft minutes for the meeting of 7/13/11 were approved with notes attached thereto by William Lawson, by unanimous vote.

5. TASK FORCE DISCUSSION ITEMS

Discussion of early warning systems and presentation by City consultant Frank Weirich, There was a motion and unanimous vote to draft an agenda bill to the City Council recommending implementation of early warning provisions before next winter.

6. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:47 p.m. to the regular meeting of Wednesday, August 10, 2011 at 4:00 p.m. at the Community Center, Community Room, 380 Third Street, Laguna Beach, CA.

# Laguna Canyon Flood Mitigation Task Force

## Revised Meeting Notes and Action Items

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Meeting Date: July 27, 2011

Meeting Location: Laguna Beach Community Center

Meeting Opened at 4:05 PM

Meeting Adjourned at 5:47 PM

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1. The LCFMTF meeting was called to order by Task Force Chairman, Eric Jessen, at 4:05 PM.
2. Roll call was taken and recorded by Task Force Chairman, Eric Jessen. Task Force Members Kelly Boyd and Charlie Quilter were not present. Steve May, Dir. of Public Works/City Engineer, and Kris Head, CLB Fire Chief were present along with Public Member Barbara Metzger and special guest speaker, Dr. Frank Weirich.
3. The Meeting Agenda was reviewed and approved without changes. The Draft Minutes of the July 13, 2011 regular Task Force meeting were approved as written, by unanimous consent.
4. Task Force Discussion Items were discussed as follows:
  - a. Forecasting and advanced warning discussion with City consultant Dr. Frank Weirich:
    - 1) Dr. Weirich gave a presentation on the work that he has doing for the City and the recommendations that he will be making in his report to the City.
    - 2) For brevity, I will not repeat in these notes what was presented by Dr. Weirich regarding Flood Forecasting as it was pretty much a repeat of his presentation this morning at City Hall to John Pietig, City Manager; Steve May, Dir. of Public Works/City Engineer; Kris Head, CLB Fire Chief; Verna Rollinger and Kelly Boyd, City Council Members; and Carl R. Nelson and Bill Lawson, LCFMTF Members. The notes from that meeting can be referenced and attached to these minutes if so approved.
    - 3) Dr. Weirich recommended that while a flood forecasting system is being implemented we can a) clear vegetation from existing channels and b) find a way to route flood water through the downtown area. Obviously 2,000 cfs can't fit in an 800 cfs channel so the street(s) need to be used as a channel too, but with improvements to increase the flow capacity of the street while providing more protection to adjacent businesses. The use of moveable K-rails and/or aluminum floodwall panels was discussed. Trained crews could set up K-rails along Broadway fairly quickly. The Aluminum panel concept would require the panels to be bolted to the street surface which might be more time consuming. Dr. Weirich suggested that if the majority of the K-rail could be left in place full-time, with openings left for traffic to pass to and from Broadway on Beach Street then that system could be made functional as a flood channel on very short notice. The downside of both systems is that parking would have to be eliminated along both sides of Broadway and access to businesses from the street would be impaired.  
One of the potential advantages of such systems is that they would allow higher velocity flows in the street which would carry mud and debris all the way to the ocean rather than dropping it at PCH.

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- 4) Ocean Avenue could be treated in a manner similar to Broadway, but would create the same business access problems and would have less flow capacity because it is narrower than Broadway.
- 5) Eric Jessen asked if the street surface could be lowered a foot to increase flow capacity. Dr. Weirich responded that it would be possible, but then the curbs would be too high to open car doors against or step off of safely.
- 6) Dr. Weirich further emphasized the need for more rain gages and 'real-time' monitoring. Rain gages on Catalina Island could be added to the network, but the storms that hit Laguna Beach could miss Catalina or not be as intense there. Norm Grossman stated that reverse 911 messages to Canyon residents and Business Owners need to be very clear as to what to do. Dr. Weirich responded that a Manual is being prepared and that Canyon residents need to be 'educated' about the flooding potential of their area and the associated dangers.
- 7) Carl Nelson repeated comments that he had made at the morning meeting (See Notes of that meeting). Bob Borthwick asked about the color code on the map exhibit that Dr. Weirich had displayed; Dr. Weirich explained that everything in red is soil on bedrock with high potential for mud flows (Almost all of the lower, downstream watershed is in the red zone). Louis Longi asked for clarification about the flow coming from the Laguna Audubon area; that flow is clearer water with less mud and debris due to development.
- 8) Dr. Weirich then repeated the priorities as being 1. Public Education; 2. Tie into the County ALERT System; 3. Channel Monitoring (manual observations and webcams); 4. Add more rain gages to the existing monitoring system; 5. Monitor moisture in slopes with or without remote sensors. Dr. Weirich noted that some equipment can be expected to break down and that the program should anticipate that.
- 9) Verna Rollinger reported on the morning meeting with Dr. Weirich. She said that John Pietig suggested that some amount of money be authorized to do something before the coming rainy season. \$25k was the suggested amount. John also asked that the Task Force evaluate what could be done on Broadway. John Pietig suggested that an Agenda Bill be prepared and presented to City Council in August or September; Task Force input is desired.
- 10) A Motion to waive Agenda posting was made by Norm Grossman and seconded by Eric Jessen. The Motion was then unanimously approved. Eric Jessen then made a motion to proceed with the preparation of the Agenda Bill and this was seconded by Norm Grossman. That motion was also unanimously approved. Verna Rollinger and Kelly Boyd will prepare the Agenda Bill for City Council approval. Someone suggested that the bill not quote a dollar figure so that the City Manager would have maximum flexibility in implementing the Bill. Carl Nelson commented that we should clarify that a modest budget is anticipated. Louis Longi said that we need to monitor the performance of Dr. Weirich's recommendations and see what costs what.

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### b. Infrastructure Sub-Committee report and discussion:

- 1) Bill Lawson reported that the Infrastructure Sub-Committee had not met again since the last Task Force Meeting. Their next meeting will be held at City Hall on Wednesday, August 3, 2011, at 3:30 PM.

### c. Public Safety and Awareness Sub-Committee report and discussion:

- 1) The Public Safety and Awareness Sub-Committee met on July 18, 2011 at City Hall, at which time they reviewed the Public Safety element of the City's General Plan. They then met on July 25, 2011 with the City Manager John Pietig, Dir. of Public Works/City Engineer Steve May, and CLB Fire Chief Kris Head and discussed Public Safety matters with them. Steve May was asked to provide information on Sand Bag use. The Sub-Committee plans to meet again on August 1, 2011.

### d. Downtown Specific Issues Sub-Committee report and discussion:

- 1) Norm Grossman met with Kelly Boyd on Saturday, July 16, 2011. They discussed increasing the capacity of the channel under PCH (the Caltrans section). The Chamber of Commerce is meeting with Assemblyman Wagoner in Irvine on August 5, 2011 and hope to discuss this with him. Norm and Kelly also discussed the failure of the Boardwalk to break-away as designed in the December 2010 flood.
- 2) They also discussed reverse 911 calls to businesses; having the right phone numbers to call is critical to properly warning businesses. Flood gates are needed at all business entrances; not all businesses have them now because the Municipal Code requiring them was not enforced for a number of years. The cost of these gates could be amortized over a few years to help get the work done. Not all businesses that had flood gates used them in the 2010 Flood. Verna Rollinger indicated that the City has funding available for mailing Public Safety info to businesses.

### e. Long Term Planning discussion:

- 1) Louis Longi questioned what Dr. Weirich's recommendations are for handling water in Laguna Canyon. Louis said that water does not rise up from the creek, but rather flows from the highway down to the creek in his area. He also noted that the 2010 flood didn't have a lot of debris and mud in it, unlike previous storms. Loss of one's life would be the worst case result of flooding in Laguna Canyon.
- 2) Karl Koski said that more controls are needed in upper Laguna Canyon to reduce flooding. *[One sentence deleted]* Louis Longi questioned what would be the best use for such money if it were available?
- 3) Verna Rollinger reminded the Task Force that we're not trying to solve 100-year storm problems here, but instead the Task Force's recommendations should cover a number of smaller fixes...valuable, but less expensive things that can be done (to protect residents and businesses). It might be cheaper to put all Canyon homes on stilts than to improve the channel; we can't get everyone out of the floodplain.

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- 4) Carl Nelson said that floodplain zoning was passed years ago, but it was later rescinded. Today it may be politically infeasible to get the County to help. Regardless, Floodplain Regulations need to be followed by Canyon residents.
5. Public comments were as follows:
  - a. There were no Public comments made.
6. Items for Future Agendas are as follows:
  - a. Reports and discussion by all Task Force Sub-Committee.
  - b. Report on Agenda Bill preparation.
  - c. Start discussion on preparation of Task Force's Final Report. The first Draft is due at the September 14, 2011 Task Force meeting.
7. The following Action Items were assigned or continued:
  - a. See Future Agenda items, above.
8. The LCFMTF meeting was adjourned at 5:47 PM, and will reconvene on Wednesday, August 10, 2011, at 4:00 PM.

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Meeting Notes and Action Items Recorded By: William E. Lawson, PE, LCFMTF Recording Secretary  
From Handwritten Notes Transcribed on: August 5, 2011