

Building and Grounds Committee Report

April 10, 2022

Snook Cipolletti, Steve Agent and Carol Farren met with Chief Robert Bertram and two other firefighters to do a walk-through of Chateau Chaparral in anticipation of doing some fire mitigation on our upcoming May 1, 2022 clean-up day. We discussed the following:

Tumbleweeds – Firefighter Flores told us about sturdy, reusable bags that allow tumbleweeds to be bagged, stomped, then dumped. I emailed her for more information on where to purchase them. Chief Bertram said that tumbleweeds should not go in the fire mitigation trailer with other material, but suggested we get a second fire mitigation trailer just for tumbleweeds. Our committee agreed and he scheduled us for a second trailer. (Hopefully the board will approve the additional \$50). We plan to tackle the tumbleweeds near the railroad trestle, near the Wyoming bathhouse and on Tract K. Many lots are inundated with tumbleweeds and pose a significant fire risk to structures on those lots. More information on that below.

Tree branches – Lower limbs/branches of trees should be removed, dead or alive. This applies to new growth on pine trees (“ladder fuels”). Recommendations are to trim up 1/3 of tree height, but no less than 18” above dead grasses or other fuels. Many lots have trees that need to be trimmed.

Trees – Snook noticed dead or partially dead trees on a couple of lots and has offered to remove them himself if the lot owners agree. Two dead trees on CC tracts will be removed on clean-up day. One firefighter noticed a small tree growing between two larger trees on a lot on New Mexico and recommends removing the small tree, as its growth will weaken the other two and make vulnerable.

Trees/Power Lines – Firefighter Vince noticed two trees on Idaho are growing into power lines. Chief Bertram said to contact SDCEA, and even though the trees are on the private property side of Idaho, the electric company has an easement and can trim them. Carol offered to contact SDCEA (with board's okay) to address this issue.

Trimming Weeds, Shrubs and Grasses - Owners should be encouraged to trim. Common areas will be addressed on clean-up day.

Evacuation Routes – If CCOA were developed today, we would not be approved without a second entrance/exit. Chief Bertram suggested contacting owner of ranch property north of us (Mc Murry?) re: emergency exit possibility.

Areas of Particular Concern:

Near Wyoming Bathhouse/Stairs from Wyoming to New Mexico is a mess. Lots of tumbleweeds and other fuel trapped by low-hanging branches and large accumulation of pine needles. Lot below the west side of steps has a small propane tank close to all that fuel which increases the risk.

Lot 157 has a huge accumulation of tumbleweeds and a wooden fence all very close to their propane tank. If owner of this lot (and possibly others like it) is not available to address the situation, is it possible for volunteers to remove those tumbleweeds with the owner's permission?

Many units have propane tanks very close to structures. These are not to fire code which says 10', but Chief Bertram realizes that is not possible here. However, owners should remove any branches, stored wood, etc. that is too close to their tanks, preferably within 5'.

Trash and recycling dumpsters – These are too close to the propane tank. One firefighter said they have already had dumpster fires and that they should be moved.

Chief Bertram said trimming should be done in the winter and spring. He will come here at 8:30 on May 1 to talk to the clean-up volunteers and will be available later in the season to do a presentation for our community.

Other Discussion:

The committee discussed the lodge's deteriorating siding (south side) and the bathhouses. Snook suggested the most cost-effective and low-maintenance solution may be to install metal siding. Steve will check with a company he knows of in Poncha Springs to get an idea of material costs. Snook suggested that depending on budget constraints this upgrade could be done in stages with the lodge at the top of the list. He said many people in the park have the tools and know-how to do some of the installation.

Tract G needs improvement. Discussed using some of the rocks that are piled up near the mailboxes along with xeriscape plants (can we separate some of our Russian Sage?) to create a rock-garden effect. If anything is planted, we will need to commit to watering it until plants are established. Another suggestion was to mulch the entire area.

Wood chips from Pine Brothers mitigation of Tract B will be spread around small trees and surrounding area near the lodge and around the pine trees near the mailboxes during clean-up day.

Cement footers under metal support beams on lodge seem to be deteriorating. Can these be mitigated?

Steve will check with Brady to see if weed whackers and other tools are available for our use during clean-up day.

Carol is making a list of projects for clean-up day, a list of tools needed, and will create announcements by April 15.

Items to Discuss at Next Meeting:

- Lodge and outbuilding Repairs
- Schedule for second community clean-up day
- Road repairs (SDCEA responsibility?)
- Speeding in the community
- Better signs to prevent trespassing on river frontage
- Possible Firewise USA designation
- Any other new business

by Carol Farren, Buildings and Grounds Committee
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