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PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING OF: October 27, 2020

APPROVED MINUTES

PLANNING COMMISSION
CITY OF SEBASTOPOL
MINUTES OF October 27, 2020, Regular Meeting

PLANNING COMMISSION:

The notice of the meeting was posted on October 22, 2020.

1. CALL TO ORDER: Chair Fernandez called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. and read an opening statement.

2. ROLL CALL:

Present: Chair Fernandez, Vice Chair Fritz, and Commissioners Douch, Kelley, Lindenbusch, Oetinger, Wilson, and Haug

Absent: None

Staff: Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director
Bill Braga, Fire Chief

3. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC ON ITEMS NOT ON AGENDA: None.

4. STATEMENTS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST: None.

5. REGULAR AGENDA:

A. LHMP (Local Hazard Mitigation Plan) – public/PC workshop

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

Presented the staff report and introduced Fire Chief, Bill Braga

Bill Braga, Fire Chief

Thank you, Director Svanstrom. I look forward to this process and thank you for allowing us to get in on your meeting tonight to start off our public workshop. Thank you so much.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

There's a couple other folks who are also on the stakeholder group who are here tonight, Commissioner Douch is representing the Red Cross and business owners for us, and we also have Skip Jirrells who is the Community Public Safety Outreach Coordinator for the City who works with Chief Braga. Lastly, I would like to introduce our consultant Juliana Prosperi from .wood and I will let her go through the presentation.

Juliana Prosperi, .wood

Presented

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

Introduced Chris Andrew from the Sebastopol Community Cultural Center who is in attendance as a stakeholder as well.

Evert Fernandez, Chair

Asked for questions of staff from the Commission.

Paul Fritz, Vice Chair

What is the Commission's role in this process, specifically tonight, are you looking for feedback, it sounds like it is mostly informational?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

This is an introduction to the process. One of the other things that we are also trying to get a sense of, it is kind of interesting, when I wrote the RFP for the consultant it was a couple months after the evacuation last year, so PSPS were on my mind and the minds of others as this was discussed. The flooding that happened in 2019 was obviously on our minds as well. We wrote the RFP to not just do the physical hazard, but also look at things like the power outages and the impacts they can have. Climate Change and drought and things like that, that have not in the past been fully recognized as potential hazards. I have been through this process once before in another community developing their own standalone plan, and they looked at those things. We did also assess things and rank them, frankly, fairly low. Things like civil unrest and pandemic. Well, of course, since the RFP and hiring a consultant, we have had huge Black Lives Matter protests, and we have a huge pandemic. One of the things that I really look to the Commission as well as the members of the public who have joined us, you are a great representation of the community who are a group of really smart people that have a lot of different expertise. One of the things I think we'll want to get to after questions is, are there hazards that aren't on this list that we should perhaps be thinking about, and for flooding, we understand what The Barlow is, and about the eastern part of town which is subject to flooding from a mapped perspective, but do you all know of other particular places that have localized flooding, high winds, et cetera. It would be helpful to receive input from the Commission on those questions for this project tonight.

Zac Douch, Commissioner

No, I do not have anything to add. I'm on the planning committee for this project and am looking forward to learning more about it as we as we get into that, and in that role, I'm

representing business owners as well as the Red Cross and their activities around emergency planning and response. I have no questions at this time.

Linda Kelley, Planning Commissioner

It will be interesting to see how the process comes forward.

Luke Lindenbusch, Commissioner

Thank you, Ms. Prosperi for a really fantastic presentation. I definitely learned a lot about the ins and outs of the policy history on a State and Federal level as to how we got to this point, and why some of these elements are included in this process. I look forward to seeing this process unfold. I am interested to hear how anybody on the committee envisions public outreach going through this process beyond the workshops, which I think are helpful. If someone could just outline what sort of community engagement strategies are going to be deployed, what kind of resources are going to be put into this process, I think that would be really helpful for both the Commission and the community here tonight.

Skip Jirrels, Community Public Safety Outreach Coordinator

For me, that is a really great question. We have two different email lists that we work from, we have our Map Your Neighborhood classes, as well as our Map Your Neighborhood leader council, we do a lot of exchanging of information within those groups. For the piece that I hold, would be to be able to keep the information flowing out into that group and allowing that group to respond back directly to whomever the appropriate person is.

Juliana Prosperi, .wood

We also prepare a formal outreach strategy as part of these plans and it specifically outlines what some of the recommended steps are. Those include everything from helping the City develop a website by providing some background material and include FAQs so there is a repository for folks to go to. That outreach strategy will outline all these other traditional, and more progressive or digital type methods for outreach to the community. There's also a section in there on engaging community based organizations, there are the stakeholders that are going to be formerly part of the planning committee, and if there are other organizations that you may want to also reach out to, we've done those types of specific engagements too. All of that is part of the outreach strategy. As a commissioner, if you are interested in in that plan once Director Svanstrom has it, I am sure she could share it with folks beyond just the planning committee for input that could be helpful.

Evert Fernandez, Chair

There is an event tomorrow night at 6 o'clock, I believe.

Skip Jirrels, Community Public Safety Outreach Coordinator

Yes, there is a class tomorrow evening as well as a leader council meeting on Thursday evening. What's going on in this process will be addressed there, and it's been addressed already with, I think, three separate emails that went out to all of them, including the survey that just went out a few minutes ago to everybody to see if they could come in and populate the survey in some way.

Bill Braga, Fire Chief

I am the Fire Chief and the Director of Emergency Services for the City. This whole plan is actually perfect timing. Not only that it is required, and we should be updating our local hazard mitigation plan, but we are also in the process of updating our City's emergency plan. The last

time the City's emergency plan was updated was in 1996. We are a few years past due in updating our own emergency plan. I see a lot of this going hand in hand, and it truly is perfect timing. Mr. Jirrels is a great resource for me out there, managing a whole bunch of areas that I just do not have the bandwidth to do and he is doing a wonderful job. I have been involved with the City for 36 years, every flood that has come by, and every fire that has come by, I have touched on it, I have been there, done that. Most recently, in the last couple of years, the planned power outages (PSPS) with PG&E. There is just so many elements to the LHMP and the City's emergency plan. Our emergency plan will probably be updated at about the same time that the LHMP goes through. There is so much involved. I am pretty excited that we are actually doing both. The City's emergency plan needed to be updated a long time ago. I think the effort that we are going to put into this will be worth our while.

Luke Lindenbusch, Commissioner

Excellent. Thank you very much for that, Chief Braga. Will Commissioner Douch be liaising to the Planning Commission? What will the involvement of the Planning Commission look like over the course of this process, or will it mostly be left to the planning committee for this?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

I think we plan to come back with the assessment of the risks to have the Commission review those, and to have the Commission review the draft plan prior to going to Council with it.

Luke Lindenbusch, Commissioner

Okay, thank you. Under the risk assessment slide for severe weather, it noted heavy rain, thunderstorms, and dense fog. I think extreme heat will be a strong consideration for us moving forward. I know that's definitely part of the consideration as I see it in the survey as well, but just noting that because a lot of the time our coordination, especially in terms of cooling centers on the increasing amount of extremely hot days that we have, are administered by the County, and we do not always have one open in Sebastopol. I think that is something that is important for us to consider, especially as we are thinking about the impact of extreme heat on vulnerable populations, whether seniors or homeless populations.

Kate Haug, Commissioner

I want to thank everyone; I am very impressed by the coordination of all these different data points. It was an amazing amount of information. I was also very pleased to hear Chief Braga's enthusiasm for the in tandem creation of the LHMP and the updating of the City's emergency plan. I think it is fortuitous that we are doing both of these at the same time, and I just want to express my gratitude for everyone's work on these extremely important and timely issues.

Evert Fernandez, Chair

We have been fortunate with not having wildfires in our community, although we do experience flooding and so forth. I have noticed that either family members, friends, and others need to evacuate they come to Sebastopol. Is that part of the plan as far as how we can help, what we can do, things we should be aware of, things we should looking at, et cetera?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

When Chief Braga and I were developing the list of folks to join the stakeholder planning group, we were looking at the structures of Sebastopol, the City has a lot of buildings, but they are operated by nonprofits. We do have someone from the Senior Center, not only as a

contact to seniors in that work in the vulnerable population, but also because that is a potential cooling center if we were able to get it improved with air conditioning. We have the Community Center, so we do have folks who are from other organizations where we would have potential shelters. I have also coordinated and talked with the folks at Regional Parks because during this epidemic, when the Guerneville area was evacuated, most recently Ragle Ranch Park was utilized as a temporary evacuation point to give people instructions and give them assistance on their way. I've already spoken with their director about yes, can we include that in our plan and make sure that we are coordinated, at the same time this plan is going on Sonoma County is also expanding their plan to be a multi-jurisdiction plan. While we are still doing our standalone plan, Chief Braga and I are coordinating with that group to make sure that, for larger events, we are either evacuating to some other town, or other towns are being evacuated just like in the 2017 Tubbs fire, Analy High School became a huge evacuation center. We do have someone from the schools on that group as well because they have facilities that could be used.

Evert Fernandez, Chair

Hearing nothing further, Chair Fernandez opened the public hearing for members of the public to speak on this item.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Marian McDonald

Thank you for the opportunity to participate. I have been doing disaster work for almost 40 years now. I am happy to be able to participate in Sebastopol, in terms of the hazards that were not listed in the list of hazards that you mentioned, I did not see anything under hazardous materials in terms of human caused incidents. Certainly, we do not have railroads here, but we have enough trucks going through so there is certainly that potential. Also, one thing that we certainly saw in 2017 is a large influx of evacuees from another town. My big worry is if the Hayward Fault ever goes, the folks from Oakland are going to be looking for somewhere else to be. Evacuees into Sebastopol from elsewhere is a situation we need to look at. I would like to see a lot of attention on public education and information for community resilience. Our Sebastopol neighborhood communications unit has been talking about incident command structure, incident command system training for our group lately. That is not for everybody.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

Having a wider understanding of how the emergency response works may be useful for the community. Finally, I will mention the Gravenstein Health Action Coalition as a community resource so that we do not have siloing of our efforts. There is a tremendous resource of folks looking at health action across our community, that might be a very valuable resource in terms of community resilience. Thank you.

Tor

There was a mention about climate change being more recognized in these planning processes recently. With it playing such a large role in the wildfires that we're seeing, and the floods we're seeing locally, I'm just wondering if any of the actions that are being considered, also do a win-win solution where you're reducing greenhouse gas emissions, as well as sequestering carbon in as far as any sort of action that is coming up in these plans? Or is it more just a reaction to the disaster that is in front of us? I have some examples there that talk about, Marian talked about resilience, and I will not go on and on about things about that, but

there's carbon farming, transportation changes, et cetera. In other words, addressing the root cause of climate change, does that show up in the mitigation plan anywhere?

Chris Andrew, Sebastopol Community Cultural Center

We are glad to be part of this process. The Community Center has been a disaster site in the past so I would be really interested in talking to Ms. Prospero about our roll in that.

Evert Fernandez, Chair

Hearing nothing further, Chair Fernandez closed public comment.

Juliana Prospero, .wood

In response to Tor's question and comments, these hazard mitigation plans are more focused on the climate adaptation side of it versus greenhouse gas emissions mitigation. However, with that said, we do address climate change and get into the core reasons and anthropogenic effects, where it's stemming from, why we're having changes in climate as it relates to increased greenhouse gas emissions in the plan itself. There's a science based background, however, the actions or the projects that typically come out of it are a little more focused on adaptation versus typically what you mentioned in the question there was on reducing, altering, or changing transportation patterns. Those types of actions that may change behaviors and transportation patterns, may be in something we call a Climate Action Plan, which is something that starts off with a greenhouse gas inventory so we can kind of understand what the community wide emissions are in Sebastopol, and what influence or capabilities the City may have to change or alter those patterns as they relate to transportation, building, and operational sources. The focus of this plan is a little bit different than that. It does look more at what is already happening and how climates can intensify some of these natural hazards. The short answer is that greenhouse gas emissions fall more in an air quality kind of category. Tor had some examples there in his question that I think can be expanded on and perhaps integrated into one of these plans.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

There is a Sonoma County Climate Action Plan in place. The CEQA documentation for that, at the County level, the Regional Climate Protection Agency was never certified. Most of us in communities use that for our climate goals when we're looking at those things, in terms of reduction of greenhouse gas, and protection against future, not so much mitigating from existing hazards that might occur, but trying to reduce the potential for additional climate change and whatnot. That is not exactly in line with what the goal of this process is. There are several things that have come up recently in terms of grants for climate emergency response, there was a grant recently from the State of California for communities affected by PSPS. This was right after the evacuation, and we applied for it for ways to get backup power. They are actually those grants, and increasingly, I'm seeing that those grants actually want sustainable decisions. If we were ready to add some battery backup to the solar on all of our City buildings, that would be a much more sustainable route to take than an emergency generator, it's a lot more expensive, so it's not something the City could just go out and do, but it is one of those steps that the City can do along with our solar initiatives and all that to help look at ways of lessening climate change into the future.

Evert Fernandez, Chair

A member of the public spoke on hazardous materials coming to our town, could Ms. Prospero or Director Svanstrom speak on that?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

I think it is a good thing to add to our list to look at. There is the potential for water contamination, either from local businesses or from transportation hazards. I certainly have seen that as a potential before. Unlike some communities, we do not have rail tracks, so we do not know what is in the cargo and it becomes a much higher light. Ms. Prosperi showed a slide about the myriad of potential natural hazards or manganese hazards that we will look at. The reality is that we do not have the time, money, or ability to respond to everything. One of the things that this process does is it looks at the likelihood. What is the frequency, how many people on properties would be impacted, et cetera? In terms of flooding, there is this pre known percentage that we will be mapping and say, yes, 10% of city properties that are impacted by flooding. In the case of a major earthquake, 100% of the town is likely to be affected. That is part of the assessment that we will be going through and bringing back to you as part of this process.

Evert Fernandez, Chair

Is some of that crossover, are there certain things you can do for an earthquake that also applies to other hazards?

Juliana Prosperi, .wood

Yes, we call the multi objective hazard mitigation actions. There are obviously criteria that we will look at and some of those actions are prioritized more highly by staff. Once we come up with a list of actions, there are various outreach techniques, and maybe even structural or property protection projects that may meet various criteria to reduce climate change affects. Some of the evacuation techniques or projects may apply to events related to hazardous material releases, as well as earthquakes. The evacuation procedures and planning processes may be similar, or maybe slightly modified. The answer is yes, we just call those multi hazard actions. When we organize everything in the beginning, there is a part in the executive summary of the plan where we can organize hazards by priority level (high, medium, low) or by hazard type. Some cities and counties like to see it by hazard type, and then those types of hazards get categories and multi hazard objectives or projects.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

One thing that has come up in a number of conversations is the need address what occurred during last year's disastrous evacuation, with the roadways and things like that. That is certainly something that is on our mind. Chief Braga and his fire group have been working on some things which he may be able to speak to. There were lessons learned and we are working on making sure that that is more orderly in the future.

Bill Braga, Fire Chief

I am currently working with the Sheriff's Department and the County. What we are going to do for the city of Sebastopol, because it was just so frustrating during the Kincade fire where we needed to evacuate the entire city. What's missing in this city, and it's being dealt with now and will be a part of our emergency plan, for evacuations we are going to have grids set up and zones, we'll be using our two state highways to split the city. We have highway 12 coming in through Sebastopol and heading west, and then highway 116 running north south if you want to look at it that way. We are going to use the two state highways to start off with creating four zones, A, B, C and D. We are working on the details now. Then we will break them into sub zones. One of the biggest complaints that I received when we opened up our emergency operation center here at the firehouse we're hundreds of people calling and saying hey, I got this map from the County, what zone are we in in Sebastopol? Unfortunately, within

the county of Sonoma, we were one of quite a few cities that did not have a breakout. They just did Windsor as a city, they just completed Sonoma a year ago. Santa Rosa has been in pretty good shape because they bump up against all the County buildings. Our city never really had a good map, a good zone map. Making sure that that happens for Sebastopol is on the top of our list. I wanted it to happen before the end of this fire season, but that is not going to happen. We are hoping that the end is near with our fire season. Developing and distributing evacuation zones is a huge one and it will be part of the City's emergency plan. This will mean that everyone in the city, all 8,000 residents will understand what evacuation zone they are in and be able to track the status in terms of warnings or mandatory evacuations being ordered. We are well overdue on that. Thank you.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

Asked Chief Braga to respond to Tor's question on whether the plan will include details about improving communications during times of disaster, for example, installing a radio tower in town that is powered by solar and battery, or improving cell tower network power supplies. I will start with that last part, the cell towers in town, most of you may know that when we did lose power, if you had Verizon, you were okay, I believe. I do not know about other cells. There is a Verizon cell tower at City Hall which also has a backup generator that ran through the entire weeklong power outage we had last Fall. Nicely, it also supplies City Hall so we can continue operations there. City facilities (Police, Fire and Public Works) generally have generators. The State also passed legislation, which goes into effect January 1, which will start to require backup power to cell towers. They will not need to do it retroactively, but if they come to apply for additional things, that is something we can require them to do. Asked Chief Braga to speak on emergency communications.

Bill Braga, Fire Chief

I'll add a couple of comments and then Mr. Jirrels, if you're still on the line, maybe you could share the work that's being done by Stan and the Communications Group, and what we've been doing lately with testing and stuff. I do sit with a County team; it is called alert and warning. We are truly not just looking at Sebastopol, we are looking at Sonoma countywide. We truly do need to improve how we communicate, how we alert, and how we warn people. There has been a lot of ideas thrown out, including air raid sirens, mounted everywhere in the county. Not sure if that's going to go through or not, but it is an idea that's been floated, enhancing our current cell towers that we use for public safety for law enforcement and fire, enhancing those cell sites and making sure that they're protected from fire. We did lose one tower during the Kincadee fire, so we are looking at all that and then more closely with Sebastopol, Mr. Jirrels can give a quick update on that.

Skip Jirrels, Community Public Safety Outreach Coordinator

Marian mentioned the Sebastopol neighborhood communications unit, it's a group of people that have actually been working for maybe a year and a half or so very closely to create a ham radio network that would have at the upper level would be our ham group, below that at our neighborhood level, taking advantage of our Map Your Neighborhood program that we have, that individual neighborhoods would use FRS radios or walkie talkies, and then be able to connect to a hub in their local area in one of the four areas that Chief Braga is talking about in the way that the city would be broken up into four quadrants, we'll have a hub in each of those quadrants, that then that area would communicate to the hub. Then we have at the Fire Department a ham radio outfit there, that would be a net control area that they would then be able to share information back and forth across the neighborhood. The process that they are going through has been really great, I think they started out with four or five, pretty much

diehard people. If I am not mistaken, they have somewhere in the high teens of number of people that have ham radio licenses now, and there's more and more neighborhoods adopting FRS. That would be a potential backup communication source within Sonoma County, and we've had other communities come and watch what they're doing when they've done some of their testing, to think that maybe it's something that they could do in their communities also when those cell towers do go down. It has been a great effort on the part of the Sebastopol neighborhood communications unit.

Bill Braga, Fire Chief

We do have an emergency generator here at the firehouse, the Superintendent of Public Works was able to purchase one recently, the Police Department has a backup generator, City Hall has a backup generator, or at least it does to the tower.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

City Hall has a backup generator, and it feeds a number of outlets. During power outages we can function.

Bill Braga, Fire Chief

Emergency generator wise, we are in fairly good shape, and we are getting in better shape as we purchase more. That part plays into the emergency plan, and it is a piece of the mitigation plan also. Once again, it all ties together.

Juliana Prosperi, .wood

I am going to close by revisiting that poll. We have 23 folks participating this evening, which is great for just this call. The top were earthquake hazards, followed by drought and water shortages, energy shortages and resiliency, PSPS, flooding, climate change is at 48%, pandemic, epidemic, followed by high winds, hazard materials releases, agricultural pest, extreme heat, aquatic invasive species, tree mortality, oil spills, natural gas pipeline hazards, sometimes that one is integrated with hazard material releases, and then there were some that were not picked as the top five. I just want to really say thanks, that is a good turnout. Hopefully, that was interesting and fun to do. I hope we can take this and compare it to what the input was last week from the committee. We will do our best to make sure that all the natural hazards are covered and decide as a team which of the others that are not required under FEMA should be addressed in this plan.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

Ms. Prosperi, Mr. Jirrels is asking if we can keep the poll open since he has sent it to his cert group and his Map Your Neighborhood folks to see what those final results are.

Juliana Prosperi, .wood

I will keep the poll open.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

That is it for this item, thank you everyone so much for attending. We will be coming back as we said before with more information at a later date.

Paul Fritz, Vice Chair

This is probably addressed as different pieces of different crises or hazards, but I'm wondering, is there a reason to have a scenario that addresses an outcome if there's a major

economic downturn that is not triggered by some other event that impacts the City's ability to carry out its functions? Is that ever considered?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

From what I have seen, this is a FEMA and emergency response plan. Something like Stockton going bankrupt does not get dealt, you don't get bailed out by funding from FEMA or Cal OES for that kind of emergency. While there are certainly reasons to plan for it, it is not part of this particular type of plan.

Luke Lindenbusch, Commissioner

Is there anything in terms of the communication plan for social media outreach, I did not hear anything about that. That could definitely be useful for anyone who doesn't have a hand crank radio but does have a cell phone that's charged.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

Are you talking about outreach as we are going through this process, or communications in the event of an emergency?

Luke Lindenbusch, Commissioner

Communications in the event of an emergency.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

For those who have access to the internet, the City does maintain a Facebook page and frequently updates its website during events.

Bill Braga, Fire Chief

Director Svanstrom is right in terms of the City's website and social media pages. I understand your concern, Commissioner Lindenbusch because there is a percentage of our population out there that does not have access, does not have Nixle, et cetera. That is an area that we still need to address. I want to reach 100% of our community and I am not yet sure how to go about that. We need to do that. At a minimum, I mentioned an air raid siren, that is pretty extreme as a means of communication but it's something that the County is looking at the possibility of doing. Here in Sebastopol we outfitted all our emergency vehicles, police, and fire with the high low siren. For some, if they hear us coming through their neighborhood with this very bizarre sounding high low siren, they will know that that means they need to evacuate immediately. For others, we'll have to improve how we're going to educate everyone in our city and everyone in our community because there may be visitors coming through Sonoma County, and a high low siren goes off or an air raid siren goes off and they won't know what to do, they won't understand what that is. That is a huge piece that I am working with the County on because a lot of it will come from the County. I want to make sure that we enhance that, or at least reinforce that for the City of Sebastopol to make sure that communications are right up on top of the list. That is a goal of mine to build that into our emergency plan.

Skip Jirrels, Community Public Safety Outreach Coordinator

Through simple exploration, I found out just recently that the City has the capabilities to send out to a very broad area through Nextdoor as one of the platforms that's available, although this is a multiple level effort in order to be able to do it. There is a way for the City to essentially be able to broadcast through Nextdoor. This is something that I had not known about before. I do not know whether actually using it has ever been thought about by the City.

It's that kind of thing that I think allows us to know, we have a lot of exploring in the social media realm, to be able to learn how we can reach out more because it is going to take multiple approaches to get to 100% as Chief Braga mentioned.

Kate Haug, Commissioner

Following up on the outreach question, which I think is important, I am wondering if you have programs that involve high school students, because I think this would be an area where high school students would really benefit from becoming involved in their community at a very ground level and learning more about how cities function in states of emergency and how groups work together during an emergency situation.

Skip Jirrels, Community Public Safety Outreach Coordinator

Coincidentally, I have just been working with a young lady trying to get some real exploration of what the possibilities are for her to be able to help us because we are trying to get to the younger crowd of people to be able to normalize the message of being prepared, and then trying to get them to assist us because they are so much better at being able to deal with social media. I had gone to the schools a couple years ago when Chief Braga and I first started working together, on this phase of the project anyway, and there wasn't a reason for high school students really to want to volunteer with us because there wasn't a whole lot going on at the college level for emergency management kinds of courses, or credentialing in some way. Now there is, so I think there might be an opportunity for us to work with the high school to be able to develop some programs that they could assist us with what we're trying to do and they could be learning at the same time, some minimal level or at least some piece of emergency management, that a letter from the City or from the Fire Department would be beneficial as they go on in their lives. It is a great question and we are just touching into that.

Kate Haug, Commissioner

It is also about community resiliency. It is not necessarily a question of a college degree. It is more about how you exist with other people in a time of duress so that it is mutually beneficial to move forward. I lived in San Francisco for many years, and they have NERT, which is neighborhood emergency response team, and it's to help neighborhoods work together during times of crisis which is for all ages, it's about getting to know your neighbors. It is both interesting to explore as emergency management as a career, but also about community resiliency. I am excited that you are already thinking about this and appreciate that.

Linda Kelley, Planning Commissioner

When we got evacuated last year the power was out, people were evacuating from the river, and it was certainly difficult to get across traffic. I'm in the central medical personnel at Memorial Hospital, and I also volunteer for the Red Cross down at the evacuation centers, and I found that when I came back, I did come back and sneak behind the lines to be able to get a change of uniform and to just check on things and I know it was a difficult time and we didn't have a lot of personnel, but it seemed that there was nobody really watching our vacated neighborhoods very much. We were very fortunate that we didn't have any property or looting as much as I can tell, from talking to staff, but I'm wondering if that can somehow be included as a very important thing for us to figure out ahead of time? I know, it is very difficult because it was a big deal what was happening, and there probably wasn't any resources, but once we were evacuated I certainly would love to have more police or the sheriff or surveillance of our personal property. We have homebound, invalid folks, we have our senior centers and senior housing, and I think there should be a coordinated effort to make sure that the plans are in place with those institutions to get the heck out of dodge in an effective

manner. The last fire we had, the Glass fire, I was coming home from Memorial at about two in the morning when it started and saw the backup of the traffic of the buses trying to evacuate the senior facilities and this time, it worked out really well. The time before, when I was working three years ago, at the Vet's building and the fairgrounds, what would happen is the staff of those facilities sometimes just dropped the folks off and left. The Red Cross at first is not set up to have to deal with bed bound patients who need care. Some facilities had their caregiver stay with them, but these are the practical issues that I observed working out there on the front lines.

Skip Jirrels, Community Public Safety Outreach Coordinator

I do not know if Chief Braga might want to comment about the local police and sheriff's being in town, but I know that a member of the public mentioned the Gravenstein Health Action Coalition. They have been supporting the Map Your Neighborhood program, especially the leader council, with an effort to be able to focus on the Map Your Neighborhood groups, connecting with isolated seniors and those people that are the more vulnerable within the neighborhood. There is an effort afoot to be able to have the neighborhoods be that connection for the most vulnerable, or for seniors. We are connected with the Senior Center to be able to share our information back and forth about what's going on. But the Gravenstein Health Action Coalition very much has a focus on isolated seniors and our ability to approach that from the neighborhood level, rather than them trying to find those individual seniors and pay attention to those individual seniors from one particular place, we're attempting to get to where we are paying attention to them from within their immediate neighborhood through the Map Your Neighborhood program.

Linda Kelley, Planning Commissioner

Can our Fire Chief address how our neighborhoods are being surveilled in terms of safety?

Bill Braga, Fire Chief

I will be honest, initially, no one was. Then we received mutual aid and auto aid from other police agencies and jurisdictions. We were receiving police officers from east bay, bay area. The Police Department pretty much put out an all call, and we had out of county officers come. During the initial chaos and gridlock and it took anywhere from four to six hours in some areas just to evacuate out of Sebastopol. When we started receiving mutual aid police, we would assign them to the main intersections to help direct traffic. That then freed up our own Sebastopol police officers, and all off duty officers were called back into work and all started patrolling. I cannot tell you that they that they patrolled every street and every neighborhood, as that is probably unrealistic, but they obviously started with the main core of the city and then worked their way through the residential areas. There was a window where there was no patrolling going on. We were trying to evacuate thousands of people in vehicles that were just gridlocked, stopped traffic right out here in front of the firehouse, those first few hours were really tough. Once we started getting resources in, we were able to get out into our community and start to protect our community. That is on the list with the Police Department, that falls on their shoulders. The City has made an offer for a new Police Chief, I am not sure when he is going to start, but I am pretty sure that he'll be involved with evacuations, sheltering, patrolling, and everything else that we have learned during these last few citywide emergencies and some of our own failures. That will be at the top of his list, I can guarantee you that.

Evert Fernandez, Chair

Hearing nothing further, Chair Fernandez thanked the presenters and concluded this item.

6. PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Svanstrom updated the Commission on the following:

- The City received a permit from Caltrans to install up to four parklets in town which will be installed within the next two to three weeks.
- Recent Council actions including budget updates and appointments to the Climate Action Subcommittee.

7. ADJOURNMENT: Chair Fernandez adjourned the meeting at 9:13 p.m. The next regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting will take place on Tuesday, November 10, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Kari Svanstrom
Planning Director