



City of Rolling Hills

INCORPORATED JANUARY 24, 1957

2 Portuguese Bend Road
Rolling Hills, CA 90274

AGENDA
Special Fire Fuel Management
Committee Meeting

**FIRE FUEL MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE**
Wednesday, May 04, 2022

CITY OF ROLLING HILLS
6:30 PM

1. PARTICIPANTS

2. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

- 2.A. [DISCUSS REVIEW COMMENTS FROM WILDLAND RES MANAGEMENT ON THE DRAFT ORDINANCE RELATING TO FIRE FUEL ABATEMENT IN THE CANYONS.](#)

RECOMMENDATION: Discuss review comments from subject matter expert Wildland Res Management and provide direction to staff.

[CL_AGN_220504_FFC_WildlandResMgmt_OrdinanceReview.pdf](#)

3. COMMENTS WILL BE TAKEN BY EMAIL IN REAL TIME - PUBLIC COMMENT WELCOME

This is the appropriate time for members of the public to make comments regarding items not listed on this agenda. Pursuant to the Brown Act, no action will take place on any items not on the agenda.

4. ADJOURNMENT

Documents pertaining to an agenda item received after the posting of the agendas are available for review in the City Clerk's office or at the meeting at which the item will be considered.

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting due to your disability, please contact the City Clerk at (310) 377-1521 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting to enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility and accommodation for your review of this agenda and attendance at this meeting.



City of Rolling Hills

INCORPORATED JANUARY 24, 1957

Agenda Item No.: 2.A
Mtg. Date: 05/04/2022

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: ELAINE JENG, CITY MANAGER

THRU: ELAINE JENG P.E., CITY MANAGER

**SUBJECT: DISCUSS REVIEW COMMENTS FROM WILDLAND RES
MANAGEMENT ON THE DRAFT ORDINANCE RELATING TO FIRE
FUEL ABATEMENT IN THE CANYONS.**

DATE: May 04, 2022

BACKGROUND:

At the January 24, 2022 City Council meeting, staff was directed to contract with Wildland Res Management (WRM) and authorize the Fire Fuel Committee to finalize the scope of work with the consultant for an amount not-to-exceed \$20,000. At the February 8, 2022 meeting, the Fire Fuel Committee directed staff to engage WRM to review, and provide feedback to the draft ordinance for \$7,500 and allocate \$7,500 for site visits for an overall contract of \$15,000. At the March 14, 2022 City Council Meeting, the Council approved a professional services agreement.

WRM's service was broken down into three tasks:

1. Review existing relevant documents relating to wildfire mitigation measures and provide written memo on consultant's review of relevant documents and comment on consistency of wildfire mitigation measures among the reviewed documents.
2. Review draft ordinance version January 13, 2022 to regulate fire fuel in the canyons and provide review comments.
3. Conduct site visits to private properties and provide written report for each site visited. Written report shall include instructions for fire fuel management on the property visited, including visual guides, reference materials and call outs of specific vegetation on the property.

DISCUSSION:

WRM estimated that an approximate 30 day period is needed to complete Task 1 and Task 2. Assuming the contract for engagement of services was executed on the week of March 14, 2022, Task 1 and Task 2 could be completed by April 11, 2022. There was delay in executing the service agreement that led WRM needing an additional week to provide review comments to the draft ordinance. WRM provided written review comments on the week of April 19, 2022

and the review comments are included with this report.

WRM recommended that the Fire Fuel Committee consider enhancing the fire fuel abatement work within the 200 feet from structures (defensible space) to be more restrictive than the Los Angeles County Fire Code. Outside of the defensible space, WRM recommended that the Fire Fuel Committee follow the model of the city's current CalOES/FEMA grant project where the city takes the lead to group a cluster of homes for vegetation treatment.

WRM reported that vegetation treatment outside of the defensible space would be subject to environmental reviews and permitting by other agencies. This critical path is the primary basis for the experts' opinion that the local ordinance should stay within the defensible space. Outside of the defensible space, WRM recommended that the city take a lead role in environmental assessments and permitting for economies of scale in order to lessen the burden on individual property owners. Environmental assessment and permitting may be a significant cost at a parcel level, but if the work were to encompass multi-parcels, for example, the same permitting cost could be spread among the multiple parcels.

As recommended, the Fire Fuel Committee can move forward with a local ordinance on abating fire fuel on private property within the defensible space to include more restrictive provisions than the Los Angeles County Fire Code. The Fire Fuel Committee was advised to not implement a local ordinance abating fire fuel on private property outside of the defensible space, but mimic the CalOES/FEMA grant model by having the city fulfill the environmental requirements and acquire permits from relevant agencies for the vegetation treatment on multiple parcels.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is sufficient budget in account 917 Emergency Preparedness to fund WRM's professional service fees.

RECOMMENDATION:

Discuss review comments from subject matter expert Wildland Res Management and provide direction to staff.

ATTACHMENTS:

[CL_AGN_220504_FFC_WildlandResMgmt_OrdinanceReview.pdf](#)

City of Rolling Hills Ordinance Review

Goal of ordinance

- Achieve reasonable level of fire safety at a home and parcel level
- Achieved through the reduction of fire hazard in order to support structure ignition resistance and survivability (potentially without firefighter protection)
 - considering life safety
 - property damage reduction
 - protecting [the environment] natural resources [significant ecological area in City]
- Large, canyon-wide projects achieve separate, complementary goals
 - These projects are aimed at community-wide benefit (to aid containment of wildfire, or reduce ember production and distribution, City-wide)
 - Canyon-wide treatments can be done outside the framework of an ordinance, i.e. through projects funded by FEMA/Cal OES

Specifications in terms of spatial dimensions covered in the ordinance

- Width of treatment (up to 200 feet)
- Start of treatment area (is from structure house)
- Treatment width is as measured on aerial (not on the ground)
- Or City boundary
- Within City boundary, be consistent with LA County Agricultural Commission, to protect adjacent structure, outside owner's property. This requires that a landowner with a structure within 200-ft of its property will be compelled to create and maintain defensible space for that structure, even if the structure is not on their own property

Trigger for when ordinance become in force (what constitutes a canyon owner?)

- Will make a new list, of parcels adjacent to canyon
- City and LA County Fire Department will keep its list of parcels, consisting of a Declaration List, for their inspection purposes
- Consider Tiers
 - Tier 1 – adjacent to the Open Space: to be inspected every year, before June 1
 - Tier 2 – others, inspected any time of the year
- Describe/locate critical habitat (by map or parcel number) with caveat that it is not the official delineation, that that is the responsibility of the landowner to comply with laws protecting the habitat.
- Same with Significant Ecological Areas (SEAs)
- Provide definition of the riparian areas, and distance of setback

Standards for what is allowed in the area covered by the ordinance – Section 8.30.040

- Rolling Hills Fire Fuel Management Standards, focusing on fuel volume, spacing and density, irrespective of species
- Prohibit uprooting (on steep slopes)

- Think about slope steepness in terms of suitable vegetation density and strategy for retaining deep-rooted plants
- Plant clustering is OK
- Focus on dead material and that with low fuel moisture (dying)
- Prohibit mulch in 0-5 feet from structure
- Support pruning of tall shrubs vs. cutting, and provide details on pruning
- Clarify that tree canopies can be continuous, and need not be thinned

How to enforce

- Contract out inspection of canyon owners ordinance
- Works in parallel with fire department inspection and enforcement of the fire code
- City procedure to enforce is fine

Definitions in Exhibit A (adjustments only)

- Flammable vegetation: expand the definition, to include landscaping plants, too
- Combustible mulch – review with an eye towards new studies
- Defensible space – where the standards have been followed and are in place, where firefighting (defensive) actions are allowable
- Weeds – worthy of re-look, so as to not require all chaparral/scrub to be weeds. Consider that a weed is just a plant in the wrong place, or wrong condition