



**CITY OF MILL VALLEY  
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES**

January 12, 2023  
6:30 PM to 8:30 PM

**Commissioners Present:** Chair Christie Coleman, Commissioner Ashley Raveche, Commissioner Leah Curtis, Commissioner Victoria Lim, Commissioner Josh Galland, and Commissioner John Poulson.

**Staff Attending:** Deputy Fire Chief Tom Welch and Community Engagement Coordinator Michelle Terrell

The January EPC meeting was called to order at approximately 6:33 pm by Chair Christie Coleman

The minutes from the December meeting were approved. (Commissioner Curtis made the first motion to approve and it was seconded by Poulson.)

**Old Business:**

**Annual report to council**

The EPC's annual report is due to the City Council on March 20. The report, to be written by Terrell and Welch, is to include the EPC's successes in 2022 and address how well the strategic plan goals were met. Terrell encouraged commissioners to share any activities and photos to her no later than January 18. She also asked that commissioners include outside work/volunteer activities that inform their experience and expertise work on the EPC. Terrell applauded Poulson for already submitting his activities. She encouraged all commissioners to attend the city council meeting at 5:30 pm on March 20.

## **New Business:**

### **2023 commission interviews/vacancies**

Coleman said that three commissioners needed to re-apply. Terrell said the last day to apply for commissions was January 25 (at 5 pm). Commissioners will choose new leadership at the March 9 EPC meeting. A chair and vice chair will be nominated (by themselves or their peers) and selected by vote at the March 9 meeting.

### **Flood readiness and evacuation routes**

Daniel Vasquez who originally had brought this item to the agenda was unable to attend the January 12 meeting due to out-of-town work with the California State Guard, so the meeting moved to staff reports (with Chief Welch addressing flood readiness).

## **Staff Reports:**

### **Tom Welch, Mill Valley/SMFD Deputy Fire Chief**

Welch said that DPW is working hand and hand with police and fire to address preparedness, safety, and damage for the most recent round of storms. SMFD Communications Coordinator Elysha Omoomy and Mill Valley's Community Engagement Coordinator Michelle Terrell have been hard at work sharing storm preparedness and up-to-date information with the public. Leah Curtis, an EPC commissioner and the Southern Marin NRG Coordinator, put together some NRG guidance for dealing with the storms. Marin Search and Rescue is all geared up to deal with mudslides, mud into homes, and other situations requiring their assistance. Water rescue teams are also ready to go.

Police Chief Rick Navarro gave a shout-out to Welch for bringing everyone together for a solid coordinated effort of all disciplines. He appreciated the solid communication effort and everyone working together collaboratively.

On the topic of flooding, Commissioner Poulson encouraged commissioners to attend Fire Safe Marin's flooding webinar on January 30 (6-6:30). Online registration is available now. Commissioner Raveche said the current burlap bags provided by local agencies are disintegrating more quickly than the previous bags. Welch said that when DPW runs out of bags they have to quickly purchase whatever is available on the market. Sandbags have been in high demand. Terrell shared experience with an emergency drainage issue at her home. Her family was able to purchase Quick Dam sandbags which she said were very lightweight but acted as "Quick Clot" for hillsides ("instant sandbags"), quickly filling with water and expanding to 3.5 inches, acting just like a regular sandbag. Commissioner Curtis echoed Poulson's call to attend the Flooding webinar on January 30 and said that the event might not be recorded so to be sure to try to listen on that day. She said she and Terrell would be attending.

Commissioner Lim asked about casualties from the storms. Welch said that there were increased traffic accidents, but while there have been slides there have not been loss of lives or homes. He reminded everyone that another round of rain was coming soon. Lim asked about the current

rainy season's impact on the upcoming fire season. Welch said the rest of the winter had an equal chance of being either dry or wet. As for the upcoming fire season, Welch said more water equals more growth which equals more fuel and we will have to see how that plays out in the dry months ahead. Terrell reported that every reservoir in Marin County was one hundred percent full.

Commissioner Raveche said that Cal Fire had released a new fire map and that our area appeared to be doing better. She said that was a reflection of the vegetation management the fire departments had been doing. Welch said that the state responsibility maps were now out for comment and that the city maps would be coming soon. He said these maps were very important to insurance companies and those seeking insurance in high fire zones.

Commissioner Galland asked what residents should do if they were concerned about a specific area and landslides. Welch said to call DPW and have the city's geotechnical engineer come out and check the area of concern. With the Governor declaring a state of emergency that loosens up funds for cities to access to address issues like landslides. Welch said moving earth areas typically have dirty water, slanting poles, slipping trees, and mud flows. Residents viewing issues like that should be immediately reported to DPW. Terrell mentioned that the Hillside area had vegetation leaning against powerlines and that she learned that now that calls of concern had to be called directly into PGE. Welch said the fire department also had to do the same. Calls to first responders should only be made when a line is down, sparking, or causing an immediate hazard.

### **Michelle Terrell, Mill Valley Community Engagement Coordinator**

Terrell reported that as of January 1 she had now switched over to the police department, working under the supervision of Chief Navarro. She will continue to work on emergency preparedness issues, but will also be working on communication about broader safety issues. She will continue to support the Emergency Preparedness Commission.

Terrell reported that she has been collaborating with Chief Welch, the City of Mill Valley, and the Mill Valley Chamber of Commerce on plans for business and organizational preparedness for 2023. The first guide she created is now up on the City's website and went out via the Chamber last week in its weekly newsletter. The guide was also announced today by the City of Mill Valley in the latest issue of the MV Connect. (She put the link in the chat: <https://www.cityofmillvalley.org/DocumentCenter/View/4403/Final-MV-Employee-Preparedness-PDF>). She reported that the prepared guide for employees will go up on Ready Marin so that other communities can use it and tailor it to their own communities. In the Spring, she hopes to create a guide for business and organization leaders on continuity of operations plans and resiliency.

Terrell reported that she and Chief Welch plan to offer a table top drill for business and organization leaders. They will run a simulation of what happens if there is a large-scale earthquake – how do businesses support the community and each other and where are the shortcomings for businesses and organizations (such as supply chain issues).

In the fall, Terrell plans to work with first responders and business leaders to provide training to employees. She would like to provide employees in Mill Valley the opportunity to get first aid, hands-on CPR, Narcan, and active threat training.

At the police department she will be working with the school resource officer to figure out some ideas of getting back into schools for preparedness and safety guidance.

Terrell reminded commissioners to check their schedules and sign up for tabling opportunities for 2023.

### **Leah Curtis, Southern Marin Neighborhood Response Groups**

Curtis reported that she had been working with the Marin County Emergency Preparedness Coordinator Elaine Wilkinson in creating a door hanger about flooding to distribute to residents living in low-lying areas in Southern Marin. Working with CERTs, those fliers were distributed to residents in Sycamore, Kay Park, and in Bird Land in Tam Valley. One thousand door-hangers were created and in preparation for the latest round of storms, nearly 500 were distributed throughout Southern Marin.

CERTs were also active in Mill Valley to babysit downed power lines. That freed first responders to attend to other tasks. Firefighters at Station 7 provided just-in-time training to several CERTs on how to manage the area around the downed power lines while waiting for PGE to show up. She reports the community was very appreciative. Curtis applauded Commissioners Lim and Galland for signing up for the latest CERT hybrid training class (which means all EPC members will be CERT-trained.) Students are completing the online training part of the CERT training and will receive hands-on training on March 25.

Curtis also released a guide on how neighbors can help each other during the storms and that was well received by neighborhoods in the flats as well as the hillsides.

A new NRG orientation program will be held on January 31. Galland is signed up to participate in that as well.

### **Subcommittee Reports**

None given.

### **Commissioner Reports**

Galland proposed the commissioner offer a service day to the community such as “joining the EPC for a clean the steps-lanes paths clearing day.” Terrell suggested that filling sandbags for those in need might be a good community project for the commission as well. Poulson said that the Rotary Club is always looking for hands-on opportunities to help the community. Raveche

suggested reaching out to high school sports teams for projects such as filling sandbags.

The meeting ended at 7:23 pm.