**Town of Green Mountain Falls**

**Fire Mitigation Advisory Committee meeting minutes**

**Monday, May 29, 2023 6 pm Mountain time**

**All members participated on Zoom**

**Committee Members Present Trustee Members**

Chair David Douglas Nick Donzello

Vice Chair Paul Yingling

Member John Bell **Town Staff**

Member Kelly Hunter None

**Recording Secretary**

Carolyn Bowers

**1. ROLL CALL AND CALL TO ORDER** Chair Douglas called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm Mountain time

**2. ADDITIONS, DELETIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA**

Hunter moved that the committee move Item 6a (Lisa Huizenga’s application to join FMAC) on the agenda to Item 5a (Old Business). Yingling seconded; the motion was approved unanimously.

**3. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Jeff Thomas (Hondo Ave.) owns a vacation house with family. He’s attending because of a conversation with Adrian Knight, Coalition for the Upper South Platte. He said he’s curious about what’s going on, he’s looking for information, and wants to help wherever possible.

Amy Wartman (Spruce Lane) also owns a vacation house with family. She wants to learn about what homeowners can do to mitigate their property.

Both Thomas and Wartman agreed to submit contact information for FMAC’s database.

**4. OLD BUSINESS**

a. Douglas and Bell both support Lisa Huizenga’s application to join FMAC. Douglas moved the committee accept her application, understanding that it is voting to recommend that the Board of Trustees approve it. Hunter seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

Douglas moved that Huizenga be considered a provisional member of the committee at this meeting so she can participate. Bell seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

b. Yingling moved to accept minutes of the April 17, 2023 meeting; Bell seconded; the minutes were approved unanimously.

c. CUSP grant; ROW remediation. Douglas said CUSP’s Adrian Knight has given the committee a list of priorities for mitigating ROWS and has completed boundary marking. He is getting bids from contractors. Bell said there are still unresolved questions about CUSP’s access to certain ROWS targeted for mitigation. If a property owner has not signed the liability release, then CUSP may not be able to easily reach the mitigation area. If CUSP must use an alternate way to reach the ROW, this will cost more money or force CUSP to abandon the planned mitigation. The town’s position on whether CUSP can enter these properties is unclear. Douglas will seek clarification from Mayor Dixon.

d. Education The committee discussed the possibility of having a contact with the non-profit Coalition and Collaboration Initiatives in Colorado (COCO) arrange a free one-day course to train 25 people in GMF on fire behavior, ignition behavior, and home mitigation. Members decided a three-hour training session with the Don Moore, leader of the NoFloCo Fire Mitigation Posse' open to all residents would be more efficient and yield better results.

Bell moved that the committee arrange a three-hour training session with NoFloCo, target time early to mid-August. Hunter seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Red Cross pilot project Hunter said 10 people have signed up. Douglas said more grassroots efforts are needed to get more participants.

June Tip of the Month Douglas moved to approve GMF’s Fire Restriction table as June’s tips. Hunter seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Bronc Day booth The Ute Pass Chamber of Commerce will provide a tent for the committee’s booth. The committee discussed having a booth both at the Pancake Breakfast and Farm Stand. Douglas asked that a final plan be in place by the June meeting.

Chipper Days There is no count yet on Chipper Day participants. Douglas noted that publicity was late getting out for June; it should start earlier for the September Chipper Days.

Database There are 36 names in the database. Jeff Thomas and Amy Wartman will submit their names to the database, bringing the total to 38.

5. **NEW BUSINESS**

Subcommittees Douglas said Colorado sunshine laws requiring public notice when more than two members plan to meet make the work of official subcommittees impossible. He said the committee will instead use unofficial “volunteer groups” for grant writing, volunteers and other projects.

Block Captain Job Description A proposed description may be too long and complicated. Bell and Huizenga will prepare a revised draft for the June meeting.

**5. OLD BUSINESS**

**Updates on Liability Release response** Response is low so far. Town Clerk sent releases for 192 properties but has received releases for about 48 of them.

Bell will consult with CUSP forester Adrian Knight about which rights-of-way are most in need of mitigation. If releases are still needed for them, the committee could target its door-to-door campaign at those owners.

Bell suggested the releases are not necessary, stating that FMAC has done due diligence and language in the letter indicating if owners don’t respond, work will begin. Douglas said that is not the position of the town’s leaders or its lawyers. 100 per cent of owners affected by a ROW mitigation must sign the release.

Douglas also said the town cannot afford to hire surveyors to establish boundaries and there isn’t time to schedule and hire them anyway.

Yingling said property owners may not want to sign because there is no upside for them. They are waiving a small part their liability protection.

**Education Program**

Bell reported he gave a very short presentation to the Manitou Springs School District Leadership Council about FMAC’s program and left information. Cori Tanner, American Red Cross, also participated in the presentation.

Douglas cited the need to start developing volunteers who can perform mitigation tasks like helping residents stack wood to prepare for Chipper Days.

A central database that contains contact information and volunteers’ interests/abilities is key.

Yingling, Hunter and Bell praised the NoFloCo Fire Mitigation Posse’s model that encourages neighbors to help their neighbors “pick up sticks” and perform other simple mitigation tasks that require no training.

**May Tip of the Month** This is a second announcement of Chipper Days, June 10 and June 11. It will be two pages. The first announces the date; the second includes guidelines.

Bell moved to accept May’s Tip of the Month. Hunter seconded. It was unanimously approved.

**6. NEW BUSINESS**

**American Red Cross Wildfire Mitigation Program Pilot** The Red Cross wants to conduct a pilot program for home wildfire mitigation using 25 homes in GMF beginning in June. This will involve creating defensible spaces around the homes. Hunter will convene a meeting with FMAC members, town staff and Cori Tanner, Red Cross, to inform them about the pilot and get their approval.

**Bronc Day Booth** Bell said the Trails Committee says FMAC’s booth can be in front of Church of the Wildwood during the pancake breakfast. No charge for the booth.

**7. REPORTS**

**Chipper Days** Chief Murphy needs two volunteers for each morning and afternoon shift. Each shift is four hours. Murphy is expected to let the committee know the skills volunteers will need.

The committee may also seek volunteers to help residents prepare for Chipper Days.

**Block Captains**  Yingling is working on a job description.

**Database** No update The committee will not add people who sent back release forms to the database because we did not ask them for consent to share it.

**NEXT MEETING AND ADJOURNMENT** Monday, June 26 NEW START TIME 6 pm

This Meeting adjourned at8:41 pm Mountain time