



Yosemite West Property & Homeowners, Inc.

Draft Minutes from the YWPHI Annual Meeting September 2, 2007

The 2007 annual meeting was held on Sunday, September 2, 2007, in Betty Clark's yard. A potluck brunch was served at 10:30 a.m., and the annual meeting was called to order by President Kay Pitts at 11:40 a.m. Handouts were available for all present and included the Meeting Agenda and the draft Minutes from the 2006 Annual Meeting. Following adjournment of the meeting at 1:15 p.m., door prizes were distributed. Approximately 48 people attended the meeting. These minutes reflect issues/presentations in the order in which they were discussed.

Directors Present: Jim Andrews, Debby Hagan, Tom Lambert, and Kay Pitts.

Directors Absent: Kim O'Neil

President Kay Pitts called the meeting to order, and began the meeting by having all those present introduce themselves. Next, presentations from two invited guest speakers occurred.

Guest Speakers

Supervisor Aborn

Mariposa County Supervisor Brad Aborn introduced himself as a Midpines resident who owns and operates a horse ranch with the help of his wife and three children. Supervisor Aborn presented a list of important issues currently facing Mariposa County such as the sheriff's salary, transportation problems on Highway 140, YARTS, understaffing in the Planning Department, the Yosemite West Special Plan, and the Hewlet's historic parcel in Cathey's Valley. Concerning the future, Brad commented that UC Merced will be attracting skilled people and good jobs to Mariposa, and that Brad wants to attract businesses to Mariposa. He also stated that high speed rail may come to YNP in the future and that he wants to influence the plans. Responding to questions, Brad stated that the Yosemite West Special Plan has been on hold because the Planning Department has no one to carry out the directives given by the Planning Commission; he speculated that our Plan would not be presented to the Board of Supervisors for consideration until spring of 2008. When asked about how the County plans to improve fire protection in Yosemite West, Brad responded that a truck was available for our community, but there were no people trained to use it. Complaints were raised concerning new construction within Yosemite West which ignored the requirements for on-site water and electric connections, porto-sans, and garbage clean-up; Brad recommended that we call him with any problems.

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7585 Henness Ridge Road, Yosemite National Park, CA 95389

www.YosemiteWest.org

Fire Safety Grants

The next speaker was Chuck Sikora, a registered professional forester contracted to help Yosemite West in completing its Community Wildfire Protection Plan and in establishing a shaded fuel break for our community. Thanks to the efforts of John Mock (YWPHI Fire Safety Chair) and Kim O'Neil (YWPHI Webmaster/Board member), grant money was acquired to help fund these fire safety measures for Yosemite West.

In October 2007, work will begin on the north and west side of Yosemite West to create a shaded fuel break until the funding is used up. The purpose is to reduce the fuel load around us so that when a wildland fire approaches, the firefighters will have a better chance of controlling it before it reaches our homes.

Currently, there is no state or county requirement for lot owners to reduce the fuel load on their properties. Chuck pointed out that all lot owners should realize that spending around \$2,000 to clean a lot is cheap insurance for preserving the value of their property (about \$200,000). The nearest fire station equipped for structural fire control is in Wawona; consequently, fire insurance for buildings within Yosemite West is much more expensive than conventional coverage if you can find a broker to deal with you.

When a wildfire threatens Yosemite West, all responding fire agencies want us to evacuate along the only access road available. If you create defensible space around your home, there is a better chance that your home will survive; without defensible space, your expectations should be very low.

New state building codes which address fire safety features for homes are expected to be in effect starting January 2008. The goal is to build only burn resistant structures. Chuck has not read the document, but has been told that some of the new requirements include fire resistant exterior walls (brick, stucco, ceramic tiles, hardy plank, etc.), boxed eaves, triple-pane glass, fire resistant roofs, walls under decks to prevent gas collecting there during fires which can flash ignite.

Chuck encouraged all property owners to take advantage of the community chipping program when available. Chipping reduces the burden on the burn pile, chips don't burn well if spread out (less than 2' thick) on your lot, and will help to reduce weeds. Chipping is an effective method to reduce the fuel load on your property, especially ladder fuels, low tree limbs, and large stands of brush.

I. Minutes

The minutes from the last annual meeting on September 3, 2006 were approved.

II. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's Report (supplied by Carol Ruiz) showed that the beginning balance for all YWPHI accounts on August 16, 2006 was \$11,130 and the ending balance for 2007 is \$11,238. The report was approved.

An accurate number for our Membership was not available. An estimate of around 119 was provided by a Board member. Membership renewals are now due and can be sent to YWPHI Treasurer, 7585 Henness Ridge Road, Yosemite National Park, CA 95389-9108. Forms can be downloaded at <http://www.yosemitewest.org/members.pdf>.

III. Survey of the Past Year

Holiday Open House

The third annual Holiday Open House in Yosemite West took place on Saturday, December 23, 2006. Anyone wishing to volunteer their home for this year's event should contact Kay Pitts. The evening is organized with different food theme's for each participating home, similar to a progressive dinner. It is a fun event for the entire community.

Memorial Day Weekend Clean-Up

The community clean-up to make Yosemite West more fire safe was a success thanks to all the volunteers and property owners who participated in the event last May. Thank you all for the continuing community support which is necessary for this program to be effective.

Fire Safety Grants

The fire safety grants for Yosemite West was previously discussed by Chuck Sikora. Thanks to the efforts of YWPHI Fire Safety Chair, John Mock, and Board member Kim O'Neil, \$56,000 in grant money will be used to complete our Community Wildfire Protection Plan and to create a shaded fuel break on the north and west side of Yosemite West. Additional funding will be necessary to extend the fuel break around the entire community.

IV. Community Issues

New Construction

A spate of new construction in Yosemite West has revealed that some contractors are ignoring or delaying water and electrical hook-ups, as well as placing portable toilets on the worksites. Besides the obvious sanitation issue, neighbors have been disturbed by extreme dust when worksites are not watered-down periodically. Without timely electrical hook-ups, either noisy generators are used, or power must be borrowed from neighbors. Some members recommended to Supervisor Aborn that the County include these three items as part of the permitting process.

Repayment of Sewer Bond

Some members expressed dissatisfaction that excess funding for the sewer repair project was placed in the County general fund instead of being returned to property owners. Apparently, the County's Counsel determined that it was appropriate to return money which the County had spent on interim repairs, but the sentiment was not shared by many Yosemite West residents.

Export of Water

Because water resources for our community are limited and a back-up water supply is not available, the Public Works Department (Dana Hertfelder) is drafting an ordinance to restrict export of water from Yosemite West. One resident present at the meeting volunteered the information that he is exporting water out of our community to his property nearby.

Mailboxes

Since almost all of the locked mailboxes in the shed are sold, there may be a need to add more in the future if demand develops.

Fire Issues

Insurance

As previously mentioned by Chuck Sikora, obtaining home insurance in Yosemite West is becoming a problem for many of us. If you can obtain coverage, it is very expensive because of the high fire risk here. The most difficult obstacle for us to overcome is the lack of qualified, available individuals to train as volunteer firefighters.

Camin's Cabin Fire

There were two structure fires in Yosemite West last year. The most devastating fire completely destroyed the Camin's home and several trees on Henness Circle. The fire originated inside the house during installation of a new propane-fueled dryer. Fortunately for the community, the accident occurred during the winter when snow covered the ground which helped the firefighters to prevent further destruction. The second fire involved Richard Long's employee housing on Yosemite Park Way. Fast action by residents trained to use our local fire equipment prevented this fire from causing more damage. Our sincere thanks go to all who helped to extinguish these fires. Creating defensible space around your home can help to prevent the spread of structure fires to the rest of the community.

Community notification-phone tree

The YOSEMITE WEST EMERGENCY TELEPHONE TREE was updated last spring and is on a password-protected part of the YWPHI website; those who have participated in the fire hydrant training are noted with an asterisk for easy identification during a fire problem. Since cell phone coverage is sparse at best, several residents have used "walkie-talkies" to communicate in the neighborhood; this contributed to the ability to act quickly during the Yosemite Park Way fire.

Other Concerns From Members

Chimney Cleaning

Elizabeth Ringrose is organizing a community chimney cleaning; the more people who join the group, the cheaper the rate. Information about this opportunity is on our website and posted in the mailbox shed.

Henness Circle Fire Hydrants

The water pressure of fire hydrants on Henness Circle varies, perhaps a pumper unit could be more effective in this area.

Dues Increase

A recommendation was made from the membership to increase dues for YWPHI. Suggestions for increases to \$35, \$50, or \$100 per year per parcel were made. The Board will consider this.

Fire Department

Someone commented that we need a paid fire department in Yosemite West and stated that it would cost \$750,000 per year for a two-person operation.

Thank You to Board Members and Committee Chairs

The contributions of all Board Members and Committee Chairs are greatly appreciated and are necessary to help Yosemite West maintain the character that brought us here. Thanks to last year's Board Members (Jim Andrews, Grace Bartel, Debby Hagan, Tom Lambert, Kim O'Neil, Kay Pitts, and Jody Brady) and Committee Chairs (John Mock, and Kim O'Neil) for all their help.

YWPHI Board of Directors Elections

There are three vacancies on the Board of Directors to fill. Debby Hagan is retiring from the Board after nine years of continuous service. In addition, President Grace Bartel resigned when she moved out of Yosemite West, and Jody Brady also resigned her position. Todd (Kipper) Caranto, Jeff Hornacek, and Kelly Rich were nominated to fill the open positions and were elected by voice vote. Each elected Board member serves for a three-year term.

Next Annual Meeting Date

Next year's annual meeting will be held on Sunday, August 31, 2008. We will continue to hold the annual meeting on the Sunday of Labor Day weekend.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah O. Hagan
Acting Secretary