

WUI VEGETATION CODE WORKGROUP

REGULAR MEETING

OCTOBER 15, 2025

9:00 AM

Cypress Room – 2180 Milvia St. 1st Floor

Fire Chief's Representative – Asst. Chief Colin Arnold

Assistant Chief David Winnacker
Richard Illgen
George Perez-Velez

Eric Weaver
Margit Roos-Collins

MINUTES

Preliminary Matters

Call to Order: 9:05 AM

Present:

- Assistant Fire Chief, Colin Arnold
- Assistant Fire Chief, David Winnacker
- Eric Weaver
- Richard Illgen
- Margit Roos-Collins
- George Perez-Velez

Approval of the October 8 Minutes

Motion by Eric Weaver, seconded by Richard Illgen, and approved by consensus.

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Matters

Public Members: 3 comments

AGENDA MATTERS *All Regular agenda matters are for discussion and possible action.*

1. **Action:** Discussion regarding citations, penalties, and appeals process and reviewing differing

perspectives on the enforcement approach (e.g., formal vs. informal).

Written Materials: BMC 1.28
EMBER Enforcement, Page 3 (modified).
Email regarding internal Administrative Citation Progress.
Proposed Modifications of Berkeley Fire Code for WUI Appeals and Violations
Report 26, Fire Hazard Severity Zone 0
Implementation Plan, dated September 9
BFD WUI Division Inspection and Compliance Process Statement

Discussion: The group discussed the appeals and review process. Members also discussed approaches to enforcement and noted that misdemeanor citations would require City Attorney approval. Member Richard Illgen will forward questions regarding the appeals and decisions process to Chief Arnold for review to clarify areas that may need further refinement or that could raise due process concerns. Chief Arnold recommended pausing further discussion until additional review is completed.

Motion: Assistant Chief Arnold moved to table this item for further discussion later in the next meeting as last item on the agenda. The motion was seconded by Eric Weaver. Motion carried.

2. Action: Discussion and possible action on suggestions for the Resident Guide.

Discussion: The group continued discussion on developing a resident guide to support understanding and compliance with defensible space and vegetation management requirements. Members recommended including the following information in the Resident Guide: Overview of defensible space and vegetation management requirements. The Alternative Means and Methods Request (AMMR) process and examples of approved AMMR projects. Enforcement process and procedures. Availability of financial assistance programs and the chipper program. Providing a list of local contractors and links to resources such as Fire Safe Berkeley, the Berkeley Fire Safe Council, Firewise Communities, and the Disaster & Fire Safety Commission (DFSC). Clarifying

specific requirements such as Zone 0 and ember-resistant zone standards. Guidance for residents based on property location. Defining what materials and vegetation are considered combustible. Addressing neighbor responsibilities and property boundaries. Providing practical guidance for spacing of trees and structures, fencing, sheds, compost bins, hoses, and other common features. The group emphasized keeping the guide concise, user-friendly, and directing residents to the WUI Division for clarification or site-specific assistance. Members agreed that the goal is to help residents prepare effectively and reduce wildfire risk without creating unnecessary confusion or burden. Additional suggestions included creating an FAQ section within the resident guide, incorporating a QR code linking to the website, and outlining the process for requesting exceptions or reporting practical difficulties. Members were asked to send additional FAQ ideas to Chief Arnold before the next meeting.

3. Action: Discussion on developing a framework for submitting scientific evidence for review.

Discussion: Agenda Item #3 was not addressed and will be carried forward to the next regular meeting for discussion.

4. Action: Agenda topics submitted by a member for consideration and discussion:
State Fire Regulations
Excerpts from the Government Code on Fire Zones
Soils and Geology
Fire-resistant Vegetation
Eucalyptus and Other Dangerous Trees
Building Composition and Compliance
Compliance Costs
Review and Discussion of Submitted Reference Materials on Wildfire Preparedness and Zone 0 Regulations

Written Materials: To reduce printing and paper use, all referenced documents will be available in a binder for public access at the meeting.

State Fire Regulations
Excerpts from the Government Code on Fire Zones
Firewise: How To Prepare Your Home For Wildfires

Elsevier, Landscape and Urban Planning article
NFFPA Preparing Homes for Wildfire
Reducing the Vulnerability of Buildings to Wildfire
Science Summary by Dr. Travis Longcore
Brentwood HOA Comments on Proposed Zone 0
Regulations
Zone 0 Won't Save Your Home from Wildfire

Discussion: Agenda Item #4 was not addressed and will be carried forward to the next regular meeting for discussion.

WORK GROUP REPORTS

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:05 AM on a motion by George Perez-Velez, seconded by Eric Weaver, and approved by consensus.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 22, 2025, at 9:00 AM.

This meeting will be conducted in accordance with the Brown Act, Government Code Section 54953. Any member of the public may attend this meeting. Questions regarding this matter may be addressed to the Wildland Urban Interface Division of the Berkeley Fire Department, wildfire@berkeleyca.gov 510-981-5620. Communications to Berkeley boards, commissions or committees are public record and will become part of the City's electronic records, which are accessible through the City's website. Please note: E-mail addresses, names, addresses, and other contact information are not required but, if included in any communication to a City board, commission, or committee, will become part of the public record. If you do not want your e-mail address or any other contact information to be made public, you may deliver communications via U.S. Postal Service or in person to the secretary of the relevant board, commission, or committee. If you do not want your contact information included in the public record, please do not include that information in your communication. Please contact the secretary to the relevant board, commission, or committee for further information. Any writings or documents provided to a majority of the commission regarding any item on this agenda will be made available for public inspection at Berkeley Fire Department located at 2100 Martin Luther King Jr. Way Berkeley, CA.

COMMUNICATION ACCESS INFORMATION:

This meeting is being held in a wheelchair-accessible location. To request a disability-related accommodation(s) to participate in the meeting, including auxiliary aids or services, please contact the Disability Services specialist at 981-6418 (V) or 981-6347 (TDD) at least three business days before the meeting date. Please refrain from wearing scented products to this meeting.

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I hereby certify that the agenda for this regular/special meeting of the Berkeley City's Disaster and Fire Safety Commission was posted at the front of the Division of Training, 997 Cedar Street, as well as on the City's website, three days prior to the scheduled Commission meeting.

#### SECRETARY SIGNATURE

*Colin Arnold*