Wildfire Prevention Commission – Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: Thursday, September 17, 2026

Time: 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Location: Oakland City Hall, Council Chambers, 1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, Oakland, CA 94612

Meeting Type: Regular meeting

Attendance

Commissioners: Dan Robertson; Rhonda Drakeford; Tom Grossman; Elizabeth Stage; Chris Foley; James Robins; Helen Bulwik

Present: Rhonda Drakeford; Tom Grossman; Elizabeth Stage; Chris Foley; James Robins; Helen Bulwik

Absent: Dan Robertson (excused). Commissioner Robertson joined by Zoom but was not eligible to participate as a voting Commissioner.

Staff & Officials: Daniel Hamilton (dhamilton2@oaklandca.gov); OFD Chief Damon Covington (dcovington@oaklandca.gov); Clinton Pugh, Oakland Public Works (CPugh@oaklandca.gov), Kevin Charles, Oakland Public Works (KCharles@oaklandca.gov), OFD Assistant Fire Marshal Javan Smith (jsmith3@oaklandca.gov); Jared Savas, Council Liaison (jsavas@oaklandca.gov).

Call to Order & Quorum

- Meeting called to order at: 7:14 p.m.

- Quorum: Yes

Public Comment

- David Boatwright – Asked about the status of the Measure MM coordinator position; the preparation and reporting of Measure MM budgets and actual expenditures; City Council follow-up on the Commission's Annual Report; vegetation inspection practices and results; and the completeness and accessibility of Wildfire Prevention Commission records on the City website.
- Assata Olugbala – Raised fire-safety concerns at Shadow Woods, including grills on patios and balconies, nearby vegetation, and homeowners association responsibilities for communicating and enforcing fire-safety requirements. Requested follow-up by the appropriate City staff.
- Councilmember Zac Unger – Thanked the Commission for its Annual Report and proposed meeting with a small group of Commissioners and the Fire Chief to review

recommendations and improve follow-through. Commissioners requested participation by Finance and Public Works staff.

- Marion Hubbard, District 4 resident – Supported the Commission's work and raised concerns about insufficient financial reporting, lack of visible follow-through, and availability of information about vegetation-management work and schedules.
- Lynn Baron – Supported a permanent position with expertise in the Vegetation Management Plan and environmental requirements; requested better budget transparency, communication, and coordination among public agencies, including Caltrans. Described successful clearing near Shepard Canyon and Snake Road following her request, while expressing concern that work schedules were difficult to find.
- Chief Damon Covington – responded to Assata Olugbala's public comment. Sent concerns to Fire Prevention and HOA and will continue following up.

Agenda Items & Actions

Item 3 — Designation of Officers (Action Item)

Discussion: Commissioners supported retaining the existing Chair and Vice Chair for continuity.

Motion: Appointed Tom Grossman as Chair and James Robbins as Vice Chair for 2026-2027 term of the Wildfire Prevention Commission. Moved by Commissioner Foley. Seconded by Commissioner Bulwick. The motion was passed by a vote of 6-0.

Item 4 — 2026–27 Scheduling (Action Item)

Discussion: Staff reminded Commissioners that the May meeting had established regular meetings every other month, beginning in September, with the option to call special meetings as needed. Commissioners discussed using intervening months for subcommittee work and preparing the Annual Report earlier to better inform the City's budget process. Discussion identified February for report drafting and March for Commission review, with an April meeting available if necessary.

Public Comment: David Boatwright advocated monthly meetings to maintain pressure for City follow-through and timely information.

Outcome: The Commission retained regular meetings on the third Thursday in September, November, January, March, and May, as adopted in May. Subcommittee work would occur between regular meetings, with additional meetings as needed. Staff advised that no new motion was required; no new scheduling vote was taken.

Item 5 — Subcommittee Reporting

Discussion**:** No substantive report was presented by the evacuation-route subcommittee; Commissioners discussed resuming its work in October. The Annual Report subcommittee was recognized for completing the previous report and would continue work toward the next report, with drafting in February and Commission consideration in March.

Commissioners discussed including a standing progress-report item to track recommendations from the prior Annual Report and report on subcommittee activities. They also discussed Councilmember Unger's proposed meeting with a small group of Commissioners, the Fire Chief, and other appropriate staff. Participation would be coordinated separately with the Councilmember's office. No formal motion or vote.

Item 6 — Measure MM Discussion

Discussion: Staff presented a Public Works summary of vegetation-management work completed during 2026, a proposed work schedule through spring 2027, and the FY 2026–27 Public Works spending plan. Staff clarified that the Public Works documents covered tree and brush clearing; goat-grazing contracts were administered by the Fire Department and were not included in that spending plan.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at: 7:05 p.m.