

# Notes From Neighborhood Emergency Preparedness Meeting November 4th. 2017

(These notes are being shared with residents of Oakmont outside of our block)

At the OVA board meeting on October 31st., it was decided that a workshop will be organized to discuss emergency preparedness on a village wide basis. The date of this workshop has not yet been announced. You are urged to attend if possible, but if you are not able to, please pass ideas not listed here to Sylvia at [civanosylvia@gmail.com](mailto:civanosylvia@gmail.com) or call 707-318-2083.

These ideas and suggestions are based on a worst case (i.e. Fountaingrove) type situation.

## **The following are items to be raised at the OVA meeting:**

- We would like sirens to alert us to an emergency, and if that cannot happen, one neighbor has suggested individual air-horns. On Amazon they range from \$8 to over \$100; the one I have ordered is \$14.36, and can be heard (supposedly) for up to a mile. However a village wide siren system would be optimal, and of course would need to be tested weekly at the same time, so that we all are familiar.
- The biggest issue for many of us the night of the fire, was lack of information. This should be a priority item. We did not know where the fires were, so did not want to venture onto highway 12 in case of driving into the firestorm. Many people congregated at the Berger to try to get information. How this could be addressed in future is not known, but definitely should be a priority.
- When the Berger is remodeled, it would be a good idea to have keyless entries so that certain individuals would have access at night. One of the problems that night was lack of toilet facilities. Also there may already be a generator there, if not, that should be added as well as a priority item.
- Since Highway 12 is our only evacuation route, and is mainly a two lane rural highway, we would like it widened to four lanes, at least from Melita to Kenwood. We also need a third entrance/exit which does not open onto highway 12. It has been suggested that there is an Oakmont back road leading to Melita, If so this should be investigated and upgraded.

## **On a neighborhood level, these were the things that we discussed.**

As far as neighborhood preparedness, we decided that the COPE model would work well in an earthquake or similar emergency where we would be sheltering in place. However, during a firestorm type situation, this is not viable given that there may not time for one person to notify 14-15 houses. We discussed a buddy system where we envision each person voluntarily arranges for two, but no more than three 'buddies'. These would be neighbors anywhere in Oakmont that you trust to have a key to your house, and would be a reciprocal agreement where feasible. This number would

ensure that at least one person should be available during an emergency, and three should be a manageable number to contact quickly. The key exchange is vital for people who sleep heavily or who have a hearing impairment. A master list of who is who's buddy should be held by someone (in a neighborhood with a COPE leader, this person could be designated). Therefore in an emergency situation with a particular individual, we would know who has a key to that persons' home. This would also ensure that everyone had at least two 'buddies'. Anyone that chooses not to participate, could 'opt-out' and this would be noted on the list.

It would be incumbent on anyone that is going out of town, to notify their buddies so that in an emergency no-one would try to break down a door to get to them!

*For people not in our group, it is vital to get to know your neighbors. Make a point of introducing yourselves, having block parties and potlucks etc.*

Some other ideas that were brought up at the meeting relate to planning ahead in order to be ready for future emergencies.

- Garage doors are one of the major issues, and we learned that one can purchase a battery back-up in order to open the door. The price ranges depending on the door opening system currently in place. (Mine will be \$475 as the current system cannot be modified). Another option is when high wind or a storm is forecast, take the car out of the garage and leave it in the driveway in case of a power outage.
- Always refill your gas tank when it reaches the half-way mark, as gas is difficult to obtain in an emergency.
- Make a list of items that you could grab in thirty seconds in an evacuation, e.g. medication, purse/wallet, cell-phone and charger, go-bag etc. Place this on the fridge or a noticeboard.
- Make or buy a "Go bag" this has items for your personal use in an emergency. Purchased survival kits start at \$30 on Amazon and go up from there. These bags are designed for shelter in place type emergencies, with k-ration type food and pouches of water etc. It is recommended to add personal items and/or a separate go bag with things needed for living in a shelter such as a change of clothing, underwear etc. Don't forget if you have a pet, to include food for him/her. I read on Nextdoor that a number of people left behind cats and birds. The Finley building at the fairgrounds was accepting evacuees with all kinds of pets; dogs, cats, rabbits, birds and even a tortoise.
- For those who do not have cell-phones, it is highly recommended that you obtain one. Not only do they provide a means of communicating with loved ones, but can be used for emergency alerts. In addition, during a power failure, many landlines did not work. An inexpensive smartphone that has the ability to text and email is available from Jitterbug for as low as \$17 a month (866-234-7161). Texting is important as these messages will often go through, when phone calls might not. During our last emergency the SoCo alert system was not activated, however the Nixel public service text message system apparently was. If you have a cellphone, to sign up for this service (this is per Nixel website)

Go to Messages  
Create a Message  
Select a New Text Message  
Enter your zip code and press Send To  
Select New Number  
Enter 888777  
Press Send

- A lot of the residents who lost homes complained that their fire-proof safes turned out not to be fire-proof and they lost all their important documents. Consider getting a safe deposit box, a small one that would hold passports and documents would be approximately \$35 per year.
- When the worst happens and a home is lost with all the contents and a lifetime of memories, what many people yearn for most is photographs. One neighbor has learned that Shutterbug in Santa Rosa has a service to take paper photographs and put them onto discs, which could then be stored in your new safe deposit box.
- Lastly for those who would like to purchase shirts to benefit wildfire victims, a local company has tee-shirts and sweatshirts that may be purchased online at [www.ARCCopy.com](http://www.ARCCopy.com) Prices range from \$17 to \$25 and 100% of profits go into the RCU wildfire fund (they have donated \$50,000 so far). Think unusual holiday gifts for people all over the country! If anyone is uncomfortable ordering online and would like to get some, call me and I will organize for you (318-2083).

We are so grateful to have homes to return to, and hope we never face another catastrophic event. However, we are determined to be fully prepared for such an eventuality, and trust that changes will be made to contribute to a general peace of mind.

The next move will be for you to decide who your buddies would be, or if you wish to opt-out, and to let me know.

If there are any questions regarding any of these items, please contact me.

Regards,  
Sylvia  
707-318-2083