

# G-CAA GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

**DATE:**           **November 5, 2009**

1.    **Alameda County Fire Department**

Fire Chief Sheldon Gilbert (who was born and raised in Castro Valley), Fire Marshal Bonnie Terra and Aisha Knowles, Community Outreach Coordinator, introduced a short film (winner of a Tully Award) on the Alameda County Fire Department and then spoke and answered questions.

The Alameda County Fire Department was formed in 1993 in response to the Loma Prieta earthquake and the Oakland firestorm. They brought the fire departments from different communities of Alameda County together and made one large department. Prior to this, Castro Valley had its own fire department. The communities now served by the ACFD are San Leandro, Dublin, Lawrence Berkeley Lab, Lawrence Livermore Lab, Sunol and all the unincorporated areas in the county except Fairview, which is served by the Hayward Fire Department.

By consolidating, they saved money. It's more cost effective to have one fire chief and one dispatch center instead of eight. The money saved was allocated to hire more crew members. They now have paramedics on every engine and fire truck. ACFD also has been able to specialize as a group in different units: Hazardous Materials, Water Rescue, Paramedicine, Heavy Rescue and Urban Interface/Wildlands. The HazMat unit is fully staffed with 17 crew members on duty 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The Water Rescue unit has a fire boat at San Leandro's marina. The Urban Interface/Wildlands unit covers zones where wildlands are adjacent to housing areas. Locally, the area on Crow Canyon Road from Coldwater to San Ramon is state controlled. The area south of that is the responsibility of ACFD. Because of the lessons learned in the Oakland hills firestorm, all hose sizes and couplings have been standardized throughout the department.

With an emergency call, you should get an ambulance and an engine (which is the first responder). There are four or five stations for every one ambulance. A ladder truck will respond if the engine is busy. The engine is the first responder because they're equipped with all-risk equipment – they need to be able to respond to any kind of emergency.

Our county fire insurance rating is a “2” — the ratings range from 1 – 10 with “10” being the worst. “1” is usually only awarded to areas with the highest risk – urban areas such as Los Angeles, etc., and Alameda County is not considered to have unique risks.

The Alameda County Dispatch Center gets about 61,000 calls annually. The average response time is a minimum of 5 minutes for 90% of the calls and 10 minutes for a full first alarm.

The Fire Marshal's department can provide code enforcement and regional fire prevention. They provide fire/life safety inspections (they annually inspect schools, jails, hospitals, etc.) and fire investigation services. Our community Fire Prevention office is located at 399 Elmhurst in Hayward in the same building as the Planning and Building Departments. The Fire Marshal also has staff in Dublin and San Leandro. They work closely with the Zoning Department on code enforcement.

Currently, the ACFD has proposals in to both Union City and Newark to join the district – they could each save about \$500,000 a year.

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### 2. **Castro Valley Supervisor Liaison**

Bob Swanson never worked in government before working for Nate Miley. He became involved during a campaign period when a proposed road was going to impact his neighborhood. Nate Miley was the only candidate who gave him straight answers, so he volunteered to work on his campaign and was later asked to work in Nate's office after he was elected.

Nate Miley came up with the Eden Area Livability Initiative – which is designed to lift up all the unincorporated communities. Ashland and Cherryland are low income areas and are becoming decrepit. What happens in Ashland, Cherryland and San Lorenzo affects Castro Valley, which is the “cash cow” of the unincorporated areas. The State took \$1 billion from Alameda County in the last ten years. The State cut \$178 million from the county budget recently and may cut another \$40 million.

Much thanks and appreciation to Sen. Ellen Corbett and Sylvia Tedesco and others for getting the \$13.9 million for our beautiful new library.

Castro Valley Boulevard streetscape redevelopment is currently out to bid. Phase 1 will include the area from Redwood road to Santa Maria. We'll have hellacious traffic problems when it's under construction, but when it's complete, traffic congestion should be much diminished.

A deal was cut on the old Daughtrey building – the new owners are waiting for the streetscape to be completed. The parking lots behind Fongs and the Ice Creamery, etc. will eventually be united. BART has future plans to put in a parking garage and shops at the CV Bart station.

### **Contact Information**

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### **3. Treasurer's Report**

There are 535 houses in the neighborhood, and we have names for over 90% of them. 171 people have joined the GCAA this year. We've collected \$2,635 in dues this year (some members pay more than we ask). Presently, we have \$5,764 in our account. We have spent \$1,500 this year. The money is spent on items for the picnic, Christmas party, the post office box (\$90), our website (\$16) and \$1,000 for postage and printing of newsletters and flyers. Only a small percentage of members have sent us their e-mail address, so sending out newsletters and flyers solely by e-mail isn't viable at this time.

4. **Board Member Election**

The following new board members were nominated and elected:

President:	Masoud Dehdari	2 year term
Vice President:	Matt Clowry	1 year term
Recorder:	Pamela Stanley	2 year term
Treasurer:	Zelda Penton	1 year term
Hospitality:	Dianne Appleton	2 year term
Zoning:	open	1 year term
Website:	Steven Kolden	2 year term
Newsletter:	Dennis Hermosa	1 year term

At Large: Priscilla Knippel  
Scott San Filippo  
Rose Clowry  
Robert Flagg  
Oggie Jones

Two of the At Large positions are for two years and two are one year terms.

Hospitality member's responsibility is to welcome new neighbors into the neighborhood with a visit and information.

Zoning member's responsibility is to enforce Alameda County code ordinances and to try to facilitate resolution.

"At Large" is a board position without specific responsibility. These members attend meetings and provide input and also assist with mailings and special events.

5. **Member Survey Responses**

Matt read the following report of member responses to our July newsletter survey:

**Responses:** 106

**Speed Bumps**

Yes:	34
No:	39
No Comment:	33

One "yes for speed bumps" vote stipulated that they be modest in size and not severe and another suggested only one bump on a stretch of Greenridge and no more.

**Speed Indicator Signs**

Yes: 42  
No: 23  
No Comment: 41

Some "okay", "good idea" and "perhaps"s were counted as "yes".

**Speed Issue Committee Participation**

Yes: 11  
Okay: 1  
Possibly: 6  
Limited Help: 2  
No: 34  
No Comment: 52

**Cold Water Sign**

Cold Water Area Residents

Yes: 12  
Maybe: 1  
No: 12  
No Comment: 15

Greenridge Area Residents

Yes: 17  
No: 10  
No Comment: 39

**Cold Water Sign Committee Participation**

Yes: 3  
Perhaps: 1  
No: 35  
No Comment: 67

Various neighbors at the meeting commented on the danger from cars speeding down the hills. A few members stated that their houses are at blind curves, and it's extremely dangerous when they pull out of their driveways. One guy was killed on a motorcycle. A few members noted that our neighborhood did have speed dots installed at one time to slow traffic, but someone had dug them out one night.

Matt announced that the GCAA is setting up a traffic committee that would research the cost of speed indicator signs and see how much of the cost the County would pick up. A sign-up sheet was placed at the front of the room.

6. **Website**

Steven Kolden will be installing a new message board on our website – one with a log-in that will verify that users are residents (to prevent spam, etc.). It will probably take 2 – 3 days of work for him to install. He requested that anyone with experience working on message boards contact him.

7. **Greenridge Triangle**

The County has been “trimming” the plants on the Greenridge triangle, but the area has been looking shabby. We received many comments on the survey from members who agreed with our assessment and who provided suggestions. The GCAA wants to allocate money from the treasury to renovate the area with native, drought-tolerant plants. The Greenridge Triangle Committee was formed with Dolores Van Aken, Oggie Jones and Matt Clowry as members.

8. **Member Suggestions**

John Giles suggested having a once a year Service Saturday where volunteer neighbors could get together and help out elderly neighbors or those living alone and in need by pulling weeds, doing yardwork, moving items, etc.

Hazel Jacoby had sent an e-mail to the Board to suggest a group be formed to check on people living alone and elderly couples in the neighborhood during a disaster – a kind of “buddy system”. She also noted that it would be nice to have people aware of their neighbor’s pet(s) and willing to help out by caring for them until the neighbor can get home during a disaster.

9. **Break-Ins**

The first two houses on Cold Water were broken into during the day on Tuesday, October 29<sup>th</sup>. The thief/thieves went to the back of the house and got in through the window. There was also a break-in that Friday

during the day at a house up in the court on Highwood. Two cars were stolen November 4<sup>th</sup> on Greenridge in the middle of the night.

One neighbor noted that 25 years ago, the Sheriff's Department had meetings in the neighborhood where neighbors exchanged names and license plate numbers. That seemed to work for a while. Please call the Sheriff's Department if you see anything suspicious – a car that keeps driving up and down the street, etc.

10. **Miscellaneous**

Scott and Carin were introduced as the new neighbors on Highwood Road.

A new neighbor on Shadow Ridge has a daughter who needs a ride to Independent School. Please contact Rose Clowry at 886-8536 if you can help out.

11. **Holiday Party**

The GCAA holiday party will be December 19<sup>th</sup> from 7 – 11pm at Doris McKim's house at 5777 Greenridge.