

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY BOARD AGENDA LETTER



Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Agenda Number:
Prepared on: 4/20/05
Department Name: Fire
Department No.: 031
Agenda Date: 05/24/05
Placement: Administrative
Estimate Time: 6/21/05 - 5minutes
Continued Item: NO
If Yes, date from:

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: John M. Scherrei
Fire Chief

STAFF CONTACT: Randy Coleman, Fire Marshal
681-5554

SUBJECT: Request to Set Public Hearing for 2005 Hazard Reduction Program

Recommendation(s):

That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Set June 21, 2005 for a Public Hearing to: declare all properties whose owners have been notified to abate and have not complied as a fire nuisance, and authorize the issuance of misdemeanor citations and necessary abatement work relative to the 2005 Fire Department Hazard Reduction Program (Weed Abatement); and
2. Direct the Clerk of the Board to post the affected Property Owners List in a place easily accessible to the public.

Alignment with Board Strategic Plan:

The recommendation(s) are primarily aligned with Goal No. 2. A Safe and Healthy Community in Which to Live, Work, and Visit.

Executive Summary and Discussion:

The Fire Department's Hazard Reduction (Weed Abatement) Program is an on-going annual program to mitigate fire hazards countywide, while providing defensible space to protect lives and property. The program is mandated by State Health and Safety Code and its penalties governed by law.

This request for a public hearing is required by your Board and is standard procedure for the Hazard Reduction Program. A sample of the "NOTICE TO ABATE FIRE NUISANCE" sent to the affected property owners is attached. The notice also indicates the date and time of the Public Hearings and ensures them the opportunity and right to express their views.

Mandates and Service Levels:

No change in programs or service levels.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

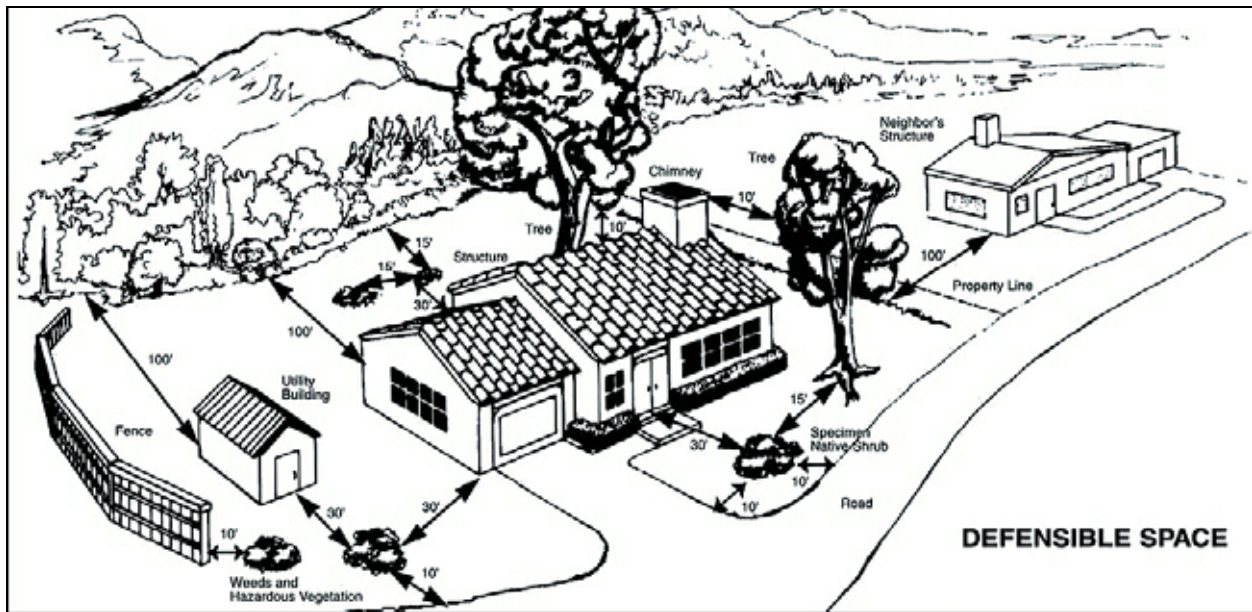
None related to this action.

Special Instructions:

Please send a copy of the minute order to the attention of Rose Pueschel, Fire Department.

Concurrence:

Attachment: Sample Notice



DEFENSIBLE SPACE

Defensible Space refers to an area around the perimeter of structures or developments in the wildlands. Defensible space is key to defending structures from wildfire. Millions of Californians live in residential developments that border fire prone wildlands.

Each year, hundreds of homes in the wildland interface are lost to wildfires. According to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF), as many as 80 percent of the homes lost to wildfires in the past could have been saved if the owners had followed a few simple fire safe practices. These practices include:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Clearance from all structures shall not be less than 100 feet using surface measurements. Within the 100-foot perimeter, all brush, flammable vegetation, or combustible growth shall be removed or mowed to stubble height not to exceed 3 inches. All cuttings shall be removed from the property. ❑ Single specimens of trees, ornamental shrubbery or ground covers are permissible provided that they do not form a means of rapidly transmitting fire from the native growth to any structure. Such specimens shall be spaced a minimum of 10-15 feet, both horizontally and vertically, from other specimens, structures or surrounding native brush. All trees and shrubs shall be maintained free of deadwood and litter. ❑ Roof surfaces shall be maintained free of accumulations of leaves, needles, twigs, or other combustible materials. Chimneys shall be provided a 10-foot clearance from trees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Access roads shall be maintained with a minimum 10-foot clearance on each side of the traveled section. Trees and shrubs protruding over the access roadway shall be trimmed to a minimum height of 13 feet 6 inches to allow proper access for emergency equipment. ❑ Discing and rototilling are acceptable methods for removing small types of vegetation. The material shall be tilled or disced into the soil in a manner to eliminate possible fire spread. ❑ Large vacant parcels located in hazardous fire areas bordering on developed areas (urban/wildland interface) shall have a 100-foot fuel break cleared along the entire interface border. When possible, the fuel break may be placed in such a manner so that it is obscured from the public view.
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These minimum standards are established to provide reasonable measures of controlling both fire and erosion hazards and to protect lives and property. The Santa Barbara County Fire Department may require greater protection levels in high-danger areas. In special cases where difficult terrain, danger of erosion or environmentally sensitive habitat areas makes compliance difficult, the requirements can be adjusted to accomplish all goals.



Fire Department

HEADQUARTERS

4410 Cathedral Oaks Road
Santa Barbara, CA 93110-1042
(805) 681-5500, (805) 681-5563 FAX

John M. Scherrei
Fire Chief

May 19, 2005

«OwnerName»
«OwnerAddrLine1»
«OwnerAddrLine2»
«OwnerStreetAddress»
«OwnerCity», «OwnerState» «OwnerZip»

Subject: Parcel # «APN»

NOTICE TO ABATE FIRE NUISANCE

**PLEASE DISREGARD THIS NOTICE IF YOUR PROPERTY HAS ALREADY BEEN CLEARED
THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION**

IN ACCORDANCE WITH SANTA BARBARA COUNTY CODE CHAPTER 15, ARTICLE II, notice is hereby given that dry grass, dry leaves, weeds, stubble, brush, litter or other flammable material is present upon the subject property described in this notice and creates, in the opinion of the Santa Barbara County Fire Chief, a fire nuisance.

On June, 21, 2005, at 9:00 the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Barbara will meet in the Board Hearing Room, located at <insert either Santa Barbara or Santa Maria location> to hear the report of the Fire Chief regarding this alleged nuisance.

Any person may attend such meeting, and his or her objection, if any, to such report, will be heard and given due consideration.

WARNING! If at such hearing, the Board finds that a fire nuisance does exist upon the subject property, it may direct the Fire Chief or his agent to remove or abate such nuisance. A misdemeanor citation will be issued to all property owners that do not abate this fire nuisance by the compliance date. THE COST FOR SUCH REMOVAL AND AN ADMINISTRATIVE FEE WILL BE COLLECTED BY ADDING IT ONTO THE TAXES ASSESSED AGAINST THE SUBJECT PROPERTY. ANY OWNER INTENDING TO ABATE THIS NUISANCE AT HIS OWN EXPENSE SHOULD DO SO, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CLEARING REQUIREMENTS SET FORTH BELOW, ON OR BEFORE MAY 31, 2005.

REQUIREMENTS FOR CLEARING PROPERTY

Remove all flammable vegetation around and adjacent to any structures for a minimum distance of 100 feet or to the property line.

Remove all flammable vegetation adjacent to any roadway or driveway for a minimum distance of 10 feet.

Please call for an explanation of special requirements or instructions for this property.

Exception: This Notice shall not apply to single specimens of trees, ornamental shrubbery, or cultivated ground cover such as green grass, ivy succulents, or similar plants used as ground covers, provided that they do not form a means of readily transmitting fire from the native growth to any structure.

Note: When clearing property to abate fire hazard, consideration should be given to potential environmental impact. Please contact the Fire Department if your property is within an Environmental Sensitive Habitat area, buffer or overlay, or if you have other environmental concerns.

COMPLIANCE DATE: May 31, 2005

DIRECT INQUIRES TO STATION «Station» AT 681-5515

THIS PROPERTY SHALL REMAIN FREE OF FIRE HAZARDS ON A YEAR ROUND BASIS

“HAZARD REDUCTION IS EVERY HOME OWNERS RESPONSIBILITY”