



## SUSTAINABLE SONOMA COUNCIL MEETING NOTES

Sonoma Community Center, Room 212  
276 E Napa St, Sonoma, CA 95476  
October 27, 2017, 1-2:30pm

### **I. Overview and objectives**

This is the beginning of a process of finding common ground and overlap between the interests of a wide range of sectors in Sonoma Valley. The Sustainable Sonoma Council is a forum to share priorities, needs, and objectives from across the community, which will result in new perspectives and opportunities to work on issues that no one organization or sector can solve on its own.

### **II. Things we learned**

- 28% of Sonoma Valley burned, including over 1000 structures.
- Many people who are undocumented are not getting aid because they don't feel it's safe to come forward.
- The land, the trees, are fire-adapted, and will recover well.
- Tourism and business are balancing messages of "we are open for your business" and "we took a hit, and we are pulling together to recover".
- Most of our post-fire priorities existed before the fires, and are now exacerbated.

### **III. After the fires, how do we respond?**

After sharing experiences in small groups, we shared post-fire priorities for our particular interest group. Many priorities were brought up more than once. They are summarized here.

#### *Urgent, short-term fire-related priorities*

- Help vulnerable people affected by the fire, or else many of them will move away. Needs: temporary housing, cleaning so residents can get back in their home, transportation and other help to access post-fire resources
- Train local people to do construction
- Get the message out that people should come and visit! Clarify misconceptions and support healthy tourism.
- Ask your constituents what they need in focus groups, rather than making assumptions
- Empower teens/youth so they can help. Get their ideas, help them lead
- Utilize this opportunity to come together towards shared goals

### *Longer-term priorities*

We need more and better housing.

- Affordable housing for all
- Rebuild better than before: update energy infrastructure and building codes
- The general plans (city and county) need to be fire-ready

We need better emergency response systems.

- Need to integrate nonprofits and their capacities, and community's "organic intelligence" (assisted by tools such as NextDoor), into emergency planning. Systems need to be integrated between city and county to cover entire valley.
- Plan for certain locations in each neighborhood to act as hubs during crises
- Need command structure in place to evacuate seniors and others who don't drive
- Things were not organized during the first 1½ days
- Communications need to be:
  - Bilingual
  - Use all media to reach all people: social media to radio, high tech to low tech
  - Function even when power is out or cell towers malfunction
  - Accurate, vetted. Or clearly noted if not vetted.
- Emergency preparedness as part of curriculum in grade school. Get families to go over the lists of what you need to have during an emergency, including legal documents, passwords, identification (teens could lead this).

We should plan now to reduce losses from future fires.

- Roll out fire education to public and schools.
- Rethink populating areas that cannot be defended, review electricity infrastructure, use fire-resistant design and materials in rebuilt structures.
- Scale up prescribed burning, e.g. TRES program of prescribed fires.
- Maintain an ongoing forum like Sustainable Sonoma.