



KENSINGTON FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

DATE: July 21, 2021

TO: Board of Directors
Kensington Fire Protection District

RE: **Agenda Item 3 – Public Hearing**
Annual Fire Hazard Abatement

SUBMITTED BY: Michael Pigoni, Fire Marshal
David Yun, Fire Prevention Officer

BACKGROUND

The Fire Department is continuing its annual fire hazard abatement program. This program seeks to remove weeds, rubbish, litter or other flammable material from private properties where such flammable material endangers the public safety by creating a public nuisance and a fire hazard. Most property owners voluntarily abate these hazards without Fire Department involvement. Ideally 100% of the property owners would do so. Experience in prior years suggests most will comply. Any property owners that do not comply will have the District do the work and place the costs on their tax bill.

ANALYSIS/DISCUSSION

The Fire Hazard Abatement process under the direction of the Fire Department should proceed according to Health and Safety Code Sections 14875 et seq which specify the following:

1. The El Cerrito Fire Department on behalf of the Kensington Fire Protection District has determined hazards that must be abated. Pursuant to these code sections, hazards are defined as weeds, rubbish, litter or other flammable materials which create a fire hazard or are otherwise noxious or dangerous and which exist on specific parcels of property within the boundaries of the District.
2. Notice was sent by mail that the Fire District has determined the existence of a public nuisance which must be abated and that a hearing will be held to consider any objections prior to ordering the Fire Chief or his designee to perform abatement.
3. At the July 21, 2021 meeting, the Board of Directors shall hear and consider all objections to the proposed removal of weeds, rubbish, litter or other flammable material. At the conclusion of the hearing, the Board of Directors shall by resolution allow or overrule any objections and order the Fire Chief or his designee to abate some or all of the public nuisance conditions on any remaining parcels which have not been voluntarily cleared by that time. The costs for abatement shall be assessed against the property as a lien and special assessment.
4. At the conclusion of the July 21, 2021 hearing, a second and final notice shall be sent to each property owner prior to abatement. This notice will order the immediate abatement of nuisance conditions. This notice will clearly state that if nuisance conditions are ignored, the

Fire District shall cause abatement and costs for removal will be assessed against the property as a lien and special assessment. It will also indicate that if the conditions are voluntarily abated, the property shall be removed from the process.

5. Sometime between August 16, 2021 and October 1, 2021, if the hazardous conditions are not removed prior to the arrival of the hazard abatement crew, the Kensington Fire Protection District shall cause the weeds, rubbish, refuse, and other flammable material to be removed and shall keep an account of the cost of abatement for each parcel or land where such work is performed.
6. After October 4, 2021, the Fire Chief or his designee shall submit to the Board of Directors of the Fire District for confirmation an itemized written report showing the cost of abatement work performed. A copy of this report shall be posted for at least three days prior to its submission to the Board of Directors. Each property owner upon whose property abatement work was performed shall be sent written notice by mail of a hearing by the Board of Directors to consider the cost of abatement work performed on their property.
7. At the Board meeting on October 13, 2021 the Board of Directors of the Fire District shall receive and consider the written staff report on abatement actions taken by the District and shall hear any objections from the property owners liable to be assessed for the abatement. The Board of Directors may modify the staff report if deemed appropriate and then confirm the report by motion or resolution.
8. After Board of Directors confirmation of the report, a certified copy of the report shall be filed with the county auditor who shall add the amount of the assessment to the next regular tax bill levied against the parcel.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The abatement program will be administered by Fire Department staff with minimum costs expended for printing and mailing. Abatement work will be completed by private contract labor as appropriate. Program costs will be recovered through the special assessment and lien process.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Fire District's Attorney has reviewed and approved the process. The Fire Hazard Abatement Program is exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to sections 15304 and 15308 or the CEQA Guidelines. Therefore, no further CEQA review is required.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Kensington Fire Protection District authorize through the adoption of Resolution 21-04 the initiation of the abatement process by declaring weeds, rubbish, litter, and other flammable material on specific parcels of property within District boundaries as public nuisances, which must be abated.

July 21, 2021
Board of Directors Regular Meeting
Agenda Item 3
Annual Fire Hazard Abatement

ATTACHMENTS

Resolution 21-04

Exhibit A of Address's and APN #'s

March 2021 Courtesy Letter

Fire Hazard Letter from the Fire Marshal

Fire Marshal's Letter of Declared Fire Hazard to be mailed 7/15/21

Fire Marshal's Correction Letter for Cleared Properties

Kensington Vegetation Management Standards

Kensington Vegetation Management Standards Checklist

Fire Hazard Abatement Inspection Form - Example