

**Cortina Property Owners Association
Annual Owners Meeting
Saturday, September 7, 2024, 10:00 AM
Location: Silverthorne Town Hall and via Zoom**

The meeting was called to order at 10:01 PM.

Attendance:

- Board members in attendance were: Stan Wagon, Steve Weinberg, Frank Pagano, Kelsey Anderson, Dawn Darling, Johnny Woods, and Rick Pratt.
- Contract staff: Austin Terry and Jeaniene Kurth from Summit Accounting.
- Guest Speaker: Dan Schroeder (Summit County Fire Mitigation Council)
- Attendance: Approximately 30 attendees, with an additional 45-50 proxies.
- A quorum was established.

Approval of Minutes:

The minutes from the February 21st, 2024 meeting were reviewed and approved unanimously.

Announcements and General Discussion:

1. Modification of Board Terms and Bylaws Amendment

- Discussion on board term staggering to avoid all positions expiring in the same year.
- Motion Passed: Terms for directors can be modified to one-year terms if necessary to maintain staggered elections.
- New Board Terms:
 - 4 current members reelected for one-year terms to prevent all positions from expiring in 2026.
 - 1 open position remains vacant.

2. Firewise:

- During the recent CPOA Board Meeting, the Firewise program was discussed as a key initiative for community wildfire preparedness. The Firewise USA program, supported by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), is designed to help communities reduce the risk of wildfire damage through education, mitigation efforts, and community engagement.

- Benefits of Becoming a Firewise Community
 - Access to grants and funding for wildfire mitigation projects.
 - Increased insurance eligibility and potential discounts for homeowners.
 - Greater coordination with local fire departments and emergency services.
 - Improved wildfire preparedness and response planning.
 - Enhanced community engagement and education on fire safety measures.
 - Recognition as a fire-adaptive community by national agencies.
- Steps to Achieve Firewise Certification
 - 1. ****Form a Firewise Committee**** – A local committee must be established to lead the Firewise initiative.
 - 2. ****Conduct a Community Risk Assessment**** – Assess the wildfire risks in the community, including vegetation, structural vulnerabilities, and emergency access routes.
 - 3. ****Develop an Action Plan**** – Create a three-year plan that outlines wildfire mitigation efforts, such as fuel reduction, homeowner education, and defensible space improvements.
 - 4. ****Invest in Fire Mitigation**** – The community must commit a minimum amount of funds or volunteer hours towards wildfire risk reduction.
 - 5. ****Apply for Recognition**** – Submit the application and documentation to Firewise USA for official designation.
 - 6. ****Maintain Firewise Status**** – Conduct annual community projects and report progress to remain in good standing.
- Firewise Mitigation Strategies Discussed
 - Creating defensible space around homes by removing flammable vegetation.
 - Using fire-resistant landscaping and hardscaping materials.

- Clearing dead trees, branches, and combustible materials near structures.
- Encouraging homeowners to use fire-resistant building materials such as metal roofing and non-combustible siding.
- Developing emergency evacuation plans and ensuring clear access routes for fire trucks.
- Educating residents on the importance of storing firewood and propane tanks away from structures.
- Encouraging participation in community-wide chipping programs to dispose of yard debris safely.
- Regularly assessing and improving fire hydrant access points in the neighborhood.
- Community Participation and Next Steps
 - The board discussed the importance of strong community participation in the Firewise initiative. Residents were encouraged to volunteer for fire mitigation projects, attend educational workshops, and take individual steps to reduce fire hazards on their properties.
- Next steps for the board include:
 - Forming a Firewise Committee to oversee the application process.
 - Scheduling a risk assessment with fire officials to determine priority areas for mitigation.
 - Applying for grant funding to support community-wide fire prevention efforts.
 - Developing an official action plan that aligns with Firewise USA standards.

3. Guest Speaker:

- **Dan Schroeder** discussed past fires in the area, particularly the 2018 Buffalo Mountain Fire. He emphasized the importance of continued forest management and fuel reduction projects.
- Key Fire Risk Factors Discussed:

- **Current Fire Activity:** A wildfire is currently burning 5-6 miles north of the community, highlighting the need for ongoing mitigation efforts.
- **Mountain Pine Beetle Infestation:** Dead and dying trees from the beetle infestation have significantly increased fuel loads, making fires more difficult to control.
- **Human-Caused Fires:** 90% of wildfires in Summit County are caused by human activity. Recent cases include high school students starting fires in the area.
- **Evacuation Challenges:** With limited exit routes, emergency evacuations could become chaotic, especially if fire conditions worsen rapidly.
- **Lack of Fire Bans:** Despite dry conditions, Summit County has not implemented a fire ban, unlike neighboring counties. Schroeder suggested that proactive bans could help prevent incidents.

Proposed Fire Mitigation Actions:

○ **Proposed Fire Mitigation Actions**

- **Encouraging Homeowners to Participate in the Firewise Program:** A nationwide initiative that helps communities reduce wildfire risks through education and preventative measures.
- **Expanding Forest Thinning and Controlled Burns:** These efforts reduce fuel loads and decrease the intensity of potential wildfires.
- **Advocating for More Aggressive Fire Ban Policies:** Schroeder suggested that implementing earlier fire bans could prevent human-caused wildfires.
- **Community Awareness Campaigns:** Educating both full-time residents and absentee homeowners about fire risks and mitigation strategies.
- **Improving Coordination Between Local Agencies:** Strengthening partnerships with the Forest Service, fire departments, and emergency management agencies to ensure rapid response to fire incidents.

○ **Enforcement and Community Responsibilities**

- One of the challenges discussed was the enforcement of fire regulations. Schroeder noted that while permits are required for open fires, enforcement has been weak. Residents have reported unpermitted fires, but responses have been inconsistent. He recommended that residents report violations directly to the Sheriff's office and that the community advocate for stricter enforcement.
- Evacuation Planning and Community Preparedness
 - Schroeder discussed the importance of having clear evacuation plans due to the community's limited exit routes. He recommended that residents familiarize themselves with evacuation protocols, keep emergency supplies ready, and participate in fire drills. He also suggested that the board explore options for additional evacuation routes or improved traffic management.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 PM.