

Town of Los Altos Hills Emergency Preparedness and Response Committee

Regular Meeting Minutes, Tuesday, September 2nd, 2025 @ 6:00 pm. PDT

[Public Documents Folder \(minutes & agenda\)](#)

1. Call to order (start recording) [6:00 pm]

The meeting was called to order by Chair Harter at 6:11pm

2. Roll call of EPRC members [6:15 pm]

Voting Member	Status	Comment
(S) Amita Sachdeva	Present	
Ben Gikis	Present	
(VC) Dave Stewart	Remote	
(C) Phil Harter	Present	
Rob Singh	Present	
Sam Wood	Present	
Terry Kearney	Present	

With **6** of **7** voting members attending, a quorum was present.

Associate Member	Status	Comment
Andy Kirk	Not Present	
Bill Lattin	Not Present	
Bill Ralston	Remote	

Associate Member	Status	Comment
David Gilmour	Not Present	
Neil Katin	Remote	
Victoria Bebee	Remote	

Other attendees

Name	Comment
Rajiv Bhateja	LAH Council Liaison
Jay Bradford	LAH Community Development Director
Victoria Bebee	LAH Town Emergency Manager Liaison
Denise Gluhan	LAHCFD Liaison
Cody Einfalt	LAH Deputy City Manager
Joram Parcutilo	LAH Management Analyst
Katy Servanti	CERT Member/LAH Town Resident
Neal Mielke	Firewise Member/LAH Town Resident

3. **Public comment on subjects not on the agenda**

4. **EPRC Chair Remarks (Harter)**

- 2 year cycle coming up on goals/priorities - make a decision on how to proceed so we can bring to City Council
- Update on Fire Ordinances for Town Discussion
- Update on Emergency Operations Plan/Wildfire Mitigation

5. Approve Previous Meeting Minutes

Member	Moved	Second	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Amita Sachdeva			x				
Ben Gikis			x				
Dave Stewart							x
Phil Harter			x				
Rabindra Singh			x				
Sam Wood		X	x				
Terry Kearney	X		x				

6 yes, 0 no, 0 abstain. Motion Approved

6. General and Invited Reports and Q&A (30 minutes)

6.1 Discussion & presentation on update of Town's Emergency Operations Plan with Joram Parcutilo and Victoria Bebee.

- Municipal Code being reviewed by Joram & Victoria
- Updated references – LAH Citizen Corp
- Ordinance is currently outdated
- Key Updates:
 - New positions & structure – align w/ Town's EOP
 - Recognizes modern emergency roles including Asst. Director of Emergency Services
 - Removal of Outdated Services: removes obsolete groups & terminology
 - Streamlines organization to active & accountable positions only
 - New authority & procedures: authority for Dir of Emergency Services to proclaim a local emergency
 - Defines emergency operation center procedures
 - Grants authority for temporary emergency regulations (curfews, evacuations)
 - Mutual aid clause missing on municipal code
- Question on where EPRC stands here

- EPRC in our charter is that we are an advisory committee and not a response committee (Kearney).
- Town is currently looking at Cupertino & Mountain View
- Bill Ralston recommends looking at Portola Valley & Morgan Hill
- Are there any changes to our Ops plan based on Joram & Victoria's proposal?
 - No - looking for comments and advisory help

6.2 Discussion & Presentation on progress of fire ordinances.

Report covering different aspects under consideration, including work by the town staff. (Stewart & Bebee)

- Site development/landscaping has subsections for erosion, noise, screening, etc, but nothing on wildfire preparedness
- Ordinance focuses on protecting every tree
- Recommendations: adopt CA Building Code R337 for all new construction across LAH, not just in higher fire severity areas. (Included maps on Altadena)
- Add wildfire, storm, & evacuation considerations to Site Development. Change focus from "save every tree" to "promote emergency planning"
- Standard currently applies to high and very high fire severity - we can expand it to include all areas (Bradford)
- Heritage Oak ordinances - current ordinance
- Recommendations: change heritage oaks definition to 113-inch circumference (approx. 36-inch diameter)
 - Allow owners to thin or remove newly non-heritage trees
 - Follow defensible space guidelines (especially zone 0 hardening, prevent crown fire propagation)
 - Prevent branch & tree falls during storms, especially if blocking evacuation routes
- Easy addendum to Fencing
 - Ordinance 10-1.507 establishes requirements for "Fences, walls, gates & columns"
 - Recommendation: add requirement that non-combustible fencing be required within 5 feet of structures. Congruent with upcoming Zone 0 requirements.

Motion to propose to council:

1. Adopt CA Residential Code R337 for all new construction across LAH, not just in higher fire severity areas

2. Change Heritage Oak Definition to 113-inch circumference (approx. 36-inch diameter)
3. Add a requirement that combustible fencing not come within 5 feet of structures or overhangs (eaves) of structures. Allow non-combustible fencing within 5 feet.

Member	Moved	Second	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Amita Sachdeva			x				
Ben Gikis		x	x				
Dave Stewart							x
Phil Harter			x				
Rabindra Singh			x				
Sam Wood			x				
Terry Kearney	x		x				

6 yes, 0 no, 0 abstain. Motion Approved

6.3 Discussion on wildfire mitigation programs with Jay Bradford and Victoria Bebee.

- Fire Risk Reduction Community (Denise)
- LAHCFD will submit their application this year 2025
- Fire District will be applying as a special district
- Special District, Tribal Nation is how the Fire District will apply
- Application is due October 1, 2025
- Main benefit - if you apply for grants, it goes directly to the grant process and skips the application.
- Rate reduction benefit
- Recommend from Town's perspective to recommend for 2027 cycle - we are waiting on the safety element in order to submit
- Safety element is one of the issues for the Town
- Work in prior discussions will inform this decision, will need to have number of criteria to be met first

- Adoption of local recommendation that exceeds local fire mitigation (example, Dave's recommendations to the Town)
- Adoption of defensible space rules, heightened regulations, apply zoning regulations that apply fire mitigation, or adopt comprehensive retrofit list
- Providing multiple jurisdictional county mitigation lists
- Denise recommends the 100-foot designation for all properties (which is now standard for all unincorporated)

6.4 Discussion on EPRC Priorities & Goals for 2026-2027 with Chair Harter

- Town Plans & Required Documents
- Wildfire Mitigation
- Mass Notification
- Community Outreach
- Medical Response to Emergencies/Disasters
- Radio Communications - Support training for Emergency Communicators in HAM club
- Other

Dave, Phil & Terry suggest that the Town hire a full-time Emergency Manager. EPRC cannot achieve its goals and priorities without the full support of an Emergency Manager

Rajiv: Town of LAH is not wealthy, even if residents are wealthy. We get 6.6% of tax for every dollar, vs. the Fire District which gets 12%. They have \$13M to spend a year on all Town related needs. Budgetary limits restrict the possibility to achieve all of EPRC goals/support. Looking to start a nonprofit where affluent residents can donate to, which can be used for the Town.

Phil: Agrees that the Town has limited money, but we can better allocate our funds to properly pay for an Emergency Manager. We can raise money by other means including taxes.

Bradford: Need to have priorities/goals set by October/November to present to Council

7. Town and Fire District Reports

7.1 Town Council Liaison Report (Bhateja)

7.2 City Manager's Report (Pirnejad/Einfalt)

7.3 District Liaison Report (Gluhan)

[Link to presentation](#)

7.4 Town Emergency Manager's Liaison Report (Bebbee)

8. EPRC Subcommittee Reports

8.1 Community Outreach (Sachdeva)

- Town Hoedown - Saturday, 9/6
- Touch a Truck - Saturday, 9/27 - EPRC Tabling Opportunity

8.2 Medical and Environmental Health (Harter)

8.3 Mass Notification (Singh)

8.4 Town Emergency Plans (Stewart)

8.5 Emergency Communications (Lattin/Katin)

- Request for funding for new lithium-ion batteries. Quote obtained from Battle Born/Dragonfly Energy Corp for \$4,482.14 and request to have this funding come from EPRC budget.

EPRC endorses the LAHEG (Los Altos Hills Emergency Group) repeater battery upgrade proposal to replace the existing lead-acid batteries with new Lithium Iron Phosphate batteries.

Member	Moved	Second	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Amita Sachdeva			x				
Ben Gikis	x		x				
Dave Stewart							x
Phil Harter			x				
Rabindra Singh			x				
Sam Wood			x				
Terry Kearney		x	x				

9. Review action items from the meeting

Discuss/Propose Future Agenda Items

Adjournment [20:30]

Chair adjourned the meeting without objection.

Member	Moved	Second	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Amita Sachdeva							x
Ben Gikis							x
Dave Stewart							
Phil Harter							
Rabindra Singh							
Sam Wood							
Terry Kearney							

Voting Template

X yes, Y no, Motion Approved