

*Sleepy Hollow Homes Association Sleepy Hollow Charitable Foundation*

TO: Sleepy Hollow Fire Protection District  
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FROM: Sleepy Hollow Homes Association and Sleepy Hollow Charitable Foundation  
DATE: May 10, 2017

***RESPONSE TO REQUEST FOR INTEREST***

Sleepy Hollow Homes Association and Sleepy Hollow Charitable Foundation (“SHHA or Association/SHCF”) are pleased to respond to the Request for Interest dated April 11, 2017 (“RFI”) issued by the Sleepy Hollow Fire Protection District (“SHFPD” or “District”). Reference is also made to the District’s Wildfire Hazard and WUI Assessment and Report (“Report”).

The response Sections “Eligibility” and “Requested Content” respond directly to the components of the RFI and provide background we believe may be helpful to readers.

**Eligibility**

SHHA and SHCF are lawfully organized, financially solvent and capable, and authorized to enter into long-term agreements to provide services as detailed in the RFI. SHHA/SHCF Boards have unanimously approved this response to the RFI. SHHA/SHCF through their cognizant representatives acknowledge the Report, have read and understand its contents, and endorse the initiatives contained in it. We either possess or are legally capable of obtaining any necessary permits, approvals or other legal authorizations and/or financing necessary to comply with the RFI within 12 months of the date of this response; provided, however, although we agree to use best efforts to secure adequate financing and complete construction of the community center and emergency facility (described below) within that timeframe, our efforts may be subject to delay for reasons beyond our control. SHHA/SHCF have an urgency to complete this project.

The Sleepy Hollow Homes Association, formed in 1946, is a volunteer organization comprised of residents of the unincorporated, census-designated area of Sleepy Hollow in Marin County, California. The Association was formed by 50 families on the premise that rather than erect a “city government,” with taxes, police, full-time employees and the rest, that Sleepy Hollow could get by with voluntary financial contributions and volunteer labor. It’s a model than has survived and thrived for approximately 70-years now. In 2016, eligibility for membership in the SHHA was extended to all residents in the Fire Protection District as drawn at that time. Chartered as a 501 (c)4 nonprofit, the Association is governed by a Board of ten Directors who - through membership drives and volunteerism - tap into a large network of residents to promote the general welfare, cooperation and understanding among the residents of Sleepy Hollow. The Association conducts communication with the approximately 2,400 residents via direct mail, email,

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events and a monthly newsletter called the Sleepy Hollow Bulletin. It facilitates community events, a swim team of hundreds of swimmers, community and social clubs, safety promotion through flood and other disaster preparedness, and community advocacy to various governments with authority over the area. In many ways, it is the voice and governing body of Sleepy Hollow.

The Sleepy Hollow Charitable Foundation is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to the people, geography, safety and environment of Sleepy Hollow in Marin County, California. Its initial, primary activity is to fund and manage the rebuild of the Sleepy Hollow community center to create a new facility that will allow residents to gather and relax on a daily basis, plus help prepare for and recover from disasters. The Charitable Foundation was legally created in California in November of 2012 and received tax-deductible charitable status from the federal IRS on March 13, 2013. Via events, lap-a-thons, ping pong tournaments, phone calls, door-to-door outreach and other activities, the Foundation has raised nearly \$1 million from families representing about 1,100 residents of Sleepy Hollow to help pay for the new community center.

The Sleepy Hollow Homes Association and the Charitable Foundation have had the honor and duty of working with our community since 2012 on conceptualizing, designing, funding and building a dual use disaster recovery and planning center, that can also serve as a hub for community life in Sleepy Hollow. The design was developed with direct input of the Sleepy Hollow Fire Protection District, as well from the Ross Valley Fire Department, the Marin County Fire Department, the Marin County Office of Emergency Management, the Marin County Sheriff's Office, the American Red Cross, the Marin County RACES communications group, and other disaster experts. The plans, developed in thorough process with residents, were approved by the Marin County Planning Commission and the Marin County Board of Supervisors. We should receive building permits from the Marin County Planning Division in two to three weeks.

### **Requested Content**

#### **I. Emergency and current facility space:**

SHHA/SHCF intend to construct a new community center and emergency facility on the property located at 1317 Butterfield Road, San Anselmo, California. The community center and emergency facility will be built based on plans and specifications prepared by the architectural firm Tolbert Design Architects and submitted to the County of Marin for permit approval ("Plans"). The establishment of permanent space for the District in a restored and strengthened community center and emergency facility is a goal we have shared with the District since at least 2014. As such, the plans and specifications for the community center and emergency facility have been developed with the District's input as to construction standards and configuration needs. The result is a structure that meets higher standards than a typical neighborhood center.

The facility will be configured so that it can be used by the District to comply in all respects with the RFI. We assume that the entire facility will be used as a disaster recovery center, in the event of a disaster declaration by Marin County, or in the event the Sleepy Hollow community needs it as a safe haven in a wildfire or other emergency.

The facility is centrally and safely located in the District, and will afford visibility and citizen access to the District. We believe that the District's use and occupancy in this space can be a platform for a wider range of collaboration that can contribute to successful implementation of the 2017 Strategic Plan.

## **II. Sufficient Communications Facilities at the Site.**

We will be guided by a detailed understanding of the needs of the District to have effective communication, including during a disaster when some forms of communication may be disrupted. We will initiate or cooperate fully with the District in obtaining such services, including encouraging acceptance by Sleepy Hollow residents. As we understand the costs of necessary services, we assume we can work out a satisfactory cost sharing with the District.

Regarding response sections III. and IV:

Beyond providing tangible facilities, we are well positioned and very willing to assist the District in achieving its initiatives and strategic goals, including:

- be more visible and accessible to the community
- reach and educate the community regarding wildfire hazard and risk in Sleepy Hollow and the benefits to the community from FPD initiatives
- gain residents' willingness to take fire safety actions
- mitigate the effects of wildfire through executing the District's mitigation goals such as vegetation management and roadway clearance
- foster a safer, more prepared community by executing the FPD goals for preparedness in the event of disaster, including evacuation planning and practice, Alert Marin registration, and citizen training.

Our responses below suggest and illustrate how we can assist.

## **III. Community Outreach Services.**

SHHA/SHCF are ideal partners for the District in building awareness of and appreciation for District initiatives and accomplishments that benefit residents within the District boundaries. We have multi-channel contact information and well-known media for regular and special needs communication to residents.

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- **Distribution:** We will share our resident names, addresses, electronic contact information, and telephone contact information for the FPD use in citizen outreach and education. We protect the confidentiality of the contact information, but we anticipate no difficulty as we let residents know the information will be shared with the District.
- **Monthly SH Bulletin:** We will regularly reserve space in the monthly Sleepy Hollow Bulletin. (Mailed 5 times annually to all residents: January, March, June, September, November for 2017. Mailed every month to SHHA members, approximately 400 resident families.)
- **Website:** We can post District notices and a link to the District website on the shha.org website.
- **Directory:** We will include disaster preparedness information from the District in the upcoming print neighborhood directory, and are open to issuing the publication as a joint benefit provided free to all residents by the District and the SHHA.

Beyond those obvious resources, we will be alert to collaborations with you, or others with whom you partner from time to time, that could be of help to the District. For example, with some notice, we could send email messages on your behalf, and actively promote participation in District events, whether public meetings or training and preparation events. We could feature a partner, such as Youth to Work, in an issue of the Bulletin.

With your guidance, we are happy to communicate and promote the benefits of such things as the Firewise Community Certification, and help assure that residents see the annual benefits of your activities to maintain that certification.

In coordination with your priorities and timelines, we can:

- Encourage and solicit such things as registration for Alert Marin. For example, we could establish an “Opt out” rather than “sign up” understanding with residents, so that we might register everyone who is in the data base who does not opt out.
- Promote and assist with evacuation preparedness and drills.
- Promote and assist with training programs in aspects of preparation and preparedness, from individual family disaster plans to potential Red Cross shelter training.
- Develop block chairpersons to be aware of neighbor needs in the event of emergencies, and to be a network of enthusiasts for the District. These might be people also interested in CERT, or in some other level of training which could benefit neighbors and support the FPD preparedness goals.

If the staffing for these kinds of outreach efforts, and the support for mitigation efforts we describe in IV. below, outgrows the volunteer capacity of the District and SHHA, we are open to a joint staffing arrangement. Or you could contract with SHHA

from time to time for specific services, such as you may now do with others occasionally.

**IV. Other Services and Support for Community Wildfire Mitigation.**

As the Report well documents, it is far better to reduce hazard and risk than to take comfort solely in great disaster preparation or emergency first response. Mitigation (such as vegetation management through residential defensible spaces and fire-wise landscaping, maintenance of roadways and common areas as hazard free and with adequate clearance for responder access, and reduced structural ignitability) requires citizen action which, we hope, is far in advance of a fire event. Such advance action requires education and buy in.

We appreciate the intention of the District to commit to education and some financial incentives for removal of structural or landscape hazards, including demonstration projects to generate broad acceptance. We believe we have strong common ground with the District on designation of safe parking areas that do not impede roadway access. We can envision collaborating with the District on renewed efforts to promote fire resistant landscapes. We expect to be able to support, through education and constructive dialogue with residents, efforts to gain citizen acceptance of new codes or inspection requirements, and hazard reduction measures that may come at individual cost.

Media and sharing identified in our response to III. Community Outreach Services, where we focused more on Preparation and Preparedness, apply equally to these outreach efforts required to gain compliance with mitigation programs.

Finally, SHHA/SHCF agree to enter into good faith negotiations with the District relative to (a) services requested by the District and (b) the specific terms and conditions of a lease for the District's use of the community center and emergency facility.

We will be pleased to meet with District directors to clarify our response or to answer any questions.

Respectfully submitted this \_\_\_ day of May, 2017.

Sleepy Hollow Homes Association

Sleepy Hollow Charitable Foundation

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By: \_\_\_\_\_

Its: \_\_\_\_\_

Its: \_\_\_\_\_