

The Steering Committee for Firewise Old Oak Way met from 5:00 to 6:30pm at Vineyard Point on Wednesday, November 10.

We reviewed the progress against our 2021 Plan (see 2021 portion of our attached Multiyear Action Plan). During the past year significant progress was made in each of our 5 focus areas: Education, Defensible Space, Road Safety, Evacuation Planning and Membership. Overall, the committee felt we had a very successful year.

The primary focus of our future (2022, 2023) activities will be fuel reduction. Firestorms are spread by flying “fire brands” (small burning pieces of wood and other flammable materials) carried by winds, often created by the fire. These firebrands can ignite any fuel on the ground including under decks or flammable landscaping, especially bushes and shrubs.

Fuel on the ground (bushes, shrubs, leaves, dead wood, etc.) serve as ladder fuel to ignite the crowns of trees. Crown fires travel rapidly, especially uphill. Ground or crown fires close to a home can ignite that home, which can then ignite neighboring homes, as we recently saw in Colorado. Removal of this fuel needs to be our highest priority.

Many of the plants and trees in our neighborhood have been growing for 30 to 60 years and gradually have created increasing fire danger.

It is important that we all follow the principles of “Defensible Space”. See the attachment from the SC County Firesafe Council. It is also important that we all schedule HIZ (Hazardous Ignition Zone) inspections to get an expert evaluation and recommendations for our property. If not already done, go to OldOakWay.info to schedule.

In 2022 and beyond we need to focus on making our homes safe from fire by trimming or removing the trees and plants that may increase the risk of fire.

At our November 10 Steering Committee meeting we discussed the need to extend our 3-year plan to include 2023. In the attached Multi Year Action Plan I drafted plans for 2023 based on our discussions. Your comments are requested and appreciated.

The next meeting of the Firewise Steering Committee is planned for February. Does 5 pm on Wednesday, February 9 work for committee members?

Dave House

Firewise Steering Committee Chair