Attachment "A:

BEL AIR–BEVERLY CREST NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

DRAFT MINUTES

Ad-Hoc Environmental Committee Meeting

Virtual Meeting (Zoom) – Monday, May 4, 2026, 5:00 PM

This meeting was conducted virtually in conformity with California Senate Bill 707 (Durazo), effective January 1, 2026 (Gov. Code § 54953.8), and Los Angeles City Council File 23-1114. Members of the public could participate by Zoom or by telephone and offer comment in real time, as stated in the posted agenda.

Call to Order, Flag Salute & Roll Call

Chair Mindy Rothstein Mann called the meeting to order at 5:07 PM. The flag salute was omitted. Roll call was taken as follows:

Committee Member	Position	Attendance
Mindy Rothstein Mann	Chair	Present
Nickie Miner	Member	Absent
Leslie Weisberg	Member	Present
Alonzo Wickers	Member	Present
Jamie Hall	Member	Present
Ellen Evans	Member	Present
David Christensen	Member	Present
Travis Longcore	Member (ex officio)	Absent

Six (6) of the eight (8) Committee members listed on the agenda were present, a majority of the Committee. The Chair noted that Travis Longcore was unable to attend because he was in class.

Others in attendance: Robin Greenberg (Zoom host); Lionel Mares (member of the public); Aaron Lawrence (Board member, joined as a member of the public, during Item 5 and did not request to speak).

1. Approval of the May 4, 2026 Agenda

The Chair asked whether any members had problems or objections to the agenda. None were stated.

ACTION: The May 4, 2026 agenda was approved by general consent, with no objection stated.

2. Approval of Minutes: Committee meeting minutes dated October 14, 2024 (Attachment A)

The Chair noted that the last Committee meeting had been held some time ago and asked whether there were any problems, amendments or abstentions regarding the minutes of October 14, 2024 (Attachment A).

MOTION	To approve the minutes of the Committee meeting dated October 14, 2024 (Attachment A).
Moved by	Jamie Hall
Seconded by	Mindy Rothstein Mann, Chair (Member David Christensen also voiced a second)
Vote	Voice vote. No objections, amendments, opposition or abstentions were stated.
Result	**APPROVED. The Chair declared the minutes approved.**

3. General Public Comment

The Chair called for General Public Comment, limited to one minute per speaker. One member of the public, Lionel Mares, addressed the Committee as an individual and provided citywide updates:

- **City Council Budget and Finance Committee (earlier that day).** Carmen Chang, General Manager of the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment, presented. Councilmembers Yaroslavsky, McOsker and Blumenfield asked how the Department will implement federal Department of Justice requirements for ADA compliance, for which Mr. Mares said the City has one year, and noted that the Department would work with the Department on Disability to ensure neighborhood councils comply. A standard website template for neighborhood councils was also discussed as a way to improve accessibility for people with hearing or visual impairments, since neighborhood council websites vary widely in complexity. Mr. Mares stated that he considered a uniform template a good idea, and that the hearing may be viewed on the LA City Clerk YouTube channel.
- **Rules, Elections, and Intergovernmental Relations Committee (Thursday, April 30, 2026).** The committee held a public hearing on City Charter reform. Advocates urged doubling the allocation for Recreation and Parks to improve park facilities and staffing, citing the City's low ranking in the Trust for Public Land ranking system. Mr. Mares expressed support for more open space and less density and land development.

No other member of the public requested to speak. No Committee action may be taken on matters raised during General Public Comment that are not on the agenda (Gov. Code § 54954.2).

Following public comment, the Chair reported that she had heard from Member Nickie Miner, who was unable to locate the Zoom link; Member Hall agreed to re-send the link to her personal e-mail address. She is not reflected as having joined the meeting.

4. Chair Reports

Chair Mann stated that she had no formal report. To make the best use of the available time (about one hour) in reviewing the Megafire Prevention Package, she explained that she had circulated written notes on the bills to members. She stated that two bills in the package, AB 1986 (Bennett) and AB 2013 (Bennett), are no longer active and would not be discussed, and she proposed beginning with the two

prescribed-fire bills, AB 1699 and AB 1891, which she expected could be addressed quickly. Member Hall shared the bill text on screen during the discussion.

5. Discussion & Possible Motion: Megafire Prevention Package

Agenda description: Discussion and possible motion to determine which elements of the Megafire Prevention Package are pertinent to Southern California and deserve our support, and, based on those conclusions, to ask that a letter be sent to the City recommending that they include those items as part of their legislative package (Attachment B, 13 bills).

Because of the limited time, the Committee reviewed six bills individually, as summarized below, and then addressed the remaining bills in the package as a group.

AB 1699 (Rogers) – Good Fire Act, and AB 1891 (Connolly) – Beneficial Fire Capacity Program

Chair Mann reported that ex officio member Travis Longcore had advised that current science indicates prescribed (controlled) burning is not appropriate in chaparral, the native vegetation of the Council's area, and had suggested that the Committee's recommendation ask that non-coniferous landscapes be excluded from these programs. Key points of the discussion:

- Member Evans asked that the recommendation state the reason: prescribed burning of chaparral tends to convert native chaparral to non-native grasses that burn hotter and more readily. The Chair said she would prefer not to include a lengthy scientific explanation. Member Wickers suggested a brief statement that fire behaves differently in chaparral, without detailing why. Member Christensen asked that the request refer specifically to non-coniferous landscapes rather than to areas where burns are "not appropriate," to avoid ambiguity; the Chair clarified that the intent is to exclude non-coniferous landscapes because prescribed burns are not appropriate there.
- In response to questions from Members Wickers and Hall, the Chair explained that, after the recent frequency of fires, burned chaparral is being replaced by non-native grasses, and noted that articles she had circulated included material from the Center for Biological Diversity and that, in her understanding, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy also opposes prescribed burning in this area.
- Members noted that neither bill excludes any region. Member Evans explained that AB 1699 would make the Prescribed Fire Liability Program permanent and, depending on CAL FIRE guidelines, would allow entities other than the State and federal government (including private landowners, nonprofits, conservation districts, fire departments and tribes) to conduct beneficial fire. Member Evans reported that her analysis (prepared with an AI tool) suggested "support if amended" for AB 1891, which builds beneficial fire capacity, and "oppose unless amended" for AB 1699, which raised more concern because it makes the program permanent, expands who may use it, and may reduce oversight; she observed that the difference between the two designations is a matter of wording.
- Member Wickers asked whether the recommendation should exclude the Council's region as a whole or be based on habitat type, noting that coniferous forests in the mountains above the city might benefit. The Chair indicated that Mr. Longcore had framed the exclusion by habitat type, and members agreed to frame the recommendation as asking that these bills not be applied to chaparral habitat.
- Member Evans asked that the recommendation also state that smoke planning, public notice and evacuation safeguards should be in place wherever prescribed burns are conducted. The Chair agreed.

Outcome: No formal motion was made. By general agreement, with no objection stated, the Committee's position on both bills is to support them on the condition that they be amended to exclude chaparral (non-coniferous) landscapes, where prescribed burns are not appropriate, and to require smoke planning, public notice and evacuation safeguards wherever prescribed burns are conducted.

SB 894 (Allen) – Wildfire Mitigation Affordability Act (California Wildfire Resilience Loan Program)

Members reviewed the bill, which creates a loan program to help property owners finance wildfire-mitigation improvements, including home hardening, defensible space activities, smoke mitigation retrofits and other risk-reduction measures. Key points of the discussion:

- Member Hall demonstrated an AI-generated analysis of the bill, which recommended support and suggested that the Committee consider (1) emphasizing native, fire-resistant landscaping rather than clear-cutting to protect the ecology of the Santa Monica Mountains, and (2) ensuring the program covers older, non-conforming hillside homes that face the highest retrofit costs.
- Member Evans noted that eligible work could include vegetation management beyond what is ecologically advisable, and suggested that the Committee ask that loans prioritize structure hardening (including within "Zone Zero") ahead of vegetation work and not fund clear-cutting beyond what is scientifically advisable. Member Wickers supported prioritizing structures over vegetation.
- Members discussed whether the program could create incentives for excessive vegetation removal. Member Hall observed that the program is voluntary, unlike the proposed Zone Zero regulations, and that he did not expect significant perverse incentives. Member Christensen noted that, if Zone Zero is enacted, the loans would help property owners comply. The Chair, who stated she has strong concerns about Zone Zero generally, said she did not read this bill as raising the same issue, and emphasized the high cost of home hardening, particularly for older homes.
- The Chair suggested that members avoid getting too far into the details. Member Evans proposed, and members agreed, that the recommendation ask that the program prioritize the highest-impact improvements.

MOTION	To recommend that the City support SB 894 (Allen), with the suggested amendment that the program prioritize the highest-impact improvements.
Moved by	Jamie Hall
Seconded by	David Christensen
Vote	Voice vote. The Chair called for those in favor, those opposed and any abstentions. No opposition and no abstentions were stated.
Result	**CARRIED.**

SB 1079 (Stern) – Fire Innovation Unit Act

The Chair described the bill as establishing a unit to keep current on new fire technologies and innovations and report on them, and stated that she considered this badly needed. Member Christensen described it as a technology research-and-development, innovation, and rapid acquisition and deployment program, with an annual report required. In response to a question from Member Wickers about whether the unit would have oversight of how beneficial fire is deployed, the Chair and Member Christensen

stated that the unit would report annually and run pilots and tests purely for research, not large-scale deployment. Members expressed support.

MOTION	To recommend that the City support SB 1079 (Stern).
Moved by	David Christensen
Seconded by	Mindy Rothstein Mann, Chair
Vote	Voice vote. Member Hall called for any opposed; none were stated.
Result	**CARRIED.**

SB 1404 (Stern)

The Chair stated that she was unsure whether the bill, which relates to fees in State Responsibility Areas, would affect the Council's area. Member Hall explained that the Council's area is a Local Responsibility Area (LRA) rather than a State Responsibility Area (SRA), and members noted that SRAs generally lie in unincorporated areas such as Topanga. Members agreed that the bill does not pertain to the Council's area.

Outcome: No motion was made. By general agreement, the Committee will not comment on SB 1404.

SB 973 (Becker) – Wildfire County Coordinator Program

Member Hall read the bill summary: the bill would require the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection to establish recommended standards for wildfire risk modeling and analysis tools, develop related guidance, support the development or procurement of county-level wildfire risk assessments, and develop guidance and templates for county wildfire resilience prioritization and implementation plans. Key points of the discussion:

- The Chair stated that the bill is helpful in concept but unclear: she was concerned that the county coordinator would work through CAL FIRE and how the coordinator would make decisions on vegetation and defensible space if the city or county disagreed with CAL FIRE. She said the bill does not make clear whether it merely adds coordination or gives the coordinator more power.
- Member Weisberg asked why the Committee should not request clarification, and whether the recommendation could be that the bill be clarified. The Chair noted that the Committee's role is to recommend a position to the City Council rather than to question the author directly.
- Member Evans stated that the Committee's lens should be that the bill must not become another tool for cutting down all vegetation; habitat must be considered; and the State should fund and coordinate the most impactful mitigation practices as agreed upon by fire professionals and environmentalists. Member Evans also asked that similar fuel-reduction guardrails be recommended here.
- The Chair and Member Weisberg emphasized that policy must reflect the geographic differences between regions and communities and cannot be one-size-fits-all; that communication between CAL FIRE and the community coordinator should flow in both directions; and, per Member Weisberg, that requirements such as five-foot clearance can be impossible in the Council's area because homes are closely stacked on hillsides, so that compliance should be community-based.
- Member Wickers asked whether the plan that the coordinator would help counties comply with is a State, county or region-specific plan, and suggested that the recommendation encourage State funding and support for smaller regions' home hardening without tying it to adherence to a

statewide one-size-fits-all plan or reducing local autonomy, while separating vegetation management from home hardening.

Outcome: No motion was made. The concerns above are to be reflected in the Committee's letter.

Remaining bills in the Package; approach for the Committee's letter

At approximately the one-hour mark, members noted that time was running short. Member Evans proposed that the Committee not conduct a detailed review of every remaining bill because members share the same view that all of the measures must be carried out with ecological sensitivity, and suggested an overarching letter on that theme with a specific section on beneficial fire. The Chair stated that her review of the remaining bills (which address, among other things, property tax relief, home hardening surveys, wildfire prevention grants, and home hardening certification) raised similar concerns:

- Home hardening should be separated from vegetation management and defensible space, which several bills combine. Home hardening is the same regardless of location, whereas vegetation and brush clearance requirements differ greatly by region.
- Contractors are not trained in vegetation management, and some bills would have contractors handle both.
- Members noted that homeowners' ability to afford the work is not being factored in, that the work may create a market for exploitation of homeowners, and that, while property tax relief for the work is helpful, no tax write-off is offered for the cost. The Chair noted that the loan program addresses affordability in part.

Member Evans suggested that the letter list the bills and state that the State should prioritize highly impactful home hardening and decouple vegetation management from it. Members Wickers and Hall expressed support for the approach. Member Evans added that if the matter goes directly to the Board, that is acceptable, since the Committee has agreed in principle. Member Wickers asked whether the approach should be put in the form of a motion; no motion was made.

Outcome: By general agreement, with no objection stated, the Chair will review the remaining bills, obtain the notes and AI-generated summary offered by Member Hall and the input of Travis Longcore (who has not yet reviewed the bills), and prepare a draft letter reflecting the positions above for members' review. No motion was made on the letter, and no date for a follow-up meeting was set.

Summary of positions on Item 5

Bill	Committee position / action	Vote
AB 1699 (Rogers) Good Fire Act	Support, conditioned on exclusion of chaparral (non-coniferous) landscapes and on smoke planning, public notice and evacuation safeguards	General agreement; no motion
AB 1891 (Connolly) Beneficial Fire Capacity Program	Same as AB 1699	General agreement; no motion
SB 894 (Allen) Wildfire Mitigation Affordability Act	Support, with amendment to prioritize the highest-impact improvements	Motion carried (voice vote)
SB 1079 (Stern) Fire Innovation Unit Act	Support	Motion carried (voice vote)

Bill	Committee position / action	Vote
SB 1404 (Stern)	No comment; bill pertains to State Responsibility Areas	General agreement; no motion
SB 973 (Becker) Wildfire County Coordinator Program	Concerns to be reflected in the letter (clarity of coordinator's role, regional differences, separation of vegetation management from home hardening)	No motion
Remaining bills in the Package	To be addressed in a draft letter prepared by the Chair	No motion

Good of the Order & Adjournment to Next Meeting

The Chair called for Good of the Order. Members wished Member Evans a happy birthday. The Chair thanked Members Hall, Evans, Christensen, Wickers and Weisberg, and Robin Greenberg for hosting the meeting.

The agenda provided for a follow-up meeting if time did not permit review of all of the bills. The Committee instead agreed to proceed as described under Item 5, and no date or time for a further meeting was set.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at approximately 6:15 PM. No formal motion to adjourn was made.