

**Introductions - Board members present:** Penny Kocan, Cindy Stichweh, Larry Lindsley, Loretta Linstad, Paul Wagner, Kat Leathers

Larry called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. and introduced guest speakers:

- Ed Chavez, Thurston County Manager
- Steve Brooks, Lacey Fire District Chief
- Sergeant Claridge, Lacey Sheriff's Department

Larry introduced the topic of fireworks and safety. Community rule states all fireworks to be set off in BC must be legal and comply with TC ordinances. Anything higher than home heights is restricted to the beach.

Mr Chavez reported the summer of 2015 was very dry and prompted proposals on regulations. By June 2016, they had a public hearing with two options – banning sales and distribution or ban the discharge of fireworks. Very emotional meeting. Local jurisdiction has to wait a year before enforcement. They passed a regulation stating County Manager and Fire Marshal may prohibit the discharge of fireworks in periods of extreme fire danger. Legal sale of fireworks is June 28, 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. July 4<sup>th</sup>. All fireworks stands must obey timeline. County manager must make a decision to ban discharge of fireworks by 9 a.m. on June 28. Does not regulate professional fireworks displays – only personal discharge. Since 2017, when the regulation was passed, Mr. Chavez has not had to ban the discharge of fireworks.

Larry shared a chart that described the leading types of injuries from 2018 in the state as well as the types of devices that caused those injuries. Male youth and young adults are most often injured.

Chief Brooks shared that in his experience, the improper discharge of fireworks has been the cause of more injuries – meaning, fireworks intended to discharge vertically, instead fall over and discharge horizontally. Fire district coverage on a typical July 4<sup>th</sup> includes Lacey's planned events, Nisqually's planned events, and responding to reported fires and injuries.

Sergeant Claridge shared that unincorporated county fireworks stands are all regulated by RCWs and fall under the state fire marshal who inspects deliveries to ensure the fireworks being distributed are legal.

Slides were shared that displayed legal and illegal fireworks. S. Claridge also shared that sparklers are some of the most dangerous fireworks as they are unassuming and given to children who don't know what to do with them once spent.

Nisqually, Chehalis Tribal and Frank's Landing all sell fireworks, but should be selling legal fireworks.

Larry shared that he would upload a video to the website that offers advice on how to calm pets during fireworks displays.

The space at the beach is a challenge for creating a safe place for fireworks displays. Last year, we had a high tide of +14 feet, which limits the available space for staging fireworks displays. Next year, the tide will be just as high. Chief Brooks visited the beach and confirmed the beach is a challenging space with such high tides. When his team consults on fireworks displays locations, they try to share perspective on

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accessibility of emergency vehicles in the event of injury. He offered suggestions for avoiding injury, including, primarily, not using rocks as stabilizing tools.

Larry asked what we are allowed to ask Sheriff's deputies to do when they are serving our community on July 4<sup>th</sup>. Claridge said they can enforce RCWs and county ordinances rather than city ordinances. It's not illegal to be an irresponsible fireworks consumer. If the person is not a community member, they can be asked to leave. There is no penalty structure for actions outside of the RCWs and county ordinances. They encourage proper action with verbal reminders.

Community members shared their opinions on recent events:

Becky Post shared her dismay at the amount of trash that is left behind. She supports a ban on fireworks to keep the beach cleaner.

A community youth called out the potential impacts – fires, animals, triggering PTSD in Veterans, environmental impacts and encouraged the ban of fireworks.

Laura Craig shared that we have federally protected seabirds in our bluff that are impacted negatively and that much trash goes into the grounds and water.

Dennis Simmons shared that consumer fireworks are small devices, with 136 mg or less of explosive devices. Dennis believes many of the fireworks lit on the BC beach last July 4 were illegal.

Laura Bloom shared that in 2016, she and her family were on the beach. She was hit by a firework that fell over. Her lens hit her face so hard, her skin was cut around her eye from impact. She believes there is not enough supervision and too little space to safely use fireworks. She reported 2019's activities included faulty fireworks, not user error, which are less predictable.

Steve Parkinson shared that banning fireworks is unenforceable and he hesitates passing a rule that is unenforceable. He asked if the sheriff's deputies we contract with could check the fireworks going down to the beach, establishing a check point. With some prior arrangement, it seems possible.

Steve Hoffman asked if there was an option to ban fireworks on the beach, but have a community sanctioned display on a barge. Larry shared that he checked with a fireworks display expert who would charge \$4000-\$5000. He needs 80-100 feet of a ½ circle to set up safely, without the additional cost of a barge. Larry suggested the funds would need to come from the community via donations, rather than come from the current BC budget. Steve asked if there was damage reported from previous displays. There was no report to refer to. Audience members shared they had observed many injuries that had not been reported.

Loretta Linstad shared that during a visit to a home in the upper neighborhood, she observed small fireworks light a fire under juniper quickly, and without warning. She also saw some young people who had misfired fireworks on the beach road trying to scramble up the bluff to avoid injury. She saw people speeding down the beach road, getting dangerously close to small children. She reported many people she believed were non-residents trying to get down to the beach.

Larry asked Mr Chavez about banning fireworks in his home community of Indian Summer. Mr Chavez explained a lien can be placed on property if a resident fires fireworks. This allows recourse without the

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sheriff's presence. Thurston County can issue a permit for fireworks, but it is a difficult permit to obtain. Clearwood, Nisqually Pines, and Indian Summer have banned fireworks.

Carolyn Wagner shared concerns about space at the beach, encouraged limiting cars to allow space for emergency access. She has concerns, not just about fireworks, but many other issues at the beach, including overcrowding.

Ian Fouts admitted fireworks contribute to damaging the environment, but asked if our activity was significant considering the rest of PS is also shooting fireworks. He suggested people leave trash at the beach all the time, not just July 4th. Safety is a concern, but he believes it is the responsibility of the individual and fireworks should be used at your own risk. He believes community concerns can be mitigated.

Hugh Fechner reported what he observed to be a change in the last few years. He believes last year had too many people from outside the community and he suggested limiting the number of people coming in, and no parking at the beach. He suggested not going to the extreme and banning fireworks but trying to mitigate the problems.

Our guest speakers encouraged continuing partnerships and working together to maintain our community atmosphere.

Larry shared an opportunity to share feedback via a poll posted on the Beachcrest website. [Beachcrest.org/poll](https://beachcrest.org/poll).

The meeting ended at 8:46 p.m.