



Neighborhood Association for Fire Safety (NAFS)

Minutes of the Fifth Meeting

Formecarrly convened as the Fire Safety Committee

Date: Wednesday, July 15, 2026

Called to order: Approx. 5:00 p.m. at 76 The Way, Buckingham County, Virginia

Present: Dhyan, Lynn, Haris, Mindy, Don, Doug, Carol, Suriya, Siva, and Erik.

Notes: Erik, Secretary, Secretary & Manager of AgniWellCare

Next meeting: Wednesday, August 5, 2026, 5:00 p.m. at 76 The Way

Learn more: agniwelcare.org/fire-safety

Comments or edits: manager@agniwelcare.org

Hello neighbors! These notes are shared openly so that everyone in our community, whether or not you were able to attend, can follow along and take part in the work ahead. Nothing here is a final decision; it is a record of what we discussed and the next steps we identified together. Where names of prospective captains appear, they are noted as possibilities only: every volunteer is invited and must agree before any role is assigned.

1. Opening and Welcome

The group opened, as has become our custom, with three rounds of Om and a few quiet breaths together before turning to business. Members then set the working agenda for the evening: reports from Don on his conversation with the Buckingham County Firefighters Association; Dhyan's presentation of the Red Cross Community Disaster Education materials; Mindy's report on her conversation with Jeeva regarding the dry hydrant and the Ashram siren; Erik's report on the Firewise grant and federal registration; captain and co-captain recruitment; and role-play practice of the neighbor conversation.

Two new co-captains

The meeting's happiest news: **Carol was a new attendee from Unity, and Suriya has agreed to serve as co-captain for the Karuna Lane zone.** Both attended and both bring exactly what the role calls for: long familiarity with their neighbors and a willingness to knock on a door. Carol, a resident of many years, also carries institutional knowledge of Unity Place that no map can supply. The committee welcomed them warmly, and thanks them.

Separately, **Narada has agreed to serve as a co-captain** — reported by Haris, who noted he is enthusiastic about the work and asked only for advance notice of meetings, given a full household. The committee accepted that gladly. Members also raised, candidly, that a captain with a large family will reasonably attend to their own household first in a real emergency; this is not a reservation about any individual but a reminder that the network must be built with redundancy so that no single person is a point of failure.

2. Captains, Co-Captains, and Zone Status

Consistent with prior meetings, names below are recorded as possibilities only unless a person has agreed. Current status:

- **Unity Place.** Doug and Don continue to lead outreach; Lynn continues to assist. Doug is compiling a list of addresses and resident names for the road, with Carol's help — this is the single most useful piece of groundwork any zone can have, and it is nearly in hand.
- **Karuna Lane.** Haris serves as captain; Karuna Marcotte was previously confirmed as co-captain;
- **Karuna Lane:** Suriya now joins as co-captain and has suggested a neighbor, Matavan for a further co-captain role, who accepted.
- **The Way.** Erik serves as co-captain. Shakti Love was suggested as Co- captain if needed, Mindy declined,
- **Narada.** Confirmed as a co-captain.
- **Jai Ram.** Members reported that Jai Ram will not be taking a captain role at this time. The committee thanks him for his consideration and hopes to draw on his knowledge of community lot information as the zone map is completed.
- **Janardana.** Outreach is under way; an email has been sent and follow-up will continue. He is a long-time resident whose participation would be valuable.

Members reaffirmed that we do not need every captain in place to begin. Distribution of the door hangers will itself surface neighbors willing to help. A notice seeking captains and co-captains will continue to run in the community newsletter and on the community Facebook group.

3. Coordination with Area Fire Departments

Buckingham County Firefighters Association

Don reported on a substantive conversation with the president of the **Buckingham County Firefighters Association** — the umbrella association for the county's volunteer companies, which public records list as based in Dillwyn. The call was returned promptly and the tone was respectful and engaged, which the committee took as an encouraging sign of the county's willingness to work with organized neighborhoods.

A note on the record. The *president's* name was recalled at the meeting as "Jason Graham." The Secretary was unable to confirm this spelling against a public source before

publication. Public listings do record a **Chief Jason Wharam** at the Dillwyn Volunteer Fire Department, and it is possible the two references have been conflated. Glenmore Volunteer Fire Department, at 179 Firehouse Road in Buckingham, is the nearest company to our neighborhoods and Don will follow-up to connect with them.

The structure–forest interface

The Dillwyn's association president raised a concern he considers distinctive to our area and worth passing on in full. Most fire response falls cleanly into one of two categories: structure firefighting (houses and buildings) or woodland firefighting (forest and brush). Our neighborhoods sit at an unusually tight interface between the two — homes tucked directly into standing timber, on narrow drives, in a pattern he indicated he does not commonly encounter elsewhere in the county. Where structures and forest are this closely woven together, a fire in either can rapidly become a fire in both.

His practical advice was direct: creating defensible space here will require removing trees around homes and along driveways. He acknowledged that this is unwelcome counsel in a community that loves its trees, and members said so plainly in the discussion — many residents will not want to lose the trees near their homes, many are renters without authority to make that decision, and for many the cost of professional tree removal is simply out of reach. Members noted that this makes the work a genuine community project rather than a list of instructions: identifying which trees actually matter, organizing shared labor, and pursuing grant funds to help cover costs. The Firewise Hazard Mitigation Grant (Section 5) is directed at exactly this need.

The committee recorded the advice without softening it and without alarm. It belongs in the second phase of our outreach — after neighbors have met their captain and had a first conversation, not on the first knock.

Volunteers and training

Don reported that the trainings we have been seeking remain difficult to pin down. What the county companies indicate they most need are structure firefighters — trained volunteers for house and building fires — which is a different discipline from the woodland firefighting some of our members have experience in. Members noted the distinction matters: for our interface, both capacities are relevant.

On scheduling, there is an apparent discrepancy worth resolving. Galen was told roughly a month ago that specialists would be available "in two months" — placing them in **late August**. Don was told, more recently, that they would be available "in two months" from that later date. The committee agreed the sensible response is not to wait: Don will follow up, note that we were told August, and press courteously for a **specific date** rather than a rolling window. Volunteer departments are stretched thin and this is not obstruction — but a date on a calendar is what turns a good intention into a visit.

Extra Note from the Secretary:

For neighbors who may be interested: Buckingham County is served by volunteer companies at Dillwyn, Glenmore, Toga, and Arvonja. Residents curious about volunteering — in any capacity, including non-operational support — are encouraged to coordinate with NAFS and contact a local company directly. Dillwyn Volunteer Fire Department, 15896 N. James Madison Highway, Dillwyn, may be reached at (434) 315-1141; Glenmore Volunteer Fire Department, 179 Firehouse Road, Buckingham, at (434) 969-2317. NAFS will share any training schedule it receives.

4. Community Disaster Education — Dhyani's Contribution

Dhyani brought to the meeting a bound presenter's binder from the American Red Cross **Community Disaster Education (CDE)** program, retained from the years she ran a community disaster education program locally. The committee received it with real gratitude — this is precisely the kind of institutional memory that a young effort like ours cannot manufacture and would otherwise lose.

The binder is a presenter's kit: background material on specific hazards — earthquake, extreme heat, fire, flood, hurricane, lightning, tornado — together with reproducible brochures and handouts, and a hazard risk assessment for the counties covered. The fire section, which Dhyani walked the group through, follows a structure our own materials could usefully borrow:

- It opens with the scale of the problem — how many Americans are killed and injured in fires each year — and the point that heat and smoke are often more dangerous than flame itself.
- It then moves to protective measures in plain bullet form.
- It covers escaping a fire, including the ordinary failures that trap people — windows painted or never opened, assumed exits that do not open under pressure.
- It identifies what not to keep in the home, and which common items most frequently ignite.
- It addresses alternative heating sources in specific terms: fill kerosene heaters outdoors, never indoors; keep heaters three feet clear of anything flammable.
- It includes sections on matches and smoking, electrical wiring, what to do during a fire, and outdoor fire safety.

Asked whether such guidance ages, Dhyani observed that the fundamentals have changed very little; the basics of fire behavior are not new. Members noted that our own focus is weighted toward wildfire and the forest interface, but that the binder's outdoor-fire section maps well onto that work, and its **structure — problem, protective measures, escape, specific hazards — is a sound model for our resident materials.**

Next step. Dhyani has generously lent the binder to Erik, who will digitize it and return it by the next meeting. Erik will also check whether the CDE materials are available online in current form. Members noted that Nikki, the county zoning director, may already hold

copies. Once digitized, the relevant sections will be posted to the fire-safety page and integrated into our own plan and resident handouts.

5. Firewise Grant and Federal Registration — Erik

Erik reported that the application process for the **Firewise Virginia Community Hazard Mitigation Grant** is under way. The grant offers up to \$9,999 on an 80/20 match, is reimbursement-based, and has continuous, non-competitive sign-up. It could support exactly the work the fire association president described: clearing around homes and along roadsides, signage, and water-source improvements such as a dry hydrant.

Applying requires a free **Unique Entity ID (UEI)**, obtained through the federal SAM.gov portal, which any organization must hold to receive state or federal grant funds. Registration is a multi-stage process with substantial paperwork. Erik expects a response on the first stage within days and estimates roughly a week and a half to clear the initial rounds. AgniWellCare — the local 501(c)(3) that hosts this committee's website and phone line — will hold the UEI and serve as the applicant of record.

A question of clarity, well raised. Mindy asked, having heard uncertainty expressed elsewhere, whether AgniWellCare's board has approved the relationship between the grant and the organization. This is a fair and proper question, and the committee is better for it being asked. The answer: the matter has been discussed at the board level and formal approval is a near-term step, not a completed one. Erik will confirm to this committee once the board has acted. NAFS remains a neighborhood effort open to all area residents; **AgniWellCare's role** is administrative and financial facilitation — holding the registration, receiving reimbursement, and carrying the required paperwork — not ownership of the effort.

6. Ashram Coordination — Mindy's Report on Jeeva

Mindy reported on her conversation with Jeeva, chair of the Ashram's Board of Trustees, undertaken as agreed at the last meeting to establish a single accountable point of entry. Two matters were raised.

The dry hydrant at Lotus Lake

Jeeva did not give an answer in the meeting, but asked for something more useful: a **written proposal** that he can carry to the Board of Trustees. He asked that it explain what a dry hydrant is and what it is for, when it would be used, where it would best be placed, and what it would cost. The committee agreed this is a reasonable and welcome request.

Action: Erik will draft the proposal for Jeeva and the Board of Trustees. A draft is appended to these minutes as **Addendum I** for committee review and comment before it is sent.

The Ashram siren

Jeeva reported that he was unaware of the status of the community siren and referred the question onward to Siva Moore. Dhyani was able to supply the missing institutional knowledge: the siren is located behind the reception desk in Sivananda Hall, mounted in the wall. It was repaired approximately six months ago at Dhyani's request.

Whether it currently works is unknown — because it has never been tested since the repair. Nor has anyone examined the external speaker component, or established whether the unit is fixed indoors or can be deployed outside. Members agreed that a repaired siren that has not been sounded is not yet a working siren.

Dhyani has taken responsibility for pursuing this (?) : confirming the siren's condition, arranging a test, and reporting back. Members noted that any test must be announced to the community in advance, so that a preparedness measure does not become an alarm in itself. Members also noted, with affection and some resignation, that the reliable way to reach Siva about physical plant questions is in person and in the morning while he is at work, rather than by text or email.

7. Role-Play Practice — The Neighbor Conversation

The heart of the meeting, and the reason it ran past six o'clock. Members practiced the doorstep conversation in front of the group, with feedback afterward. It was funny, it was uncomfortable in the useful way, and it changed our approach substantially. A distilled set of scripts and responses appears as Addendum III.

What the practice taught us

1. **Do not knock unannounced.** This was the clearest lesson, and it reversed the group's prior assumption. Watching the first role-play, several members reported physically tensing — one described the instinctive defenses that rise the moment a stranger appears at the door with a pamphlet. If our own members react that way, our neighbors will too. The revised default is: call or text first, then visit.
2. **Give the name.** Both role-plays revealed the same gap — the visitor collected a phone number but never gave their own name or got the resident's. Lead with your name, your street, and the organization. ***You are a neighbor, not a canvasser.***
3. **Write your name and number on the hanger before you leave home.** A member suggested this and it was tested on the spot: a Sharpie writes cleanly on the laminated card and does not smudge once dry. The printed contact line is small; a handwritten name in your own hand is personal, and it survives an interaction that ends in twenty seconds. The committee adopted this as standard practice. A sticky note was also proposed as an alternative.
4. **Never enter a home.** Members agreed this should be a firm rule even when a resident invites you in — decline warmly ("I'd love to, but I've got the rest of the street to get to") and keep the conversation at the door. Likewise, do not open a closed gate.

5. **Never place anything in a mailbox.** Only the U.S. Postal Service may place items in a mailbox. A door hanger or a note on the door is fine. This is federal law and the committee agreed to hold the line on it without exception.
6. **Do not touch people.** Noted in feedback on the first role-play. A hand on the shoulder reads very differently from a stranger than from a friend.
7. **Two or three sentences is what you get.** A member with extensive door-knocking experience reported the realistic arithmetic: most doors do not open at all, and when they do, you have perhaps two or three sentences before the resident decides. Everything else must fit on the card.
8. **Stay in your lane.** One role-play resident immediately steered toward an unrelated community controversy. The captain's answer — that he had no opinion, that it was a separate matter, and that he was here about fire safety — was the right one. NAFS carries one subject to the door. Nothing else.
9. **Explain the QR code, and offer help with it.** Members reported varied experiences: some phones open a link automatically from the camera, others need an app or a separate scan function, and some residents will not use one at all. Every hanger therefore carries a plain typed web address and a phone number as alternatives. If someone cannot use the code, offer to help them sign up — that offer of help is itself the relationship we are trying to build.

On the neighbor who says they are already protected

One role-play surfaced a response members recognized immediately: that faith, or **Gurudev's protection**, makes preparedness unnecessary. Members noted this same sentiment circulated during the pipeline effort years ago — and observed, dryly, that the pipeline was in fact stopped, by a great deal of work from a great many people.

The group's counsel was that this deserves respect rather than argument. One member offered the old story of the man on his roof in the flood who turns away the boat and the helicopter, certain God will save him, and drowns — and is told, in heaven, that God sent the boat and the helicopter. Another offered the shorter version, which the group liked best: "Maybe God sent me." Or: "Maybe Gurudev is behind all of this."

A member cautioned, rightly, that such a line lands very differently from a stranger than from a friend and should not be deployed as a rehearsed rebuttal. It is offered here as something to internalize rather than recite. The related saying — that **the Lord helps those who help themselves** — will also come up, and can be met with warmth.

A member who holds the sense of protection sincerely also spoke to it, describing watching a cabin fire years ago in which white flames climbed above the trees and the neighboring structure was saved by a garden hose and, in their view, grace. Their conclusion is worth recording as the committee's own: it is not either-or. It is *and*. One can believe the place is protected and still be on the team that makes sure it is.

On the neighbor who is not connected to the Ashram

Members raised this scenario and did not get to role-play it fully; it goes first on the agenda for August. Several members have neighbors with no relationship to the Ashram, and some with an actively poor one. The essential move is the one the second role-play got right: state plainly that NAFS is an independent, geographic neighborhood effort — this street, these houses — open to every resident regardless of affiliation. Fire does not check who you pray with.

8. Outreach Method — Revised

Following the role-play, the committee revised the sequence agreed at the last meeting. The door-hanger-first approach is replaced with a contact-first approach:

10. **Call or text first** where a number is available. Say who you are, that you are their neighbor and their captain for fire preparedness, and ask for three minutes at the door at a time that suits them.
11. **Visit briefly.** Give the hanger, with your name and number already on it. Introduce yourself. Offer the resources. **Do not ask for anything on the first visit beyond a preferred contact method — and let it go gracefully if they decline.**
12. **Where no number exists,** leave the hanger on the door with your name and number written on it. Members may also ask a neighbor who the resident is, and reach them that way.
13. **Follow up in a week or two,** with permission secured at the first contact. The second conversation is where the real information lives.

What we are actually trying to learn. Members were clear that the first conversation is an introduction, not an intake interview. Its purpose is to establish who we are and to take the temperature: who is glad we came, who is indifferent, who wants nothing to do with us. The essential question a captain must eventually be able to answer for their zone is this: ***who in my area would need help to evacuate, and who will get out on their own?*** That answer will not come in five minutes — several members noted that people are often too proud to say they need help — but the conversation is where it starts.

Members agreed captains may adapt the method to their own street and their own comfort. What must stay consistent is the message and the fact of the contact — not the choreography.

Coordinating with the parallel effort

Members again raised that a separate community effort is compiling information on residents who are homebound or need assistance. Two groups asking the same households the same questions serves no one and risks wearing out the community's goodwill. The committee agreed to invite Jai Ram to the August meeting so the two efforts can be aligned rather than duplicated.

Information to collect — a standard form

Mindy proposed, and the group accepted, that **captains should collect the same fields so the information is usable across zones**. A simple clipboard form will carry: resident name; best way to reach them in an emergency; that contact's details (phone, email); and space for notes. Erik will align the existing community survey with these fields. Members noted the practical wrinkle that email is of little use in a fast-moving emergency; a phone number is what matters, and the ask should be framed that way.

9. Advisory Visit — George Stish

Haris reported that George Stish — a firefighter who lives in our community — has agreed to come and speak with us. The question before the group was timing. Members concluded we are close to ready: the door hangers are printed, captains are largely identified, and outreach begins shortly. The consensus was that George should come before we go door to door in earnest, so that his local knowledge shapes the work rather than corrects it afterward.

Decision: Invite George Stish to the August 5 meeting. Members will bring questions in advance so his time is well used; a starting list is appended as **Addendum II**. Members were particularly interested in having him observe a role-play — someone who has actually knocked on these doors, and answered calls at them, will know at once which of our lines will work and which will not.

10. Minutes, Records, and Housekeeping

Minutes and comments. A member reported that comments and corrections she entered on the previous minutes did not appear in the version circulated, and that she received no notification of the changes. One correction is confirmed lost: the spelling of Karuna Marcotte's name. The Secretary takes responsibility for this. Two contributing causes were identified: the minutes are circulated in both editable and PDF form, and the PDF — being static — cannot receive or display comments, so a reader who opens it first will see none of their work; and a permissions or notification setting on the editable document appears to have prevented comments from registering as expected.

Resolution. Erik will circulate these minutes within twenty-four hours with comment permissions verified. Members who leave comments are asked to send a brief email as well, and Erik will confirm receipt. The committee affirmed the principle at stake, in the words of the member who raised it: *we want the institutional memory to be accurate*. That is the whole reason these notes exist. Corrections to any prior minutes remain welcome at any time.

On a related note of practice, the Secretary observed that where a statement made in a meeting is factually incorrect, it is not recorded as fact in these minutes. Where a correction matters to the record, it is noted openly — as with the burn-status correction in the July 1 minutes and the fire association name above.

Members reviewed the printed door hangers, which have arrived and were admired at length. The design was praised warmly; the Blue Ridge imagery was singled out. Members took supplies for their zones; a reserve remains at 76 The Way.

11. Decisions Reached

- **Decision:** Welcome Suriya as co-captain for Karuna Lane/Zone; confirm Narada as co-captain.
- **Decision:** Revise the outreach method: contact first by phone or text where possible, then a brief door visit — rather than door hanger first.
- **Decision:** Every captain writes their name and phone number on each hanger before leaving home. A Sharpie works and does not smudge on the laminate.
- **Decision:** Captains do not enter homes, do not open closed gates, and never place materials in mailboxes.
- **Decision:** Adopt a standard set of fields for captains to collect: name, best emergency contact method, contact details, notes.
- **Decision:** Invite George Stish to the August 5 meeting; members to submit questions in advance.
- **Decision:** Invite Jai Ram to the August 5 meeting to align with the parallel assistance-needs effort.
- **Decision:** Draft a written dry-hydrant proposal for Jiva and the Ashram Board of Trustees (Addendum I).
- **Decision:** Circulate minutes within twenty-four hours with comment permissions verified; members to email when leaving comments.
- **Decision:** Set the next meeting for Wednesday, August 5, 2026, at 5:00 p.m.

12. Action Items

- **Erik** — Draft the dry-hydrant proposal for Jeeva (Addendum I); digitize Dhyani's Red Cross CDE binder and return it by the next meeting; complete SAM.gov / UEI registration and confirm board approval of the grant relationship to this committee; align the community survey with the agreed captain fields; circulate these minutes within twenty-four hours and update the fire-safety website; invite George Stish and Jai Ram to the August 5 meeting.
- **Don** — Follow up with the Buckingham County Firefighters Association to confirm the president's name for the record and to secure a specific date for the training visit, noting we were told August; continue pursuing Glenmore Volunteer Fire Department.
- **?** — Confirm the condition of the Sivananda Hall siren, arrange an announced test, and report back; check whether the external speaker exists and whether the unit can be deployed outdoors.
- **Doug & Carol** — Complete the Unity Place list of addresses and resident names; begin contact-first outreach on the road.
- **Haris** — Confirm arrangements with George Stish for August 5; continue coordinating captain recruitment.
- **Suriya** — Invite the additional prospective co-captain for the Karuna Lane zone.

- **Mindy** — Continue as liaison to Jeeva; carry the dry-hydrant proposal forward once drafted.
- **All members** — Write your name and number on your hangers before distribution; bring questions for George Stish; bring role-play scenarios, particularly the neighbor with no Ashram connection; continue assembling street-by-street household lists.

13. Status of Prior Action Items (from July 1)

- **Door hangers (Erik / Haris).** Complete — printed, delivered, reviewed, and distributed to members.
- **UEI / SAM.gov registration (Erik).** In progress — first stage submitted; response expected within days; roughly a week and a half to clear initial rounds.
- **Captain / co-captain recruitment (All).** Substantial progress — Surya, and Narada added. Jai Ram declined a captain role. Janardana outreach continues.
- **Zone map and household lists.** In progress — Unity Place list nearly complete; Dhyani (and Hanuman, at the previous meeting) offered assistance matching names to buildings.
- **Training and equipment (Don).** Ongoing — association contact established; a firm date remains outstanding. Glenmore has not responded.
- **Ashram liaison (Mindy).** Complete as to first contact — Jeeva engaged; a written dry-hydrant proposal requested; siren question referred onward.
- **Role-play practice (All).** Complete and highly productive — see Section 7 and Addendum III. Two scenarios remain for August.
- **County / Everbridge coordination.** Carried forward — confirm with the county whether wildfire and evacuation orders are pushed through Everbridge's Emergency Alerts category, and whether street-level targeting can be arranged.

Three things every household can do now

1. Sign up for Everbridge emergency alerts so you receive evacuation and hazard notices by phone.
 2. Clear leaves and debris from the first five feet around your home, plus gutters and roof.
 3. Make sure your house number is clearly visible from the road, so responders can find you at night.
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Join Us

Everyone is welcome at our next meeting: **Wednesday, August 5, 2026, at 5:00 p.m., at 76 The Way.** To get involved, sign up, or share a concern about a neighbor who may need evacuation assistance, please visit agniwelcare.org/fire-safety.

In service,

Erik Phillips-Nania

Secretary, AgniWellCare

for the Neighborhood Association for Fire Safety (NAFS)

Om shanti

Addendum I — Draft Proposal: Dry Hydrant at Lotus Lake

Draft for committee review. Not yet sent. Prepared at the request of Jeeva, Chair, Board of Trustees, for consideration by the Board.

1. What a dry hydrant is

A dry hydrant is a fixed, unpressurized pipe assembly installed at a static water source — a pond, lake, or stream — that allows a fire engine to connect and draft water directly. It has no pump, no power supply, and no moving parts. A strainer sits below the water surface; a pipe runs from it to a standard hose connection at a point a truck can reach. It sits idle and requires no attention until the moment it is needed.

2. What it is for, and when it would be used

Our neighborhoods are not served by pressurized municipal hydrants. In a structure or wildland fire, responding companies must carry their water with them; when the tank is empty, the engine must leave the scene, drive to a fill site, and return. A dry hydrant collapses that cycle. It allows a tanker to refill in minutes at Lotus Lake rather than making a round trip to a distant source — the difference, in practice, between a continuous water supply and an intermittent one.

The Virginia Department of Forestry specialists who visited our community on June 24 identified our ponds and lake specifically as underused assets and named a dry hydrant at Lotus Lake as a concrete improvement available to us.

It would be used in any fire in the surrounding area requiring sustained water — an Ashram building, a residence on any of the adjoining roads, or a brush or forest fire at the interface. It benefits the Ashram's own structures as directly as it benefits the surrounding neighborhoods.

3. Where it would be placed

Placement would be determined with the Department of Forestry and the responding fire companies. The governing requirements are practical: water deep enough to draft year-round; a bank a fire engine can reach and stand on; and an approach and turnaround a heavy vehicle can use without becoming stuck. NAFS requests the Board's permission to bring a Forestry specialist and a representative of the responding company to Lotus Lake to identify a suitable point, and to return to the Board with a specific location before anything is installed.

4. What it would cost

There would be a cost, and NAFS proposes to seek grant funds to cover it. A dry hydrant installation typically involves the pipe assembly, strainer, and fittings, and the excavation and bank work to set it. NAFS is not in a position to state a figure at this time, and will not represent one to the Board until a site is identified and a quote obtained.

The Firewise Virginia Community Hazard Mitigation Grant, administered by the Virginia Department of Forestry, provides up to \$9,999 on an 80/20 match and expressly covers water-source improvements. It is a reimbursement program with continuous,

non-competitive sign-up. AgniWellCare, a Virginia 501(c)(3), is completing the federal registration required to apply and would serve as applicant and fiscal agent.

On that basis, the anticipated structure is that grant funds would cover the substantial majority of the cost, with the 20% match sought from community fundraising and in-kind contribution. NAFS is not asking the Board of Trustees for money.

5. What is requested of the Board

- Consideration in principle of a dry hydrant at Lotus Lake.
- Permission for NAFS to bring a Department of Forestry specialist and a representative of the responding fire company to the site to identify a suitable location and obtain a cost estimate.
- An indication of what the Board would require before granting site access and installation permission — so that NAFS can return with a complete proposal rather than a partial one.

NAFS would return to the Board with the identified location, a firm cost estimate, the proposed funding structure, and any access or maintenance terms the Board wishes to set, before any commitment is made.

6. Ongoing maintenance

Dry hydrants require periodic inspection and occasional back-flushing to clear sediment from the strainer. NAFS proposes that this be coordinated with the responding fire company as part of its routine familiarization, at no cost and no obligation to the Ashram.

Committee note: members are asked to review this draft and send comments to manager@agniwelcare.org before it is forwarded. Cost language in Section 4 is deliberately non-committal; no figure should be represented to the Board until a site-specific quote is in hand.

Addendum II — Questions for George Stish

George Stish is a firefighter and a resident of our community. That combination is rare and worth using well. The following questions are proposed as a starting list for the August 5 meeting; members are invited to add to them in advance so that his hour with us is well spent.

On our specific risk

- Where are the real problem spots in our neighborhoods — the places you would worry about first?
- The county fire association president described our structure–forest interface as unusually tight. Do you see it the same way, and what does that mean for how a fire here would actually behave?
- Which of our roads and driveways would a fire engine have trouble with? Are there places an engine simply could not go, or could not turn around?
- What would you tell us about the trees? Which ones actually matter for defensible space, and which are we worrying about for no reason?

On response

- What actually happens when a fire is reported here? Who comes, from where, and how long does it take?
- Where do the responding companies currently draw water in our area? Would a dry hydrant at Lotus Lake change how a fire here is fought?
- Is the community's siren of any use to responders, or is it purely for residents?
- What do residents do — with the best intentions — that makes your job harder when you arrive?

On our plan

- Are our proposed gathering points and rally points sensible ones? Where would you put them?
- What should a captain do, and just as importantly not do, in the first ten minutes of a real fire?
- Is our captain role — outreach, contact-gathering, welfare checks, no rescue — drawn in the right place?
- What are we missing entirely?

On the doorstep conversation

- Would you watch a role-play and tell us where we are getting it wrong? You know these neighbors; we would rather hear it from you than learn it at their doors.
- Which of our three action items — Everbridge, five-foot clearance, visible house numbers — matters most here, if a resident will only do one?

On volunteering

- The companies say they need structure firefighters. What is realistically involved for someone in this community who wanted to help — time, training, physical requirements?
- Is there useful non-operational work a volunteer can do?

Addendum III — The Doorstep Conversation: Scripts and Responses

Distilled from the role-play practice of July 15. These are not lines to memorize. They are a shape to work from, so that every neighbor hears a consistent message and no captain is left improvising at a stranger's door. Adapt them to your own voice — your voice is the point.

Before you go

- **Write your name and phone number on the hanger.** Every time, before you leave the house. A Sharpie works on the laminate and will not smudge once dry. If the conversation lasts eight seconds, this is the only thing that survives it.
- **Read the hanger first.** Know what the QR codes go to, know that the printed web address is an alternative to the code, and know the phone number at the bottom is AgniWellCare's line and reaches Erik.
- **Call or text first if you can.** An unannounced knock puts most people on the defensive before you speak.

The phone call or text, first

"Hi _____, this is _____ from _____ — I'm your neighbor down on _____. A few of us have put together a neighborhood fire-safety group, and I've volunteered as the captain for our street. I have something small I'd like to drop by and give you. Could I stop over for three minutes sometime this week? Whenever suits you."

If leaving it on the door instead: "Hi _____ — I'm leaving something on your door about neighborhood fire safety. No rush at all. My name and number are on it if you'd like to talk."

At the door — the opening

Give your name, your street, the organization, and your role. In that order. All four.

"Hi — my name is _____. I live down at _____, so we're neighbors. I'm here with the Neighborhood Association for Fire Safety — we're a local group of residents, and I've volunteered as the captain for our street for fire preparedness and evacuation. I'm not selling anything. I just wanted to introduce myself and give you this."

Then hand over the hanger and let them look at it. Do not talk over it.

"There are three things on there anyone can do — signing up for the county's emergency alerts is the big one, so you'd get a call or text if there were ever an evacuation. My name and number are right there at the bottom. If you ever want help with any of it, or you just want to talk about it, call me."

The one ask

If the conversation is going well, ask for one thing only:

"If there were ever an emergency on this road, what's the best way to reach you quickly?"

If they offer email, it is worth saying gently that in a fast-moving emergency there may be no time to read one — a phone number is what works. If they decline, let it go entirely and warmly. The relationship is worth more than the data. You can ask again in two weeks.

Responses to what you will actually hear

"I'm not interested."

"That's completely fine. I just wanted to share some resources about fire safety with everyone on the road — my name and number are on there if you ever have a question. Good to meet you." Then go.

Do not push. A graceful exit leaves the door open for the next conversation; a pushed one closes it for good.

"Who are you with? The Ashram?"

"No — we're an independent neighborhood group. It's the residents of these roads, whoever they are and whatever they're involved in. Fire doesn't care who anybody prays with. It's just neighbors looking out for each other."

If asked about AgniWellCare, whose number appears on the card: it is the local nonprofit helping with the printing and with the state grant paperwork. That is the whole of it.

"I don't need this — I'm protected."

"Maybe God sent me." Or: "Maybe Gurudev is behind all of this."

Offered with warmth and a smile, or not at all. This is not a rebuttal to win; it lands well from a friend and badly from a stranger. The underlying truth is simply that it is not either-or. It is and. Believe the place is protected, and be on the team.

"I don't give out my number — there are scams everywhere."

"That's very sensible, and please don't. I live at _____, just down the road — so you have my number instead. Call me anytime."

Then leave the hanger with your handwritten name on it and move on. This is a good outcome, not a failed one: they now know who their captain is.

"There hasn't been a fire here in thirty years."

"That's true, and I hope that holds. The forestry folks who came out told us we're more likely to see brush fires than anything dramatic — but with the woods as close to the houses as they are here, they thought it was worth being ready. That's really all this is."

Never overstate the risk. Honesty is more persuasive than alarm, and our credibility is the only asset we have.

"Let me tell you about [unrelated community matter]."

"I don't have an opinion on that one — it's a separate matter, and honestly it's outside what I'm here about. I'm just doing fire safety today."

Then return to the card. NAFS carries one subject to the door.

"I can't use a QR code." / "I don't have the computer skills."

"No problem at all — there's a plain web address right there too, and a phone number. Or I'd be glad to help you sign up myself, right now or another time that's easier. Whatever's simplest for you."

This is not a failure of the material. It is an opening. The offer to sit down and help someone register for Everbridge is worth more to this effort than a hundred hangers on a hundred doors.

"Come in and sit down."

"I'd love to, honestly — but I've got the rest of the street to get around to. Another time. My number's right there."

Decline every time. This protects the resident and the captain both, and it keeps the role clear.

Closing

"Take a look at it whenever you get a chance. I'll check back in a week or two — or call me sooner if anything comes to mind. Really glad to have met you."

Hard rules

- Never place anything in a mailbox. Only the U.S. Postal Service may do so. Doors are fine.
- Never open a closed gate.

- Read the relationship, not the script — with a neighbor you've known for years, ordinary warmth is ordinary warmth; with someone you're meeting for the first time, keep your hands to yourself.
- Do not argue. Ever. If it turns into an argument, we have lost regardless of who is right.
- Do not represent yourself as speaking for the Ashram, AgniWellCare, or any other body. You are a neighbor with a card, offering resources for fire safety.

Oṃ shanti