



**Redwood City/San Carlos CERT
Community Input Meetings
August 14-16, 2018
Meeting Notes**

Agenda

- Welcome & Introductions
- Agenda Review and Group Agreements
- Presentation on CERT Program and Transition, Clarifying Questions
- Small Group Discussion Input on CERT and Transition
 - Report Out (if time)
- Next Steps, Meeting Evaluation and Close

Small Group Discussion: Community Input on CERT

Questions:

1. *What do you like about the CERT program and what is working well?*
2. *What challenges or areas for improvement do you see with the CERT program?*
3. *What would you like to see the CERT coordinator do?*
4. *What questions or concerns do you have?*

1. What do you like about the CERT program and what is working well?

- Quality of the coordinator and building a relationship with the volunteers
- Training: topics are excellent and easy to digest for non-EMS people
 - Provides and encourages confidence in CERT volunteers
- CERT contributes to neighborhood watch and emergency situations
 - Not just those who are CERT-trained
 - Contributes to leadership
- CERT training helps individuals become more aware for emergencies, etc.
- Regular training, drills, and meetings
- Training, knowledge, and accessibility
- Provides information and access to disaster experts
 - Search and rescue
 - Continuing education
- Consistent exercises
- Repetition, muscle memory → preparedness

- Revisiting, refreshing
- → alertness in disaster
- Assessment of ability and safety of a situation
- Continuing education
- Ongoing meetings
- Learned valuable skills that translate to professional and personal lives/community
- Training with Fire Dept. learning different skills
 - First aid
 - Search and rescue
- Training
 - Be trained in capacity that you want
 - Options on where it can be found
- Christy attributed to a lot of experience of various skill-building techniques
- Skill stations
- Formal training and standardized curriculum
- Hands on trainings, new content, frequency of trainings
- Larger drills, county-wide, silver dragon drill, collaborate with county
- Fire Dept. staff teaching classes—EMTs and paramedics
- Training and drills very good
 - Drills and reinforcement make it good
 - Active exercises and search, e.g. Silver Dragon annual skills day a couple times a year, Urban Shield (regional)
- Refresher trainings
 - Extension trainings – monthly
- Excellent training
- CERT volunteers were cross-trained in all ICS
- Monthly meeting with CERT team for refresher of training and also a way to get together
- Opportunity to do drills
- Flexibility in ways to take the refreshers (online, etc.)
- Skills days training very valuable
- Monthly meetings – speakers from different organizations and aspects, e.g. Dr. From Health Dept.
- Actively educating community
- Annual RW Shores disaster drill
- Monthly meetings, trainings and exercises that keep everybody ready.
- Monthly meetings - CERT and Community Projects
- Christy engaged volunteers to help with training new CERT volunteers and other duties
- Triage: assist family first → help others
- Learning → is more prepared
- Partnership and community
- Collaboration, working together, helping one another
- Intentionality about mutual aid and support
- Learning abilities of team members
- Social/community - Christy is the glue
- Building a community
 - Organizing activities as well as training
 - Social aspects
 - Network: know talents of volunteers

- Build teams/subteams and know how to activate them
- Social events in summer and holiday season - fostering community and working better together
- Community with the team and volunteers
 - Christy's role and delegation
 - Informational events
 - Belonging
- Felt a strong sense of local community and with your neighbors (local focus)
- Christy as a community builder
- Esprit de Corps
 - Everyone willing to help and cover for each other
 - Leadership by example
- Volunteers get to know each other through social events → Team
- CERT encouraging residents to check on neighbors. Share information about what is going on
- Sophistication of communication resources
- Good communication (wouldn't change anything)
- Community outreach
- Community outreach → educate and assist community better for emergency situations
- Passionate leadership - instills confidence and growth of progress and empowerment
- Organized leadership - passionate, vision, people want to work for them
- Leadership
 - Active - involved, knowledgeable in regular contacts with volunteers, make sure volunteers have tools and supplies
- Christy's role, expertise, and reputation
- Passion and appreciation
- Christy as point of contact for Red Cross
- Christy as resource gatherer, \$\$ and experts
- Program is distributed throughout the city
- Christy developed leadership within organization → being able to help others
- Christy = asset to the city
 - Collaborative
 - Sense of loss
 - Valuable
 - Good listener
 - Develops ideas
 - Appreciation of people's time and ideas
 - Started from scratch and built organization
- Christy is good at planning and announcements
- High School students get training
- Teen CERT program in high school and teens training others
- Teens were honored when they got their certificate
- Sequoia HS CERT program → students certified
 - Young energy
 - Attachment to Christy
- Development of the Sequoia High School student organization
- Trailers - well functioning, people trained to use (credit to Christy)
- Supplying trailers and staying local
 - HAM radios

- Generators
- Forms
- Trailers in different places of the community
- Trailers - maintenance, inspection, and emergency equipment
- Close relationship with P.D.
- Collaborations with other organizations: P.D., F.D., Schools, etc.
 - Developing leadership
- Open access to other cities' trainings
- Connection to Fire Dept. and emergency management
 - Defined roles
- Passion of coordinator/leader and volunteers
- Community engagement
- Comfort/confidence on how to act in case of emergencies
- Organized approach on how to deal with various emergency cases/situations
 - If successful-train others to promote safety
- Involvement of community helps them to know what he/she can do in times of disaster
- Currently run very well-volunteers are terrific
- New people coming in to the program through neighborhood groups somehow lost/sideway
- Friendly group working on preparedness
- Valuable safety information (initially and ongoing), community-building, teamwork, community relationships
- People are pretty satisfied with the way the program was being run
- Relationship/Fire Dept. knows where you are
- Damage assessment
- Quick assessments and immediate help (work with P.D.)
- Specialized teams - team members work as a family
- Christy had a full plate with RWC/San Carlos/Belmont - that focus was excellent
- Leadership relationships within the CERT program

2. What challenges or areas for improvement do you see with the CERT program?

- Lack of support from Fire Dept.
 - No budget
 - Appreciation for leadership and participants
- Lack of utilizing CERT members for public safety situations and events
 - Not the CERT coordinator's responsibility, but the Fire Dept., P.D., etc.
- Not enough promotion of the CERT program to let community know about it; education of community
- Ongoing communication and involvement of CERT engagement and refresher courses
- Knowing who in your neighborhood are CERT members
 - Support and collaboration
 - Would like to have a resource list and create a network
- Identify neighbors needs
- Lack of technology to support program
- Reach out to a younger generation
- More input and transparency from the city to CERT volunteers: notification and feedback
- More consistent training: structured, best practices
- Developing mutual aid and structure for improvement
- Need to know where are participants in an emergency

- How and when will CERT be activated
- Communication: lines and benchmarks, community guidelines
- Need smooth transition, well thought-out
- Built-in evaluation and participation of selection process
- Lack of support from F.D. will get more difficult (need to fight for money and support)
- Because of changes - need local meetings in each district (trailers)
 - Local stuff works for outreach
- Need more training and outreach to recruit - these have already been in decline
- Community needs a professional emergency responder that can access resources, evacuation centers/shelters, hospitals, etc.
- Concern that RWC/SC resources will be lost to the larger community (trailers)
- Need to continue to develop technology, database
- Keeping people together
- Keeping people engaged
- All the same areas don't seem to have the same CERT training
- Outreach
- More trainings for new members
- Volunteers could be a big challenge
- Working with other communities and other programs: i.e. Red Cross, FEMA
- Social media - communication about what CERT is
- Concern about getting timely updates in the future
- Utilizing the volunteers more
 - When Obama visited CERT members (crowd control)
 - Fireworks displays
- Christy had dedicated time for the role - concern about the new coordinator having enough time to do the job
- Fear time and skills will not be valued in transition
- Previous transitions had been difficult
 - Loss of members and leaders
 - Uncertainty and upheaval
 - Fear this will replicate
- Hope: Christy must be involved in transition
 - Show process and procedures currently in place
- Concern with San Mateo OES
 - Need better communication
- Need process to provide feedback to improve processes
 - Be heard
 - Feedback loop
- Develop a plan for transition that includes retention and recruitment
- Easier to know other CERT members - building relationships
- Neighborhood focus, knowing who is close by
- Collaborate with radio operators
- More delegation from leadership: decentralization
 - Lead to more neighborhood collaboration
 - Add to community focus
- Additional CERT visibility
 - Outreach

- Trainings
- Awareness
- Connecting with neighborhood associations
- Next Door
- Business community (siren tests in SF)
- More tabling and resource fairs
- Further involve schools and educational foundations
- New leadership has potentially less familiarity with local needs and concerns
- New person will make new effort to connect
- Need to travel
- Potential to shadow position
- Would like more formal organization/committee to help the leader keep track of tasks, needs, equipment, etc.
 - Also track capabilities, etc. of volunteers
- Challenge - lack of preparedness in general public
 - Set up emergency preparedness workshops for neighborhoods and parents at schools
- Engage younger people - replicate and expand Sequoia program
- Mutual aid - CERT groups get involved with other CERT groups for support and cross-training
- Actually use CERT to help with search, shelter, etc. as needed
- F.D. does not respect CERT, RWC never uses CERT and doesn't think of it as a resource
- Need training to help with evacuation from floods and fires
- Use of radios could be expanded: provide training and encourage licensing, do exercises, communication and drills with volunteers and Fire Department.
- Bringing/onboarding new volunteers: challenge in retention; staying engaged as a volunteer
- Make the program more rigorous
 - Provide more opportunities for volunteers
 - Ongoing training
- Lack of promotion of the program
- Exploration of successful CERT programs in surrounding communities
- Ongoing growth and knowledge from basic to advanced
- Funding to run program and for training
- Motivation of recruitment; making classes available on weekends, etc.
- Have volunteers in a support role at trainings
- Outreach for trainings
- More ongoing hand-on training for new people coming into the program
- Maintain the trainings that train in the skillset needed
- Offer classes more often
- Provide gear
- Get other groups connected with CERT neighborhood watch and national night out for example
- Give a budget for equipment. This is something Christy did very well
- Lack of support from higher-ups, politicians for the CERT program
- Increase awareness of program in community
- More involvement from Fire Dept.
 - Know volunteers
 - Build trust in volunteers
 - Augment services
 - Humanize and build relationship with Fire Dept.

- Help create sense of community in smaller neighborhoods within RWC and SC (working relationships); idea of neighborhood groups
- Want to see well-designed transitional time
- Refocus on current needs of program
- Want to see trailer improved: updated equipment and more funding
- Loss of current structure will lose volunteers and knowledge
- Need funding and more communication
- Retention of volunteers
- Advanced training
- Communication ongoing
- Engaging CERT member—keeping our interest
- Advanced training
- Training

3. What would you like to see the CERT Coordinator do?

- Be like Christy
- Have big picture vision
- Have CERT coordinator collaborate with neighboring CERT programs
- Hire staff for support
- Make regular presentations to City Council and community
- Community outreach events to have the public hold their own emergency kits
- Creating programs for TV; create videos for how to create emergency kits
- Putting a dollar amount on your volunteer hours
- Passion for program
 - Not just an OES employee
 - Interest in making effective use of the program
- Easy access & communication with the Fire Dept.
- Local to RWC/San Carlos, where this program was located
 - Building connections
 - Emergency tool
- Structure with different coordinator levels in different cities, contacts
- Everything plus more outreach and recruiting
- CERT coordinator must be an expert focused on CERT
- Needs to be able to recruit trainers and find other resources
- Coordinate with other CERT activities in county and other county agencies/organizations
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- Our hope is that CERT in our communities (RWC/SC) continue to be led with the same skill, enthusiasm, and professionalism as Christy has brought to the position and that as we move forward the CERT program gets the appropriate resources to support and expand with the same or better focus on our local communities.”
- Coordinator that knows how to do the training
- To get familiar with RWC
- Coordinate intersection exercises
- Establish communication with all members/reach out to everyone
- Good communication and social media

- Consistency
- Coordinate with other CERT leaders
- Maintenance and management of the equipment
- Set up regular schedules
- Social event once a year
- Coordinate with other county CERT cities
- Annual SF Airport disaster
- Skill classes twice a year
- Volunteers once a month meeting (refreshers)
- Would like San Mateo to kick in \$ to keep Christy
- How many cities will this coordinator be responsible for? We'd like that person to have familiarity with those cities
- Someone who is specifically dedicated to the CERT program.
- Working relationship with law enforcement
 - Communication with CERT representative
- Bridge working locally to increase community
- Budgetary commitment for CERT program to have proper equipment
- Developed hierarchy or leadership network
 - Based on training experience
 - Local leadership
 - Mentoring
 - Decentralization
- Accessibility of coordinator
- Strong leadership: lead dynamic group of volunteers, is likeable, can organize passionate, collaboration with other communities → build more inclusion
- Build strong partnerships with F.D. and P.D.
- Provide quality, helpful trainings
- Transparency is all that is needed for support and ability to voice concerns
- Ability to inspire and build a team of volunteers
- Honesty in all capacity
- Ask Christy
- Lead by example
- Invite Christy to apply for new position
- Regular communication with volunteers
- Hard to divide CERT and emergency management duties
 - E.g. national night out, outreach re: fireworks
- CERT coordinator has to know emergency management duties and requirements
- Coordinator has to advocate for CERT in emergency planning → present to city council, etc.
- More communication, outreach to community and volunteers
- Have training programs on a regular basis
- Keep current volunteers engaged
- Advanced training should be considered; quarterly focused trainings
- A good comprehension of delegation skills
- How to best utilize skill set
- Create a localized specialty or specialist around Bay Area types of disasters
- Create advanced trainings within specific subjects

- Coordinate work with neighborhood watch program—provide CERT trained volunteers as a resource person for cases of emergencies
- Talk to FC CERT Coordinator to learn their program and set-up
- Continue to advocate and bring new members into CERT
- Structure a plan to maintain trained members to keep them motivated/engaged
- Facebook group or other means of communication (Christy would even drop the invitations in people's house who didn't have emails)
- Structure training program to be more hands-on /practical drills streamed
- Cross-organization drills
- The coordinator should be supported by the hierarchy
- Christy could apply for coordinator
- Monthly meetings, alternating between Redwood City and San Carlos
- More involvement
- Education courses, planning for events
 - Emergencies
 - Exercises, drills
 - Skills buildings
- Would like to see more events
- Booths at community fairs – outreach, presentations
- Plan for moving trailers in an emergency
- Planning for transition issues:
 - Team morale
 - Team readiness
 - Building of trust
 - Consider Christy in the future
- Understand individual neighborhood communities
- Be supported by higher level personnel and politicians
- More CERT classes and ongoing engagement training
- Proper transition with current EPOC and active team
- Outreach
- Check in with successful CERT programs such as Foster City
- Social media
- Team up with neighborhood watch to assign CERT people to a team
- Use neighborhood watch division in RWC as a CERT neighborhood grouping
- Train for a major disaster

4. What questions and concerns do you have?

- Keep trailers maintained/stocked
- Retrain CERT members who have gotten rusty from lack of involvement
- Engage CERT members to be and stay active
- Engage more young people
- Does RWC Fire appreciate the contributions CERT can make?
- Why is RWC cutting back in this growing economy?
- If RWC is cutting back now what is going to happen in the next recession?
- I want to be sure the current program Christy has built over the years is maintained.

- She has done an extraordinary job. I worry the program will fall by the wayside and will deteriorate over time
- Security and safety isn't national it's local and personal. My family is not threatened by immigrants. My family is threatened by fire and earthquakes. We need more people to be prepared and trained in my community -- not less. We need more local emergency preparedness coordinators, not fewer. We need to reward and honor Christy who has made the program successful.
- Keep the program viable.
- Dilution, neglect
- Keep youth engaged throughout RWC
- Staying ahead of the curve – monitoring and creating solutions
- OES has hired a San Carlos CERT Coordinator – how will this position relate?
- Loss of continuity of regular meetings
- Losing relationships with volunteers
- Loss of independence in joining with City, watered down program
- Concern about being a stepchild. Ensure RWC/SC is positive, active CERT program
- Bring Harry from USGS to a workshop for the community
- Promote more communication about CERT
- This process is missing the element related to dissatisfaction with budget/spending choices, transparency and personal dismay at loss of community/structure
- It's difficult for someone to split their time 50%--usually one program gets much less than 50%
- Do the politicians really know about CERT
- Need for CERT is growing with all the construction and new residents
- Who is going to train the coordinator?