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AGENDA

REGULAR MEETING OF THE Community Safety Committee

August 3rd, 2026 at 6:00 PM

City Hall Council Chambers
10890 San Pablo Avenue
El Cerrito, Ca 94530

This Meeting Place is Wheelchair Accessible

6:00 PM CONVENE REGULAR MEETING

1. **ROLL CALL** – Chair James Dolgonas, Members; George Gager, Rosa Esquivel, and Howard Hickman
2. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**
Remarks are typically limited to three minutes per person.
3. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**
CSC members will have a vote to approve the meeting minutes from the July meeting.
4. **COUNCIL AND STAFF LIASION REPORTS**
5. **PRESENTATION FROM THE EL CERRITO FIRE DEPARTMENT**
Battalion Chief Chase Beckman will present on the state's "Zone Zero" law that will be going into effect. He will also speak about vegetation management within the city. He may also speak about other general fire safety topics as they come up or is asked about by committee members.
6. **DISCUSS CITY ADVISORY BODY MEMBER FEEDBACK SURVEY**
Discuss if each member wants to submit their own survey or they want to have one submitted as collective feedback.
7. **WEST NILE VIRUS UPDATE**
Chair Jim Dolgonas will provide an update about the dead bird that was found in El Cerrito last month that tested positive for West Nile virus.
8. **INTERVIEW TWO PERSPECTIVE MEMBERS FOR THE COMMITTEE**
The committee will interview Katherine "Rin" Kimsey and Tova Feldmanstern about their interest of joining the Community Safety Committee. They will also hold a vote on whether to recommend these two candidates become members of the committee.
9. **ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE COMMITTEE**
Please limit comments to three minutes.
10. **ADJOURNMENT**

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the Staff Liaison, (510) 215-4418. Notification 48 hours prior to the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting. (28 CFR 35.102-35.104 ADA Title I).

Any writings or documents provided to a majority of the members regarding any item on this agenda will be made available for public inspection at El Cerrito Police Department – 10900 San Pablo Avenue El Cerrito, Ca 94530 during normal business hours.



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DRAFT MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF THE Community Safety Committee

Monday, June 1st, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.

El Cerrito City Hall Council Chambers
10890 San Pablo Avenue
El Cerrito, Ca 94530

CONVENE REGULAR MEETING Chair Dolgonas called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

1. **ROLL CALL** – Chair James Dolgonas, Members; George Gager (tardy), Rosa Esquivel, and Howard Hickman
2. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

A member of the public addressed the committee regarding ambulance billing, firefighter overtime, and public safety staffing.

Comments included:

- Requesting additional public education regarding ambulance billing policies and hardship waivers.
- Clarification regarding charges for patients treated but not transported by ambulance.
- Questions concerning firefighter overtime expenditures, staffing vacancies, fatigue, and potential pension impacts.

Sergeant Leone responded that:

- The El Cerrito Fire Department does not charge residents for fire department emergency response services.
- Ambulance transport fees are administered by the ambulance provider rather than the City.

- Fire department overtime associated with statewide mutual aid deployments is generally reimbursed by the State of California.
- Overtime compensation is not credited toward City employee retirement benefits.

3. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

Member Esquivel made a motion to approve the minutes from the June meeting and Chair Dolgonas seconded. Ayes: Dolgonas, Esquivel, and Hickman

Noes: none

Abstentions: none

Member Gager was not present for the vote

4. **COUNCIL AND STAFF LIASION REPORTS**

Council Member Ktsanes was unable to attend the meeting.

Sergeant Leone provided the following Police Department updates:

- Two recently hired police officers successfully completed the Field Training Officer (FTO) program and were assigned to solo patrol.
- A third officer was expected to complete field training within the next several weeks.
- The Police Department has effectively returned to full staffing levels after experiencing significant vacancies over the past several years.
- Increased patrol staffing has resulted in greater police visibility throughout the community.

Sergeant Leone also announced that **National Night Out** would be held on **Tuesday, August 4**, from approximately **5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.**

Committee members were invited to participate by accompanying police personnel as neighborhood events are visited throughout the city. Residents were encouraged to attend neighborhood gatherings in support of the annual community policing event.

5. **CRIME BLOTTER**

Member Esquivel introduced a demonstration of a new interactive crime mapping website developed using publicly available Police Department crime blotter data. The website was created to provide committee members and the public with an improved method of reviewing crime trends throughout the city.

The presentation included:

- Crime data spanning January 2019 through May 2026.
- Interactive mapping display reported incidents throughout the city.
- Heat map functionality illustrates crime trends over time.
- Filters allowing users to review specific offense types, including burglaries, assaults, robberies, arrests, and other reported incidents.
- Animated timeline features showing changes in crime activity over multiple years.

Committee members discussed the usefulness of the mapping tool and noted that the heat map provides a visual representation of crime patterns that may be easier for the public to understand than the traditional weekly crime blotter.

Sergeant Leone advised that:

- Most reported crimes continue to occur along the San Pablo Avenue and Interstate 80 corridor.
- Residential burglaries have declined significantly in recent years, due in part to more residents working from home.
- The website was created independently using publicly available crime blotter information and is not an official Police Department product.
- Certain incident types, including domestic violence cases and other sensitive investigations, are excluded from publicly released crime blotter information.
- Crime blotter entries generally reflect the date an incident is reported to the Police Department rather than the exact date or time the crime occurred.

Committee members discussed opportunities for future crime mapping using the Police Department's recently approved investigative software platform. Members noted that enhanced mapping and analytical capabilities may become available as the new system is implemented.

Sergeant Leone also discussed the importance of ensuring that publicly available crime data is accurate and appropriately reviewed before being released as an official city resource.

Following discussion, the committee agreed that the ad hoc Crime Blotter Committee had completed its assigned work.

Sergeant Leone dissolved the ad hoc committee and thanked the members for their efforts in developing and presenting the crime mapping project.

Sergeant Leone noted that committee members may return in the future to present additional crime trend analyses as new data becomes available.

The web address for the crime mapping database is: <https://second-mutt-trunks.github.io/crime-map>

6. CITY OF EL CERRITO JULY FOURTH CELEBRATION

The committee conducted a debrief of its participation in the City's Fourth of July Celebration.

Committee members expressed appreciation for the participation of all committee members and volunteers who staffed the Community Safety Committee information booth throughout the event.

Discussion included:

- The committee's outreach efforts to educate residents regarding crime prevention, identity theft, fraud awareness, wildfire preparedness, and other public safety topics.
- Positive public response to the educational brochures and informational handouts provided during the event.
- Strong interest in crime prevention materials, fraud prevention information, and mosquito and vector control publications.
- Continued value of participating in community events to increase public awareness of the committee's role and responsibilities.

Committee members also discussed several opportunities for improving future outreach efforts, including:

- Relocating the committee booth to an area with greater pedestrian traffic.
- Coordinating booth placement with other city boards and commissions.
- Increasing opportunities for direct engagement with adult attendees.
- Continuing to provide educational materials addressing identity theft, fraud prevention, emergency preparedness, and wildfire safety.

Sergeant Leone explained that booth locations are coordinated through the City's Recreation Department and are generally assigned based upon event operations and public safety needs.

Committee members agreed to revisit booth placement and outreach strategies during planning for next year's event.

7. DRAFT VEGETATION MANAGEMENT STANDARDS FOR THE VERY HIGH FIRE SEVERITY ZONES

Chair Dolgonas provided an update regarding California's proposed Fire Hazard Severity Zone regulations and the State's continuing development of defensible space requirements.

Discussion included:

- Recent revisions to the State's proposed regulations following extensive public review.
- Anticipated adoption of updated wildfire mitigation requirements affecting Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones.
- Continued emphasis on vegetation management immediately adjacent to structures.
- Future requirements affecting combustible fencing and other combustible materials located near homes.
- The anticipated implementation timeline for the new regulations.

Committee members discussed the importance of educating residents before new requirements become effective and providing homeowners with sufficient time to comply.

Chair Dolgonas also noted that future committee discussion may include recommendations regarding public education and city implementation of the forthcoming State regulations.

8. UPDATE FROM AD HOC COMMITTEES

The Chair continued the discussion regarding California's proposed wildfire regulations affecting properties located within Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones.

Discussion included:

- Proposed "Zone Zero" defensible space requirements adjacent to structures.
- Draft State regulations limiting combustible vegetation immediately surrounding homes.
- Future requirements restricting combustible fencing attached directly to residential structures.
- Anticipated implementation periods allowing property owners time to comply with the new standards.

The committee also discussed potential impacts on homeowners, including:

- Costs associated with replacing combustible fencing.
- Opportunities for future public education regarding wildfire mitigation requirements.
- The possibility of future financial incentives or tax programs to assist homeowners with compliance.
- The importance of coordinating public outreach before regulations become effective.

Chair Dolgonas expressed concern that property owners obtaining permits for new fencing should be informed of upcoming state requirements that may affect future compliance. Committee members discussed the value of providing educational information during the permitting process.

Chair Dolgonas advised that the Fire Marshal is expected to attend a future committee meeting to provide additional information regarding Fire Hazard Severity Zones, defensible space requirements, and the City's implementation plans.

Chair Dolgonas provided an update regarding the City's Red Flag Day Parking Pilot Program.

Discussion included:

- Installation of seasonal Red Flag Day parking signs along designated streets participating in the pilot program.
- Continued use of temporary signage during the current fire season.
- Public outreach efforts to notify residents when Red Flag Day parking restrictions are in effect.
- Future public meetings planned prior to consideration of permanent parking restrictions.

Committee members discussed:

- Additional methods for notifying residents of Red Flag Days.
- Coordination with the Community Warning System and other public notification tools.
- Public education efforts to encourage voluntary compliance before enforcement measures are considered.
- Whether accommodations for residents with disabled parking placards should be evaluated during future discussions.

Chair Dolgonas explained that permanent parking restrictions have not yet been adopted and that the City intends to gather additional public input before considering permanent implementation.

9. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE COMMITTEE

Chair Dolgonas provided an update from the Contra Costa Mosquito and Vector Control District regarding current mosquito activity and public health concerns.

Discussion included:

- Confirmation of the first West Nile Virus-positive bird identified in Contra Costa County during the current season, which was located in El Cerrito.
- Continued surveillance of mosquito populations throughout the county.
- Recommendations for residents to reduce mosquito breeding by eliminating standing water around their homes.
- The importance of using insect repellent and taking precautions to avoid mosquito bites during peak activity periods.
- Instructions for residents to report dead birds to the Contra Costa Mosquito and Vector Control District for testing.

Chair Dolgonas also discussed a pilot mosquito control program utilizing male mosquitoes treated with naturally occurring bacteria to reduce mosquito reproduction in targeted areas of the county. Committee members reviewed the District's use of drone technology and other modern mosquito control methods to improve treatment effectiveness.

Members encouraged continued public education regarding mosquito prevention and awareness of West Nile Virus throughout the summer months.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Dolgonas adjourned the meeting at 7:18 PM