

Emergency Preparedness Committee
Bel Air Ridge Center - 2760 Claray
Wednesday January 15, 2014 7pm

Call to order:

7:10pm

Roll call

Present

Chuck Maginnis
Buddy Jolton
Gary Plotkin
Candy Mintz
Leslie Stojka
Irene Sandler
Michael Schlenker
Maureen Smith
Don Farkas
Virginia Ball
Sara Glaser

Affiliation/Title

BABCNC Safety Chair, Bel Air Resident
Casiano Estates
Casiano Estates
Casiano Estates
Bel Air Ridge
Bel Air Crest
Bel Air Crest
Bel Air Resident
Bel Air Park Resident
Oak Pass Road
Nextdoor

Introduction of Attendees:

Everyone introduced themselves, and new at the meeting is Sara Glaser who has been with Nextdoor for 6 months. Nextdoor is a 2 year old company that started in Chicago and has launched their program in the top 35 cities. Virginia Ball is a resident of Oak Pass Road which is 1 miles long in the Benedict Canyon area having 44 residents.

Approval of minutes:

Buddy Jolton motioned to approve the December 11, 2013 minutes, Maureen Smith seconded, minutes approved.

Nextdoor.com & White pages:

Chuck briefly introduced what <http://neighbors.whitepages.com/> can provide which includes names and addresses of neighbors by inputting your address and seeing everything from an ariel or satellite view, being able to pan in on each residence. Chuck introduced Sara mentioning that there must be a reason why Mayor Eric Garcetti is partnering with <https://nextdoor.com/>. It is a free, on-line private social network for your neighborhood and different from Facebook in three ways: 1) it's a private network which verifies your address 2) it's local with only your neighbors included 3) the City of Los Angeles has partnered with them so Mayor Eric Garcetti and the Fire Chiefs can send updates to all their area participants. Sara showed a map of all the areas in their jurisdiction. Michael Schlenker joined Nextdoor to introduce this to BA Crest and when requested, gave samples of some of the announcements. One was from the Bureau of Streets and another on holiday safety from LAFD Chief James. Don asked if it is a private or public utility company. Nextdoor is a privately backed company in the Silicon Valley with the

same backers as LinkedIn and Facebook who have invested over \$46 million. They may plan to go public one day but never plan to charge users, as they expect local businesses will have an interest in helping support them via ads. Their main focus is providing a good user experience. Leslie mentioned that they have a Yahoo chat group that might be skeptical about their purpose in gaining memberships. Don asked what additional things Nextdoor.com could do for helping to organize community disaster preparedness that regular email or the BABCNC website could not do. Sara said there are 451 current members in the BABCNC area. To gain more immediate neighbors, Nextdoor headquarters will send postcards to invite others to join. You can direct message or share information with them like Facebook. You can create private or public groups including an emergency preparedness group. Irene asked about logistics of this service and Sara responded that there are founding members that help set the boundaries of their group. There is training to learn different capabilities. Any neighbor can join if they are part of that neighborhood. Sex offenders are screened and not allowed to join. Being a private company, it's possible to remove a trouble maker although Sara is unaware of this happening thus far. Don questioned whether using a commercial service such as Nextdoor might potentially actually impede the Committee's efforts to organize residents about emergency preparedness since some people in the community may not wish to participate in electronic data collection about themselves by a commercial business. The founding member can produce guidelines for their group. Chuck mentioned that Marquis Olsen is still going to be the BABCNC point person although Sara was kind to present tonight. He sees this effective for EP in two primary areas. First, in a small community like BA Crest it is excellent because of excellent board support, most of the community may join, opposed to larger communities like Bel Air or Benedict Canyon with 2700 plus homes. Second, it is a big benefit for LAPD endorsed Neighborhood Watch along with EP where you get to know your neighbor. Chuck also mentioned that Nextdoor's video shows \$150 DropCam video surveillance cameras being used although DropCam is a separate company. These videos can be shared with neighbors. Marquis mentioned to Chuck that Cheviot Hills had a string of burglaries and the HOA endorsed Nextdoor to help them as 700 of their 2000 residents joined. Sara said they actually caught one of the burglars. The question of what separates Nextdoor from just exchanging email addresses is their platform and flexibility, according to Sara. Chuck asked if being a founding member is any different than anyone else who joins and the response is the lead can remove posts. You also get a little flag logo, which Michael volunteered. With disaster preparedness, it was mentioned that too much information can be no information. Each leader can get all the alerts from various disciplines, or none by un-subscribing. There can be check off for various types of alerts: police, fire, DWP, etc. They can have multiple groups and Chuck mentioned the BABCNC voice emergency can do the same. Leslie asked for brochures for her group and the best situation would be a visit to their website. Sara will also send Leslie the 10 most asked questions, which Chuck offered to send to the committee list. Everyone applauded with thanks to Sara for her presentation.

Discussion on HOA Emergency Notification

Chuck recapped questions asked at the last meeting where deep discussion resulted in whether 911 should be contacted, who and when to pull the trigger, what information is needed, etc. Joel Moss, who is planning to make emergency preparedness a livelihood, had various opinions. Don read the December minutes and warned the group to watch out for the legal aspects of emergency notices and that emergency notices rarely cause panics. Don has spent 20 years on this subject and warns us that once you offer to announce emergencies, you are opening yourself up for legal action. He suggests you don't need to set up a procedure if you see an emergency,

you just do it. Key individuals could be on vacation. How would you tell the neighborhood a situation is important? And you should notify them when you feel it is so dangerous you have to notify people. Don asked when we have ever needed to send a notification and Chuck responded that the Getty fire nearly a year ago, was a good example. Asked what Chuck did and he said he reported this to his 40+ neighborhood email list telling them to turn on their TVs, as every local station was carrying live details including multiple planes dropping water on the fire. We were lucky it was not windy. Since the BABCNC had no procedure, they could not be notified and is why the BABCNC Emergency Notification was created. With Don bringing up the legal aspect, Chuck read the non disclaimer that all participants on the notification list signed: "Notification is a best effort process dependent upon timely information from many sources. I understand BABCNC will not be liable for late or no notification regardless of the catastrophe." This was sent to the city's legal department for further review, although there has been no response. Don suggested why not sending just an email out and Chuck responded that emails don't wake people up between 11pm at night till 6am in the morning when people are sleeping, but phone calls might. We do have the open EP list where 75 individuals are all CC' d rather than BCC' d for this very reason, emergency notification to everyone listed. Don then said in dealing with disasters, your plan has to include disaster situations when electricity, internet, land-line telephone, and cell phone communications are interrupted after a major incident. He recommended that it would be most useful for the City to make announcements from helicopters with public address systems if possible, and that our communities also make some plans to develop the capability to warn our fellow residents using inexpensive methods such as bull horns, a pre-publicized code signal using automobile horn honking, and hand-held walkie-talkie radios on a specific pre-arranged channel with regular emergency broadcast times specified. He suggested letting the police and fire departments deal with it as it's their job to notify people and make those decisions. Candy pointed out that Captain Christopher Cooper suggested Alert-La for notification and to have a land line which is powered if the electricity is out. They get their information from various sources and notification is specific to your zip code. Don mentioned that there is a company that to his best recollection is located in the state of Georgia that manufactures an inexpensive digital radio receiver product designed to be installed in homes like a smoke detector, that would allow public safety agencies of municipalities to issue emergency notifications directed to specific homes on a street-by-street basis, or to selected neighborhood areas, or to entire communities all at once, as desired. Such a device could be useful, for example, to allow public safety agencies to better facilitate evacuations because their evacuation advisories or orders could be sent to only specific homes or to specific areas on a priority basis that would help to reduce potential traffic congestion that might otherwise impede both the evacuation and needed access to the affected area by emergency. Chuck requested we get back to our agenda involving aspects of notifying communities. Don then repeated his doing this for 20 years and our recreating the wheel is getting him frustrated, as he would like to accomplish one thing with EP before it's too late. And when asked how he would go about it, he suggested we experiment with bull horns going through the neighborhood and also use honking sequences like SOS cadences to alert neighbors, and that these are the primary ways to notify the community. Don then stated that the committee does the same things over and over, and that he asked Chuck a few weeks ago to find out what radio signals could be used with inexpensive \$20 radios to allow the HOA's to communicate with each other in a 5 mile line of sight radius. He also asked that Chuck to then have the safety committee get all the HOA's to agree on what channels they want to access and the time to do it. Chuck told Don he did not

have time to do this but that he could do it. Chuck tried to get back to the agenda again and Don said Getty was not a big deal as the fire department could handle it. Leslie suggested Don come to one of BA Ridge's meeting to discuss their communication drills and discuss radio communications further. Don said he didn't have the time for all this and left the meeting.

Chuck re-established the agenda discussion from December's meeting on questions regarding Emergency Notification. Irene mentioned there could be different types of emergencies, what to do after the emergency and this would lend itself to CERT training. Chuck reiterated opinions and situations from the last meeting as to what we should do, and Candy suggested that they will use Alert LA County to reach out to their community, Casiano Estates. Chuck asked if it was important to have their own alert system for their community. It was questioned how effective Alert LA is and Irene suggested she would hate to rely solely on the government as they have not always been that effective. Having a notification system of some type is important for each HOA, whether by phone, text, email or driving down the streets yelling or using a microphone. Chuck recalled that we use Message Broadcast out of Newport Beach for 4 cent, ½ minute messages and Irene felt Newport Beach is in our same earthquake zone as they may also go down. Chuck assured her that having over 60% of the US banks and 80% of the telephone companies, that they have complete redundancy to other out of state facilities to get messages out. Gary asked if Chuck could get 500 Alert La pamphlets which were discussed at a previous EP meeting, for the NC meeting next week. Gary suggested that this would be a good action item for the HOA's and for outreach. Virginia said she bought a land line phone for emergencies and asked about it. Chuck responded that as long as it does not require electricity for features, that land lines are powered by ATT & Verizon via copper and should work, unlike cable phone lines which require a modem and thus electricity. Irene asked about the most active groups on the committee and Chuck responded BA Crest, BA Ridge, Casiano Estates and Holmby, and that Residents of Beverly Glenn is trying to configure their radio communication system. Leslie mentioned they have 3 advisory committees to their board at BA Ridge and are working on a manual regarding their procedures. She also briefly discussed their drills mentioning different obstacles are presented as they strive for getting more neighborhoods involved.

HOA EP Status & Questionnaire

Irene said that based on the number of active groups on the Committee, that the questionnaire information asking for needed support from HOA boards or communities does not apply if HOA's needing that information are not present. She suggested we face the facts that the other communities perhaps don't care about having an EP plan as others do. Gary commented that the lack of interest may be due to talking about these things, but not taking action. Gary said that Casiano and Candy have done many things for their community. Chuck responded that we can try as hard as we can to gain interest and most people just don't care until a disaster happens, and then it's too late. The people that are in the room attending these meetings, care about the welfare of their communities. With an emphasis on getting the Alert La documents to the meeting, Chuck suggested Gary as President of the BABCNC contact Captain Cooper for the pamphlets as Candy has been in touch with him. Candy said that they have 90% of their association's email addresses and have consulted with Captain Cooper. And for the 10% that don't have email addresses like the elderly, Buddy suggested speaking to their children to help alert them. Candy agrees that they have decided to be a resource to their community. Leslie summed up BA Ridge's similar feeling that they will do what they can to help prepare them, and

people will either join them or not, but can only do so much. Gary mentioned that in the desert they have a list for the elderly of doctors, medications, etc. Gary suggested coming up with ideas on a local level to gain interest and Chuck suggested Gary come up with a subject as Chuck requests topics of interest for every meeting and receives few if any responses on new ideas, or volunteers for that matter. Virginia mentioned there was a program for the elderly called SNAP and it might be helpful to have the elderly's grandchildren as members on the alert lists. She also asked if anyone on Alert LA has had any alerts and Buddy responded no, but luckily since it is zip code oriented and thank God there has been no fires since he signed up. Chuck mentioned there is another city service which a few have tried but gives alerts for everything in the county with 10 messages or more a day, as he stopped using it after a day of miscellaneous alerts around the city. Back to the Alert La pamphlets, Gary will ask Captain Cooper if pamphlets could be distributed to each HOA, and that at the NC meeting, we find out how many pamphlets each community wants and have them shipped directly. This would show we are being active and produce more interest in EP. Discussion then took place regarding Virginia's area and how the NC might be of benefit to her and their street, and how her being on our EP list would keep her informed. Asking for topics for the next meeting, Irene suggested evacuation and Chuck agreed it would be a good topic and suggested that it would need to be a workshop as each community would need to be handled separately. Chuck still has a large map of our area from a NC LAFD presentation a year ago that could be used. Chuck will contact the fire department to see if this can be provided for HOA's interested in attending the next meeting, that will provide specific areas of interest in advance. Gary will also speak to the head of their security service to see if he will help sound the alarm for our BABCNC Notification system, that Chuck alone operates as Chuck mentioned that he is not always available and has asked multiple times for volunteers to assist him, with no success thus far.

Adjournment at 9:00 pm

Chuck Maginnis
Submitted: January 5, 2014
cmaginnis@babenc.org