

Summary of a Proposed Ordinance of the Board of Supervisors, County of Sonoma, State of California, Amending Chapter 13A of the Sonoma County Code, Duty to Maintain Defensible Space and Abate Hazardous and Combustible Material (“Ordinance”).

On June 9, 2020, at 2:30 p.m., the Board of Supervisors of the County of Sonoma will conduct a public hearing to consider the proposed Ordinance. The proposed Ordinance would make the following changes to Chapter 13A of the Sonoma County Code:

1. The proposed Ordinance would exempt cannabis cultivation, agricultural crops, agricultural operations, agricultural buildings such as barns, hay barns, dairy milking facilities except for habitable dwellings and residential accessory structures.
2. The proposed Ordinance clarifies that in the State Responsibility Area, Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations Sections 1299.01-1299.05 applies to improved parcels.
3. For improved parcels outside of the State Responsibility Area, the proposed Ordinance would require maintenance of a thirty-foot defensible space around all buildings. The proposed Ordinance would require grass to be cut six inches or less, but not to the bare soil. The proposed Ordinance would require tree branches to be limbed up six feet from the ground and shrubs to be maintained. The proposed Ordinance would require climbing vines to be maintained to be free of dead and dying materials or removed from trees and structures. The proposed Ordinance may also require additional defensible space outward to one hundred feet from all buildings based on steepness of the property, the amount of vegetation and the type of vegetation. The proposed Ordinance would require maintenance of at least a ten foot minimum clearance next to the roadside. Trees must be cut ten feet away from chimneys. Trees that are adjacent to or overhanging a structure must be free of dead or dying wood. Roofs of any structure must be maintained free of leaves, needles or other dead or dying wood. A spark arrester must be installed on any chimney or stovepipe outlets. Street address numbers must be posted on the house as described in Sonoma County Code Chapter 13. Dead and dying vegetation must be removed from the property.
4. For unimproved parcels throughout the unincorporated area of the County, the proposed Ordinance would require flammable vegetation,

dead and dying vegetation and other combustible growth within ten feet of structures and roadway frontage to be removed. The proposed Ordinance would also require grass and combustible surface vegetation within ten feet of structures and roadway frontage to be trimmed to less than four inches in height unless necessary for erosion control. The proposed Ordinance would also require trees within ten feet of structures and roadway frontage to be pruned to at least six feet above grade. The proposed Ordinance would require all combustible material to be removed from the property.

5. The proposed Ordinance clarifies the responsibility of property owners, occupants and persons in control of any improved or unimproved parcel of land in the unincorporated area of the County to comply with vegetation management as set forth in Chapter 13A to protect the health and safety of the community and the environment.
6. The proposed Ordinance also clarifies that vegetation management in the Riparian Corridor Combining Zone streamside conservation area is subject to the allowed land uses, activities and permit requirements set forth in Chapter 26-65-040 of the Sonoma County Code. The proposed ordinance would require the property owners to comply with all other federal, state and local laws, including environmental protection laws.
7. The proposed Ordinance would amend sections 13A-7 and 13A-8, Abatement proceedings and private right of action, to incorporate the County of Sonoma's standard code enforcement abate procedures set forth in Chapter 1 of the Sonoma County Code.
8. The proposed Ordinance would amend Chapter 13A to remove references to Sonoma County Fire and Emergency Services Department and replace it with the County of Sonoma Fire Prevention and Hazardous Materials Division, and it makes other miscellaneous changes to clarify the existing requirements and enforcement responsibilities.

Copies of the proposed Ordinance are available for public inspection during regular business hours outside of the office of the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors, 575 Administration Drive, Room 100A, Santa Rosa, California.