



# City/School Liaison Committee Minutes



Regular Meeting  
March 20, 2014

The City School Liaison Committee met in the Council Conference Room on this date at 8:42 A.M, 250 Hamilton Avenue, Palo Alto, California.

Present: City of Palo Alto  
Liz Kniss, Vice Mayor (Chair)  
Greg Schmid, Council Member  
Pam Antil, Assistant City Manager, City Representative

Palo Alto Unified School District  
Heidi Emberling, Board Member

Absent: Dana Tom, Board Member,  
Cathy Mak, District Chief Business Officer

## Oral Communications

None

## Approval of Minutes

February 20, 2014

**MOTION:** Council Member Schmid moved, seconded by School Board Member Emberling to approve the February 20, 2014 minutes.

**MOTION PASSED:** 3-0 Tom absent

3. Review Recent City Council / PAUSD Board Meetings

Chair Kniss asked the School Board to discuss enrollment.

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Heidi Emberling, Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) School Board Member said PAUSD moved the Enrollment Report to a later agenda; enrollment was discussed later on in this meeting.

Council Member Schmid said there were two demographic reports, one was the 11 Day Enrollment and the other one was an in-depth study of demographics, which was released in December or January.

Ms. Emberling remarked that the in-depth study of demographics was moved to a later agenda.

Chair Kniss wanted to know what the enrollment situation was.

Ms. Emberling said enrollment growth slowed because of the transition into the new Kindergarten Bill, a Bill that required the entry age of new kindergarteners to be five by September 1st. There was also a Transitional Kindergarten Expansion Bill going through the Senate that expanded pre-kindergarten to all children age four. There was not a lot of funding attached to adding another year of students; the School Board was watching the Bill carefully. The decision to open the thirteenth elementary school was deferred another year due to enrollment growth being slower than predicted.

Council Member Schmid wanted to know if having all four-year olds was going to increase the number of classrooms or the number of kids in the classrooms.

Ms. Emberling relayed there was a huge impact on the facilities used in the classroom and the teacher qualification requirement because kindergarten through grade 12 credentials did not include early education credentials. As a result, the School Board was discussing public/private partnerships with private preschools to help in providing services for all four year olds.

Chair Kniss wanted to know how many private schools there were.

Ms. Emberling thought there were about 40 private preschools and reiterated that the discussion involved adding another year of school. She remarked that some children that entered kindergarten were already behind. Sharon Keplinger, the Early Education Principal ran the Preschool Family Program, the Transitional Kindergarten Programs, and the Special Day Programs for birth through age three and was in a position to determine whether a child was ready to transition into the next program. Children did

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not develop chronologically, it was a developmental growth; not all five year olds were at the same level.

Chair Kniss thought it was helpful to have all of the support in place before the children entered kindergarten.

Ms. Emberling remarked that children without access to a high quality preschool environment were missing education by the time they entered kindergarten.

Chair Kniss said the Council would be looking at these aspects as the City moved forward with the Cubberley Community Center Discussion, along with the transportation issue.

Ms. Emberling said there were four current preschools at Cubberley Community Center, they were all small businesses. Another update was that there was a celebration of the closing of the Palo Alto High School gym. Many people in the community came out and told stories about the gym. There was a generous community donor rebuilding the new gym.

Chair Kniss asked who the donor was.

Ms. Emberling said the name of the donor was not known. The previous Monday, the School board conducted interviews for several search firms to find a new superintendent; they chose Leadership Associates. There were also community forums available for the public to submit desired qualities for a new superintendent; they were also meeting with parents for input.

Chair Kniss asked who ran Leadership Associates.

Ms. Emberling relayed that Leadership Associates was run by former Superintendents; they were an education administration search firm. She encouraged that community to submit their input.

Chair Kniss wanted to know the salary range for the position.

Ms. Emberling said she would have more information about that next week.

Council Member Schmid said the City Council had a discussion on the negotiations over Cubberley.

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Ms. Emberling remarked that the School District would have a discussion about Cubberley Community Center Tuesday, March 25, 2014. The California Standard Testing was going to be done away with; this year they were using the Smarter Balance Consortium Assessment. The Common Core was the new Federal Standard for education, which they began using the past couple of years. As part of the assessment, there was a consortium that created new testing. The testing was computerized; if the student answered the question correctly they got a harder question.

Chair Kniss thought the testing sounded labor intensive.

Ms. Emberling said rural districts struggled because they did not have the technology; the Governor set aside some funding for those districts. This year they were gathering information, next year was the base test, and the year after that they were able to compare tests.

Council Member Schmid confirmed that there will not be comparisons for two years.

Ms. Emberling said yes. There were local assessments that were used so three years of data were not lost. Part of the new funding formula from the State was the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP), a plan that discussed how the funds were used. Even if they were a community funded district, they were still required to put together an LCAP to provide community input and to identify community input for plans and assessments.

Chair Kniss remarked that teachers may feel overwhelmed.

Ms. Emberling felt teachers were grateful that there was a lot of professional development around common core.

Council Member Schmid said the Council was entering a stage of strategic planning and were updating their Comprehensive Plan; there was an Item on the Agenda for the Housing Element Comprehensive Plan. There was overlap regarding economic impacts on funding and School accessibility was a shared concern between the Council and the School Board, along with traffic.

Chair Kniss said one topic of discussion was solar power and how it involved schools. The City was able to encourage more solar usage but the real

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discussion was whether there was advantage in the cost. She suggested that the School Board discuss their view on solar energy now because the City was moving more aggressively into solar energy.

Ms. Emberling said there was a presentation to the City School Liaison Committee (Committee) last year about solar power by Rebecca Navarro and there were some School District parking lots and roofs that were already solar.

Chair Kniss remarked that the County looked at every place possible to have solar installed; more people parked when there was solar coverage. The City also decided to add a four pronged Transportation Demand Program (TDM). That involved busses, which involved kids. Council wanted to look at transportation and what kids were doing.

Council Member Schmid remarked that transportation was a big deal for kids but a key time was morning commute hours.

Ms. Emberling remarked that the Traffic Safety Committee did a great job; more kids were riding their bikes.

Chair Kniss mentioned that the finishing off of Arastradero Road included traffic calming devices. At the past Monday Council meeting, Council voted to put consultants into place for the long term Bike/Pedestrian Plan. Council was looking into transportation because many people are complaining about traffic. She added that the Maybell Avenue site was sold.

Tim Wong, Senior Planner remarked that escrow was expected to close April 17, 2014.

Chair Kniss felt this was something the School District would want to look at by May or June 2014, because there was discussion about a school going on that site.

Council Member Schmid talked about the Citizens Survey Assessment which was an assessment of services around the City.

#### 4. City Housing Element Update.

Steven Turner, Planning Manager remarked one discussion of mutual interest between the Planning Department and the School District was the

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Housing Element. The City just certified the Housing Element for the previous cycle and if the Planning Department took advantage of a streamline process, they would be granted an eight year time period before they needed to update the Housing Element again. This needed to happen by January 2015. They were in a good position because they just certified their recent Housing Element.

Chair Kniss remarked that the Council discussed how they were going to alter their Comprehensive Plan. In the 1990's there was a volunteer committee that assisted in updating their Comprehensive Plan. This year the City had consultants and a Stakeholder Committee; the Comprehensive Plan was looked at element by element and there will be frequent reports.

Hillary Gitelman, Planning Director said Mr. Turner would be overseeing the Comprehensive Plan.

Chair Kniss said the Housing Element was a portion of the Comprehensive Plan and affected the School District.

Tim Wong, Senior Planner said the Housing Element was a planning document related to housing; it was one of the seven mandated elements of the Comprehensive Plan and was the sole element that required State certification. The deadline for the next Housing Element certification was January 31, 2015. This updated Housing Element addressed the City's housing needs for all income levels for the period of 2015-2023. There were four main parts to the Housing Element: 1) the Constraints of the Housing Development; 2) Resources and Site Inventory, which included the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA), 3) the Needs Assessment; and 4) Review of the Implementation of the Previous Housing Element.

Heidi Emberling, Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) School Board Member clarified that the current Needs Assessment was just for housing.

Mr. Wong remarked yes and reiterated that the reason why the Housing Element was adopted was it was the only element that required certification by the State; it was a current document that reflected current housing needs and changes in the community. Many housing and transportation grants required a certified Housing Element; not having a certified Housing Element made cities vulnerable to legal challenges.

Chair Kniss requested Mr. Wong discuss the Housing Element in more detail.

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Mr. Wong gave an example of Menlo Park and said many organizations filed a lawsuit against them because they did not have a certified Housing Element since the early 90's. A major repercussion to not having a certified Housing Element was losing local control, the ability to issue building permits for example. The functions of local control were sent to courts; the ability to have local land-use control was very important to a local jurisdiction. Menlo Park had nine months to certify the 2007-2014 Housing Element, which cost them over \$1 million, plus another \$200,000 in attorney fees.

Chair Kniss remarked that the City objected because of the RHNA numbers. In connection, Senate Bill (SB) 375, a SB that says land use and transportation must be connected, and one must support the other, was a big discussion throughout the bay area.

Mr. Wong remarked that SB 375 had an eight year cycle; if the Housing Element was not certified by January 2015, it was going to need to be recertified every four years.

Ms. Emberling inquired whether the process was to adjust housing cost policy to reflect changes in the community and she wondered how much was looking back and how much looking forward.

Mr. Wong replied it was both. Staff looked at past programs and policies, what was effective, what worked, and was worth continuing. In addition, they were reflecting policy to show the change in demographics because from 2000-2010 the census showed increases in household size, increase in population of children age 17 or younger, and an increase in the senior population.

Chair Kniss thought it was important for PAUSD to know the direction the City was headed because the development at Charleston Road and El Camino Real for example, brought about trouble for kids. She clarified that in order to fulfill the Housing Element the City designated where houses could be built, they did not build houses.

Council Member Schmid clarified that the Housing Element timeline was from 2015-2022, which was nine years, not eight years.

Mr. Wong remarked that the RHNA was from January 1, 2014 to October 31, 2022; the Housing Element timeline was from January 31, 2015 to December 31, 2023

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Council Member Schmid remarked that Housing Element timeline was closer to nine years.

Chair Kniss stated the timeline was normally eight years.

Mr. Wong relayed that these dates were given by the State. Regarding the RHNA, the goal was to accommodate the required number of units, there was no construction obligation. The Planning Department needed to show they had the zoning and the sites in place to accommodate the RHNA requirement. The City of Palo Alto had a requirement of 1,988 units, which were broken into four income categories. In order to accommodate the RHNA, Staff needed to identify the locations of the units. The sites not developed in the 2000-2014 Housing Element were carried over; the sites that were developed needed to be replaced in the 2014-2022 period. The State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), the department responsible for the certification for the Housing Element, wanted a surplus of units reported in case some units reported did not end up being developed. As a result, the actual target unit number was 2,188 units; the total unmet need was 389 units. The Planning Department worked closely with the Regional Housing Mandate Committee (RHMC) and formed a Community Panel of housing stakeholders interested in housing issues in the City of Palo Alto. The Panel was comprised of School Board Members, developers, representatives from Palo Alto neighborhoods, advocates for renters, a representative from a senior organization and someone that represented persons with disabilities. The RHMC and the Community Panel were responsible for reviewing potential sites for housing development.

Chair Kniss remarked that a large part of Council's discussion was the California Avenue and the Fry's Electronics site.

Council Member Schmid said the carry over numbers and the new numbers primarily came from housing on the south part of town, south El Camino Real Corridor, and a sizable development on San Antonio Road. These were not necessarily neighborhoods that had good infrastructure for housing. As there was more discussion about the future of Palo Alto and what the goal of the Comprehensive Plan was, the hope was to create vibrant neighborhoods, pedestrian friendly facilities, and areas that helped with traffic in concentrated areas.

Mr. Turner said the housing needed to be consistent with Comprehensive Plan.



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Chair Kniss clarified south town meant south of Oregon Expressway.

Mr. Turner said the Fry's Electronics site was considered south and was an area that could accommodate a lot of the housing. Staff wanted to work with the Committees and the Community Panel to make sure they identified the appropriate sites.

Chair Kniss outlined a major message of the Comprehensive Plan from the 1990's was to have the density concentrate around transit centers; they focused on walkability and being close to transit.

Council Member Schmid noted that the Fry's Electronics site was the same number units as the new element that was added on San Antonio Road.

Chair Kniss observed that San Antonio Road did not have the infrastructure that Fry's Electronics had.

Ms. Gitelman relayed that because of the deadline of the Housing Element, Staff was not able to be as creative. Staff wanted to explain that if there were ideas that were not included in the Housing Element, they could be included in the Comprehensive Plan process.

Chair Kniss emphasized tracking the ideas.

Council Member Schmid clarified delaying the process of the Comprehensive Plan to gather the ideas was difficult.

Chair Kniss said it was possible to amend the Comprehensive Plan.

Ms. Gitelman reiterated amending the Housing Element.

Council Member Schmid remarked that it took eight years to amend the Comprehensive Plan.

Ms. Gitelman noted that the last Housing Element took about six years.

Council Member Schmid relayed that it was best to put the issues upfront.

Ms. Gitelman added that the reason Staff chose some sites was because they did not have to change the zoning.

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Mr. Wong relayed that the RHNA showed the City's allocation in comparison to other jurisdictions in the county.

Chair Kniss remarked that San Jose got a big allocation because they were expanding.

Mr. Wong said the Housing Element certified last year was used to update the current Housing Element; they will only need to revise certain sections. In the spring of 2014 Staff planned on looking at the sites programs, policies and housing needs, and an administrative draft at the end of April, early May 2014. California Environmental Quality Act and HCD comments were handled in early summer; Council consideration was done in the November 2014. The Community Panel planned on making a recommendation to the RHMC about the draft update in August and the Planning and Transportation Commission and RHMC reviewed the revised draft in September and October. Staff had two community workshops in April 2014 to stating that the Housing Element was being updated. Staff wanted to schedule a tentative City Council Study Session in May 2014 to report the progress of the Housing Element update and they planned on submitting a draft to HCD to get their initial comments in June 2014. The City published a website with the schedule for Community Panel meetings and information about the update process.

Chair Kniss wanted to know if people were able to go City website to access this information.

Mr. Turner said people needed to go to the Planning Department under Long Range Planning.

Pam Antil, Assistant City Manager thought the link should go on the City home page.

Chair Kniss remarked that if housing was built away from transit areas, eventually the transit came to the people.

Ms. Emberling noted that she was the School Board representative for the Community Panel.

Ms. Gitelman said there was not Council representation for the Community Panel.

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5. PAUSD 2<sup>nd</sup> Enrollment Report Update (discussed with Item 1).

6. Property Tax Ballot Initiatives Evolve.

Pam Antil, Assistant City Manager noted a group called Evolve was working to publish a Ballot Measure for 2016 and wanted the support of school boards and city Councils.

Chair Kniss remarked that there was not anyone carrying legislation for this yet.

Council Member Schmid noted that Evolve had a list of 25 cities and school boards from the past year that passed a petition looking for business exemption on Proposition 13, a Proposition that decreased property taxes by assessing property values at their 1975 value and restricting annual increases using an inflation factor, not to exceed two percent per year. In 2013, residences paid 73 percent of their total property value, and it went up one percent per year. He recommended that the Council and School Boards make a recommendation for review.

Chair Kniss wanted clarification on the expected outcome.

Council Member Schmid noted that there was an amendment on the original Proposition 13 that defined Business Taxes and revenues as distinct from the person; the business or property owners that changed did not go through a reevaluation process.

Heidi Emberling, Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) Board Member inquired whether there was an effort to get legislation on the ballot for 2016.

Ms. Antil said that was the goal for Evolve in 2016.

Chair Kniss inquired whether there was a petition drive happening.

Ms. Antil said yes and if it was on an Agenda, they would make a presentation.

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Ms. Emberling said she would bring it up at the PAUSD Board Meeting.

Council Member Schmid remarked that this issue has been ongoing for 40 years.

Chair Kniss remarked that eventually, almost all burden was going to be carried by the home owner.

Council Member Schmid added that commercial square footage was going up dramatically.

Chair Kniss said taxes on a house in Palo Alto worth \$1.5 million was \$10-20,000 per year.

Council Member Schmid said the biggest burden was on their kids. He wanted to make an informal recommendation to respective Committees.

Chair Kniss wanted to bring this Item back on the next Agenda. There was no legislative committee in the City of Palo Alto that handled ballot initiatives.

Council Member Schmid confirmed Ms. Emberling's School Board meeting was going to coincide with the next City School Liaison Committee (Committee) meeting.

Ms. Anitl said the next Committee meeting was April 17, 2014.

Chair Kniss said sometimes these initiatives get introduced in the morning and are done in late afternoon.

Council Member Schmid remarked that a cooperative effort with the School Board was good because the City had a shared interest in the value of the Property Taxes.

Chair Kniss noted that since PAUSD was a Basic Aid District, they were even more compelled.

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## 7. Future Meetings and Agendas.

Pam Antil, Assistant City Manager wanted to go through the calendar for the next meeting said there was time for one Item from the City and one from the Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD). The Evolve Ballot Measure was scheduled for the next meeting. She wanted to know if there was something that the School District wanted to discuss.

Heidi Emberling, Palo Alto Unified School District said she would check.

Chair Kniss talked about doing a tour.

Ms. Antil remarked that the District Staff was able to do a tour whenever convenient.

Chair Kniss wanted to do a tour in place of one of the meetings.

Council Member Schmid was interested in doing a tour.

Ms. Antil suggested a School tour in May 2014 and asked if there was a specific school that people wanted to tour.

Chair Kniss replied that she would like to tour the school that would make the most impact.

Ms. Emberling recommended Gunn High School, Palo Alto High School, or Jane Lathrop Stanford (JLS) Middle School.

Council Member Schmid suggested JLS because it has an elementary school and a middle school that went through many changes.

Chair Kniss asked if the Palo Alto Weekly ran story about all that was done with the Bond money for schools. She suggested setting up a tour for people to see what has been done.

Ms. Emberling remarked that there were ribbon cuttings after each site was complete. Some City Council Members came to these events.

Ms. Emberling wanted to discuss the Enrollment Report and inquired where the Council wanted to discuss the City relationship with foreign cities.

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Council Member Schmid wanted to hear an update on the Cubberley Community Center.

Chair Kniss inquired whether Ms. Emberling will have discussed these topics with the School Board.

Chair Schmid recalled that Ms. Emberling's meeting was on Tuesday and suggested discussing the Community Survey.

Chair Kniss recapped that next Agenda included Cubberley Community Center, Evolve, and the Enrollment Survey.

Ms. Antil remarked Agendas were now fully electronic, and there was an e-mail with a link for any packet information and said she would look at doing a tour of a school.

Adjournment: This meeting was adjourned at 10:10 A.M.