

SCHOOL/CITY LIAISON COMMITTEE
PALO ALTO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
CITY OF PALO ALTO

DATE: April 2, 2015

MINUTES FOR MEETING OF April 2, 2015

Opening

The School/City Committee held a special meeting in the District Conference Room A at 25 Churchill Ave, Palo Alto. The meeting was called to order at 8:07 a.m.

* All handouts can be viewed in the Business Services Office 25 Churchill Ave.

Palo Alto Unified School District Representatives:

Camille Townsend, Board Member, Committee Chair
Terry Godfrey, Board Member
Cathy Mak, Chief Business Officer

City of Palo Alto Representatives:

Pat Burt, Council Member
Tom DuBois, Council Member (Absent)
Khashayar Alaei, Assistant City Manager

Review of Recent City Council/PAUSD Board Meetings

City Update: Burt reported they had directed staff to return to Council with a development cap that would limit the amount of business development in the interim while the City's new comprehensive plan is completed. It would exclude the Stanford Research Park but include California Avenue, University Avenue, and El Camino Real. It will also drive for very significant transportation demand measurements in Research Park and those will be in parallel with those the City has already initiated.

Burt informed there is an upcoming Buena Vista meeting on April 13 and a potential hearing on April 14 that could determine if the closure plan has met the legal requirements. It is not a policy decision by the City in any way, it is quasi-judicial hearing where they are obligated to objectively look at whether the closure plan that has already been reviewed by the hearing officer, is conformant with the local closure ordinance.

Townsend asked about the timeline on Buena vista? Burt said it is all up to the property owner and the legal proceedings that may take place. He said whatever outcome occurs from the hearing, either party could initiate legal action in response and all this could affect the timing of the closure so there is no way to answer that question. In the City Manager's report the City has placed \$8 million in the affordable housing fund and those funds are equal numbers to what the County has set aside.

Keene stated Council has been really confined in what they could say regarding their actions because of their judicatory role but once the hearing is concluded and Council has made a decision, they will be much freer, from a policy perspective, on what they say or do. Once Council has made a ruling, the residents cannot be moved for six months. It does not mean that no one would choose to move or that it will be a longer period of time. Townsend said this was helpful information.

Burt said they also have a retail preservation emergency ordinance coming forward to prevent further loss of local retail business that has been squeezed out in different locations by the expanding demand for office space. This will be an interim measure while they come up with modifications for a long term ordinance.

Godfrey asked if there was anything planned for the intersection of Churchill Avenue and El Camino Real? Keene said yes, he does not know the exact schedule but they have it their CIP plan to add a stacked lane to deal with the problem of traffic on the right turn. He said he will make sure to inform the District of the exact schedule.

Keene reported Council has had conversations about how to enhance their shuttles. They have been asked to look at transit modes that are more technology based. Burt said they just launched their enhanced service on the Cross Town Shuttle.

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Townsend asked if there is someone in the transportation position. Keene said they have an interim person who is assisting, Jim Lightbody. They are in the process of doing the first round of final interviews for the Chief Transportation Official.

District Update: Godfrey reported that budget was discussed at their last Board meeting and one of the more important items was the funding of two mental health licensed therapist for both high schools.

Godfrey said the high schools are through their WASC process and are both accredited.

Townsend said spring break starts next week.

Youth Health and Wellness

Carillo and van der Zwaag presented on the following slides:

- Project Safety Net Update
- Palo Alto has Experienced Suicide Clusters
- PSN Created to Meet Community Needs
- PSN Mission Supports Youth Well Being and Suicide Prevention
- Strategic Plan Project Safety Net
- Education/Prevention/Intervention
- Current PSN Structure Is In Transition
- PSN Partners Reflect Wide Range of Stakeholders
- Accomplishments of the PSN Collaborative
- PSN Staffing & Structure is An Area of Focus
- PSN has Areas of Growth
- The Collective Impact Model is Promising
- Next Steps

van der Zwaag reported that since Project Safety Net (PSN) group came together in 2009, their mission has been to develop a comprehensive community based mental health plan for overall youth well-being in Palo Alto with three main components: education, intervention, and prevention strategies. These continue to guide the PSN group.

Carillo believes PSN is in a period of transition of trying to figure out where they are going as a collaborative and how to best serve their community. Currently the City and District serve as co-chairs. The City is the backbone for the collaborative and provides funding for staff and contract services. There have been challenges in hiring a director for PSN so they discussed looking at a different model of what might be some other ways to provide leadership to the PSN collaborative. The City has hired one contractor and one is being hired to carry on some of the work. She informed the leadership group meets monthly and they also have the larger collaborative meetings that take place approximately bi-monthly.

van der Zwagg said one of the contractors Patricia Lowell is doing more research based projects, currently working on the means reduction project under the supervision of the Office of Emergency Services, Ken Deucher.

Townsend asked about means reduction? van der Zwagg defined means reduction as an effort for looking at ways of taking the focus away from the tracks and making it less attractive whether that is physically or by other methods.

Townsend asked about the conversations with Caltrain? van der Zwagg said those conversations are being led by Rob De Geus, Palo Alto Police, and Jim Keene.

Burt said Jim Keene's letter to Caltrain summarizes their position. They are trying to convince Caltrain to move on these measures more aggressively and more comprehensively. Caltrain's budget for these measures is inadequate and have discussed with them about the City's willingness to

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devote capital resources to supplement their budget which is something they had not had a City ever do; they did not know how to respond to that within their context of how they determine priorities. Part of what Keene's letter laid out was the objective basis of why this should be an urgent priority. A second argument they are trying to pull together for Caltrain is even beyond the Palo Alto area where they have had these risks since their entire system is experiencing a significant elevation in level of suicides and they have seen nothing to date that Caltrain is recognizing this as an existential risk to their transportation system. Part of the discussion is they need to approach the Caltrain Board in parallel with efforts to address this with their executive leadership to recognize that the status quo and the prioritization they have placed on this historically, is inadequate today and need to look at reallocating capital resources. They have a two billion modernization program and hope to convince them to spend a tiny fraction on safety and security. They hope they will begin to come to that recognition.

Townsend asked if there are conversations with the rail conductor's union or is there such a thing. She knows these commuter rails are very high risk for these conductors and maybe that is an angle they could approach.

Townsend asked if there are any formal dates for meeting with Caltrain? Keene said their staff had a meeting with Caltrain's senior staff on March 13th to layout the issues and their perspective and had another event that following Monday. When the new CEO for SamTrans/Caltrain was announced he contacted him and had some phone tag conversations but has a phone call scheduled with him for tomorrow at 11 a.m. and has invited the City Mayor to sit in on the conversation. This call is a prelude to establishing a formal meeting quickly to sit down and lay things out specifically. Burt said at the Leadership Conference, Meg Durman and Dr. Joshi volunteered to bring the HEARD Alliance and other support to help support their position on this.

Townsend asked if the assembly men are involved in this effort? Burt said yes, both are former San Mateo County Supervisors so they have a deep understanding of the Caltrain relationship and they are resources that could support them on this.

Burt said the hours of the track watch guards were increased to all hours of operation for Caltrain. Townsend asked about the grant from Stanford? Keene said they received a grant of \$4 million to be used in consultation with Stanford. The Council has allocated \$2 million to Project Safety Net funding and has yet to allocate the other \$2 million.

van der Zwagg reported on the Collective Impact Model which is framework that really rose to the top during their PSN discussions on how they can better serve the community. It is really just a more rigorous and structured form of collaboration among organizations to address a specific social problem.

Townsend said when PSN began, it was seen as a youth organization and given that they have had a cluster that is much bigger than the youth in the community, have they thought about expanding that? For example, some the data collected during the contagion did not include adults. She hopes they could bring this into the conversation at a later point. van der Zwagg said they have had those discussions at different points in their lifetime as a collaborative. They discussed it when they did their MIG report which is their organizational and structure report from 2010 and again when they did their strategic plan. The thought at that time was to focus on youth where their strengths lied at that point. They realize the high risks among senior citizens and they have had fruitful discussions around that. Keene stated that all of the physical deterrents will apply to everybody.

Carillo has contacted the Center for Disease Control (CDC) around having them provide some level of support and has been in conversation with De Geus about how they might collaborate on that because it really needs to come from them as a community. She has a phone conference scheduled with the State Health Department about next steps and having the CDC come out to Palo Alto. That

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was a part of the conversation that emerged from the Opinion Leaders Forum to have them come out and help them understand where they are and some of the issues that are perhaps unexplored. She also reached out to Communities that Care for support because they are a Collective Impact Model and they are also thinking of how they might leverage them in some way to support the work here in Palo Alto.

Godfrey asked if State Senator Simitian is working on the number of psychiatric beds available in the County? Carillo said she does not know that he is working on that specifically, the conversations he has had with the District have been very preliminary around what can he do to provide support. Carillo knows Dr. Joshi along with the HEARD Alliance are working on the number of beds issue and there could be a connection there.

Townsend asked when the next PSN meeting scheduled. van der Zwagg stated they are trying to schedule a PSN meeting in April and one in May.

Oral Communications

Leif Erikson, Executive Director of Youth Community Services, family member of PSN, and member of the subcommittee that is making these recommendations going forward for the collaborative model. He briefly shared the experience he has had in East Palo Alto with the organization Youth Empowerment Strategies for Success (YESS); it is a Collective Impact Model that is focused on youth well-being in East Palo Alto. They have been working with a consultant on the strategic plan; this document has not been published yet, it is in draft form but it describes the way the Collective Impact Model has been guiding the efficacy of this work. The lack of graduation rates, crime issues, all the issues the community faces have been very challenging. What has happened through this model is the Sequoia District, Ravenswood District, San Mateo County, City of East Palo Alto and 40 other non-profit organizations have come together in a very focused way with clear direction and clear government structure. The key element has been the backbone structure that has been provided by the one East Palo Alto organization which is a convening independent nonprofit. Its purpose is to be a convening body. He believes this is a very powerful model and example of an independent convening nonprofit structure for PSN that is funded by the partners. This organization is funded by San Mateo County, East Palo Alto, the two school districts, and small contributions from members. Data collection analysis is provided with an MOU agreement with John Gardner Center at Stanford. This is a terrific model for PSN of a Collective Impact Structure.

Stacey Ashlund asked that they please keep parents posted on anything they can do such as organizing a letter writing campaign to Caltrain. Also anything that can be done so PSN meetings could be inclusive of the parent community. Parents would like to stay involved. If scheduling is during the school day it is better but afterschool is particularly hard. A lot of parents have nonprofit experience and are interested in maintaining that collaborative in a sustainable basis.

Leigh Metzler said she has been involved in the community with PTA Council and the CAC. They have reached out to the City and District to work on inclusion for children of special needs and have received very good support from the Parks and Recreation Department. She has kids with special needs and it is often forgotten that they have special abilities. Many of these people struggle in the classroom but yet they are great athletes, actors, and musicians. One of the things that helps to learn is a sense of mastery and a sense of belonging. When she read the OCR report, the one thing that stood out was that one particular person was very outcast. Inclusion is really important. The District is doing a very good job with band, cross country, and football. One of the struggles are the after school activities, especially at the elementary school level, that are provided by vendors and they do not necessarily have to adhere to the District standards. At the CAC they did a community resource fair where they asked if they could do special needs accommodations and they were very willing. Metzler believes there should be a minor policy change where they ask vendors on campus to make accommodations for special needs children.

Barbara Shufro asked if there is data collection on hospitalization rates from the high schools. She

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believes there is a high level of hospitalization rates and it tells them how important it is to staff and that perhaps more staff is needed. She would like to see a very clear pattern in the school system of what parents should do when they ask for help when children are exhibiting mental health symptoms, however that is expressed. A lot parents are afraid of saying anything specifically because of the stigma and students are afraid to go to therapy because of the stigma. It is very important for PSN to be out front. She very much supports the new model that is being proposed and asks that the hiring of a director is sped up.

Future Meetings and
Agendas
Adjournment

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 23, 2015 at 8:00 a.m. at the District office.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:38 a.m.