



City/School Liaison Committee Special Meeting Minutes



Special Meeting
August 16, 2018

Chairperson Holman called the meeting to order at 8:08 A.M. in the Community Meeting Room, 250 Hamilton Avenue, Palo Alto, California.

Present: City of Palo Alto Representatives
Karen Holman, Council Member, Committee Chair
Eric Filseth, Vice Mayor
Rob de Geus, Deputy City Manager, Staff Liaison

Palo Alto Unified School District Representatives
Ken Dauber, Board Member, Board President
Bob Golton, Bond Program Manager

Absent: Todd Collins, Board Member
Cathy Mak, District Chief Business Officer, Staff Liaison

Oral Communications

Keith Reckdahl expressed concerns about Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) placing solar panels on recreation space at Jane Lathrop Stanford Middle School and the lack of outreach to the community and stakeholders regarding the project. Without public input, PAUSD eliminated a half acre of valuable recreation space.

Board Member Dauber felt the siting concerns were legitimate, and he would share them with the PAUSD Board of Education (Board). The Board held a number of meetings about the financial arrangements of the project, where the contracts were thoroughly and openly vetted.

Chair Holman inquired whether the City/School Liaison Committee (Committee) could discuss the topic under Agenda Item Number 4.

Rob de Geus, Deputy City Manager, responded yes.

MINUTES

Minutes Approval

2. Approval of Minutes From the June 21, 2018 City/School Liaison Committee Meeting

MOTION: Vice Mayor Filseth moved, seconded by Board Member Dauber that the City School Liaison Committee approve the minutes as presented.

MOTION PASSED: 3-0

3. Review Recent City Council / PAUSD Board Meetings.
 - a. CITY Examples Including but not Limited to: Rail Grade Separation Alternatives to be Evaluated, Citywide Cumulative Cap on Office/R&D Development, Council Adopted Ordinance to Regular Unnecessary Idling of Vehicles.
 - b. PAUSD Examples Including but not Limited to: Approval of the Chief Business Officer Contract.

Board Member Dauber reported the Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) Board of Education's (Board) first meeting for the school year was scheduled for Tuesday. PAUSD hired a new Chief Business Officer. The Board reviewed PAUSD's draft response to the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the Stanford University General Use Permit (GUP). PAUSD objected to the amended DEIR based on its compliance with requirements. To some extent, the objections mirrored those of the City. Board Members had expressed concern about the impact of additional housing and students without corresponding property tax revenues to support the students.

Vice Mayor Filseth commented that the residents of Palo Alto would pay if Stanford University did not. If Palo Alto residents had to pay Stanford University's education cost, then they would have less funds for City services.

Board Member Dauber disclosed that PAUSD was dependent on local property tax revenues for funding. Additional enrollment for PAUSD did not automatically equate to additional revenues for PAUSD.

Chair Holman noted school commute traffic was a major issue for residents.

Board Member Dauber added that PAUSD's response focused on adequate mitigation of increased traffic. The GUP and its mitigation measures did not provide safe walking routes to neighborhood schools.

MINUTES

Chair Holman asked if the Board had considered inviting the public to a Board meeting to discuss the GUP.

Board Member Dauber advised that the Board's agenda for August 21 included a discussion of the GUP and appointment of a Board ad hoc subcommittee to oversee PAUSD's response to the GUP. A town hall meeting, perhaps in conjunction with the City, could be beneficial.

Chair Holman inquired about the possibility of the new Superintendent attending a Council meeting.

Board Member Dauber suggested the City Manager arrange a date with the Superintendent.

Chair Holman requested the status of the bike path project along Churchill.

Rob de Geus, Deputy City Manager, reported safety improvements were progressing; however, no progress had been made in obtaining an easement from PAUSD.

Vice Mayor Filseth disclosed the Council's approval of the Comprehensive Plan Citywide office cap reduction. The Council also adopted an anti-idling ordinance. The City would implement signage and an education campaign for the ordinance.

Chair Holman added that education cards for anti-idling would be distributed.

Mr. de Geus added that Staff had prepared drafts of the education cards. Involving students in distributing the cards could be effective.

Vice Mayor Filseth recounted the Council's appointment of Ed Shikada to replace City Manager Keene upon his retirement.

Mr. de Geus advised that Staff worked on grade separations while the Council was on break. A new outreach plan was approved. Staff solicited applications for 12 positions on a Community Advisory Panel and received 44 responses. After interviews, the City Manager chose 12 applicants for the panel. The panel's first meeting was held the prior day. The Rail Committee focused on the consultant's work regarding the Charleston and Meadow crossings. A hybrid solution could work at both crossings with limited property impacts. The number of alternatives had been reduced to seven.

4. City and District Staff Comments and Announcements.

Rob de Geus, Deputy City Manager, noted the partnership between the City and Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) regarding the playing fields.

MINUTES

City Staff and the City's athletic field users were not aware of the solar project.

Vice Mayor Filseth asked if PAUSD planned to place solar panels on additional fields.

Bob Golton, Bond Program Manager, explained that more solar projects would be considered if the bond measure was approved in November. Community and internal outreach was a concern for PAUSD.

Vice Mayor Filseth suggested the community's response was visceral because the solar panels were placed on a playing field. Outreach would be considerably more important if solar projects affected additional playing fields.

Chair Holman encouraged members of the City/School Liaison Committee (Committee) to share impacts and benefits created by either City or PAUSD actions. The solar project at Palo Alto High School also raised community consternation. She asked if mitigation of the solar projects was possible or if the panels could be relocated.

Mr. Golton agreed to relay questions to PAUSD's Facilities Manager.

Chair Holman inquired whether a presentation of PAUSD solar projects to the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) would be beneficial.

Keith Reckdahl responded yes.

Vice Mayor Filseth clarified that placing solar panels on a rooftop would not interest the PRC.

Mr. Reckdahl concurred. The PRC was concerned with impacts to park and recreation spaces. The problem could be communications within the City, but the Building Division or Public Works should have been aware of the project.

Mr. de Geus indicated PAUSD would have to coordinate the solar project with the Utilities Department.

Mr. Golton clarified that PAUSD's construction projects were not approved by the City, and PAUSD was not required to obtain City building permits. Therefore, City Staff could have been unaware of the project. Nonetheless, information should have been shared with the City.

Board Member Dauber acknowledged that outreach and communication with the City did not occur.

MINUTES

Mr. Golton realized that all PAUSD capital projects should be vetted with the community.

Chair Holman suggested the PRC establish criteria for projects about which PAUSD should consult with the PRC.

Mr. Reckdahl reported that the City relied upon parkland and park-like land for recreation. Perhaps PAUSD could meet with the PRC yearly to present projects that could impact recreation facilities.

Kristen O’Kane, Community Services Assistant Director, advised that the recreation area at Jane Lathrop Stanford Middle School was utilized for three soccer fields. Staff was able to reconfigure the fields around the solar project and maintain three soccer fields on the site. Hopefully soccer goals could be stored underneath the solar panels. City Staff was working with PAUSD Staff regarding the final details.

5. Cubberley Master Plan – Introduce Bobbie Hill From Concordia (Consultant).

Kristen O’Kane, Community Services Assistant Director, reported the City and Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) were collaborating to master plan the Cubberley Community Center site. The City and PAUSD selected Concordia as consultant for the project.

Bobbie Hill, Concordia, shared information about a project in Emeryville for which Concordia was the consultant. Concordia utilized a collaborative process for planning projects and encouraged everyone to participate in the planning process. Four meetings were planned for the Cubberley project. Participants would work at tables in groups of six or eight. Agendas and activities would be posted prior to each meeting. Following each meeting, documentation of the meeting and an analysis and preparation for the following meetings would be posted. Thus far, Concordia had reviewed background information for Cubberley and mapped assets. A preliminary analysis of the site indicated the site offered many opportunities for programming that would meet the needs of the City, the community, and PAUSD. Concordia relied on a team of community fellows to understand the community and culturally appropriate actions. Community fellows were not the same as an advisory committee. Community fellows would assist Concordia with recruitment and training, reviewing materials, preparing for meetings, and ensuring meeting participants remained on task. A community fellow should not have a particular bias or a strong advocacy for any aspect of the project.

MINUTES

Alison Cormack hoped the first community meeting would not conflict with other community events so that residents could attend. In addition, the City and PAUSD should communicate the meetings and dates to the public. Palo Alto's aging population should be included in plans and documents. In addition, people who could not attend the meeting should have a platform to share their thoughts and understand what happened during the meeting.

Ms. Hill explained that the activities were designed to allow participation at any or all of the meetings. She anticipated online participation would be available.

Chair Holman asked about the process for selecting community fellows.

Ms. Hill advised that information had been posted on the City's website and Nextdoor. Community members had contacted Concordia or the City about becoming a community fellow. Board Members Collins and Dauber had recommended community members. The selection process was based on people's interests and an interview.

Chair Holman inquired whether Concordia received the work of the previous community working group.

Ms. Hill replied yes. In addition, Concordia obtained the work product of a previous committee and other City planning documents.

Chair Holman remarked that the community advisory group did not fully consider connectivity.

Ms. Hill reported she had met with members of the Greenmeadow neighborhood association and conversed with people operating in Greendell.

Chair Holman hoped outreach would extend to Charleston Shopping Center. The City owned eight acres at the Cubberley site, not eight specific acres.

Rob de Geus, Deputy City Manager, clarified that the City owned the eight acres defined by the boundary. The City and PAUSD agreed to remain open to changing the boundaries.

Chair Holman advised that it would be foolish to master plan the site and be constrained by the irregular boundary of the eight acres.

Ms. Hill was familiar with the irregular boundary. A discussion of when and how to define the boundaries would be appropriate.

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Bob Golton, Bond Program Manager, commented that the City held title to a specific eight acres. By agreement of the parties, the boundaries could be adjusted.

Chair Holman agreed that the City owned eight acres. However, the possibility of altering the boundaries could aid the planning process.

Board Member Dauber did not believe PAUSD was attached to a particular configuration for the City's eight acres. PAUSD engaged in the planning process to find a solution that worked best for the whole project.

Chair Holman asked if community meetings would be recorded.

Ms. Hill replied yes. A summary of meeting activities and outcomes would be available following each meeting. Participants would be included in a database. In addition, participants would evaluate accomplishments and list concerns from the meeting.

Chair Holman felt a four-meeting process was extraordinarily aggressive.

Ms. Hill believed four meetings would provide the necessary information. The interval between meetings could be as much as two months so that reviews could occur and presentations could be made to various bodies.

Chair Holman recalled the community group's request for a needs assessment and inquired whether Concordia would perform a needs assessment.

Ms. Hill answered yes. Concordia had met and exchanged emails with tenants. She understood the existing conditions of the site.

Chair Holman noted the working group and the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) recommended a community needs assessment. Items such as a swimming pool and a bowling alley would not be considered needs if the assessment focused on the site.

Ms. Hill clarified that the foundational work opened the door to the community needs. The site offered many opportunities for programs on the site.

Board Member Dauber inquired about opportunities for the City and PAUSD Board of Education (Board) to have progress reports.

Ms. Hill reported that regular updates would be scheduled.

MINUTES

Board Member Dauber noted the difficulty of predicting PAUSD's needs and asked how that would be handled.

Ms. Hill needed to know the definite constraints and needs of PAUSD and the City. The initial analysis demonstrated square footage could be preserved for a comprehensive high school if one was needed. The potential need for a high school could be easily addressed.

Chair Holman suggested the PRC receive a few updates so that it could advise the Council and the Board.

Ms. O'Kane explained that the PRC formed an ad hoc committee to address Cubberley. The ad hoc committee could review documents and the stakeholder engagement plan. The PRC would also receive updates.

Ms. Hill noted she presented information to the PRC in July.

Chair Holman commented that small group work had not always been successful because the small groups did not feel their work was properly summarized.

Ms. Hill understood that people needed to see their work and their contributions to the process. The process would take information, analyze it, and bring it to a logical conclusion.

6. Stanford General Use Permit (GUP) PAUSD and City Comment Letters (Attached).

Discussed with Agenda Item 3.

7. Future Meetings and Agendas.

Chair Holman asked if the Ventura Area Plan had been delayed until September.

Rob de Geus, Deputy City Manager, responded yes. Information could be presented in September or October.

Chair Holman requested the list of items be calendared.

Mr. de Geus asked if other City/School Liaison Committee (Committee) Members had comments regarding timing of items.

Board Member Dauber questioned whether the Stanford University General Use Permit (GUP) should be agendized for the September meeting.

MINUTES

Mr. de Geus recalled that the City Council would review the City's response letter, and additional information could be presented in September.

Vice Mayor Filseth concurred with scheduling it for September.

Board Member Dauber inquired whether the City Manager and Superintendent should attend meetings as they could direct Staff.

Vice Mayor Filseth did not believe they should be present for every meeting.

Board Member Dauber suggested a discussion of the issue occur when all members were present and subsequent to obtaining the thoughts of the City Manager and Superintendent.

Chair Holman thought Assistant City Manager Shikada should attend the October meeting.

Mr. de Geus felt the presence of the City Manager, Assistant City Manager, and Deputy City Manager was not necessary. Depending on the topic, the appropriate person should be present.

Vice Mayor Filseth did not believe the chief executives needed to be present for every operational meeting.

Board Member Dauber remarked that the Cubberley joint planning process resulted from the presence of the City Manager and Superintendent at a meeting.

Mr. de Geus suggested an agenda item for the Churchill bike path.

Chair Holman requested an update regarding the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) establishing criteria for review of PAUSD projects.

Keith Reckdahl indicated the PRC needed to discuss a process to share potential projects.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 9:39 A.M.