



City/School Liaison Committee Special Meeting Minutes



Special Meeting
September 20, 2018

Chairperson Holman called the meeting to order at 8:03 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
Todd Collins, Board Member
Jim Novak, PAUSD, Chief Business Officer, Staff Liaison

Absent: Ken Dauber, Board President

1. Oral Communications

None.

2. Review Recent City Council / PAUSD Board Meetings:

a. CITY - Examples Including but not Limited to: Update From State Legislative Lobbyists on State Legislation; Review and Potential Adoption of Positions on State and Local Measures on the November 6, 2018 Ballot; Palo Alto Safe Routes to School Partnership Annual Update; Review and Comment on the Letter Sent to the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors Regarding the Stanford General Use Plan (GUP).

b. PAUSD.

Vice Mayor Filseth recalled that the Council held lengthy discussions regarding renter protections.

Board Member Collins reported that the school year had begun. Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) had received comments from the public regarding the installation of solar panels. PAUSD did not conduct sufficient public outreach for the project and would increase outreach efforts in the future. Personally, he was pleased with and proud of the solar panel project.

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The installation at Ellen Fletcher Middle School looked great, shaded the parking lot, and did not obstruct the view of the school. Dr. Austin was named PAUSD Superintendent. Karen Hendricks was confirmed as Deputy Superintendent, and Jim Novak was hired as Chief Business Officer. The PAUSD Board of Education (Board) confirmed its intent to hire in-house counsel. The Board created an ad hoc committee to guide the Superintendent in discussions with Stanford University and the County of Santa Clara (County) regarding Stanford University's General Use Permit (GUP).

Vice Mayor Filseth advised that the City took a position on the Bay Delta Water Plan contrary to the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission's recommendation. The Council was persuaded that the chances of a severe water shortage were remote. The City Manager requested additional time to identify structural FY 2019 budget savings in the amount of \$4 million. Brad Eggleston was appointed to the position of Director of Public Works. The City's comment letter regarding the Stanford University GUP had not been updated. The City sent a response letter to the Grand Jury Report regarding housing. The Council declined to evaluate rent control.

Chair Holman noted the Council enacted an urgency Ordinance that provided relocation assistance for renters of certain incomes and an Ordinance that removed the means test.

3. City and District Staff Comments and Announcements.

Rob de Geus, Deputy City Manager, reported Chief Transportation Official Josh Mello resigned his employment with the City. The Transportation Division was moved from the Planning and Community Environment Department to the City Manager's Office and renamed the Office of Transportation. Staff was planning a Town Hall meeting for October 22 regarding traffic.

Chair Holman inquired regarding the location and time of the Town Hall meeting.

Mr. de Geus indicated the Town Hall would be held in either the Council Chambers at 6:00 p.m. The Moonlight Run was scheduled for September 21.

Jim Novak, Chief Business Officer, advised that school enrollment had decreased slightly over the previous year.

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4. Introduction of PAUSD Superintendent With the City Manager.

Board Member Collins reported Superintendent Austin was attending a conference in San Francisco and sent his apologies for not attending the meeting.

Chair Holman suggested Staff confirm the availability of City Manager Keene, Assistant City Manager Shikada, and Superintendent Austin for the October meeting.

Rob de Geus, Deputy City Manager, related that Superintendent Austin had placed the meeting on his calendar. City Manager Keene would not be available in October, and Staff would contact Assistant City Manager Shikada.

Board Member Collins advised that Superintendent Austin had met regularly with City Managers in his prior postings and seemed to be enthusiastic to meet with the City Manager or Assistant City Manager.

Chair Holman remarked that the City/School Liaison Committee (Committee) was attempting to present agenda items for discussion rather than information. Perhaps the Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) Board of Education (Board) would be willing to share in the cost of preparing Minutes and televising Committee meetings.

Board Member Collins expressed PAUSD's and the Board's willingness to try new things.

Mr. de Geus noted the City prepared Minutes for the Committee's meetings.

Board Member Collins indicated he had reviewed the City's website for minutes of prior Committee meetings, and minutes for the prior three meetings were not available.

Mr. de Geus agreed that May was the last meeting for which minutes were available.

5. Stanford General Use Plan Update.

Rob de Geus, Deputy City Manager, reported the City prepared with Council input and sent a comment letter to the County of Santa Clara (County). On August 20, the Council briefly discussed the comment letter.

Board Member Collins advised that Alternative Scenarios A and B in the Stanford University General Use Permit (GUP) were an important issue for the Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) Board of Education (Board)

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because of the possibility of a significantly greater number of on-campus housing units for faculty and staff. The original GUP proposed 550 multifamily housing units at Quarry Road. Alternative Scenarios A and B were proposed as mitigations for the additional labor force expected for the expansion. The original GUP proposal generated an estimated 275 new students, but PAUSD believed the number would be substantially higher. The alternative scenarios increased the estimated number of new students to more than 800 and almost 1,500. Stanford University had built essentially a new neighborhood on Sand Hill Road, which was one of the few neighborhoods in Palo Alto that was not well-served by an elementary school. Because Stanford University was a nonprofit entity and would be creating rental housing for its affiliates, the new housing would be tax exempt, which created a problem for PAUSD as it is funded through property taxes only. In essence, Stanford University's expansion would generate hundreds of new students without providing any revenue for PAUSD. The cost of 1,500 new students would be \$30 million annually. To offset the additional cost, PAUSD could cut programs and increase class size by 25 percent. In meetings between PAUSD staff and Stanford University, Stanford University had given no indication that it would entertain mitigations that would provide land or funds for a new school or that would reduce the \$30 million cost. In the press, Stanford University representatives indicated Stanford University had done more than enough. The Board had no leverage to encourage Stanford University to provide mitigations. Hopefully, the County would support PAUSD in encouraging Stanford University to support the students generated by the new housing. Superintendent Austin had met with Stanford University President Tessier-Lavigne to discuss a framework for addressing the issue. The City's support and assistance would be appreciated. A major component of PAUSD's brand was neighborhood schools. The Quarry Road/Sand Hill Road area was the worst-served area in Palo Alto for schools. Students from the area would have to cross a state highway, train tracks, and an expressway to reach the nearest school, Addison Elementary. Because of that, students in the area were zoned for Nixon Elementary, which was 2 miles from the area. PAUSD did not provide busing, and the paid bus service for the area was oversubscribed. All the land in the neighborhood was owned by Stanford University.

Chair Holman remarked that Council Members individually had been supportive of PAUSD's concerns. All the issues affected the City as the quality of PAUSD schools contributed to Palo Alto property values.

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6. Coordination Between City and PAUSD on Capital Improvements.

Kristen O’Kane, Community Services Assistant Director, reported Mr. Novak and she had met to discuss ways to improve communications regarding capital projects that could affect programs offered by the City and Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD). City and PAUSD representatives could meet quarterly to discuss capital improvement projects that could impact a school or City property and activities at those locations.

Jim Novak, Chief Business Officer, agreed that regular meetings would improve communications.

Don McDougall, Parks and Recreation Commission Chair, remarked that parks, open space, and recreation areas were important community assets. The Parks and Recreation Commission (PARC) was the steward of parks, open space, and recreation areas. The PARC's letter to PAUSD and the City Council stated actions that affect parks, open space, and recreation areas should be discussed transparently, collaboratively, and deliberately. While green energy was good, solar panels covering fields were not beautiful and eliminated valuable resources. The PARC was committed to the stewardship of parks, open space, and recreation areas.

Jeff Greenfield, Parks and Recreation Commission Vice Chair, was interested in the PARC having a role in communications between the City and PAUSD. He requested PAUSD provide information regarding plans for installing additional solar panels on school campuses. Perhaps the PARC could be directly involved in reviewing and guiding future projects that impact jointly managed resources.

Keith Reckdahl, Parks and Recreation Commission, commented regarding the financial benefits of the solar panels to PAUSD. PAUSD overlooked the recreational value of the field in analyzing the solar panel project. Green energy projects should be critically reviewed to ensure they optimize the use of tax dollars. The opportunity cost of lost recreation space must be factored into land use decisions.

Ms. O’Kane suggested Staff report to the PARC regarding meetings between City and PAUSD Staff. At that time, the PARC could provide input. The PARC could be involved in specific capital projects.

Mr. Novak concurred with involving the PARC, City, and PAUSD departments as needed rather than for each quarterly meeting.

Board Member Collins reiterated that PAUSD did not handle communications for the project well. No additional solar projects were being planned.

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Vice Mayor Filseth inquired whether Commissioner Reckdahl's numbers pertained to projects participating in the City's feed-in tariff program.

Board Member Collins indicated the solar panel project benefited from the City's Net Energy Metering (NEM) program.

Vice Mayor Filseth noted the City's feed-in tariff program subsidized approximately a third of project costs.

Board Member Collins suggested the NEM subsidy was even higher than the feed-in tariff program.

Chair Holman felt the PARC would be the ideal entity to provide a public and transparent hearing for projects. Projects identified for a hearing before the PARC should be presented as action items rather than information items. Criteria for referring projects to the PARC should be developed. PAUSD's landscape committee should also be involved.

Mr. McDougall suggested PAUSD designate a representative to attend PARC meetings as the Council had a liaison to the PARC. Exposure to nature benefited students' wellness and academic success.

Chair Holman noted the City's tree canopy was added to infrastructure in the Comprehensive Plan.

Board Member Collins would share the suggestion to designate a PAUSD representative to the PARC with PAUSD Staff and the Board of Education (Board).

Rob de Geus, Deputy City Manager, reported the PARC prepared a letter that summarized its views regarding review of projects. He would forward the letter to the City Council and Board.

7. Cubberley Master Plan Update.

Rob de Geus, Deputy City Manager, reported the community fellows for the Cubberley master planning process had been selected and trained.

Robert Golton, PAUSD Bond Program Manager, noted the first of four community meetings was scheduled for the following Thursday. Two hundred people had registered for the meeting, and walk-ins were welcome. An item would be presented to the Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) Board of Education (Board) the following Tuesday. Concordia, the project consultant, had many ideas and a tremendous social media presence. PAUSD and City Staff had been meeting bi-weekly with the consultant.

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Kristen O’Kane, Community Services Assistant Director, explained that community meeting attendees would participate in activities rather than listen to speakers. The community fellows would facilitate activities at community meetings and increase community awareness of the planning process. The community fellows were comprised of 12 adults, three Palo Alto High School students, and three Gunn High School students.

Board Member Collins suggested private school students be included in future projects. He inquired whether Board Members should attend the community meeting.

Mr. Golton answered that Board Members and Council Members were welcome to attend. Board Members and Council Members could participate as individuals.

Board Member Collins appreciated the City leading the project.

Ms. O’Kane clarified that PAUSD Staff had participated and would continue to participate in every step of the process.

Alison Cormack expressed concern that the community meeting was scheduled on the same night as a meeting for Board candidates. She previously requested meetings not be scheduled concurrently. She looked forward to attending the community meeting.

Don McDougall disclosed that the community meeting was rescheduled to avoid a conflict with a Board event. However, the League of Women Voters' panel discussion was overlooked in setting the new date. He had suggested to a Board Member that a common calendar would benefit the coordination of City, PAUSD, Board, and community events.

8. Future Meetings and Agendas.

Rob de Geus, Deputy City Manager, reported the October meeting could include an item with Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) Superintendent Austin and Assistant City Manager Shikada and an item regarding the Cubberley Master Plan. The Human Relations Commission's recommendation for the City Council to reaffirm its commitment to a diverse, supportive, inclusive, and protective community could be presented in October as well.

Chair Holman requested an item regarding the Parks and Recreation Commission's letter to the City Council and PAUSD.

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Mr. de Geus suggested an item regarding the Parks and Recreation Commission's letter be scheduled after City and PAUSD Staff had an opportunity to meet.

Chair Holman noted the December meeting was scheduled for December 21. A number of items remained on the list of items to be scheduled. Perhaps the City and PAUSD could coordinate events for the City's 125th anniversary and the May Fete Parade. An event celebrating the 100th anniversary of Palo Alto High School was planned for October 7. She requested items for the City's 125th anniversary and the May Fete Parade be placed on the November agenda.

Board Member Collins requested an item regarding grade separations. Either the Board of Education (Board) or PAUSD Staff needed to be involved in the process.

Mr. de Geus understood a PAUSD representative was participating on the technical advisory committee.

Chair Holman inquired whether an item for emergency preparedness was tentatively scheduled for December.

Mr. de Geus would confirm Mr. Dueker's attendance in December.

Chair Holman asked if Staff would present the Ventura Coordinated Area Plan in November.

Mr. de Geus replied yes.

Chair Holman suggested items regarding City internships for PAUSD students and a joint City Council/Board Town Hall meeting be prepared for October or November.

Mr. de Geus indicated a joint Town Hall had not progressed beyond an idea.

Chair Holman suggested Board Member Collins share the idea with his colleagues to gauge their interest.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 9:24 A.M.