



City/School Liaison Committee Special Meeting Minutes



Special Meeting
February 21, 2019

Chairperson Kou called the meeting to order at 8:01 A.M. in the Community Meeting Room, 250 Hamilton Avenue, Palo Alto, California.

Present: City of Palo Alto Representatives
Alison Cormack, Council Member
Lydia Kou, Council Member (Chair)
Chantal Gaines, Assistant to the City Manager, Staff Liaison

Palo Alto Unified School District Representatives
Jennifer DiBrienza, Board President
Jim Novak, Chief Business Officer, Staff Liaison

Absent: Todd Collins, Board Vice President

Oral Communications

Rachel Kellerman expressed concern about the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists traveling the Embarcadero Corridor. A few years ago, Staff proposed a plan to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety on Embarcadero Road, and residents felt it was a good plan. She requested the City/School Liaison Committee review pedestrian and bicycle safety as an urgent matter and in conjunction with Safe Routes to School and the potential closure of Churchill Avenue.

Chair Kou requested the name of the project Staff had proposed.

Ms. Kellerman did not have the name of the project.

Minutes Approval

2. Approval of Minutes for the December 13, 2018 City/School Liaison Committee Meeting.

MOTION: Council Member Cormack moved, seconded by Chair Kou to approve the minutes as presented.

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Board Member DiBrienza reported Board Member Collins had reviewed the minutes and did not have comments about them.

MOTION PASSED: 3-0 Collins absent

Chair Kou welcomed Superintendent Austin and noted support from the City Manager's Office.

Ed Shikada, City Manager, indicated he and Deputy City Manager Rob de Geus were present.

3. Review of Recent City Council and PAUSD Board Meetings:

- a. CITY: Council Retreat and 2019 Priorities, Study Session With City's State Lobbyist Related to the 2019 Legislative Session, Fire Safety Month Poster Award Recognition to PAUSD Students; and
- b. PAUSD.

Council Member Cormack reported the City Council chose transportation and traffic, fiscal sustainability, climate change, and grade separation as its Priorities for the year. Two Council Members were recused from discussion of grade separation, and the remaining five Council Members would serve as a Committee of the Whole.

Board Member DiBrienza asked which Council Members were recused.

Council Member Cormack responded Mayor Filseth and Council Member Kniss. A Rail Committee meeting should be scheduled soon. Winners of the annual fire safety poster contest received their awards at a Council meeting. The Council discussion with the City's lobbyist for state legislation focused on housing.

Board Member DiBrienza advised that the Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) Board of Education (Board) had directed Staff to pursue funding for Supervisor Simitian's teacher housing project. PAUSD received a matching fund grant from the County of Santa Clara (County) for a Magical Bridge-type playground at El Carmelo Elementary School. The Superintendent had proposed priorities under the title of *The Promise*.

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Chair Kou stated the City's lobbyist provided a timeline for the Legislature's processing of bills. The City could submit comments on bills at the end of March and the beginning of April. The lobbyist anticipated Legislators would propose additional housing bills without funding mandates. Senate Bill (SB) 50 was a major housing bill. Elements of the Committee to House the Bay Area (CASA Compact) would support one-size-fits-all bills. The Council continued to monitor bills and was attempting to educate the community regarding the CASA Compact.

4. City and District Comments and Announcements.

Rob de Geus, Deputy City Manager, announced he would be leaving the City for a new position in Westlake Village. Chantal Gaines would be the new Staff Liaison for the City/School Liaison Committee.

Chantal Gaines, Assistant to the City Manager, introduced herself and her responsibilities within the City Manager's Office.

Don Austin, Superintendent, reported former State Secretary of Education Jack O'Connell and Capital Advisors Chief Executive Officer Kevin Gordon would provide legislative updates at the next Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) Board of Education (Board) meeting. A late start bill would likely be re-introduced during the session, and it could have stronger support than the prior bill. A new bill would require on-campus police officers at all schools in California.

Ed Shikada, City Manager, requested the number of the bill.

Mr. Austin would provide the information at a later time.

Board Member DiBrienza asked if the bill proposed police officers at all schools or only secondary schools.

Mr. Austin replied all schools. The bill was not realistic but interesting. He would share information learned during the Board meeting at the next City/School Liaison Committee meeting.

Chair Kou inquired whether the schools or the cities would have to hire the police officers.

Mr. Austin indicated the bill did not contain details.

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5. Grade Separation Update.

Rob de Geus, Deputy City Manager, shared the Council's January 22, 2018 action regarding grade separation alternatives. The City had four at-grade crossings that needed a solution. The Rail Committee had narrowed its discussion from 34 discrete ideas to six. The Palo Alto Avenue crossing was removed as an alternative so that a coordinated area plan for the grade crossing, Downtown area, and the Transit Center could be prepared. The Loma Verde undercrossing was removed from an alternative because it was not in proximity to the grade crossing and was a part of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Master Plan. Staff did not feel a tunnel alternative was realistic given the large construction and funding issues, but the community was interested in further study of a tunnel alternative. A new alternative was a southern tunnel for the Charleston Road and Meadow Drive crossings with freight trains running on the surface of the tunnel and passenger trains running in the tunnel. Closure of the Churchill Road crossing was another alternative under study, which would impact the Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) and bus service. Alternatives for the Charleston Road and Meadow Drive crossings were a hybrid elevated and depressed track, a trench, and a viaduct or elevated track. The last alternative was a Citywide tunnel. Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) would meet in the next few months to discuss the distribution of \$700 million among Sunnyvale, Mountain View, and Palo Alto for grade separations. The Council also directed Staff to return with a review of the criteria, timeline, and schedule for alternatives. The tentative date for the review was late March. A Community Advisory Panel met regularly and received public comment. A community meeting regarding the Churchill Road crossing was scheduled for March 27.

Council Member Cormack added that a Downtown coordinated area plan could improve Palo Alto's connection with Menlo Park. She inquired about the potential action the Council could take on March 25, prior to the community meeting on March 27.

Mr. de Geus advised that the Council would not narrow the alternatives on March 25.

Council Member Cormack asked if the Churchill Road closure would be a full closure.

Mr. de Geus replied yes.

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Council Member Cormack indicated a closure of the Churchill Road crossing to cars only did not appear to be possible. The Council recognized that any modification of the four crossings would impact other crossings and traffic.

Board Member DiBrienza requested the rationale for a full closure of the Churchill crossing.

Mr. de Geus explained the decision was based on the amount of traffic at the crossing and the ability for traffic to navigate around the area. Closure was considered for each of the crossings.

Ed Shikada, City Manager, clarified that any type of grade separation at Churchill Road would require property takings or severely limit access to the area.

Chair Kou remarked that the options were limited by the narrowness of Churchill Road. She requested PAUSD Staff notify school populations of the proposal so that they could provide feedback.

Mr. Shikada disclosed that coordination and meetings with PAUSD Staff regarding access were increasing as the list of alternatives narrowed. Separately and as part of grade separations, Staff was considering both mid-term and long-term options for Embarcadero Road.

Chair Kou inquired whether classrooms at Palo Alto High School (PALY) were affected by noise.

Don Austin, Superintendent, indicated the noise from trains was relatively significant and disruptive.

Chair Kou asked if they could walk through the school to understand the noise impacts.

Mr. Austin explained that in Southern California a sound barrier wall was usually installed between a rail line and nearby structures. He had not considered the impact of additional trains. The bus situation was a major concern for PAUSD. Grade separations would change the bus routes. He was interested in working toward a solution with City Staff. He asked if pedestrian and bicycle access at the Churchill Road crossing would cease with the closure of the crossing.

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Mr. de Geus answered no. A bicycle and pedestrian underpass would be needed at Churchill Road.

Mr. Shikada added that the Engineering Division had begun preparing concepts for the undercrossing. The concepts would be presented to the public at a meeting in late March.

Mr. de Geus clarified the date as March 27.

Board Member DiBrienza requested the location of the March 27 meeting.

Mr. de Geus responded Mitchell Park Community Center.

Council Member Cormack commented that people were aware of the issues for buses. Many options and opportunities were available to resolve the issues.

6. Cubberley Master Plan Update.

Kristen O'Kane, Community Services Assistant Director, relayed community concerns regarding housing, administrative management of Cubberley, gym space and shared uses, transportation and circulation, use patterns, wayfinding, and parking. The community also expressed a strong interest in obtaining input from parents of school-age children. The Cubberley Community Fellows would develop some strategies for reaching that demographic. In meeting with the City/School Traffic Committee and the Bicycle Advisory Committee, Staff would solicit input for ways to reach parents. Additional concepts were being prepared to address community concerns. The next community meeting was scheduled for May 9 at Cubberley Community Center. Staff was planning a joint study session between the City Council and Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) Board of Education (Board) members.

Robert Golton, Bond Program Manager, reported a draft plan would be presented in May, but it was subject to Council and Board approval. The time horizon for the project was 10, 15 years. The property was very valuable, and PAUSD could not let it go. Staff would return to the Board the following week to affirm PAUSD's priorities for the property.

Council Member Cormack advised that the consultant and Staff had incorporated the previous work on the Cubberley Master Plan. An option

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with housing was crucial. She inquired whether the meetings were listed in the e-news.

Board Member DiBrienza responded yes.

Council Member Cormack hoped the e-news article highlighted the option for people to provide feedback without attending the meetings.

Board Member DiBrienza indicated the Community Fellows were working on outreach.

Council Member Cormack suggested the Council and Board could make some decisions during the joint meeting. Perhaps Staff could present a range of methods to manage the site, and the Council and Board could discuss the transition process. The site should offer programming for teens.

Chair Kou remarked that outside space was needed for sports such as cricket, pickleball, and tennis. She inquired about PAUSD's thoughts for its portion of the site.

Mr. Golton stated the future school site would be useful for staging construction and activities. Phasing construction on the site was an incredible advantage.

Chair Kou noted structures would remain in the southern area while construction occurred on the northern area. PAUSD should retain the property as replacing it would not be possible.

Board Member DiBrienza was surprised by the ability to increase the amount of both square footage and green space.

7. Stanford University General Use Permit (GUP) Update.

Rob de Geus, Deputy City Manager, shared the Council's action taken on February 4 regarding the Stanford University General Use Permit (GUP). Staff had proposed a letter with a focused request and a handful of priority items. The Council preferred the letter contain all topics of interest and added almost all items contained in the Staff Report to the letter. Board Member Collins had attended the Council meeting and requested the letter include Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) Board of Education's

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(Board) concerns. The County of Santa Clara (County) Planning Commission had scheduled study sessions on February 28 and March 14.

Ed Shikada, City Manager, indicated the Mayor was finalizing the City's letter, and it should be transmitted to the County soon.

Don Austin, Superintendent, related the Board's concerns regarding ongoing funding sources based on number of students generated by the development and one-time funding for construction and dedicated land for a community school. Stanford University had not proposed any mitigations for those issues and had not acknowledged any issues that needed mitigations. The Board was working with the County rather than Stanford University.

Council Member Cormack advised that she added topics to the letter to demonstrate the deep interconnections among the City, Stanford University, and PAUSD. Every Council Member was ready to include the importance of PAUSD in discussions.

Board Member DiBrienza reported the Board sent a letter to the County more than a year ago and passed a resolution about its concerns. The Parent Teacher Association Council (PTAC) had shared the Board's concerns with parents at each school site. Dr. Austin had sent an email about the importance and impacts of the issues the prior week. Consequently, many PAUSD parents were writing to the County and were planning to attend meetings.

Chair Kou added that parents were sharing information about the GUP and its impacts on PAUSD. The City may be able to assist with distributing PTAC's petition.

Board Member DiBrienza clarified that PTAC had identified many ways that further growth would impact the school community.

8. City School Liaison Committee Format Discussion.

Rob de Geus, Deputy City Manager, recommended the City/School Liaison Committee (Committee) begin its meetings at 8:30 a.m. Meetings typically last for 1.5 hours. The Committee's mission or purpose had not been defined. From Staff's perspective, the Committee's purpose was to communicate effectively about opportunities to collaborate and share information. The City Manager and Superintendent were meeting monthly, which would be helpful in defining Agenda Items for the Committee.

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Council Member Cormack felt the Committee had evolved over the past two years because of the collaboration needed for the Stanford University General Use Permit (GUP) and the Cubberley Master Plan. The list of topics in which the City's and Palo Alto Unified School District's (PAUSD) interests overlapped would help the Committee better understand the Committee's mission and purpose. She felt the components of a mission statement would be connections between the City and PAUSD along with City and PAUSD priorities. She had no preference for a start time. She wondered if private schools could be included in meetings. She requested PAUSD enrollment data from 2000 to the present.

Board Member DiBrienza agreed that the list of connections would be a good starting point for discussion of a mission statement. She had no preference for a start time. Including private schools was a good idea. Determining a contact person, sharing Committee meeting agendas, and inviting questions and comments could facilitate relationships with private schools in Palo Alto. PAUSD could provide enrollment data to Committee members. She appreciated the changes the Committee had made in the last few years and the City Manager and Superintendent meetings.

Chair Kou concurred with inviting private schools to attend meetings. Perhaps the item could be a standing item.

Ed Shikada, City Manager, advised that a draft mission statement could be presented to the Council and the PAUSD Board of Education (Board) for approval.

Board Member DiBrienza inquired about the existence of a list of connections.

Mr. de Geus agreed to provide the list.

Council Member Cormack recalled that the list was compiled in an effort to understand financial expenses, but the exercise should be broader than expenses.

Chair Kou concurred.

Mr. de Geus indicated City Staff drafted the list, but the list should include PAUSD's perspective as well.

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9. Update on Key Events: Including the Palo Alto 125th Anniversary.

Kristen O'Kane, Community Services Assistant Director, reported Palo Alto was celebrating its 125th birthday in 2019. Judy Kleinberg of the Chamber of Commerce was chairing a committee to plan events, and the City was involved in coordinating events throughout the year. The 125th birthday theme would be incorporated into many existing events. A Palo Alto Day celebration would likely be held in April. Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) was invited to participate in events. A logo would be released for use in events that included the 125th birthday theme. A website with a calendar of activities would be created. Events would likely begin in April.

Council Member Cormack suggested a Snapchat filter would draw more students. She asked if Palo Alto High School was the oldest existing school.

Board Member DiBrienza replied yes.

Council Member Cormack suggested including a historical thread of school development and the people who facilitated that development as a way to involve students.

Board Member DiBrienza felt the May Fete Parade would be a launch of the 125th birthday celebration for schools because of their participation in the Parade.

Don Austin, Superintendent, clarified that PAUSD was also 125 years old.

Council Member Cormack suggested the City/School Liaison Committee pose for a photo at a historical site for inclusion in the celebration.

Board Member DiBrienza noted a historical plaque indicated the first site of PAUSD.

Chair Kou hoped both birthdays would be celebrated.

Ms. O'Kane advised that three time capsules had been sealed, and one was designated to be opened in 2019. Opening the time capsule would be a focus of Palo Alto Day.

Chair Kou asked if Staff knew the location of the time capsule.

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Ms. O'Kane replied yes.

Mr. de Geus added that it was located in an elevator shaft.

Board Member DiBrienza inquired about the possibility of replacing the time capsule with a new time capsule.

Ms. O'Kane indicated that was a possibility.

Chair Kou suggested the Palo Alto Youth Council be invited to promote the celebration.

Ms. O'Kane shared a passport activity for the celebration. Perhaps the Youth Council would have some ideas for activities.

Chair Kou added that the Youth Council could assist with social media platforms.

Board Member DiBrienza invited the public to the new Palo Alto High School Library. Construction was occurring at several school sites.

10. Future Meetings and Agendas.

Rob de Geus, Deputy City Manager, reported the Cubberley Master Plan, grade separation, and Stanford University's General Use Permit (GUP), would be ongoing Agenda Items. The list of connections could be an Agenda Item for the March meeting.

Council Member Cormack requested Staff provide materials in advance of meetings and develop a list of potential Agenda Items.

Board Member DiBrienza requested an Agenda Item or an offline discussion of the City's operation of middle school sports.

Council Member Cormack suggested middle school sports be placed on the August Agenda, just before the program began.

Chair Kou requested Staff include the number of students registered for middle school sports.

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Board Member DiBrienza asked if the meeting start time had been decided.

Mr. de Geus replied 8:30 A.M.

Chair Kou announced the Mayor's State of the City address was scheduled for March 5 at 7:00 P.M.

Council Member Cormack advised that a special meeting regarding the North Ventura Coordinated Area Plan (NVCAP) was scheduled for March 11.

Chantal Gaines, Assistant to the City Manager, clarified that the Council would hold a Special Meeting/Town Hall with the NVCAP Working Group on March 11 at 6:00 P.M. The meeting would focus on issues relevant to the Ventura area and the NVCAP.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 9:29 A.M.