



City/School Liaison Committee Special Meeting Final Minutes



Special Meeting
October 31, 2019

Chairperson Kou called the meeting to order at 8:30 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
Todd Collins, Board Vice President
Don Austin, Superintendent, Palo Alto Unified School District

Absent:

Oral Communications

None.

Minutes Approval

2. Approval of the August 15, 2019 Meeting Minutes.

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

MOTION PASSED: 4-0

3. Superintendent's Comments and City Manager's Comments.

Don Austin, Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) Superintendent, expressed appreciation for the good relationship between the City and PAUSD.

Chair Kou thanked Superintendent Austin for attending the City/School Liaison Committee meetings.

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Chantal Cotton-Gaines, Assistant to the City Manager, reported Staff was revising the shadowing program for Palo Alto youth. The tentative date for the event was the morning of February 26.

Kristen O’Kane, Director of Community Services Department, advised that Richard Fujii of PAUSD had contacted City Staff and had experience with shadowing events. The program was an opportunity for kids to be exposed to municipal government and the types of jobs available in government.

4. Review of Recent City Council and PAUSD Board Meetings
 - a. CITY: August 19 Council Action on North Ventura Coordinated Area Plan, and Other Updates
 - b. PAUSD: Recent Board Agendas Recap

Council Member Cormack reported the Council had established a Residential Preferential Parking Permit (RPP) Program that probably would not impact schools. The Council approved the extension of a contract and funding for the North Ventura Coordinated Area Plan (NVCAP). The Utilities Department was monitoring wildfires and power shutoffs.

Board Member DiBrienza indicated each Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) Board of Education (Board) meeting included a discussion of equity related to academic achievement, test scores, and engagement. The Board would review the structure of middle schools and their function.

Board Member Collins advised that the Board had heard presentations regarding physical safety on campuses and created a position of Safety and Emergency Preparedness. The Board and PAUSD Staff worked closely with the Palo Alto Police Department (PAPD) regarding safety plans. The Board had discussed career-themed pathways, an initiative related to the shadowing program. The Board was searching for methods to facilitate students' transition from school to work. The annual enrollment report was released on September 24, 2019. Overall enrollment had declined by 225 students to a total enrollment of 11,683 students. This was the fifth year of declining enrollment. With voter approval of bonds in 2018, the Board had reviewed many projects for school improvements.

Board Member DiBrienza added that the Board received information at its last meeting about renewing the parcel tax. Polling would be conducted soon.

Board Member Collins related that the Board had not finalized plans for a ballot measure.

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Council Member Cormack disclosed that the City was contemplating a November 2020 ballot measure for a business license tax.

Ed Shikada, City Manager, stated the renovation of the Cubberley field and track was complete.

Chair Kou noted she had received Foothill College's request to present information to the City Council.

5. Palo Alto City Library/PAUSD Collaboration: Study Success Library Card

Gayathri Kanth, Interim Library Services Director, reported the program had exceeded expectations. Under the program, students' Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) library cards functioned as a Palo Alto Library card.

Emily Garrison, PAUSD Coordinator of Educational Technology and Libraries, related that the program benefited students through academic support, positive adult-student relationships, life-long learning, and access to resources and safe spaces. The partnership benefited not only students but also Staff.

Ms. Kanth advised that 11,315 students had received a joint library card, and approximately 30 percent of those students were active users. Students were checking out physical materials and utilizing online resources and computers.

Ms. Garrison indicated the number of students in Grades K-5 checking out materials from the Palo Alto Library was similar to the number checking out materials from PAUSD libraries. At the secondary level, students were using the libraries to support academics.

Ms. Kanth announced the number of user sessions of the Brainfuse tutoring database increased from 2,900 in fiscal year 2018 to 10,000 in fiscal year 2019. The use of research databases had significantly increased as well. Next steps included additional marketing and promotion of library resources and collaboration with parents and teachers.

Board Member DiBrienza suggested the low number of active users may be a result of elementary students using the traditional library card rather than the joint card.

Council Member Cormack inquired regarding unexpected information gained through the program.

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Ms. Garrison stated the number of details and adjustments needed for a successful program was interesting. The collaboration was working well.

Board Member Collins noted the amount of technical collaboration required to make the program work. Constituents expected this type of collaboration. The program was a great model for additional collaboration.

Chair Kou asked if data revealed the libraries the students used most often.

Ms. Kanth replied no. Mitchell Park Library was probably used most often because of its proximity to schools. Children's Library had its own clientele. Online usage did not correlate to any of the schools.

Chair Kou requested that type of information in a future report.

Ms. Kanth agreed to do so.

Chair Kou asked if any data was collected regarding students' modes of transportation to libraries.

Ms. Kanth responded no, but it was an interesting concept. Generally, the majority of students biked to City libraries.

Chair Kou inquired about the use of online services and computers by low-income students.

Ms. Garrison explained that the program did not consider income in any way. A PAUSD program loaned devices to low-income students in grades three through eight. All high school students had access to devices. The City Library provided databases that students could use while in school.

Ms. Kanth added that the City Library had Chromebooks and laptops available for lending.

6. Discussion Regarding Vaping in Palo Alto

Chair Kou reported the vaping item was placed on the agenda because of interest in the issue.

Erwin Marton expressed concern about the number of students using vape products on campus and the accessibility of vape materials. He urged the City and Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) to take action to reduce the availability of vape products. The Parent Teacher Association Council (PTAC) was educating students and parents and bringing a resolution to the State PTA about vaping. A number of cities and the County of Santa Clara

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(County) were attempting to make the purchase of vape products more difficult.

Diana Pang related that PTAC had hosted several parent education events about vaping. Many parents believed vaping was a healthy alternative to cigarettes. More education was needed.

Jade Chao, PTAC President, advised that PTAC representatives had been attending the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) weekly telebriefings. PTAC advocated for city, county and State legislation, resolution, and ordinance to protect children. The County would adopt a resolution to ban the sale of vape and flavored products.

Grace Mah shared information from a County meeting about vaping. She encouraged the City to prohibit the sale and distribution of all e-cigarette products, eliminate the exemption for certain retailers to sell flavored tobacco products, and modify the permitting process for retail sales of tobacco products. A recent article had reported seven states had banned vaping.

Ken Horowitz encouraged PAUSD to make its Life Skills class more relevant for students.

Sumita Vasudeva advocated for a change in the health culture of the community. The focus on e-cigarettes needed to move from innovation to prohibition.

Board Member DiBrienza reported PAUSD was aligning practices across campuses. Secondary school principals were focusing on education and support rather than punishment.

Council Member Cormack remarked that attending the County Summit on Vaping was instructive. The City was willing to do its part to protect children. She shared data from the Summit. Vaping should be treated as a public health issue.

Chair Kou indicated she was particularly affected by the student panel at the County Summit. The effects on youth who did not vape needed to be considered. She expressed great concern that middle schoolers were vaping. A total ban on vaping could send a powerful message. She suggested everyone lobby the Legislature to regulate vaping and online sales. Adults needed to be educated that vaping was not a method to stop smoking. Chair Kou requested City Staff develop a community conference or education panel regarding vaping.

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Kristen O'Kane, Director of Community Services Department, reported the Healthy City Healthy Community group was planning a community leader breakfast for experts to share information about vaping. A community forum could be held subsequent to the breakfast. In addition, City Staff was planning collaborative efforts within the community. The Palo Alto Youth Council conducted a survey about youth vaping in 2018 and was considering peer-to-peer education.

7. Updates on Ongoing Matters

- a. Cubberley Master Plan Update
- b. Grade Separation Update
- c. Stanford University General Use Permit (GUP) Update

Kristen O'Kane, Director of Community Services Department, reported the Cubberley Master Plan should be released to the community in the next few weeks through the project website. A link would be available for the community to comment. Staff was preparing a draft extension of the lease between the City and Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) for Cubberley Community Center.

Council Member Cormack asked if the PAUSD Board of Education (Board) was interested in rebuilding the auditorium and/or the theatre.

Don Austin, PAUSD Superintendent, explained that PAUSD had no immediate plans for either of those buildings. The two buildings would be available for rentals for the foreseeable future. He clarified that the Board's bond counsel had clearly stated that the Board could not utilize bond funds for buildings that were not intended for school purposes. With no immediate plans for a school site, funding a community center would be an inappropriate use of bond funds.

Board Member DiBrienza added that declining enrollment increased the difficulty of justifying the expense of constructing a new school.

Ken Horowitz recommended the City not renew the lease and vacate the Cubberley site. The Ventura neighborhood could be a good place for a community center.

Chantal Cotton-Gaines, Assistant to the City Manager, reported the City Council had tasked the Expanded Community Advisory Panel (XCAP) with providing recommendations for grade crossings at Churchill, Meadow, and Charleston by the end of April 2020. At the Council's direction, the XCAP

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had elected a Chair and Vice Chair and prepared guiding principles and a work plan.

Ed Shikada, City Manager, noted PAUSD would be interested in the option to close Churchill Avenue. A community meeting on November 7 would provide the community with factual information about the grade crossing options. Community engagement would be much more active after the first of the year.

Board Member Collins inquired about the proposed Rail Blue Ribbon Commission.

Mr. Shikada advised that Staff was reviewing the possibility of a Rail Blue Ribbon Commission in light of the XCAP's new responsibilities.

Board Member Collins asked if the XCAP had been expanded.

Mr. Shikada responded yes.

Board Member Collins inquired about the possibility of financing grade separations in 2020.

Mr. Shikada indicated financing in 2020 was possible.

Board Member Collins requested a potential timeframe for the Council to make a decision regarding a ballot measure.

Mr. Shikada noted the work plan called for discussions and decisions in May that could affect a decision about a ballot measure.

Council Member Cormack emphasized Staff's communications plan for educating the community about grade separations and the need for grade separations. The delay in Caltrain's electrification project and the complexity of planning and funding grade separations along the Caltrain Corridor had led to the belief that a coordinated approach to grade separations would be beneficial.

Chair Kou requested PAUSD assistance with providing notices to school families. She inquired whether Staff had provided a grade separation update at a Board meeting.

Mr. Austin reported the Board's representative to the XCAP would provide an update at the November 5 Board meeting.

Board Member Collins requested information regarding the delay of the Caltrain electrification project.

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Mr. Shikada reported the target date for electrified operation of Caltrain had moved from late 2022 to early 2023. Construction was underway across the Corridor.

Board Member Collins inquired whether Caltrain electrification would trigger an increase in the number of trains, which would affect traffic at crossings.

Mr. Shikada responded yes.

Mr. Austin advised that the staff report for the County of Santa Clara (County) Board of Supervisors had utilized different assumptions for student generation rates than PAUSD used in the original agreement with Stanford University regarding the General Use Permit (GUP). The County's assumptions made the Board's deal with Stanford University appear to be less than the actual amount. Possible scenarios were the County granting a GUP and Stanford University declining it without a Development Agreement; the County denying the application; and some form of Development Agreement between the County and Stanford University, in which case the Board would have an uncapped per pupil funding predetermined allocation valued at approximately \$250 million. PAUSD had no opinion as to whether Stanford University should receive or not receive a GUP.

Mr. Shikada related that City Staff was tracking the Board hearing on November 5.

8. Committee Format Discussion (Continued From August 15, 2019 Meeting)

Chantal Cotton-Gaines, Assistant to the City Manager, reported the attachment had not been provided with the packet, and Board Member DiBrienza's proposed changes had not been included in the revisions. She would prepare a clean document with all revisions and present it at a subsequent meeting.

Future Meetings and Agendas

Chair Kou inquired about a future presentation regarding vaping.

Board Member DiBrienza did not believe members of the City-School Liaison Committee (Committee) needed further information about the dangers of vaping.

Chair Kou requested Staff explore private schools' issues with vaping.

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Board Member DiBrienza remarked that private schools were impacted in similar ways as Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD). Combining forces with them would be logical.

Chantal Cotton-Gaines, Assistant to the City Manager, indicated she had shared the Committee's agenda with principals of private schools.

Chair Kou noted members of the Palo Alto Youth Council were attending Castilleja, Kehillah, and Harker. Students from Castilleja had indicated there was not a vaping problem at Castilleja.

Board Member Collins felt a meeting to share perspectives and experiences and brainstorm and coordinate activities would be useful for the community. The Healthy City Healthy Community group was working on such a meeting.

Chair Kou concurred with participating in the meeting and requested an update of the group's efforts at the Committee 's next meeting.

Ed Shikada, City Manager, clarified that the meeting would likely occur after the first of the year.

Chair Kou announced Palo Alto Unified School District's (PAUSD) school safety presentation was scheduled for November.

Ms. Gaines related the Committee's next meetings were scheduled for November 21 and December 19. As Chair Kou would be absent on November 21, the Committee may choose to reschedule the meeting to November 14. The Council's winter break was scheduled to begin on December 17. The Committee may cancel the December meeting or reschedule it for December 12.

Board Member DiBrienza advised she could not be present on November 14.

Chair Kou indicated she may be available for November 21. She recommended the Committee cancel the December meeting.

Council Member Cormack suggested the Committee postpone a decision regarding the December meeting until November.

Chair Kou agreed.

Board Member DiBrienza agreed.

Board Member Collins agreed. Over the past few years, the Committee had not met in January.

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Council Member Cormack inquired about the length of Council Members' terms on the Committee.

Mr. Shikada did not know.

Council Member Cormack hoped Council Members could continue.

Board Member Collins remarked that the Committee had lost momentum in the past with the appointment of new Council Members and no meetings in December and January.

Council Member Cormack suggested an agenda item for Palo Alto Community Child Care.

Board Member Collins suggested Board Members were familiar with Palo Alto Community Child Care.

Council Member Cormack suggested a short presentation about the organization. She inquired about the tradition of Palo Alto High School egg wars, which had occurred earlier in the week in her neighborhood.

Board Member Collins viewed it as antisocial behavior dressed up as fun. School and community leaders needed to educate youth about the detrimental effects of egg wars.

Board Member DiBrienza noted the frozen eggs had broken car windows.

Council Member Cormack thanked City Staff for cleaning up egg wars.

Board Member DiBrienza advised that the Palo Alto High School Student Government Association had clearly opposed egg wars.

Chair Kou requested Committee Members submit ideas for agenda items.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 10:09 A.M.