



City/School Liaison Committee Special Meeting Final Minutes



Special Meeting
November 19, 2020

Chairperson Collins called the meeting to order at 8:32 A.M. on this date via virtual teleconference.

Present: City of Palo Alto Representatives
Greg Tanaka, Council Member
Lydia Kou, Council Member
Chantal Cotton Gaines, Deputy City Manager

Palo Alto Unified School District Representatives
Jennifer DiBrienza, Board Member
Todd Collins, Board President (Chair)
Karen Hendricks, Deputy Superintendent, Palo Alto Unified School District

Oral Communications

None.

Minutes Approval

2. Approval of the October 15, 2020 Meeting Minutes.

MOTION: Chair Collins moved, seconded by Council Member DiBrienza to approve the minutes of October 15, 2020 as presented.

MOTION PASSED: 4-0

3. Superintendent and City Manager Comments.

Chair Collins introduced Deputy Superintendent Karen Hendricks who sat in for Superintendent Don Austin.

Karen Hendricks, Deputy Superintendent, Palo Alto Unified School District announced that the elementary school sites have reopened for in-person learning in all elementary grades. Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD)

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continues to plan for in-person learning for secondary schools. She concluded by announcing her departure from the City and thanked the City for all the years she has been able to work with them.

Monique leConge Ziesenhenné, Assistant City Manager announced that the City continued to plan for when Staff can return to work. Currently, only essential Staff was reporting for in-person work and all City services are being provided either virtually or by appointment. Staff continued to work on the Churchill Road Enhanced Bike Way which will be brought before the Committee in early 2021. Coronavirus testing was available at the Art Center by appointment every other Friday. The City continued to promote small businesses through the Uplift Local Program. Staff continued to encourage residents to follow the Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines regarding safe ways to travel.

Kristen O'Kane, Director of Community Services reported that the virtual tree lighting ceremony was held at 6:00 pm on November 20th, 2020. Also, a home decorating contest took place. The Magical Bridge Playground has reopened from 9:00 am to 4:30 pm Tuesday through Sunday under strict guidelines. Mondays were reserved for cleaning the playground, but also allowing specific disability groups to reserve the park.

Board Member DiBrienza thanked the Staff for all the events and she was very excited that the Magical Bridge Playground was open.

Chair Collins echoed Board Member DiBrienza's comments. He noted that playgrounds are still open even under the Purple Tier.

Council Member Kou concurred with the comments and asked how many children are in each classroom now that in-person learning has resumed.

Ms. Hendricks answered a maximum of 14 students per day when it use to be 19-22 students per day. The kids engage in activities inside and outside of the classroom, but with proper distancing and wearing masks.

Council Member Tanaka inquired if measurements have been taken in terms of what the impact has been in terms of remote learning. Chair Collins reported no.

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Rachel Cox was concerned about the construction delays of Addison Elementary School and she wanted to know when the school would be ready to reopen.

Chair Collins encouraged Ms. Cox to write to the principle of Addison Elementary School if she did not find the first email from the principal satisfactory.

Agenda Item Number 6 was heard next on the agenda.

6. Update on After School Sports Programming.

Chantal Cotton Gaines, Deputy City Manager acknowledged that there was a request to have more information about what was happening with after-school programs.

Kristen O’Kane, Director of Community Services disclosed that the City provided a scaled-back version of the middle school athletic program which was a skill-based program with no competitive play. The program was concluded in November 2020 due to weather and will start back up in January of 2021. Outdoor sports such as tennis and soccer continued to be active with pickleball starting in the winter. An outdoor cooking class was offered for kids as well, along with virtual classes. The City continues to provide leadership programs like the Palo Alto Youth Council and the Teen Advisory Board. The Palo Alto Art Center also provided virtual and in-person classes.

Council Member Kou was amazed by how many kids participated in the middle school athletic program. She wanted to know what programs were available for younger kids.

Ms. O’Kane noted that tennis was available for ages 5 through 18, soccer was for ages 3 to 16, the outdoor cooking class was for ages 6 through 13, and the academic classes was open to all ages.

Council Member Tanaka requested what the impacts were from the increased fee for the middle school athletic program.

Ms. O’Kane clarified that the fee was not increased because the full program was not being offered.

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Ms. DiBrienza agreed that the City's programs helped many kids through the tough pandemic.

Chair Collins advised the City to provide any information in places where the School District can help.

Karen Hendricks, Deputy Superintendent, Palo Alto Unified School District echoed that the kids have loved the City's programs.

4. Review of Recent City Council and PAUSD Board Meetings.

Council Member Kou summarized that Foothills Park Nature Preserve was opened to non-residents and there was a cap on the number of visitors who could be in the park at one time. Council has approved a project on San Antonio Road which contained 102-dwelling units as well as approved the expansion of the Housing Incentive Program (HIP) to 16 other properties along the San Antonio Road corridor. She disclosed that there needed to be coordination between PAUSD and the City to facilitate safe travel to school as San Antonio Road develops.

Council Member Tanaka mentioned that Council approved the contract with Palo Alto Community Childcare for 5-years for the management of the City's childcare subsidy program.

Chair Collins cautioned that San Antonio Road was one of the places within the City where it is more than a mile to the nearest elementary school. He foresaw challenges that PAUSD would face regarding how to facilitate safe school routes.

Board Member DiBrienza added that there are other areas where a school is located over a mile from new residences. The School District and the City will have to coordinate on how to help children get to and from school.

Chair Collins agreed that the School District should be included in the City's planning process. He articulated that the largest discussion at the School District's meeting was regarding the Secondary Re-Opening Plan. Data collection was in the process regarding programs that parents and students were interested in. After moving to the Purple Tier, any schools that were not open already are not allowed to open. Schools cannot open until Santa Clara County has passed two-week within the Red Tier. There was a strong desire to not have an additional disruption in student learning and so the

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schools would not open if it was in the middle of the semester. He concluded that the School District meeting that was to be held on December 8, 2020 was moved to December 15, 2020. A study session was to be held on December 8, 2020, that focused on Title 9. Students were encouraged to participate in the discussion with the School District Board on topics around sexual harassment and/or assault issues.

Board Member DiBrienza added that the lack of social connection was affecting kids and the School District was looking at ways to quickly return kids to in-person learning when it is safe to do so.

5. COVID-19 Coordination Update.

Chantal Cotton Gaines, Deputy City Manager noted that the City has been in coordinating outreach and testing dates to essential worker who require frequent testing.

Karen Hendricks, Deputy Superintendent, Palo Alto Unified School District appreciated the coordinated effort and stated that the School District continues to relay the message to employees.

Monique le Conge Ziesenhenné, Assistant City Manager remarked that Council Member Kou and the School District had attended some of the Citizen Court Council phone calls and updates.

Board Member DiBrienza inquired how the police department was enforcing the current mask mandate regarding young adults.

Ms. Ziesenhenné specified that it was educational enforcement instead of physical enforcement.

7. Updates on Ongoing Matters.

- a. Cubberley Update
- b. Connecting Palo Alto (Grade Separation) Update

Kristen O'Kane, Director of Community Services, reported that the City continued to work with School District Staff regarding safety concerns at Cubberley Community Center.

Chair Collins asked if the item should continue to be a standing item on the Agenda.

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Board Member DiBrienza predicted that the item could be removed from the Agenda.

Chair Collins mentioned that there has been interaction with Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) regarding an easement they were seeking on the property for a gas distribution pipeline. They have threatened a condemnation procedure against the School District to get the easement because the School District was not granting the easement. He believed it would take coordination between stakeholders and the City agencies to negotiate for extra time with PG&E to allow for appropriate analysis of the easement.

Ms. O’Kane noted that she had not heard about the situation.

Monique Zieshenne, Assistant City Manager commented that she would notify the Public Works Department as well as the City’s Utility Department.

Chair Collins advised updating the City Attorney as well.

Council Member Kou requested that information be distributed to all Council Members, the City Manager, and Executive Staff.

Ms. O’Kane articulated that there was an existing PG&E easement already running through the Cubberley Community Center Site and asked if that was the easement in question.

Chair Collins believed it was a brand-new easement.

Council Member Kou left the meeting at 9:33 AM.

Chantal Cotton Gaines, Deputy City Manager reported that the Expanded Community Advisory Panel (XCAP) had completed their deliberation process for the alternatives for Churchill Avenue, Meadow Drive, and Charleston Road grade crossings. Future XCAP meetings were scheduled for December 2, 2020, December 9th, 2020, and December 16, 2020. In terms of the Churchill Avenue grade crossing, the XCAP suggested a road closure with an option that provided a bicycle lane in the center of Churchill Avenue. The panel was divided about Meadow Drive and Charleston Road, so the panel provided pros and cons in the report that was to go to Council. The report was expected to be brought forward to Council in early year 2021.

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Ken Joye mentioned that the City was updating the Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Transportation Plan and welcomed all feedback regarding the update.

Council Member Tanaka advised Staff to give an update regarding the Measure B funding and Santa Clara County Valley Transportation Authority (VTA).

Ms. Gaines summarized that the City had received the Measure B funding Budget Outlook from VTA and it had no allocation for the grade separation projects within the first 10-years. The City sent a letter to VTA requesting further dialog.

Council Member Tanaka noted that the biggest issue was that voters had the expectation that they were taxing themselves to pay for grade separation and now the funding was being used for something else.

Chair Collins asked if Sale Tax was the source for Measure B Funds. Ms. Gaines confirmed yes.

Chair Collins summarized that the impression was that the City needed to move at a brisk pace to receive funding before it ran out. Now VTA was saying it could be 10-years before the funding is available. Ms. Gaines stated that is correct.

Council Member Tanaka clarified that Measure B funding prioritized the project of getting Bay Area Rapid Transit to the City of San Jose. For that reason, he predicted that the money may never be available.

Chair Collins disclosed that the school community had not been involved in the process at all and that it was important to engage school community if the City starts seeking more money from residents.

Future Meetings and Agendas

Chantal Cotton Gaines, Deputy City Manager announced that Project Safety Net will do a presentation at the December 17, 2020, meeting. Allcove Youth Advisory Group will be presenting to the group in January or February of 2021.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 9:47 A.M.