



School/City Liaison Committee Minutes



School/City Liaison Committee Meeting Wednesday, May 24, 2006

8:15 AM to 9:30 AM
City of Palo Alto, Civic Center
Council Conference Room
250 Hamilton Ave
Palo Alto

In Attendance:

City of Palo Alto

Larry Klein, City Councilmember, Chair
Dena Mossar, City Councilmember
Steve Emslie, Director of Planning and Community Environment
Mary Underhill, Administrative Assistant
Gayle Likens, Interim Chief Transportation Official
Kathy Durham, Commute Program Coordinator
Rob De Geus, Recreation and Youth Services Director
Kim Parker, Supervisor of Recreation Programs

Palo Alto Unified School District

Barb Mitchell, Board Member
Kathy Durkin, Manager of Auxiliary

Handouts: PAUSD Enrollment History and Projections
City of Palo Alto and PAUSD programs promoting Healthy Living
for youth and teens
Summary of finding from the Santa Clara County California
Healthy Kids Survey, 2004
Way 2 Go flyer-May is National Bike to Month
Safe Walking Tips for Grades K-2
Charleston-Arastradero Corridor Project Update Brochure
PAUSD Schools with Choice Programs: Enrollment and How Get
to School 1993-2006
PAUSD Neighborhood Schools: Enrollment & How get to School
1993-2006
PowerPoint Presentation on Joint Library Projects

***All handouts are available at the City Clerk's Office at 250
Hamilton Avenue or Deputy Superintendents Office at 25
Churchill.***

Meeting convened at 8:35 a.m.

1. Oral Communications

Bill Chapman spoke regarding school enrollment projections, and provided handouts that he compiled based upon the Lapkoff projections. The hand-outs portrayed graphs to illustrate the projections. Mr. Chapman stated that he would be meeting with Shelly Lapkoff and Jerry Matranga in approximately one week, to finalize the data before it is presented to the Committee next month.

2. Approval of Minutes – April 26, 2006

Ms. Mossar moved to approve, Ms. Mitchell seconded. Minutes approved 4-0.

3. Healthy City/School Program Matrix

Mr. De Geus talked about increasing obesity and inactivity in kids and teens, and the various programs and services that the City provides to promote healthy living for students. Mr. De Geus introduced Kim Parker, Supervisor of Recreation Programs for the City of Palo Alto. Ms. Parker said there is a rapid increase in chronic diseases related to obesity, such as hypertension and diabetes, problems traditionally seen mostly in adults. Ms. Parker reviewed the handout statistics from the California Healthy Kids Survey executive summary.

Mr. De Geus distributed a matrix outlining City of Palo Alto and PAUSD programs promoting healthy living for youth and teens. The goal is to offer a diverse range of fun, interesting programs that get kids active.

Ms. Mossar described a program she encountered recently on a visit to Cambridge, Massachusetts titled "Cambridge Walks". This is a successful program that is an organized hunt for gold shoes all over town with prizes. They have been very successful at getting both adults and children in the community to participate in the program. They are interested in exporting the program to other cities, and Ms. Mossar will provide the information to see if it is applicable for the City of Palo Alto.

Mr. Klein said he deliberately chose twenty years because TV was every bit as prevalent twenty years ago as it is today, and acknowledged that computer is a change. He stated that obesity is worse in poor communities than it is in middle class communities. Ms. Parker agreed, adding fast food diets, lifestyle and environmental changes. People used to walk and bike for transportation and now they are in cars or public transportation.

Mr. Klein advised distinguishing who they were talking about. Describing Palo Alto...the figures are better than they are in south central Los Angeles.

Ms. Parker said that if you take the California statistic there is a .2 difference between the Santa Clara County statistics, so it's really not a huge difference.

Mr. Klein begged to differ, stating that you have to disaggregate your statistics. Latino communities have more obesity problems.

Ms. Parker agreed, adding that the Latino population also had a higher rate of type 2 diabetes, and it is on the rise.

Mr. De Geus noted that obesity is still a big issue for kids in Palo Alto. Environment plays a huge role, and in poorer communities, there is less access to fresh, healthy foods, parks, and that is a big contributor as to why those folks are being affected.

Ms. Parker cited the Healthy Kids Survey information and that it is can be sorted demographically. The Asian-American population has rising obesity statistics, and it is catching up to the Latino population. Through the Healthy Kids Survey, you can search for whatever demographic you want to look at and see where the increase is, and that it has to do with habits and lifestyle.

Mr. Klein asked what they were finding in the kids, and what their response was to all this.

Ms. Mitchell updated the group on the prior night's school board meeting, and the approval of Wellness Policy that Linda Lenoir, District Nurse, described at a prior meeting. It is framed around eight components in the California State framework, e.g.: physical activity, nutrition, and education.

She noted that the charge at the moment is to have a health committee/health council develop a plan within the eight areas of concern. She appreciated the matrix and the effort it took the two organizations to come up with the common work that is being done.

Ms. Mossar said that as adults and role models, we should be setting good examples for our youth, and encouraged programs geared towards getting adults to change unhealthy habits.

When asked by Mr. Klein what they could do, Mr. De Geus suggested they recognize that this is an issue for youth in Palo Alto, as well as the state and the country. While we may have a few more resources, Palo Alto is not immune to this issue. The kids in Palo Alto are at risk, and as a policy maker it is important that the issue is recognized.

In regards to the Wellness Policy, Ms. Mossar suggested that the City support what the district is doing so that kids, families and people in our communities are getting the same message.

Mr. Klein said that Mr. De Geus and Ms. Parker had made them all more aware of the problem, and they would be alert to seeing what they can do.

4. Safe Routes to School

Ms. Likens noted that they were coming to the committee today mainly as a check-in, and not with any major items to discuss, mainly a brief update on the Charleston/Arastradero Corridor, an update to the previous discussion on the School Commute Choice graphs that Ms. Durham presented a few meetings ago, and a brief update on Bike to School/Bike to Work, what the schools were doing and how successful it was this year. In looking forward, to bring issues and concerns forward with the increase in school enrollment and how it might affect traffic safety.

Ms. Likens handed out copies of the brochure that was distributed to people within a quarter mile radius of the C/A corridor, approximately 2,000 residents. They are ready to begin construction both with the Gunn High improvements and on the striping of the corridor from Fabian to El Camino beginning next month. The brochure describes the issues, the goals of the project and the schedule. The second of two community meetings were held on 5/23/06 at Cubberley (the first was held last week at Terman, to let everyone know what is happening and to bring up to speed people who were not involved in the process two years ago). Both meetings were well attended with approximately 35 people each, considering a lot of the community members are already aware of the project.

Ms. Durham distributed the Safe Routes to School hand-out, which was a utility bill insert. In celebration of May's National Bike Month, some of the messages that are used in the Safe Routes to School materials about sharing the road were stressed. Additional hand-out materials included the Safe Walking Tips for Kids, an outgrowth of the Safe Moves presentation, presentations that are made to kindergarten through second grade. This is a great example of the partnership that has been building between the City, the School District, and the PTA.

Ms. Ellson, a member of the public who is very involved in the City's Safe Routes to School program, recommended the committee members go out and watch one of these programs. The children have fun and remember what they learned, and the programs are fun for adults as well.

Ms. Durham said that they would provide that opportunity to the Committee next year.

Ms. Durham distributed handout materials on the School Commute Choice over the past 15 years. In the past, the main focus has been on the percentage share, and not the absolute numbers. In this case the data on percentages was

combined with actual enrollment in elementary schools. There has been 18% growth in population at the elementary level from 2,900 to just under 3,450. At the same time the number of children who come to school in single family cars (not with anybody other than their own family), has held steady at around 1,450. Simultaneously, where the PTA have been putting the most emphasis has been on encouraging walking and biking and that percentage has increased from 33% to 47% at our neighborhood schools. All this effort is making a difference in the direction of supporting healthy activity in kids.

Ms. Durham reviewed the Choice Program Schools handout. Enrollment, while smaller, has been growing from 1,080 to 1,260 over the same period. Along with an increase in the number of kids, there has been an increase in the number of cars. This does not tell us anything other than what we would observe by going out to the schools. There have been increases in the walking and biking at these schools, which not everyone can do, but a larger percentage of kids at the Choice Schools really don't have the option to walk or bike. She noted that it is very hard for the volunteers to handle promoting car pooling, because it involves a central coordination and a level of expertise that they simply don't have. That they are still making a difference is very encouraging.

Ms. Ellson distributed materials from last week's Walk and Bike to School program. She was very happy with the outcome. In regards to the enrollment impacts on transportation issues around schools, she recommended collaborating as the school district completes the attendance area review, and making sure that they consider the placement of schools and safe school routes. She suggested getting a stronger commitment from the school district to work on some type of system such as car pool matching, staggering start times, specifically a pilot program.

Ms. Likes noted that these issues were on the work program for the coming year.

Ms. Mossar noted that she was on the Alma train track bike path yesterday, and was surprised at the number of children walking and biking, as well as a large number waiting for the Marguerite shuttle bus in front of Town and Country. The bike path is a significant addition, as it creates a safe access point.

Ms. Mossar asked Ms. Mitchell if there was a way to have that conversation-it's happened over the years at arms length. Is there some way to have an offline meeting with school district staff and board staff to identify what the issues are?

Ms. Mitchell said that she would be interested personally, and applauded Ms. Durham for the work.

Ms. Mossar said that they should take advantage of the leadership in the community, and would like to hear more about pilot programs on student safety.

5. Update on Joint Library Projects

City of Palo Alto Library Director Paula Simpson distributed copies of the PowerPoint presentation and introduced Maya Spector, City of Palo Alto School Liaison Librarian, Marie Scigliano, District Director of Libraries and Technology, and Library Advisory Commission members Valerie Stinger and Sanford Forte. Ms. Simpson turned the presentation over to Ms. Spector.

Ms. Spector narrated the slide presentation which covered outreach to PTA, and Palo Alto Community Childcare, just a few of the things they have done this year. She was invited to be on a panel on Safety on the Internet at Jordon, made a presentation on the Library's databases to the JLS PTA, and made many visits to kid's clubs throughout the Palo Alto Community Child Care, and conducted summer reading programs, and promotion assemblies to sign kids up for summer reading programs to keep their reading gains up over the summer.

Ms. Scigliano said that they were continuing to look at options for purchasing joint databases together.

Mr. Forte updated the Committee on a community survey. Town hall meetings, and census collection of demographic data, feed back for customers, stakeholders and partners numbered in the thousands for a Library Master Plan. Council has reviewed the draft recommendations and had given further guidance going forward. The recommendations put forward asked to retain the five branch systems, improve collections, expand Mitchell Park, and define specific roles for Main, College Terrace, Down Town and Children's libraries. Mitchell Park needs to be more than a branch, and this will be presented to the City Council as scheduled on September 11, 2006.

Mr. Klein said they had talked in the past about increased use of the school's libraries as in effect branch libraries of the city systems, and asked if there had been any progress.

Ms. Simpson said she and Ms. Scigliano had discussed that and felt that they need to come together and do a pilot program on a small scale.

Ms. Scigliano said that a lack of resources to be able to do some of the things that would incorporate next steps. Staff in the libraries is limited in the District.

Mr. Klein asked if there were examples of that working around the country, and Ms. Scigliano said there were many, even in the county.

Ms. Simpson suggested a possible corporate sponsorship to do a pilot.

Ms. Mossar suggested getting school board, council and staff members to sit down and hash it through together, as some of this is policy, some resources.

Ms. Simpson said that where she has seen it work the best is when there is leadership at the elected official level, administrative level, and staff resources to implement the program.

Ms. Mossar and Ms. Mitchell said they would be willing to spend time on the issue, and Mr. Klein noted a lack of volunteers, and asked who would take the initiative.

It was agreed that Ms. Simpson would set up a meeting that would include approximately twelve people: one or two people from the Library Advisory Committee, the City's library staff, someone from the PTA and School Board Council and District staff.

Ms. Scigliano said that Ms. Spector's contribution to the District has made significant growth in program development and services for children. She said Ms. Simpson's leadership and Ms. Spector's work have just been phenomenal.

Mr. Klein asked for a target for the meeting to occur by June 15th, and provide a status report at the next City School Committee meeting on June 28, 2006.

Ms. Mitchell asked Mr. Forte if he was satisfied with the amount of input that he received in community survey from parents and youth interests.

Mr. Forte said that the PTA Presidents Council last week showed that there was a lot of concern about libraries; parents really want more from our local libraries. His sense was that they got enough representative information from every segment of the community, and that the survey itself is a part of the diligence that goes into any advice that they give to Council in terms going forward with the library.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:40