



School/City Liaison Committee Minutes



School/City Liaison Committee Meeting Wednesday, May 25, 2005

8:15 AM to 9:45 AM
Palo Alto Unified School District
Conference Room A
25 Churchill Avenue
Palo Alto

In Attendance:

City of Palo Alto

Emily Harrison, Asst. City Manager
Sgt. Steve Herrera, Police Department
Yoriko Kishimoto, City Councilmember
Gayle Likens, Transportation
Dena Mossar, City Councilmember
Lt. Mark Venable, Police Department

Palo Alto Unified School District

Ann Crichton, PTA/Safe Routes to School Community Task Force
Kathy Durham, Safe Routes to School Community Task Force
Kathy Durkin, Manager of Auxillary Services
Penny Ellson, Fairmeadow PTA/Safe Route to School Community Task Force
Mandy Lowell, Board Member
Jerry Matranga, Associate Supt, Business Services
Gail Price, Committee Chair and Board Member
Richard Swent, PTA/PABAC/ Safe Routes to School Community Task Force

Attachments

"City School Traffic Safety Initiatives"

Meeting convened at 8:19 a.m.

1. Oral Communications

Ms. Durham announced that later in the morning, Ann Crichton would be receiving a grant award of \$2,500 from the PTA Council for the Safe Routes to School website.

2. Approval of Minutes – April 27, 2005

Ms. Mossar moved to approve the minutes and Ms. Lowell seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

3. Update on Joint City/School Traffic Safety Initiatives

Ms. Likens presented the of status on traffic-related action items. She also announced that Ashok Aggarwal, a City Traffic Engineer, was retiring as of June 30. Amanda Jones would also be leaving the City on June 30 and this position would not be filled.

Ms. Crighton said a draft for the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) website was being developed. They would probably be using a professional web designer and welcomed any suggestions. Some of the \$2,500 grant money would be saved for fine-tuning of this website next year.

Ms. Likens explained the list she handed out of City-School Traffic Safety Initiatives. (attached)

Sgt. Herrera said the date for "Safe Passage" was pushed back a week by the California Highway Patrol just before it started, but the Police Department went ahead and did its program as planned.

Ms. Ellson said the PTA had put together the traffic safety handbooks that would be distributed to all elementary parents. These remind parents at the beginning of the year to be aware of behavior. Press releases had also been put out throughout the year.

Ms. Crichton said there was a lot of discussion with parents and kids regarding the bike issues because of the bike event that involved ticketing. Events like this should be repeated.

Ms. Mossar noted that in the City's publications, the coordination between the City and the schools to make everyone safe should be promoted.

Mr. Swent said there were two classes. The first, Bringing Up Bicyclists (Kids I), which was for parents and children up to age 9, had rather poor attendance, because Cubberley did not allow a late enough start time. The second class, for 10-14 year olds and their parents (Kids II) was all sold out. This involved some training, then a four-mile bike ride.

Ms. Ellson said next year's PTA president agreed to bring Mr. Swent in to Fairmeadow to teach Kids I.

Ms. Harrison said she had just spoken to Mr. Emslie by phone. He said that, in spite of the departure of Ms. Jones, every item on the list of accomplishments would continue and that the emphasis would be on Safe Routes to School. The half-time position left vacant by Ms. Jones would be refilled, Ms. Likens would continue her work on many of the items, and the Transportation Division would be restructured. Ms. Harrison also said neighborhood traffic calming needed to come second to Safe Routes to School. In this way, resources could be consolidated.

Ms. Likens said, in response to Ms. Kishimoto's suggestion, that the Transportation Division would create a flyer on safe routes to the new Mayfield site.

Ms. Mossar asked Ms. Harrison about time and venue access for Kids I, because Cubberley was only letting Mr. Swent have a room at 6:30 p.m., which made the attendance very low. He would rather start at 7:30 p.m. so families could have time for dinner before the class.

Ms. Harrison said she would look into this.

Sgt. Herrera asked that crossing guards who witness violations write down license numbers and call the police after their shifts, rather than immediately calling in from cell phones. There was a concern that crossing guards using their cell phones would be taking their attention away from the safety of kids trying to cross the street. About twelve notices had been sent out so far this year to people who were seen driving dangerously near crosswalks. Sgt. Herrera said he was notified any time there was an incident involving a bike and that there had been eight so far this year, which was down from last year.

Lt. Venable said there were 61 accidents in 2003, involving bikes, 14 of which were school-related. The majority were at intersections and involved leaving and coming onto sidewalks. Of the 14 school-related incidents, the vehicle was found to be at fault in five, while in nine it was the fault of the bicyclist. Also, seven were in the morning and seven were in the afternoon. With all the education and follow-through happening now, accident rates should continue to decrease.

Ms. Crichton said more outreach was needed for parents of kids involved in these accidents, because many did not know what channels to go through to vent their frustration.

Ms. Kishimoto suggested collecting statistics on mode share.

Ms. Mossar said this program could develop a regular report including celebrations on improved statistics. These should become milestones in the City's budget to show taxpayers what they are getting for their money.

Ms. Harrison said one of the Council's "Top Five Priorities" was traffic and transportation.

Mr. Matranga suggested developing some metrics that were common to the District and City that could be measured over time in terms of getting improved results. Two potential benefits an improvement in community relations and the School/City Liaison Committee could then see where more effort was needed.

Ms. Price suggested starting small, with just a few metrics.

Ms. Durham said she had looked at school incident reports in the past. Less than half overlapped with police reports. She said new text about accident reporting would be added to student handbooks.

Ms. Kishimoto suggested having a form for reporting hazards.

Ms. Crichton said the SRTS website would also enable hazard reporting.

Ms. Durham said the goal was to be able to link this site to the City and District web reports.

Sgt. Herrera said the Police Department had a very good bike safety campaign the week before the Bike to School week. The purpose of this was to teach kids how to ride safely on Bike to School week. Most responses were positive and kids were more aware now. 83 kids got tickets, as well as 59 adults. As a result, the Fire Department would be very busy, because cited kids had to go to a Saturday safety class rather than pay a fine. Most of these incidents involved riding on the wrong side of road and helmet violations. Also, many adults ran red lights and stop signs.

Ms. Likens said there was a need for better coordination along the Charleston-Arastradero Corridor with the Hoover community and the Greenmeadow Neighborhood Association. An onsite meeting was held at Hoover, and traffic engineers came up with a solution that involved modifying the Nelson-Charleston intersection to provide for U-turns. The carpool match program was also continuing at Terman.

4. School/City Collaborative Efforts

Ms. Price said the previous night's Board of Education meeting included an enclosure which listed many of the collaborative efforts between the District and the City. This was available on-line at <http://www.pausd.org>.

Mr. Matranga said this list was just the beginning and that any input was welcome.

5. Future Meetings and Agenda Items

It was determined that libraries and i-Net would be on the agenda for the next meeting, which was to be held on Wednesday, June 22, 2005 at 8:15 a.m.

Ms. Kishimoto asked if a report could be given on demographics.

Ms. Harrison said the Community Services Department had been looking at this issue as part of its strategic planning process and that this could be agendized here.

Adjournment 9:28 a.m.