



City/School Liaison Committee Special Meeting Minutes



Special Meeting
February 18, 2021

Chantal Cotton Gaines, Deputy City Manager, called the meeting to order on this date in virtual teleconference at 8:30 A.M.

Present: City of Palo Alto Representatives
Patrick Burt, Vice Mayor
Greg Tanaka, Council Member
Chantal Gaines, Deputy City Manager, Staff Liaison

Palo Alto Unified School District Representatives
Jennifer DiBrienza, Board Member (arrived at 8:32 AM)
Shounak Dharap, President
Don Austin, Superintendent, Palo Alto Unified School District

Absent:

Oral Communications

Rebecca Eisenberg wanted to see better coordination between City Council (Council) and Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD). She encouraged all the City School Liaison Committee Members to attend each other's meetings. She disclosed her concern regarding Castilleja School and its long history of equity issues.

Minutes Approval

2. Approval of the December 17, 2020 Meeting Minutes.

Chantal Cotton Gaines, Deputy City Manager announced that normally new members do not vote on the minutes.

Board Member DiBrienza requested that the word Counsel be changed to Council.

MOTION: Board Member DiBrienza moved, seconded by Council Member Tanaka to approve the minutes with the following changes:

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A. To change from the wording from "PTA Counsel" to "PTA Council."

Vice Mayor Burt specified that he did not view the meeting recording and felt uncomfortable voting on the minutes.

Board Member DiBrienza confirmed that only two members could vote on the minutes and there needed to be three.

Vice Mayor Burt shared that he would review the meeting recording and then vote at the next meeting to approve the minutes.

Monique leConge Zieshenne, Assistant City Manager agreed that approval of the minutes will be held over to the next meeting.

Board Member Dharap confirmed that he would also review the recording and vote at the next meeting.

MOTION FAILED

THIS ITEM WAS CONTINUED TO NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING

3. Selection of Committee Chair.

Chantal Cotton Gaines explained that each year the Chair position alternates between City Members and Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) Members. For 2020, PAUSD held the Committee Chair position.

NOMINATION: Board Member Dharap moved, seconded by Board Member DiBrienza to nominate Vice Mayor Burt as Chair for the City School Liaison Committee for 2021.

Rebecca Eisenberg emphasized that there is a crisis regarding racial equity within the City and country. While she supported Vice May Burt, she requested that Council Member Tanaka be Chair.

NOMINATION OF VICE MAYOR BURT PASSED: 4-0

4. Brief Superintendent's Comments and City Manager's Comments.

Chantal Cotton Gaines, Deputy City Manager mentioned that Staff had presented the Bikeway Project along Churchill Avenue to the Board of Education (Board) at their last meeting. Coronavirus (COVID-19) testing continued to be available at various sites throughout City. In terms of the

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21-day Equity Challenge, the City has partnered with Youth Community Services (YCS), Parent Teacher Association Council (PTAC), and Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) to have a conversation regarding equity within the community.

Yolanda Conaway, Assistant Superintendent of the Palo Alto Unified School District, announced that the program was on day 18 of the 21-day challenge. Roughly 2,000 people signed up for the program and discussions commenced regarding housing, awareness, and impacts regarding equity. Every Thursday a discussion is held with various speakers and questions and answer sessions.

Don Austin, Superintendent of the Palo Alto Unified School District declared that the pipeline project regarding Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) has been resolved. Currently, over 2,100 students were back in school for in-person learning, 120 students rode the bus, 400 high school students were attending sports, and well over 100 teachers were back. PAUSD planned to have the 6th grade return to school on March 1st, 2021, and grades 7th through 12th would return shortly after March 1st, 2021.

Chair Burt reported that City Council (Council) had approved the next Bike Plan element that was to begin the design phase of improving the bike system on Fabian Way, Charleston Road, and East Meadow Drive. A study session was held regarding the Teacher Housing Program near the Court House and the Council strongly supported it. The Expanded Community Advisory Panel (XCAP) has finished their work and the important issues regarding PAUSD were the recommendation to close Churchill Avenue as well as the recommendations regarding Charleston Road and East Meadow Drive. The Council also discussed the upcoming City Budget and the Council will revisit and recalibrate the Capital Plan to accommodate the pandemic and revenue shortfalls.

5. Brief Review of Recent City Council and PAUSD Board Meetings.
 - a. Update on the 21-day Habit Building Equity Challenge.
 - b. COVID-19 Coordination Update.

Rebecca Eisenberg remarked that Ms. Conaway has done incredible work regarding the 21-day Equity Challenge. She requested that all City School Liaison Committee (Committee) Members take part in the challenge and possibly discuss in each meeting one issue that was raised during the challenge. She reemphasized that Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) needed to be involved in the Castilleja School Project discussions, the closure of Churchill Avenue, the Cubberley Community Center discussions as

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well as the conversion of retail space converting to the medical office at Town and Country Shopping Center.

Board Member DiBrienza mentioned that the 21-Day Equity Challenge was very successful. She announced that the D-F Report was distributed at the last Board of Education (Board) meeting and there were fewer kids receiving grades Ds and Fs. PAUSD has pushed to help teachers receive the Coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccinations, which was successful and teachers will begin to receive them soon. She concurred that the closure of Churchill Avenue will greatly impact PAUSD's buses and she wanted to know how the closure will impact the bike plans that were discussed for Churchill Avenue.

Chair Burt explained that two alternatives go along with the closure and both alternatives include extensive options for improving bicycle and pedestrian access.

Board Member Dharap commented that the Board of Education (Board) had a deep discussion on equity and the potential creation of a Board Committee that will be tasked with oversight over the equity measures the PAUSD is taking. The Board acted to allocate \$1.5 million to modernize the I Building at Cubberley Community Center. He shared that in terms of COVID-19 coordination, there have been zero transmissions of the virus within PAUSD.

Chair Burt added that PAUSD has taken drastic steps to reduce airborne virus transmissions within the schools themselves through air filtration and other various methods. He encouraged PAUSD to communicate more on how PAUSD is fighting against the spread of the virus.

6. Allcove Presentation and Update.

Chantal Cotton Gaines, Deputy City Manager shared that the item was an update on the conversations that were happening related to Community Economic Recovery. Allcove's mission was to address youth mental health within the community.

Jules Villanueva-Castano, Allcove Representative requested that the team introduce themselves.

Steve Adelsheim, Allcove Representative shared he is the Director for the Center of Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing.

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Catherine Aspiras, Allcove Representative expressed she is with the Santa Clara County Behavioral Health Services Department and is the Program Manager who oversaw the school base of behavioral services.

Ana Lilia Soto, Allcove Representative announced she is the Youth Development Manager at Stanford Center for Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing. She also worked with the Youth Advisory Group (YAG).

Simrum Rao, Allcove Representative voiced that she is a Member of the Palo Alto YAG at Allcove as well as the Social Media Officer.

Myra Xu, Allcove Representative was also a YAG Member and a Senior at Palo Alto High School.

Stephanie Peng, Allcove Representative confirmed she was also on the Palo Alto YAG and a senior at Palo Alto High School.

Mr. Villanueva-Castano, Allcove Representative specified that he is the Support Education Employment Specialist with Allcove in the City of San Jose and in the City.

Steve Eckert, Allcove Representative disclosed that he is the CEO of Alum Rock Counseling Center.

Mr. Adelsheim disclosed that the City is facing a mental health crisis among its teens and it is very important to have early mental health support. To encourage more mental health support for teens outside of school, there was a collaboration among several entities to start two Allcove sites. The core services provided at the Allcove sites included mental health, physical health, supported education and employment, substance use support, peer support, and social support. One of the key aspects of the Allcove model was the youth voice and services and supports that were guided by young people.

Ms. Xu shared that Allcove practices inclusivity. The name is meant to be inclusive as well as an understanding of having autonomy in service and support.

Ms. Rao noted that youth struggle with hardships but rarely talk about them. To encourage youth to reach out and engage in discussions, Allcove provided three key moments. At the entrance and check-in, youth are greeted in an accepting way, services are tailored to each youth to provide an

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understanding offering and then youth are guided and connected with services. YAG continued to work with Allcove to ensure that there was transparency as well as the right services available to youth.

Ms. Peng articulated that the Allcove space will be a non-clinical space with warm tones and have a variety of seating areas and textures.

Ms. Aspiras reported that the discussion around creating such a space for youth started in 2015 with a Feasibility Study that looked at Allcove sites. In 2017, County General Funds were invested in the implementation and a contract with Stanford University was formed to help with technical assistance. In 2017, the Mental Health Services Act Stakeholder Leadership Committee approved the project. In 2019, Allcove became the official name and the Board of Supervisors approved the leases of the sites located in Palo Alto as well as the City of San Jose. In 2020, a virtual youth wellness support program was implemented online to help with the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic. Construction is to be completed for the Palo Alto site in April 2021 with a site activation on May 14, 2021. The lead agency was the Santa Clara County Behavioral Health Services Department. The YAG provided input on Staff hiring as well as peer supportive services. The providers and subject matter experts included Alum Rock Counseling Center, Santa Clara County Behavioral Health Services Department, Stanford Center for Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing, and Valley Medical Center. The City site is located at 2741 Middlefield Road. She briefly described the layout of the site.

Ms. Rao explained that the YAG ensures that there is a youth voice at the core of all Allcove touchpoints and that each center has its own youth advisory group. The engagement of the YAG within the center builds community and trust among youth.

Ms. Peng shared that the mission of Allcove YAG was to empower young people to become the leading voice in redefining mental wellness, reducing stigma, and increasing access to mental health support. The vision was to revolutionize mental wellness for young people and the core values were youth voice, accessibility, and mental wellness.

Ms. Soto highlighted the principles of youth participation which included youth involvement, youth expertise, youth direction, learning, leadership, collaboration, and shared decision making.

Ms. Peng noted that youth advisors share similar living experiences and situations as other youth. For this reason, members can empathize and support other youth with their mental health and build empowerment.

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Ms. Xu emphasized that youth inclusion made sure that Allcove effectively responds to the needs of young people. YAG continued to work with marketing Staff to ensure as many youths as possible become aware of Allcove and its services.

Mr. Villanueva-Castano explained the supported education and employment service cycle of change model. The model included six stages that Staff focused on. Precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, maintenance, and learning experiences. When youth seek out services from Allcove, Staff discovers what stage they are in and then works with the youth to move them forward to the next stages. Education pathways provided at Allcove included academic advocacy support, academic skill-building support, academic placement support, and community connections. Employment pathways included skill-building, job seeking, and communication connections to local workforce development agencies, employment skill-building organizations, and connections to certificate/union-based programs. Workshops and training will also be offered to help.

Mr. Eckert shared that Alum Counseling Center has been in business for 46-years and is a multi-service agency that provided 13 programs. Allcove's peer support specialists would serve the population of youth from age 12 to 25. Alum Counseling Center will provide non-clinical services at Allcove and lead and coordinate the Community Consortium. The Community Consortia met quarterly and the 12 members included Elected Officials, community college representatives, and other service providers.

Rebecca Eisenberg expressed excitement about the Allcove Program and she urged the Council to financially assist and support the program.

Council Member Tanaka asked how students get involved.

Ms. Soto mentioned that the application process has started for YAG and that is how youth can become involved. Also, other opportunities were available if youth are interested.

Council Member Tanaka requested if the YAG is only available for high school students.

Ms. Soto answered that the YAG was for youth ages 16 to 25. Allcove will provide services for youth starting at age 12.

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Board Member DiBrienza was excited about the program.

Chair Burt expressed awe at how fast the program is moving. He wanted to understand more about the Community Consortium and the roles that exist with Stanford University, PAUSD, the City, and Project Safety Net. He requested that a follow-up discussion take place regarding the Community Consortium. He shared that Mayor DuBois has launched an initiative that at the beginning of Council meetings, community partners will have 15-minutes to promote their programs to the community.

Mr. Adelsheim announced that he would follow up with the City School Liaison Committee (Committee) regarding collaboration.

Council Member Tanaka left the meeting at 10:00 A.M.

Future Meetings and Agendas

Chair Burt asked for future agenda topics.

Board Member DiBrienza wanted to see a standing update on the railroad crossing project.

Chair Burt urged the Board of Education (Board) to participate in the upcoming City Council (Council) meetings.

Board Member Dharap supported having a standing agenda item that discussed shared interests between the City and Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD).

Matt Savage, Health Policy Analyst of the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors was excited about Allcove opening in the coming months.

Chair Burt shared an outline with the City School Liaison Committee (Committee) on a possible way to structure discussions around shared interests. He suggested that at the next meeting the Committee discuss the outline.

Board Member DiBrienza concurred with that suggestion.

Chantal Cotton Gaines, Deputy City Manager added that Staff will work with the Chair to agendize a discussion regarding the Cubberley Community Center and the railroad crossing project.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 10:05 A.M.