



HSR City Council Subcommittee

Members

Patrick Burt
Larry Klein
Nancy Shepherd
Gail Price

Special Meeting

Thursday, March 18, 2010
8:30 am – 10:00 am
Council Conference Room
Civic Center
250 Hamilton Avenue
Palo Alto, CA

Minutes

1. Oral Communications

Chair Klein said the Subcommittee should evaluate the CSS Toolkit during the next meeting.

CM Price clarified whether “CSS” is different terminology for the advanced community outreach process.

Mayor Burt said CSS is not just public outreach.

Nadia Naik said we need to evaluate goals vs. needs. All stakeholders are on level ground, but we are not – we are just waiting for them to provide us with information.

Public Comment: Concerned about noise issues and even if HSR will be underground, it would cause major vibrations. Concerned about the closure of Alma during construction. City Council needs to take a stronger stand against HSR.

Public Comment: A realtor said the realty community is concerned about neighborhoods. Every buyer and seller is notified of disclosure.

Mr. Emslie said the EIR is available on the HSR web site and copies are available at the library.

Mayor Burt said realtors would provide valuable insight and a different perspective to our committee.



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2. Public Outreach Strategy

Mr. Emslie said we should discuss the upcoming key decision points: EIR (already released) and the Alternatives Analysis (tentatively scheduled for release on April 8). We need to focus our attention on keeping people involved and engaged, but also having an agenda at the same time. He asked the Subcommittee members what the best way to engage citizens is.

CM Shepherd said we already have some quality of standards of life in Palo Alto and we need to be vested in those. Our citizens should know facts such as the frequency and consistency of noise and vibration.

Mr. Emslie agreed that those are points we should share with the citizens. He also pointed out that the City has noise standards that cannot be modified.

CM Price said a consultant should be present in an outreach setting because of the complexities of expertise that we do not have at a staff level.

Mr. Emslie said we are in a reactive mode, until the consultants approach us.

CM Price wondered if it was timely to get out into the community and present the current options to the public.

Chair Klein asked what the due date is for comments.

Mr. Emslie said April 26.

Sara Armstrong said we should take into account that the HSR board meetings are on April 7 and 8, which could effect when a public outreach event occurs.

CM Shepherd said the purpose of a community outreach meeting should be for the public to act – people are responding to multiple layers (convoluting the situation).



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Chair Klein proposed having an informational meeting before April 7 that would discuss the general process of the Program Level EIR. A second meeting could be scheduled when our consultant is ready to provide analysis.

CM Shepherd stated the meeting should include baseline decisions.

Mayor Burt said the purposes of extended community outreach are to 1) get people to come to the meeting, 2) provide content at the meetings, and 3) utilize the media as much as possible to get word out regarding the meetings.

Chair Klein motioned for two meetings: 1) an informational meeting for the public (what the Program Level EIR is all about) before April 7, and 2) a meeting during the April 12 City Council meeting.

CM Price seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

3. Legislative Strategy

Mr. Emslie said we need to closely monitor bills in each legislative session and oppose them if they impact Palo Alto. We also have not gotten more perspective in talking to legislators to introduce bills that would change decision-making of HSR to make them more accountable.

CM Price said we do not need to be talking about authority, operations, etc. of HSR, more so than CSS.

Mr. Emslie said HSR should be held more accountable. We need to find a legislator that would introduce bills for us, etc.

Chair Klein said from a legislative perspective, we need to talk to the Federal Rail Authority.

Mayor Burt noted the Subcommittee should meet with Rhavi Mehta on April 6.



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4. Discussion of City Response to the Revised HSR Program EIR

CM Shepherd said we are behind in getting our community partners, etc. (Parks and Recreation, HRB) invested.

Mr. Emslie said we would have to get on many of these groups' agendas in order to speak with them.

CM Shepherd asked if there were any other stakeholders we should reach out to.

Mr. Emslie responded PAUSD, Cal Ave., Palo Alto Medical Foundation, Stanford, etc.

CM Shepherd motioned to contact city stakeholders for the Subcommittee to be placed on their agendas or to call a special meeting. No second.

5. Discussion of Guiding Principles

CM Shepherd questioned whether we are following through on our demands of accountability.

Mayor Burt said the Guiding Principles do not need any action.

CM Price motioned to continue this item on April 1. Chair Klein seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion passed.

6. Follow up on Correspondence

Gayle Likens stated there are two pieces of correspondence we are sending out: 1) a letter to the Governor, and 2) a letter to the Chair of the Natural Resources Committee.

Mayor Burt said Jeff Barker is the Deputy Director of the Rail Authority for outreach. We should respond to his inaccurate claims regarding the NEPA. We should write letters to Caltrain regarding the inadequacy of responses that we have received – they are in violation of the Public



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Records Request Act. We need to start holding them accountable in advance.

Mayor Burt motioned to hold them accountable in advance. Chair Klein seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

7. Responses to Questions for City Attorney

Mr. Emslie said we need to include in our comments that more outreach should be conducted. We should bring this item back to the Subcommittee on April 1.

8. Future Meetings and Agendas

Chair Klein said we should receive a report from Public Works Assistant Director Mike Sartor and Utilities Engineering Manager Greg Scoby during our next meeting.

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