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**MINUTES  
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
July 23, 109  
CITY HALL  
250 Hamilton Avenue  
Palo Alto, California**

13 **Commissioners Present:** Anne Cribbs, Jeff Greenfield, Ryan McCauley, Don McDougall,  
14 David Moss, and Keith Reckdahl

15 **Commissioners Absent:** Jeff LaMere

16 **Others Present:** Council Member Cormack

17 **Staff Present:** Daren Anderson, Kristen O'Kane, Natalie Khwaja

18 **I. ROLL CALL**

19 **II. AGENDA CHANGES, REQUESTS, and DELETIONS**

20 Chair McDougall: Are there any comments, changes, deletions, or requests relative to  
21 the agenda from anybody? If not, we'll proceed with the agenda as published. I would  
22 like to not necessarily warn people but inform people that if you add up the 15, 45  
23 minutes and so on, it adds up to about 10:00. I am going to make every effort that we  
24 actually get to 10:00 and not 11:00 or 12:00. I hope I'm never rude, but I will be  
25 encouraging as we go.

26 **III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

27 Chair McDougall: The first thing I'd like to do is have Oral Communications on topics  
28 that are not on the agenda with one exception. I'll start with Winter Dellenbach.  
29 Welcome.

30 Winter Dellenbach: Hi. I have concerned myself with tree protection and our tree  
31 protection ordinance for many years. You'll see why this is relevant in a minute. At the  
32 post office two blocks away from here is a dawn redwood tree, one of the three kinds of  
33 redwood species on the planet Earth. It was planted at the post office on Arbor Day,  
34 March 7, 1949, a very significant date as you will learn, 1949. In 1941, a tree fossil was



1 discovered by a botanist in China of what he presumed was an ancient, extinct species.  
2 In 1943, another botanist discovered a single tree in Szechuan Province he judged to be  
3 450 years old. Finally in 1948, a third scientist went into the area's valleys, finding  
4 hundreds of these trees, making the connections between the 1941 fossil and the 1943  
5 tree, and the world was introduced to dawn redwood. With less than 1,000 in existence,  
6 it was on the edge of extinction. The discovery fired the imaginations of international  
7 scientists and the public. Seeds of dawn redwood were distributed internationally in 1949  
8 through the efforts of Chinese and American scientists in order to increase the chances of  
9 species survival. One of those seeds came to Palo Alto and was planted on U.S.  
10 government land at our post office. We were doing our part to save the species, and we  
11 still are. Dawn redwood remains a critical risk of extinction in the wild in China. This  
12 year is our dawn redwood's 70th birthday at the post office. Until two years ago, dawn  
13 redwood was thriving, and then the post office stopped watering the tree, and it started to  
14 struggle. Today, it is in great distress not because of drought but because of neglect. The  
15 City has no jurisdiction over federal land. It's been hard, but there may now be an  
16 agreement negotiated to start to water again, maybe. March 19, City head of Urban  
17 Forestry, Walter Passmore, spoke to you about the need for an ongoing community forum  
18 such as your Commission that would concern itself with trees and urban forestry, a good  
19 suggestion. There is no current City forum directly involved with any role or any  
20 interface with urban forestry. Palo Alto, known as Tree City. I ask that you consider  
21 being that forum and request staff to look into it. Also, I ask that you request staff to  
22 contact Urban Forester Walter Passmore, City Manager Ed Shikada to see if they can  
23 lend any assistance in getting a reliable water supply quickly to dawn redwood, which  
24 may die. Thank you.

25 Chair McDougall: Thank you, Winter. I have a second card here from Rita Vrhel. Rita,  
26 are you speaking to one of the topics or just in general?

27 Rita Vrhel: I wanted to speak to the Foothills Park and to the ...

28 Chair McDougall: That is Item Number 3. I'm making one exception on that. If you  
29 could hang on, we'd appreciate it.

30 Ms. Vrhel: I appreciate that. Thank you.

31 Chair McDougall: Thank you. The one exception that I'm making to speaking to topics  
32 not on the agenda would be to invite Lee Levy to come and speak on Item Number 3 in  
33 respect for his time.

34 Lee Levy: Thank you very much. I appreciate that. Two weeks ago, I went up to San  
35 Francisco to attend a free concert at Sigmund Stern Grove of the San Francisco  
36 Symphony. I obviously don't pay taxes in San Francisco, but I had no problem attending  
37 the concert. Nobody questioned whether I was from in town or out of town. This past

1 weekend, I was on the Stanford campus, and I had the pleasure of bicycling on their  
2 extensive and very-well-kept-up bicycle paths. I also went into the Anderson Collection.  
3 Again, it was free. Again, no one asked where I lived, where I was from. Over the years,  
4 I've been to many parks locally, Huddart Park, Los Trancos Open Space District, San  
5 Antonio, Sam McDonald, and of course spent a lot of time at Foothill Park. I admired  
6 Foothill Park greatly and have appreciated how well the City has protected that park and  
7 maintained it. I've also felt a little bit of a concern that I was there, but neighbors were  
8 excluded. I appreciated the work of the ad hoc committee and their proposal that we test  
9 a program to open the park somewhat more to our neighbors. It's a sensible program, I  
10 think, and it's a test. If the test doesn't work, we go back. If the test does work, we in my  
11 opinion go forward. A number of years ago, when I was more active in public affairs, I  
12 used to write songs. One of the songs was about Foothill Park. It was taken from the  
13 Woody Guthrie folk ballad, "This Land Is My Land, This Land Is Your Land." This  
14 song, however, went "this park is my park. It is not your park." I have a couple of copies  
15 of the song if you'd like to take a look at it. I won't burden you with singing it, but I do  
16 hope that at long last this song can be laid to rest. Thanks very much.

17 Chair McDougall: Thank you. We'd like to thank you for your comments and for not  
18 singing. If there are no other non-agenda items, I'd like to invite the Department Report.

19 **IV. DEPARTMENT REPORT**

20 Daren Anderson: Good evening. Daren Anderson, Community Services Department.  
21 I've got a few updates for you. The first of which, I'd like to thank Commissioner  
22 Greenfield for reporting some rockslides up at Foothills Park. I just wanted to report that  
23 the Rangers found those on Los Trancos, have cleared the rockslides and the downed  
24 trees. Thank you for that. I had a couple of Commissioners ask me about the Los Altos  
25 sewage treatment plant, what was going on there. This is a City-owned property adjacent  
26 to the Baylands Nature Preserve. Public Works has recently taken down some of the—  
27 it's one old building and several sheds that were adjacent to this property. They were  
28 unsafe, unsightly, and falling apart, and so they had to remove them. That's just been  
29 accomplished. They're regrading the area around those buildings, where they were.  
30 Likewise, there was a drainage ditch that went down to one of the sections of the pond  
31 that was ponding and creating mosquito habitat. They have cleared that and are grading  
32 that for proper drainage as well. There's one other facility out there, and it's the digester.  
33 That will remain onsite. They're going to repaint it because it's covered in graffiti.  
34 They're going to put a fence around it and make sure people can't get in there and throw  
35 more debris. It was clear there were people camping in it and other nefarious activities.  
36 If you want additional information, we can set up a time for the ad hoc on the Baylands to  
37 meet with Phil Bobel, Assistant Director, and get into more details. That's the  
38 information I've got for you tonight. I also received a question about the fruit fly incident  
39 that recently happened. This was on June 28 and July 2nd that the County and the State



1 Department of Food and Agriculture identified and confirmed that we had two invasive  
2 peach fruit flies in Palo Alto in the area of Embarcadero Road and U.S. Highway 101.  
3 As a result of those confirmed detections, organic bait treatments were applied on  
4 July 2nd within a 1.5-mile radius from where the fruit flies were found. Commissioner  
5 McDougall had asked me if there were any concerns about the parks, are we seeing any  
6 impacts. We are not seeing any impacts in the parks, and we did check with our  
7 community gardeners to see if anyone had noticed anything. Unfortunately, it's the kind  
8 of thing you only notice once you open the fruit that they affect, and you would find  
9 maggots inside. No one's reported, but we asked them to keep their ears out. If they hear  
10 anything, they'll let us know. In turn, we would report this to the County. The pickleball  
11 project, an update on that. This is the Mitchell Park pickleball court project. It's  
12 anticipated to begin in September of this year and be completed by November 2019. The  
13 project's currently under concurrent review with both our Planning Department and our  
14 Building Department. The contract is complete, and insurance bonds are in place. We're  
15 ready to issue the notice to proceed as soon as we get those permits. The Cubberley track  
16 and field renovation project is underway. We're under contract with O'Grady  
17 Incorporated. Their sub on the project is Spin Turf. The work accomplished so far is the  
18 removal of the turf and infill, which will be recycled. There's still some infill on the  
19 process of the removal of the field that needs to be cleaned up. We're working with the  
20 contractor to address that. Thank you, Commissioner Moss, for bringing that to my  
21 attention. Between now and mid-August, they'll install the new turf. Between mid-  
22 August and the end of September, they'll remove the old track and put in the new all-  
23 weather track. Project to be completed by October 5.

24 Vice Chair Greenfield: Will the field be open while the track renovation is in progress?

25 Mr. Anderson: No. It'll have to be closed. The 101 bike/ped bridge schedule update.  
26 Caltrans has approved the project design and issued the right of certification and an  
27 encroachment permit for the project. We're now anticipating approval of the federal  
28 funds authorization application in the next couple of weeks. Upon issuance of that, the  
29 project is anticipated to go out to bid in August 2019 and begin construction in fall 2019,  
30 to be completed in winter 2020. The existing undercrossing will be closed during the  
31 bike bridge construction due to safety reasons and will be permanently closed for public  
32 access post-construction. I was also asked about the status of the 3350 Lambert Avenue  
33 property, the AT&T parcel, that we have been pursuing purchasing. This is the one  
34 adjacent to Boulware Park. I just wanted to let you know the City's still in negotiations  
35 with the property owner at this point. As soon as we have more, we'll bring that to the  
36 Commission's attention. I was asked about the status of the interpretive signage project  
37 for the Baylands Nature Center. This is the one that John Aiken has been working on.  
38 This project adds interpretive signs to help the connection between the Baylands Nature  
39 Preserve Interpretive Center and the Cooley Landing Education Center. The number of  
40 signs will be determined during the design process and the stakeholder review, which the



1 Parks and Rec Commission will be part of that. It will be coming to you. We've got  
2 confirmation that the Friends of Palo Alto Parks will be giving \$54,000 towards the  
3 project. That'll go towards design and part of the fabrication. Right now, they're looking  
4 at a few other grants to supplement that. The money hasn't come through with the  
5 Friends yet; it's sort of pending some other grants that might be coming in. I'll have more  
6 information for you soon. The tentative schedule is that the planning and ARB review  
7 for this has been completed. The CEQA is underway, and the design will get going in  
8 October 2019 through the following year, October 2020. Fabrication is somewhere in the  
9 timeframe of November to May 2021, and installation in May 2021. Again, this project  
10 will come to you for discussion, and we'll get far more into the details of that project at  
11 that point.

12 Chair McDougall: Did you say it had already been to ARB?

13 Mr. Anderson: ARB has done a preliminary review. The Mercedes building application,  
14 I think the last time we talked about this, Council had approved the project. They  
15 approved the massing of the project, requiring as a condition of approval that the aspects  
16 of design come back to the Architectural Review Board as part of a separate application  
17 in order to improve the design of the project. The Mercedes project planner informed me  
18 that the applicant is in the process of preparing to submit a subsequent application to the  
19 ARB, but they don't have the timeframe yet. Lastly, the update on the Arastradero  
20 community garden. This is our newest community garden that's coming online soon.  
21 Park staff started the installation of the irrigation today, and we anticipate the garden will  
22 be open for business at the end of August. That concludes the Department Report.

23 Chair McDougall: Thank you. Are there any questions?

24 Commissioner Moss: Where is the Arastradero community garden?

25 Mr. Anderson: This is at the Palo Alto Christian Reform Church. They formerly had a  
26 common ground demonstration garden there.

27 Chair McDougall: If there are no questions or comments, thank you, Daren.

28 **V. BUSINESS**

29 **1. Approval of Draft Minutes from the May 28, 2019 Parks and Recreation**  
30 **Commission meeting.**

31 Approval of the draft May 28, 2019 Minutes was moved by Commissioner Reckdahl and  
32 seconded by Commissioner Moss. Passed 5-0, McDougall abstaining, LaMere absent

1           **2.     Dog Parks and Park Restrooms**

2           Chair McDougall: That takes us to the dog park discussion. We will be introduced by  
3           Daren as a staff presentation of the review. After Daren speaks, we'll have comments  
4           from the speakers who have cards here.

5           Mr. Anderson: Good evening. Daren Anderson again from Community Services  
6           Department. Here tonight to discuss dog parks and park restrooms and get your feedback  
7           on the recommendations and concepts that the ad hoc committee has regarding dog park  
8           off-leash opportunities and appropriate locations for park restrooms. I'm going to start by  
9           providing background information on our dog parks. Palo Alto's got four dog parks.  
10          We've one in Greer, Hoover, Mitchell, and now Peers Park. Peers Park dog park, our  
11          most recent one, opened in June 2018. That project was funded through a capital  
12          improvement project—I'm going to call that CIP. The City's five-year Capital  
13          Improvement Program has a CIP which provides funding, \$150,000, for dog parks in  
14          fiscal years 2020, 2022, and 2024. It's important to note that the funding for the CIP  
15          comes from Park Development Impact Fees, which require that it be used for expanding  
16          capacity. That is, new dog parks or taking an existing one and doing something that  
17          would expand the capacity of use for that facility. What it may not be used for is  
18          maintenance practices. For example, if we were to look at one of our existing dog parks  
19          and say we want these other exercise amenities added, that would not be allowed. If we  
20          wanted to move the fence or build new fence to expand that, that would be allowed. If  
21          that makes sense. The Parks, Trails, Natural Open Space and Recreation Master Plan  
22          provides guidance on dog parks. The Plan noted that all of Palo Alto's dog parks, except  
23          for our newest one, Peers, are all located in south Palo Alto. The policy and program for  
24          that dog park, which was included in your staff report, explains that we should pursue  
25          dedicated, fenced dog parks equitably distributed between north and south Palo Alto, and  
26          that we should have at least six dedicated, fenced parks. In addition to providing  
27          potential sites for new dog parks, it also proposed expanding some of those existing dog  
28          parks. The ad hoc committee and staff have been working to identify the best use of that  
29          dog park CIP funding that's available in FY '20 and '22. The ad hoc committee  
30          recommends using the FY 2020 CIP funds to expand those existing dog parks at Greer  
31          and Mitchell Parks. The ad hoc committee will continue analyzing potential dog park  
32          locations, particularly in north Palo Alto, and staff would conduct community outreach  
33          prior to making any formal recommendation to the Commission regarding those dog  
34          parks. In addition to dedicated fenced dog parks, dog owners in Palo Alto have  
35          expressed an interest to both staff and the ad hoc committee about considering other dog  
36          off-leash opportunities, such as the unfenced dog off-leash area model used by the City of  
37          Mountain View. In this model, non-fenced sections of parks are used as dog parks for a  
38          limited number of hours per day. The ad hoc committee and staff would like your  
39          feedback on the idea of pursuing this option as a pilot program.



1 Chair McDougall: If it's agreeable to the rest of the Commission, I would invite speakers  
2 to respond or not necessarily respond but offer their comments on the dog park item. I  
3 would start with Michel Callon [phonetic].

4 Michel Challon: Dog ownership is a huge responsibility that I take very seriously. We  
5 are the stewards of an animal that is devoted to us and whose entire life is pretty much at  
6 our disposal. If we teach them basic good manners, socialize them to get along with  
7 other dogs, and give them opportunities to play with members of their own species using  
8 their natural instincts, I believe their life and ours is enriched. What happens to dogs that  
9 have no such opportunities? They are erratic around other dogs, and they lunge and bark  
10 wildly whenever they cross paths with other dogs, which makes walking them a  
11 challenge. There are so many of these dogs that cross my path everyday when I walk my  
12 dog. I see their owners crossing the street to the other side when they see my dog  
13 approaching. Why is that happening here so often? I think the reason is clear. People  
14 are busy; they don't want to get in their car after getting home from work and drive to a  
15 far-away dog park, so a walk around the neighborhood is all they can manage. Who can  
16 blame them? What's in it for them really? Standing alone at a dog park where you don't  
17 know anyone is boring, and making small talk with people you don't see regularly is a  
18 waste of time. Walking to your own neighborhood dog park, meeting and talking with  
19 your neighbors, many on a daily basis, enriches our lives as much as those of our dogs.  
20 Imagine moving to a lovely town with very high property taxes and having kids several  
21 years later, only to find out that there were no playgrounds for them or that you got cited  
22 every time your child played in an area that wasn't specified for kids, that you had to  
23 schlep them out of your area for any park or field to legally play on. Wouldn't you fight  
24 for a dedicated playground for your kids? For dog owners, their pups are part of the  
25 family and deserve to have their own dedicated space. When law-abiding citizens need  
26 to break the law in order to properly care for their charges, something is wrong with the  
27 system. We are willing to work with you, fundraise for a dog park if we are approved  
28 and the City does not have it in their budget; although, I hear you do have some. There  
29 are many interim solutions for this ongoing problem in our neighborhood. We don't have  
30 to start with a committed, fully funded, and fully featured dog park. We are also willing  
31 to consider a temporary dog park that would be open for even as short as an hour or two  
32 every day. If necessary, we can enclose the area under investigation with temporary  
33 fencing and judge the impact over the following months. A group of us could be  
34 stewards of the park and help the City maintain it. I think the other off-leash area—  
35 allowing an hour a day off-leash even in a schoolyard or at Pardee Park would be an  
36 option as well. I hope you will consider a dog park at Pardee Park or at the very least  
37 some legal off-leash hours somewhere else in the Crescent Park/St. Francis/Duveneck  
38 area. Thank you very much. Thanks for the opportunity to speak.

39 Chair McDougall: Thank you. I would ask other speakers—I don't want to start setting a  
40 three-minute clock because I let the speaker go beyond three minutes. Please try and

1 respect the time in the direction of three minutes. Thank you. The next speaker would be  
2 Sabrina Braham, and after that is Rita that I rejected earlier. Thank you.

3 Sabrina Braham: Hello. I'm Sabrina Braham. My son is sitting over there and may have  
4 a few words to say. I am a physician. I grew up in San Francisco. I moved down here  
5 12 years ago. I was kicking and screaming coming from the city, but I fell in love with  
6 Palo Alto primarily because of the people and because of the outdoor spaces. Our family  
7 got a puppy a year ago, and our use of the outdoor spaces and our interaction with our  
8 neighbors has increased immeasurably since then. Our lives are so much richer, and our  
9 appreciation for Palo Alto has increased 100 fold. I feel strongly that the more we can  
10 encourage dog ownership and responsible dog ownership the better it's going to be for  
11 our community, for good neighbors. These dog parks—I've met many of the people in  
12 this room and many other neighbors that I hadn't met in 12 years since having the dog. I  
13 just think it's an important part of our Parks Department. Finally as a physician, dogs  
14 have been shown to improve both mental and physical health and in a time and a place  
15 where we have a lot of stress and a lot of mental illness, I think this is only a positive to  
16 increase the access that families and individuals have to a good life with a dog. Thank  
17 you.

18 Chair McDougall: Thank you. Rita followed by Herb Borock.

19 Ms. Vrhel: Good evening. I wanted to speak to restrooms. I live near Eleanor Pardee  
20 Park, and I understand that this is one of the largest parks in the City that does not have a  
21 restroom. However, we have picnic benches, we have two children's playground areas,  
22 we have soccer and baseball and camp all the time. We do not have a bathroom. We  
23 also have a community garden. The park is extremely, heavily used throughout the week,  
24 but we don't have a bathroom. Now, I understand that neighbors have objected to a  
25 bathroom. I think the park is 9.2 acres. I think there is a place to put a bathroom that will  
26 not be across the street from somebody's living room window or in their backyard. I  
27 hope when you discuss the restroom part of this agenda item that you will seriously  
28 consider that it is time for Eleanor Pardee Park to have a bathroom. Thank you.

29 Chair McDougall: Thank you, Rita. Herb Borock followed by Shuang Wang.

30 Herb Borock: Good evening. In the case of both dog parks and restrooms in  
31 neighborhood parks, it may be the case that those who have lived and chosen over the  
32 years to live in particular parts of Palo Alto chose to be in a part of town that did not have  
33 dog exercise areas and did not have bathrooms in neighborhood parks. The uses are  
34 changed in two ways. First with adult sports teams, a majority of each league from  
35 people outside Palo Alto, and also people who feel if they spent a lot of money to outbid  
36 people for a house it's their intention and right to change things despite the fact that they  
37 bought in a place where there were already values and standards. I happen to be one of  
38 the people who think that there should be a dog park—actually it's an exercise area—



1 within a park in north Palo Alto. Where we have one now, I'm not quite sure it's north  
2 Palo Alto or west Palo Alto. We typically think of north Palo Alto, south Palo Alto, and  
3 west Palo Alto. West Palo Alto is west of the Caltrain tracks, but usually you think of  
4 that as also being south of Page Mill/Oregon Expressway. Nobody from that area,  
5 Barron Park and all those, has been saying they want a dog exercise area there. I had  
6 suggested using part of El Camino Park, which at one point was a community garden  
7 which may sometime in the distant future be an extension of Quarry Road into the bus  
8 island and that is near where the Hetch Hetchy lines come in, but there's been a resistance  
9 of staff, I'm unclear why without any clear plans for the area, of using that area as a dog  
10 exercise area. I think that would be a good thing. It is certainly better than having an  
11 area that's close to people's homes so you don't have to drive there to exercise the animal.  
12 There is one other thing, and that is the idea of making larger areas available for part of  
13 the time for dogs to run free such as has been considered at Hoover Park and elsewhere.  
14 There, I look at the tragedy of the commons, the people who violate the current off-leash  
15 law in parts of a park that are not the exercise area so to self-police and are a small  
16 number. Once you make it legitimate, you will find that it may destroy the area. You'll  
17 also maybe find it's not a place just for the residents of the neighborhood but for dog  
18 walkers with many dogs. In terms of fencing, I would hope at some point in the capital  
19 budget, perhaps this year, that you'll restore the proper height of the fencing facing the  
20 park for Hoover Park. When Hoover Park was expanded, they put a proper tall fence  
21 against Matadero Creek, but the fence was lowered between the exercise area and the  
22 park; although, that was never on the proposal that was before the Council. Thank you.

23 Chair McDougall: Herb, thank you. This is not an action item tonight. I expect more  
24 discussion on this within the ad hoc. I would encourage the ad hoc to follow up with a  
25 few of these speakers that have specific suggestions that would be useful. Shuang Wang  
26 followed by Matt Greenberg. I am going to start setting a clock. Usually we don't accept  
27 cards after we've begun a discussion. I keep getting cards, so I'm going to start with a 3-  
28 minute clock at this point. Thank you.

29 Shuang Wang: Thank you for having me presenting here. I'm also a dog owner and,  
30 similar to other people's experience, I moved to Palo Alto about 10 years ago. Before I  
31 had a dog, I never know there are so many people. After we had a dog, we come to  
32 Pardee Park, and that is how I met so many people, and we have interactions. I just want  
33 to give a little bit of feedback about the benefit that we can bring to the park, especially to  
34 Pardee Park. I just want to give a few incidents. Like one year, there are some high  
35 school kids having a party at the park, and they throw eggs all over the park. It was such  
36 a mess. Most of this group of dog owners cleaned up. We spent so much time just pick  
37 up all the eggs. The park was not pretty while the rotten eggs are all over. The other  
38 thing is we also participated in clean up for the weeds. We actually care for the park.  
39 We're not just taking care of our dogs. If we see there's other trash on the ground, if there  
40 are other things on the ground that are not safe for people, we actually are very

1 responsible and pick them up. The other thing is most of our dogs are very mellow in  
2 personality. My kids often say that we should train our dog to go to visit hospitals and be  
3 a therapy dog. I feel like we provide that kind of interaction with other kids and people  
4 in the park anyways. Often, little kids just come over and say hello to the dog.  
5 Teenagers come over and say hello, older people as well. A lot of good interaction there  
6 is good for the overall neighborhood. Because we are there, we also keep an eye on other  
7 children as well. Like little kids running away from their parents, and the group of dog  
8 owners are very responsible. We say, "Who are you? Do you have adults to come with  
9 you?" It's not just for the dog, it's for the community. It's for everybody living in Palo  
10 Alto. We have so many neighbors. Even though they don't own a dog, they enjoy the  
11 interaction with dog owners and dogs. I want to propose the priority for using the money  
12 and then the priority on which location to have the dog park. I feel the money is better  
13 spent to have a new dog park in Pardee Park instead of expanding the existing dog park  
14 because they already have something to play with anyway. To the north part of Palo  
15 Alto, there is absolutely nothing within walking distance. Thank you.

16 Chair McDougall: Thank you. Matt Greenberg followed by Madhuri.

17 Matt Greenberg: Hi. I'm here mostly for informational purposes. I'm from Redwood  
18 City. I'm actually a member of the Park and Rec Commission; I'm a Commissioner in  
19 Redwood City. I came mostly to hear you, but in hearing this discussion I figured I  
20 would add some perspective. Feel free to contact me at any time. I can give my  
21 information. We actually have a 42-acre park called Stulsaft Park. I don't know if  
22 anyone's familiar with it. About one-third allows off-leash; two-thirds does not. It's a  
23 great source. Not to repeat what everyone else said; I'm not speaking on behalf of the  
24 Park and Rec Commission, again. I am an owner of a 3-year-old Australian shepherd, so  
25 I go there almost every day. It's a great way not only for the dogs to socialize, and off-  
26 leash anyone would say is best. It's become like the Starbucks for dog owners. As  
27 everyone says, you become friends. You're hanging around in the morning. The same  
28 people come. Different people come on the weekends. It's also become a place where a  
29 lot of families and children come to meet dogs. It's become an access point. We have  
30 toddler programs where people will meet by our creek just designed to meet the dogs.  
31 We also have a champions program, which is our Friends of the Park, where we have  
32 clean ups and stuff specifically by dog owners to clean up. We have all these poop  
33 stations and everything else. Of course, we police not only with this group in the Park  
34 and Rec, but also the dog owners make sure that other not-good dog owners aren't  
35 welcome, which is also part of it. Most dog owners and dogs are great. Like in any  
36 group, there's always that 3-5 percent that cause problems for everyone, and you need to  
37 self-control. We do it. I'm mostly here to say if you want to see an example of a place  
38 where we certainly have our ups and downs, but it works great for a wide source of  
39 people. Love to talk about it. Love to tour you around and show you where it's a true

1 off-leash, non-fenced area. We have some dog parks, but it's a different place for bigger  
2 dogs and people with bigger dogs with kids and families to just hang out. Thank you.

3 Chair McDougall: Thank you. I really appreciate you coming up and speaking. I hope  
4 we have the opportunity to follow up.

5 Madhuri Chattopadhyay: Good evening everyone. I think I recognize many of the faces  
6 because we made a concerted effort to get a dog park in the northern part of Palo Alto  
7 about 3-4 years ago. We are back in front of you asking for the same thing. Daren  
8 Anderson and many others put in a lot of work then, but we were not able to get it to go.  
9 I'm going to try to keep this brief. People before me have explained way more eloquently  
10 than I could as to why we need one. We are a community. We like to think of ourselves  
11 as a village. A village needs a place, a hub to meet. I know so many people here, and I  
12 get to know them only because we meet with our dogs either on walks or trying to find a  
13 place for them to run around off-leash. I'm going to try to keep this brief. Some of the  
14 setbacks we encountered the last time were extremely negative, NIMBY-type community  
15 feedback from the people living in the immediate periphery of Eleanor Pardee Park, who  
16 made the effort of extending their outreach to a block and had people come by telling the  
17 City and the people here that they did not want a dog park there because of the noise and  
18 the smell. We here have all been in dog parks. If anyone here has ever found a dog park  
19 that is noisy or smells, please raise your hand. I do not see a single hand. If anyone has  
20 found a dog park that is more noisy than a bunch of kids playing soccer or anything,  
21 please raise your hand. I don't see any raised hands. Dog parks are not noisy, and they're  
22 not smelly. They're a place for people to come together. Most dog owners in Palo Alto  
23 are very conscientious. Please keep that in mind as we go forward and encounter the  
24 usual routes of resistance. The second point I'd like to make is this is a need for all of  
25 northern Palo Alto, not just the people living in the immediate vicinity of Eleanor Pardee  
26 Park. If you want to solicit feedback, if you can find a way of extending that to all of  
27 Palo Alto, particularly north of Oregon, so that everybody gets a say in whether they  
28 want an off-leash dog park in this part of Palo Alto, that'd be great. I assure you that the  
29 yeas will far outnumber the nays. Even the people who live in the immediate vicinity of  
30 Eleanor Pardee Park and don't want a dog park there do bring their dogs off-leash early in  
31 the morning to the park and let them run around. This should not be the case. We are not  
32 asking for anything unfair. I do not have kids, but I live on Addison Avenue, and I see  
33 wrappers and all kinds of things on my front lawn. It's fine. It's a choice I've made. I'm  
34 not cribbing about the tax money that goes to support the schools. I need a dog park and  
35 so do many others here. I would really, really, really appreciate it if you could figure out  
36 some way of getting a dog park in northern Palo Alto. Thank you so much for your time.

37 Chair McDougall: Thank you. Rohini—I'm not even going to try and embarrass myself.  
38 I have another card here from Winter. Is Winter planning on speaking again?

1 Ms. Dellenbach: Yes.

2 Chair McDougall: Thank you.

3 Rohini Chakravarthy: I just wanted to add to everybody's comments about Pardee Park.  
4 I would really urge you to consider that. We have a black lab called Rocky. He's a year  
5 and a half old. He's actually my son's dog, and my son doesn't drive. If he has to be  
6 exercised, he has to be walked. Living close to Pardee Park, I've gotten to know the  
7 community through that. You do have to consider that there are people who don't drive,  
8 who do have dogs. This would be a great benefit. I also want to urge you to think about  
9 Pardee Park for a couple of reasons. One is in the agenda you mention that there's 0.4  
10 acres being considered out of the 9.6-acre park. It's a park that already has many assets.  
11 It has a little dog fountain, which gets well used. It has a community as Shuang and  
12 others mentioned, where we will take care of the park for you, not just for the dogs but  
13 for everybody. We would really like you to try the pilot project, which is let the dogs  
14 have an hour a day to run around maybe with temporary fencing and see how it goes.  
15 That's another way to overcome some of the resistance that has been experienced in the  
16 past. Thank you for that.

17 Chair McDougall: Thank you. Winter.

18 Ms. Dellenbach: I just thought since I was here. You have Bol Park down for restrooms.  
19 I want to congratulate you. Bol Park needs restrooms. When this really comes to you  
20 and becomes a real issue, you're going to have a lot of my neighbors, whom I love a lot,  
21 come in here and just really disagree. I just want you to know I'm thrilled. We need it.  
22 You're going to have to be really sensitive or whoever makes the final decision where  
23 you put it. We think Bol Park is the most beautiful park in the whole City, so it needs to  
24 have a sensitive placement of the restrooms, which we really, really need. I just want you  
25 to remember what I'm saying and remember it is the most beautiful park in the City.  
26 Sensitivity is needed. Thank you for being sensitive before you make your decision.

27 Chair McDougall: Thank you. I do have a card from Penny Proctor relative to the  
28 bathrooms. Would you like to speak now or wait until after the staff report on  
29 bathrooms? If you're willing to wait, I would prefer to have you speak after. You might  
30 have a more interesting perspective. I'd like to open this to the Commission for  
31 comments on the dog parks. Who is on the ad hoc? Anne, Ryan. Anne.

32 Commissioner Cribbs: Thank you very much. Thanks, Daren, for the staff report. It  
33 says everything that we talked about in the meeting. We're excited to be able to use some  
34 of the money to expand the existing dog parks and, I think, also very excited to see if we  
35 could convince our fellow Commissioners and others to move forward with the pilot  
36 program for the off-leash dogs in certain times of the day at specific parks. I look  
37 forward to comments from Commissioner McCauley and the rest of the Commissioners.

1 I'm excited that we're moving forward on this. We've been without dog parks for a long  
2 time. It feels really good to get this going. Thank you very much, Daren, for your  
3 efforts.

4 Commissioner McCauley: I'll try to be brief. I think Anne covered most all of it. A  
5 number of speakers this evening articulated the point, which I heard from Don and Daren  
6 and former Mayor Karen Holman when they were dedicating the Peers Park dog park,  
7 which is that dogs tend to make us better neighbors, and they help build community. I  
8 think this is something notable that we should be continuing to move forward. I am also  
9 supportive of the idea of bringing a pilot proposal to the City Council, looking at doing a  
10 study along the lines of what Mountain View did to allow one or two areas that have an  
11 obvious need for an additional dog park to have off-leash limited hours during the day.

12 Chair McDougall: Keith, you want to comment?

13 Commissioner Reckdahl: I strongly support the dog parks. Dog owners just do not want  
14 to have to get in the car, drive across town to exercise their dog. It makes it less pleasant  
15 for them. It makes traffic for us, so it makes it less pleasant for everybody. We really  
16 should be moving as fast as we can to expand dog parks at most major parks just to  
17 minimize the drive. People can walk out their door to the dog park and not drive. It all  
18 comes down to money. If we can have some fundraising and Howard can get some  
19 money, we can speed up this process because that's what is slowing it down right now.  
20 It's not anything else. With respect to the unfenced off-leash area, I'm not a big fan of  
21 that. As one of the speakers mentioned, you have like 3-5 percent of the dog owners who  
22 aren't watching their dogs, they're not cleaning up after their dogs. That's a hard burden.  
23 It's unfortunate because the other 95 percent are doing their job. If you look at Hoover  
24 Park, there's waste everywhere. When we lived next to Hoover Park, every night the kids  
25 came home with dog waste on their shoes. That's a big issue. If we extend the unfenced  
26 areas, I'm afraid that we're going to be spreading dog waste over that area, and it will not  
27 be a good experience.

28 Commissioner Moss: About Eleanor Pardee Park, there's not a single Commissioner who  
29 is against putting more dog parks, nor has the staff had any issues with that. Peers Park  
30 was mainly going to the park of least resistance. The speaker that mentioned NIMBY-  
31 ism on Eleanor Pardee Park, it's a serious problem if we let five neighbors overrule what  
32 20,000 people in north Palo Alto could benefit from. It's really important that we do a  
33 conscientious job with staff to make sure there is a dog park in a less-sensitive part of the  
34 park. Even if it were 5 feet away from the back fence instead of right up against the back  
35 fence of these people who don't want the park there, that would be okay. I think it's  
36 really important for staff to pick the right spot and not move on to the next park. We're  
37 going to have that issue with every park that we recommend. Dog owners should be  
38 aware that their neighbors can have an impact to stop progress, so they need to work on

1 their neighbors. About off-leash, I walk and run the track at Cubberley. As the speaker  
2 from Redwood City said, there are these 3-5 percent of people who have a problem, but  
3 there are many, many people who use Cubberley and Greendell off-leash at night. As  
4 long as they don't interfere with sports teams and runners and walkers, then they haven't  
5 had a problem. I would support a pilot for off-leash, but it's really up to the dog owners  
6 to help police those 3-5 percent because we and staff can't be there. It wrecks it for  
7 everybody. That's what I would recommend for off-leash. I've been to Stulsaft Park in  
8 Redwood City. It's amazing. I'm a little worried about the natural diversity and the  
9 health of wildlife in that part that's off-leash. When we were there, there was very little  
10 wildlife. I don't encourage off-leash on such a huge open space as they have, but I do  
11 feel off-leash in certain areas and certain parks is worth a pilot. The last thing I want to  
12 mention is in your staff report you talk about dollars for creating dog parks, expanding  
13 dog parks versus maintenance. I know there is a dog owners association in Palo Alto,  
14 and I encourage them to come forward with funds to improve the existing parks with  
15 benches and other amenities, maybe even AstroTurf versus turf, things like that. If there  
16 is a way the dog owners association can help with that so that the vast majority of the  
17 funds can go to creating new parks, I would prefer that.

18 Vice Chair Greenfield: I'd like to echo the comments of a few Commissioners speaking  
19 before me. I do support reducing car traffic for dog exercise and for all exercise in  
20 general. Pardee does seem like an ideal geographic location for a dog park, but we've run  
21 into logistic issues. Maybe we can overcome them, maybe not. It's something we need  
22 to pursue further. Regarding off-leash, I agree it's incumbent on the dog owners to make  
23 it work. I'd like to better understand the rationale for recommending Mitchell and Greer  
24 improvements as opposed to opening a new dog park.

25 Mr. Anderson: The one that jumps out to me is Greer. The potential is there to make that  
26 a usable dog park, and frankly it's not. No one uses it. People complain about it and treat  
27 it like it's a joke. It's almost a daycare, where you drop off your dog and go do a task,  
28 instead of the vibrant dog park dog owners want. I think we've got space at that park to  
29 expand it in a way that it could become that. It could be really useful and helpful and  
30 create community. Likewise at Mitchell, the last time we did outreach about a dog park,  
31 we heard from so many dog park users saying, "Mitchell is disgusting. I can't stand that  
32 place. You need to do something different. The grass is always dead." It was the most  
33 negative feedback I've heard about any of our facilities. I was astonished and  
34 disappointed. We thought this may be a way to help address this. There's capacity on  
35 passive turf adjacent to that dog park where you can double the size of grass. Maybe it'd  
36 last longer. There's shade because there are trees adjacent to it. There are some  
37 amenities there, blowing that out to take advantage of park that's not being utilized and  
38 perhaps make that dog park better.

1 Vice Chair Greenfield: Is this prioritized over a north Palo Alto dog park based on the  
2 easiest option available?

3 Mr. Anderson: I think there's an element of that, that we could make it happen, I think,  
4 sooner rather than later. We'd still have to do outreach certainly to the community and  
5 the users of those facilities. The number of outreach meetings we've had to do in the past  
6 is onerous and causes delays. I already have a lot of complaints about those existing dog  
7 parks, and I want to be responsive to those concerns as well as the demand for new ones.  
8 Those are some of the reasons. You can make a fair argument that the need is  
9 everywhere. Finding just the right spot can be challenging. The ad hoc and staff felt like  
10 that would be two good uses for the FY '20 funds.

11 Vice Chair Greenfield: That's helpful. Where are we considering off-leash dog usage on  
12 a temporary basis?

13 Mr. Anderson: I think it's still a little bit early. The ad hoc would benefit from a little  
14 time and perhaps some more site visits. Ones we've talked about anecdotally would be  
15 Pardee, Heritage Park. I think it would be wise and prudent to look broadly at all our  
16 sites to find out what would make the most sense in terms of a pilot.

17 Vice Chair Greenfield: That sounds interesting and something I'd be interested in  
18 supporting.

19 Council Member Cormack: I'm not familiar with Kingsley Island Park. In fact, I've  
20 never heard of it. Where is that located?

21 Mr. Anderson: It's not actually a park. It's a parcel that we thought, "Wouldn't it be great  
22 if we could make it dedicated parkland?" It's not currently being used for anything. It's  
23 just an open piece of grass, and it doesn't abut against anybody's backyard, which is  
24 another kind of highlight area that we thought we would have less noise issue. This is on  
25 Embarcadero at Kingsley. There are some trees there and a passive piece of turf. It's  
26 relatively small, about 0.27 acres.

27 Commissioner McCauley: It's essentially the southern area at the intersection of Alma  
28 and Embarcadero.

29 Council Member Cormack: It's the triangle. When you say pilot, does that mean our off-  
30 leash laws would not be enforced? Is that what a pilot means?

31 Mr. Anderson: I think we'd be seeking an exception to that for a temporary time period  
32 to say the off-leash rules would not apply to this area. We'd treat it just like we would a  
33 dog park for whatever the pilot length is and the duration of the times per day. It  
34 wouldn't be all day but rather a certain time period.

1 Chair McDougall: Council Member Cormack really liked your answer because she did  
2 this project where she went to every park, and she was afraid she was going to have to  
3 start over again. Rather than make my own comments, which I'll obviously interject, I'd  
4 like to recount what I thought I heard. I heard several people talk about the importance of  
5 the dog parks relative to socializing their dogs and exercise for the dogs and, by the way,  
6 not wanting to get into their car to get to that. I brought Michel's card back out. When  
7 she talked about fundraising, I would like to comment on that. There is Friends of the  
8 Palo Alto Parks, which is a 501(c)(3). What they're perfectly willing to do is set up  
9 subsections of that. If you wanted to put money into a 501(c)(3) rather than into a club or  
10 something, that could be set up that way. If you're interested in talking about that, send  
11 me an email, and I'll introduce you. I liked your comment about flexible times. There  
12 were at least half a dozen other letters that came to the Commission, people who weren't  
13 here and submitted letters. The concept of flexible times was important. Several of those  
14 written inputs said, "Just give us a couple of hours someplace, some time." The idea that  
15 we have all of these parks and maybe you could make every park. To comment to  
16 Council Member Cormack, when you asked if our rules won't be enforced, our rules are  
17 not being enforced at any park today. Heritage Park, Tuesday night, 5:00 to 7:00 is the  
18 dog park at Heritage Park every week. Probably 30 people come to that, 30 dogs. I  
19 know this is not the only park where that goes on. I think that's what people are asking  
20 for as much as they're asking for a 7-foot fence and sawdust and whatever. I do hear the  
21 whole idea that you have responsible dogs. I heard somebody talk about the fact that you  
22 have responsible dogs. I'm not sure I heard as many comments about responsible owners.  
23 To reflect what Commissioner Moss was saying, the professional dog walkers at  
24 Baylands do walk their dogs with leashes, 20 at a time or whatever it may be. Every  
25 individual that takes their dog to the Baylands, particularly Byxbee, let's it off the leash  
26 the minute they get out of the car. We're really interested in maintaining the wildlife  
27 there and growing the wildlife. Having off-leash dogs chase the rabbits through the  
28 bushes does not help that. I'm totally in favor of this off-leash concept, but this idea of  
29 responsible owners. I like the idea that several people mentioned, that dog owners could  
30 become park stewards, even basically mini volunteers, you might say. That doesn't mean  
31 we want to give you green jackets and badges or stuff. It might mean we would give you  
32 a card, a pilot card that says, "Here are the regulations. If you encounter somebody, it's  
33 not your responsibility to be a policeman." In fact, it might even be dangerous for you to  
34 be a policeman. It wouldn't necessarily be bad for you to hand somebody a card and say,  
35 "By the way, are you aware that this is the circumstance?" Back to the letters we got, I  
36 would say every letter we got talked more about the community value, the people they  
37 meet than the letters talked about any of the other items. I do believe before this off-leash  
38 thing went even to trial, we would have to make sure that we were talking to City legal  
39 staff to make sure things are okay. Carmel by the Beach is totally dog friendly; there are  
40 no leashes on the beach, so it must be possible. We have no jurisdiction over schools. I  
41 would discourage dog owners from going into the schools. I think that would be a  
42 mistake. The question about the two new—when I hear the problems with the existing



1 two that we're going to try to fix, I'm not sure if I'm hearing maintenance versus  
2 expansion or expansion as an excuse for maintenance. I don't mean that to be pejorative.  
3 On the other hand, we could look at it as we don't have any dog parks right now. Instead  
4 of saying we have four, you might want to say we have two because two of them are not  
5 usable. Fixing these two would give us four. I would encourage the ad hoc to look at  
6 that. I'd like to hear back from the ad hoc very quickly about if we are going to pursue  
7 the idea of an off-leash trial, how quickly could we do that. I would really not like to  
8 have a pickleball episode where six years later—I know I'm exaggerating. I would like  
9 us to see if we could do that trial sooner rather than later. I'd like to thank everybody,  
10 especially Matt Greenberg for coming from Redwood City to talk about what they're  
11 doing there. We'll probably take him up on his invitation to visit that. This has been a  
12 good discussion. I'll send it back to Daren and/or Kristen if they would like to make any  
13 further comments.

14 Mr. Anderson: I don't have any additional comments on dog parks but rather continue on  
15 with the park restroom discussion. On the topic of park restrooms, the Parks Master Plan,  
16 much like the dog parks, illustrated that residents strongly support additional restrooms in  
17 parks. The community highlighted the need to include security measures such as  
18 automatic locking mechanisms and lighting, which have helped address some of the  
19 concerns related to adding restrooms in parks. The Parks Master Plan has a park  
20 restroom policy and program, and that is that the City will actively pursue adding park  
21 restrooms in parks that are approximately 2 acres or larger, have amenities to encourage  
22 visitors to stay in the park, have a high level of use, and have no other nearby restrooms.  
23 Fifteen of our parks and open space preserves have restrooms. By the criteria defined in  
24 the Parks Master Plan, the Plan recommends adding restrooms in seven other parks. I  
25 need to mention that, much like the dog parks, we would need to perform the community  
26 outreach for each of those sites prior to taking an action or making any recommendation  
27 to add a restroom at those sites. Similar to dog parks, there's a CIP, which provides  
28 funding in this case of \$350,000, for park restrooms in fiscal years 2020, 2021, and 2023.  
29 The ad hoc committee and staff have been working on identifying locations where we  
30 should add those park restrooms, especially for the funding available in FY '20 and '21.  
31 The committee recommends Ramos Park be considered the site for the FY '20 park  
32 restroom project. Ramos Park, which is identified in the Parks Master Plan as one of  
33 those potential sites, is scheduled for its own capital improvement project that same year,  
34 FY '20, and that improvement project would replace the existing playground, benches,  
35 drinking fountain, and resurface the basketball court. Community outreach for that  
36 project, the Ramos improvement project, is tentatively scheduled for August 2019, and  
37 construction would start in approximately February 2020. It'd be about a 3-month  
38 construction project. As I noted, the ad hoc would continue to look at where the next  
39 park restroom would be, do some more outreach, and look at all our sites again with fresh  
40 eyes. With that, I conclude my presentation, turn to the ad hoc for any additional  
41 comments they'd like to make on park restrooms.

1 Chair McDougall: Before I go to the ad hoc, I'm going to give Rita and Winter  
2 Dellenbach the opportunity to speak. Rita, and after Rita, Winter.

3 Ms. Vrhel: Again, Eleanor Pardee Park is a very large park. You have two children's  
4 playgrounds. You have picnic tables. You have soccer teams, baseball teams, camp  
5 during the summer, park play. I don't know how big Ramos Park is, but Eleanor  
6 Pardee—in addition we have a community garden, which is very successful. We need a  
7 bathroom. The dog owner people were talking about neighbors running their dogs in the  
8 morning and objecting to a dog park for the rest of the community. I know this is true.  
9 Some of the people who are objecting are actually friends of mine. It's a public park.  
10 When the public park was built and designed by Helen Proctor, Penny Proctor's mother,  
11 apparently a bathroom could have been put in at no charge, but the neighbors were afraid  
12 of undesirables. Reported in the paper was La Doris Cordell's idea of a bathroom, and  
13 apparently Mexicans and Blacks would come from East Palo Alto. We are living in a  
14 time where there is racial divide fomented by our President. Palo Alto is better than that.  
15 To have a park as large as Eleanor Pardee Park with as many people who visit that park,  
16 you know the kids are going somewhere. Having human waste in a proper receptacle,  
17 being a public health nurse, would be a good idea. I would really encourage you to do  
18 public outreach for both the restroom and the dog run and certainly make it beyond the  
19 people that live right next door to the park. I live right next door to a school. It's okay.  
20 Things can work out. We just need all to realize that it's not all about us. Thank you.

21 Chair McDougall: Thank you. Winter.

22 Ms. Dellenbach: I thought I spoke on this because somebody said, "You should just get  
23 up here and speak all the same ..."

24 Chair McDougall: Did you speak on the restrooms? You spoke on the restrooms.

25 Ms. Dellenbach: Weren't you listening, Don? I thought you listened to me.

26 Chair McDougall: I'm sorry. I even have notes.

27 Ms. Dellenbach: Do I have to remind you? I spoke of sensitivity, and I thanked you for  
28 your sensitivity. The other thing about Bol Park that I will say, they've put in a rain  
29 garden there because of the ...

30 Chair McDougall: I don't deserve this, or I do.

31 Ms. Dellenbach: We may be getting bioswales as part of the green infrastructure. You're  
32 going to have to negotiate that too. I'm just saying. This is a good thing; it's not  
33 insurmountable. Again, who does this? Who makes the decision about this? Do you  
34 make the decision or does City Council make the decision?

1 Chair McDougall: We make recommendations.

2 Ms. Dellenbach: The Council makes a decision. I'll save that for them. It's a little  
3 sensitive because it is the most beautiful park.

4 Chair McDougall: That part I remember. Penny Proctor. Penny, thank you for being  
5 patient.

6 Penny Proctor: I'm Penny Proctor on Greer Road, and I'm a community gardener at  
7 Eleanor Pardee Park. We would really love to have a bathroom there. As you know, it's  
8 a big park, heavily used. There's a picnic area, and there's a couple of areas adjacent to  
9 the community garden that are used as a toilet, which is not good. One of my gardeners  
10 had to quit and give up her plot because she couldn't make it home in time. For a couple  
11 of people with various medical problems, it's a problem. The master gardeners have  
12 events that the public comes to; although, most of them are pretty short. It would be  
13 really wonderful to have a bathroom there. In the past, some of the neighbors have  
14 expressed concerns. Maybe it could be tried out with a port-a-potty for a couple of  
15 months and see if there are problems or not. It would also be nice to have the dog park,  
16 so they aren't running right around the garden. Although, that's okay. Thank you.

17 Chair McDougall: If there are no other cards, I'll invite the Commission members to  
18 speak. Thank you, Penny.

19 Commissioner McCauley: My thought is that a pilot is the theme of the day. I think it's  
20 exactly the right thing to do. I thank the last speaker for mentioning it. It's something the  
21 committee has been talking about. Bathrooms these days have a lot higher technology  
22 than they did 10 years ago. The ability for them to be secured in a way—also for them  
23 generally to be resilient—for them to be secured overnight and even during the day if  
24 needed. They can essentially be remotely controlled. Many of the concerns that we had  
25 about restrooms, again, even 10 years ago have been addressed in large part by  
26 technology. Back to the pilot idea, it would be a particularly good thing to have a fairly  
27 high-end portable restroom facility. It's something we did at the golf course while the  
28 golf course was under construction. We could do something similar, and Pardee Park  
29 would be a great place to start with a pilot of that nature in order to see how the  
30 community responds to it. I hope it would be favorable.

31 Commissioner Cribbs: I agree with Commissioner McCauley about the trial basis for  
32 some portables, which tend to be very nice these days. I'm very much in support of  
33 bathrooms in the park and moving as quickly as possible to get them installed in the  
34 places where they need to be. I also think it's going to be important when we do the  
35 community outreach to talk about the things that Daren talked about, that bathrooms are  
36 different now. They can be locked at night. They have particular designs that enable  
37 them to be kept clean. The old objections probably aren't as strong. I'm really glad to

1 hear the number of people in the audience tonight who are supporting bathrooms in the  
2 park and supporting the use perhaps of portables. That's great. We need to do a good job  
3 of educating the public about what bathrooms look like in 2019 because they're really  
4 different than they were when we were all growing up.

5 Commissioner Moss: Like with the dog parks, I don't think there's any Commissioner  
6 who hasn't consistently supported more bathrooms in the parks. It is precisely because of  
7 what Commissioner Cribbs said about an increase in security and cleanliness. You can  
8 lock the bathrooms at night and things like that. When we have an outreach meeting, it's  
9 really important that neighbors talk to neighbors about the importance of these bathrooms  
10 because that was probably the reason why we didn't move faster 2 years ago. It's a health  
11 issue that the City is responsible for. I don't know if legal will have any issue with that.  
12 As we have older gardeners and young kids who cannot make it home to the bathroom,  
13 this is a health issue. When we have an outreach, we have to make it clear that there is an  
14 exposure there. A pilot is not necessary. We should have a set schedule that every time  
15 we redo a park, if they don't have a bathroom, we should be putting one in. If you want  
16 to put port-a-potties in in the meantime for health reasons, please do, but don't call it a  
17 pilot. Just put the port-a-potties in for health reasons.

18 Commissioner Reckdahl: These temporary toilets that would go in as the pilot project.  
19 What percentage of a real bathroom would that be? Is it 10 percent? Is it half the cost?

20 Mr. Anderson: We rent them. The only experience I've got with it was the recent one we  
21 did at the golf course. It was appreciated. People seemed to like it. It was very clean.

22 Commissioner Reckdahl: If it's a small fraction, I see the benefit. If it becomes  
23 significant, then you're delaying effectively a real bathroom because you're renting this  
24 temporary for a while.

25 Mr. Anderson: I can tell you on the ad hoc discussions we had. It was one of those  
26 things to keep in the back pocket. If we're confronting a lot of opposition to it, it's a tool  
27 we could say, "Let's see if your fears are realized. Let's put a restroom there without the  
28 enormous cost or the permanency." You can put it out there for a limited amount of time  
29 and see if these things are true. There's another argument to be ...

30 Commissioner Reckdahl: This would be similar in size and style to what we're talking  
31 about for Cubberley, just less sturdy?

32 Mr. Anderson: I wouldn't say it's similar to a brick-and-mortar restroom. It's a port-a-  
33 potty.

34 Commissioner Reckdahl: It's more like a port-a potty.

1 Mr. Anderson: There's a ramp going up to it.

2 Commissioner Reckdahl: We'd have to price it out, but I'd be inclined not to spend the  
3 money on that and try to accelerate the real toilets as quickly as possible. We talked  
4 about problems. When I go to the parks, they seem to be in pretty good condition, the  
5 bathrooms do. Are there complaints about the bathrooms?

6 Mr. Anderson: The complaints are typically on really high-use days. If you had a park  
7 like Greer, for example, and very heavy tournament play, the complaint would be either  
8 the restroom didn't have supplies or wasn't clean. In fact, on those kind of weekends, we  
9 have two servicings. It's not like it's waiting through the weekend. That's one. Another  
10 one might be some of our restrooms—I'm thinking about the one in Mitchell Park next to  
11 the tennis courts. This one is used by both the Magical Bridge Playground and the tennis  
12 users. I think it's undersized for the number of people who are using it. We get  
13 complaints about either it's availability or its cleanliness.

14 Commissioner Reckdahl: That's one bathroom I've heard complaints about. People are  
15 saying it's not big enough. Their kid is dancing around, waiting in line, and they wish it  
16 was a bigger bathroom. Are there any plans to expand that?

17 Mr. Anderson: There aren't currently. The ad hoc's discussed the need for that. We're  
18 certainly pursuing options with our own Public Works facilities to see if we can enhance  
19 it because it's not working well right now.

20 Commissioner Reckdahl: The list that you have on page 2, that lists the different parks, if  
21 you had to rate them by the number of youth athletic games that were in there, would  
22 Ramos be the highest one? What would be the ...

23 Mr. Anderson: I don't think I could say definitely. I can get back to you. It's something  
24 maybe I could work on with the ad hoc to categorize it.

25 Commissioner Reckdahl: That is the common need for bathrooms when you have youth  
26 soccer or baseball games because you're constrained. You can't go home because it's in  
27 the middle of a game. I would put a lot of weight on the parks that have a lot of youth  
28 sports. Ramos is a reasonably good choice because there are soccer games there. I know  
29 there are baseball games. I want to make sure we're not overlooking something.

30 Chair McDougall: Council Member Cormack, do you want to comment?

31 Council Member Cormack: If you're contemplating temporary restrooms, I want to be  
32 sure they're accessible. I heard Mr. Anderson mention a ramp. It's something to keep in  
33 mind. It won't be necessarily the normal one, the straightforward one. We want to be  
34 sure that it's accessible for everyone.

1 Vice Chair Greenfield: If I understand correctly, we're looking at using CIP budget for  
2 restrooms in fiscal 2020 and 2021.

3 Mr. Anderson: That's correct.

4 Vice Chair Greenfield: Are we looking at one bathroom per year? Is that what the  
5 budget supports?

6 Mr. Anderson: Yes.

7 Vice Chair Greenfield: We've selected Ramos as the priority for 2020 at this point.  
8 When we're talking about a pilot restroom, that would be targeted for the 2021 choice or  
9 are we ...

10 Commissioner McCauley: Potential, subject to the comment that Daren made, which is it  
11 may not be necessary, but it would be an option potentially.

12 Mr. Anderson: If I could add one little caveat. Again, the CIP I don't think could be used  
13 for that temporary one. We'll have to secure funding. The ad hoc had asked me to get  
14 the cost for that; I don't have it yet. I'm looking into it. That would be another hurdle to  
15 overcome.

16 Vice Chair Greenfield: The portable toilet you're talking about, is this going to have  
17 smell issues that we commonly associate with port-a-potties?

18 Mr. Anderson: These are significantly nicer than your traditional port-a-potty that you'd  
19 see on a construction site. I don't think that was an issue at the golf course at all. I  
20 frequented it during the construction just to check on it and make sure it was working  
21 well and being cleaned. That wasn't an issue. I think it comes down to the servicing  
22 schedule. That's probably the chief thing that's going to address the smell issue.

23 Vice Chair Greenfield: I'm concerned that if we're trying out something like this as a  
24 pilot program and it has some impacts on the site that a permanent restroom wouldn't  
25 have, are we doing ourselves a service in this trial and is it an accurate representation to  
26 the community of what a restroom would be like? We want to avoid shooting ourselves  
27 in the foot on that. What are the most recent restrooms that we've added at parks the last  
28 couple of times around?

29 Mr. Anderson: I think it's Briones. The next one that's coming up, even before whatever  
30 the Commission recommends to Council and whatever Council chooses, is the field  
31 restroom at Cubberley. That one will be trail end of that project that's coming. It's a  
32 standalone CIP and not part of this project.

1 Vice Chair Greenfield: I'm looking forward to that. I support the work for the restrooms.  
2 We just need to get community buy-in and funding and keep moving forward.

3 Chair McDougall: In summary, I agree with the concerns about doing a trial in terms of  
4 how legitimate it would be and the concern of if it's \$10,000 a month or whatever it  
5 might be, have we a year later used up the \$150,000 that we were planning. I can't  
6 remember where I've encountered this. I didn't see the one at the golf course. These  
7 were amazingly comfortable in terms of the amenities and clean and easy to keep clean.  
8 They did have a ramp so they were accessible. If those are rentable, I would guess that  
9 they're also purchasable. Is there some possibility that we could, instead of spending  
10 \$150,000 to build a new one, buy those for \$75,000 and populate two parks at the same  
11 time or something? I would like to think about that. If the issue is they're painted white  
12 and they're quite visible, there's no reason why we can't repaint them and make them  
13 blend into the landscape much better. It's important that we move ahead with this  
14 aggressively. Both the Comprehensive Plan and the Parks Master Plan go on and on  
15 about our aging population. Once you've got this aging population doing their gardening  
16 and has to get home, I can understand how somebody would give up their garden. It's  
17 just more and more evidence that that kind of thing is becoming a real problem. I  
18 understand that the CIP is put in place, \$150,000 for a dog park, but we also know it's  
19 flexible in terms of things being moved out. I would hope that it's flexible in terms of re-  
20 examining even the concept of a dog park every other year and a bathroom every other  
21 year. If it were to have to stay that way, I'd be in favor of 3:1 or something like that for  
22 the bathrooms. I say that because Council Member Cormack is right to question whether  
23 people are out there breaking the dog rules by having their dogs off-leash, but we're not  
24 likely to run screaming too badly about that happening. If people decide they've got to go  
25 in the bushes, then we are going to scream about that. Trying to address that problem is  
26 important, and we should move on it sooner rather than later. The table you sent out  
27 relative to potential parks included Heritage Park and the idea that there's going to be a  
28 bathroom in the museum. I have no idea what the status of that is and whether that's  
29 anytime soon, that that would be the solution to a bathroom in Heritage Park. It's again in  
30 an area where you have density of aging population that you need to deal with. It's a park  
31 that's used by people Downtown. This is an urgent problem, and I hope we address it  
32 quickly. Thank you.

33 Commissioner Cribbs: These portable restrooms that we're speaking about are not the  
34 construction restrooms, but they're the ones that you would see at any special event at  
35 Pebble Beach and have the accessible ramps, hand washing stations that are lovely.  
36 Some even have flowers planted outside. I would assure you that these will not be  
37 eyesores. They will not be smelly, and they will be serviced on a regular basis. It's a  
38 great opportunity to give it a shot for a couple of months and see how the neighborhood  
39 reacts to it.

1 Commissioner McCauley: The point about not wasting money on a pilot program is very  
2 well taken and totally appreciate that. Daren is probably the best equipped to speak from  
3 experience about instances where there was some negative pushback against bathrooms.  
4 The idea of a pilot would be to, as Daren was saying, essentially see whether those fears  
5 materialize or not. I hope they wouldn't be, but it would be a study. It's a great thing to  
6 have in the back pocket.

7 Chair McDougall: If we have no other comments on that, I would suggest we move onto  
8 the next topic, which is access to Foothills Park.

9 **3. Access to Foothills Park**

10 Chair McDougall: Unlike most of our topics where we have staff make a presentation,  
11 we have the luxury of having the ad hoc speak to this. I invite Ryan to introduce the  
12 topic.

13 Commissioner McCauley: The purpose for tonight's discussion is to hear from the public  
14 and the Commission about the access policy for Foothills Park and for the Foothills ad  
15 hoc committee to then digest that and come back to the full Commission with a more  
16 complete proposal. This dialog within the Parks and Recreation Commission has been  
17 going on for a couple of years. I know that there's been recently more press attention to  
18 the issue of Foothills Park access, but this is something—it's important for the public to  
19 know—that's been discussed within the Commission several times in our annual retreats  
20 in the last couple of years. Obviously, it's been a topic which has been raised publicly  
21 over the decades. I'm going to turn it over to Daren to provide us some of the historical  
22 context, and then Daren will pass the baton back. Don maybe will have a couple of other  
23 prefatory comments and then welcome public comment, I think.

24 Mr. Anderson: Good evening, again. Daren Anderson, Community Services  
25 Department. Just a brief history of Foothills Park. In 1941, Dr. Russell Lee, one of the  
26 founders of the Palo Alto Medical Clinic, and his wife, Dorothy Lee, bought the land that  
27 is currently Foothills Park. In 1958, the Lees offered that land to the City at the special  
28 price of \$1,000 per acres so it would be preserved as open space rather than subdivided.  
29 In May of 1959, an election was held on the proposed purchase. 6,542 people voted to  
30 buy the park, and 3,997 voted against it. With that 62 percent of the voters supporting the  
31 purchase of the land, the City bought the property for \$1.3 million. The park was  
32 dedicated on June 19, 1965 as a place of beauty, simplicity, and serenity that would be  
33 conserved to protect its natural features and scenic values. The public vote regarding the  
34 purchase of the land did not include whether or not the park should be limited to residents  
35 only. That was a Council decision that appears to be based on two factors. The first is  
36 that Palo Alto fully funded the purchase of the land. Palo Alto approached other cities,  
37 both Los Altos and Los Altos Hills, about sharing the expenses of the property, and both  
38 cities declined. The second is some information I recently found in an article from





1 December 10, 1980 in the *Stanford Daily* that discusses the purchase and the price. The  
2 article states some residents believe the City had no business creating a regional park, and  
3 a group called the Citizens for Good Government formed to oppose the plan of buying it.  
4 They filed a taxpayer's lawsuit in Santa Clara County Superior Court alleging that Palo  
5 Alto City Council had violated the City Charter by approving the land purchase without  
6 waiting the 30 days for public examination of the expenditure. The lawsuit was rejected  
7 by the California Supreme Court after a referendum of the park purchase was approved  
8 by Palo Alto voters. In what former Palo Alto City Manager Jerome Keithley termed an  
9 attempt to salvage the project and to appease the regional park concerns of the Citizens of  
10 Good Government, City Council announced in 1959 that the park would only be open to  
11 Palo Alto residents and their guests. It wasn't until 1969 that the City added that  
12 residency requirement to the Municipal Code, which limited admission to the park to  
13 residents and their accompanied guests. Over the years, there's been interest in opening  
14 the park to nonresidents. In 1973, the City Council unanimously reaffirmed the  
15 residents-only policy, pointing out that the park's acquisition was paid for with City  
16 general funds, and no federal funds were used. The residency requirement was brought  
17 up again in 1991 and 2005, and both times Council again reaffirmed the residency  
18 requirement. In 2005, in exchange for a \$2 million grant for funding the purchase of 13  
19 acres adjacent to the Pearson-Arastradero Preserve, City Council voted to allow  
20 nonresidents to enter Foothills Park via the Bay to Ridge Trail. Hikers may enter  
21 Foothills Park via the Pearson Arastradero-Preserve and from the Los Trancos Preserve.  
22 Though your memo also included some information on visitation, I've got some  
23 additional visitation information that might be helpful. It is estimated that 153,670  
24 people visited Foothills Parks in 2018. This is an increase of 1.8 percent from the 2017  
25 numbers. This is down from the 15-year high of 202,538 people, which was experienced  
26 in 2011. With the exception of the two higher than average years in 2011 and 2012,  
27 visitation levels have basically remained very constant and consistent around that  
28 150,000-per-year level. The number of vehicles entering Foothills Park in 2018 was  
29 72,949, 2.3 percent higher than the previous year. Monthly visitation during the summer  
30 of 2018 was a little higher than the median for the prior years. You can see a drop in  
31 visitation in November, which is a month when we usually see a little spike around the  
32 Thanksgiving holiday. This was due to the smoke from the fires of 2018. The number of  
33 nonresident vehicles being turned away fell from the previous year by 7.5 percent. It was  
34 3,482 nonresident turn-aways. The median annual number of nonresident turn-aways per  
35 year for the last 5 years has been about 2,800. We've got two very low years in 2006 and  
36 2007. I don't have good data for why those were so low. There were 311 dog turn-aways  
37 for 2018. As you know, dogs are not allowed in Foothills Park on weekends and  
38 holidays. That concludes my presentation.

39 Commissioner McCauley: Just a few other brief comments and then, Don, if you think  
40 it's appropriate, we'll go with public comment and then we can perhaps come back. The  
41 ad hoc committee has considered a number of different options. I want to stress that



1 they're not exclusive options. Some combination of one of these options might be a path  
2 forward. They're laid out in the memo from the committee to the Commission. I'll talk  
3 about them a little bit after we hear public comment. Before we hear public comment, I  
4 just wanted to recognize and appreciate that there is history with Foothills Park and this  
5 particular policy. It's been a thorny issue in the past. I've had many conversations with  
6 members of the community. I've found that there are a number of items of consensus,  
7 which I think will help guide us to what I view as a better policy. Foothills Park is a very  
8 special place. Anyone who might speak to that issue would definitely hold that in  
9 common with all of us. Personally, it's where I proposed to my wife, where she accepted  
10 my marriage proposal, so it is near and dear to my heart. Part and parcel, the discussion  
11 in some part is what motivated the implementation of the current policy in the first  
12 instance. It's not to diminish that conversation at all. There are probably a number of  
13 different reasons for the implementation of the policy. My own view is the current policy  
14 uses a fairly rough tool to accomplish a goal, and we might have other tools available to  
15 us today that would allow us to do the same thing, which is to ensure that we have the  
16 right balance between number of people using the park and preservation of the park. We  
17 have a number of good tools available to us. We've tried to lay some of those out in the  
18 memo, but there may be others as well. The third point of consensus I found is that  
19 practice and the Municipal Code are not aligned. As we've talked about with the Council  
20 itself a couple of months ago, there is a problem in that we have made it a misdemeanor,  
21 made it a crime, for someone who's not a Palo Alto resident to step foot or at least drive  
22 into the park. They can walk on the Bay to Foothills Trail, as we know. The next point  
23 of consensus that I've found is that the park can reasonably support more visitors without  
24 degrading its resources. This is probably particularly true on weekdays. If anyone has  
25 questions about weekday and weekend visitation, Daren has this incredible trove of data.  
26 I hope that will be helpful to the entire Commission as you think about different options  
27 here. Don't hesitate to turn to them for information where you need it. The next point is  
28 we have an opportunity to build a better policy that's more inclusive and uses some  
29 technological means in order to advance the community objective. This is what I was  
30 talking about before. With that, unless there are any initial questions from Commission  
31 members, it might make sense to take community comment.

32 Chair McDougall: Before we go to comment, the menu of options that you have here  
33 includes updating the current Code so that it's not illegal to be there during the week,  
34 number one. Number two, focus on student programs relative to various school  
35 constituencies as a basis of opening the park more. The third is a reservation system  
36 that—the word here is dynamic reservation—can be implemented. Number four is a  
37 combination of the above and maybe others that we haven't heard about. It's worth  
38 understanding that there are those options. I would invite speakers. I would start with  
39 Robert Roth with Barbara Millen next. I am so happy to see that Winter's going to  
40 submit a card because I was going to invite her to speak anyway. Thank you.



1 Robert Roth: My name is Robert Roth. My wife and I are charter members of the  
2 Friends of Foothills Park. For the last 25 years, we have been digging invasive weeds to  
3 make the park a more beautiful place. When it comes to widespread access to the park,  
4 you can color me smallish, not that I feel superior to the people who live in Los Altos  
5 Hills or Los Altos or Menlo Park. It's just that I live in a town where the government  
6 purchased the park, and they developed the park, and they provided a staff to create a  
7 beautiful place. The park has limited parking facilities. Would you want to cut down the  
8 trees and spread gravel in the meadows so that we could accommodate more cars in the  
9 park? It follows that if the park is overused, the magical experience of coming upon a  
10 flock of quail or 30 or 40 young turkeys or seeing a coyote or any of the experiences of  
11 the birds and the beasts and the flowers in the park could be lost. There's also a need for  
12 a bit of quiet. People in the community need a place for, say, a mental health day, where  
13 they can walk for 15 minutes and enjoy a very, very quiet place. I encourage you to  
14 continue to limit access to the park. Thank you very much.

15 Chair McDougall: Thank you. Barbara will be followed by Kristine Zavoli.

16 Barbara Millen: I'm Barbara Millen. I'm glad to have this opportunity to thank Mr. and  
17 Mrs. Roth for all their work that they've done. I go to the park quite a bit, and I see these  
18 two. They're in there when it's 90 degrees, and they're pulling out the weeds. I admire  
19 them so much I feel very guilty because I just go there to hike. I do other things to help  
20 the community, but they're special. I hate to go against him, his ideas, but I'm not really  
21 against his ideas. Also, I hope my husband's not listening because he won't let me in the  
22 house tonight. I'm just going to read this. Foothills Park is an open space preserve.  
23 According to the City's website, it's mission is to protect and interpret the resources and  
24 wildlife entrusted Palo Alto for enjoyment and the future generations. Being a public  
25 open space means it needs to be open to the public. Palo Alto is a city, not a gated  
26 community or a country club. Keeping people out because they don't have the right ZIP  
27 Code goes against the principles of many if not most of the City residents. There are real  
28 concerns that the park would be overused. One way to deter usage is to take out the  
29 picnic tables and the grills and the group picnic area. That does not seem to me to be part  
30 of the mission of the open space. The last time I had a little picnic there with a couple of  
31 friends about a month ago, there was a party of about 50 people or more from a company,  
32 not in the group area but in the main picnic area. I don't really see that as valid usage for  
33 the park. There are many parks and open space preserves with wonderful hiking trails  
34 near local cities. In general, people go where it is convenient. If the usage of the park  
35 matched the mission of the open space preserve, the park would be less desirable, and  
36 overuse would be less of an issue. Upkeep costs of paths and facilities may increase. Is  
37 it possible and/or desirable for the park to become part of POST, Peninsula Open Space  
38 Trust? Would that lessen the financial burden on the City? Would it be useful in some  
39 way? Daily usage could increase beyond capacity, especially on weekends. Other cities  
40 have found ways to control crowds, and you've mentioned some ideas. As much as I

1 enjoy the solitude and grumble with the crowds when they're there, exclusivity of this  
2 wonderful resource is undemocratic and unjust.

3 Chair McDougall: Barbara, thank you, and thank you for the comment about the Roths  
4 and all of their work. It should have been on us to thank them very much for them and all  
5 of the other Friends for the work they've done. Barbara, I'm sure we can find you a place  
6 to stay tonight. Kristine followed by Ralph Levine.

7 Kristine Zavoli: Good evening. My name's Kristine Zavoli, and I have lived in Palo Alto  
8 for 47 years in the same house, having been raised in the military where I went to 17  
9 schools. I've been very happy to live here. My husband I both love hiking very much,  
10 and we love Foothill Park, and we love hiking there. I understand the history that we've  
11 been reminded of. A gentlemen who was alive at that time told me what happened. He  
12 said the City asked Los Altos and Los Altos Hills to help pay. They said no. The  
13 response was this will be for Palo Alto residents only. That seems like tit for tat, when  
14 you consider we have 1,400 acres in Palo Alto. I think back to 1959, when Palo Alto was  
15 much more diverse economically. It certainly was more diverse economically when we  
16 moved here in 1972. It is no longer economically diverse. To me, this policy is one that  
17 makes me embarrassed to be a resident of Palo Alto. I agree with the prior speaker as far  
18 as equity issues. We go there often. I know people can come in during the week, so  
19 that's already been settled. I've been stymied for so long by this exclusive policy. In Palo  
20 Alto, it's one I cannot defend. I thought the first speaker was very eloquent when he said  
21 what other City park won't let nonresidents in. We say that they're welcome during the  
22 week, but that isn't what the sign says. It says Palo Alto only. I am aware of the guards,  
23 and I understand that we don't want it overrun. The stats suggest it won't be overrun.  
24 There are ways to control that, and it looks like the Commission is working on that. Set a  
25 limit to the number of cars, maybe charge a fee to nonresidents. If you've been around  
26 long enough, you might remember the humorous columnist Herb Caen with the *San*  
27 *Francisco Chronicle*, who wrote in one of his columns one day I finally figured out why  
28 Foothills Park is Palo Alto residents only. They don't want the riff raff from Los Altos  
29 Hills to get in. It seems like that really was the policy, but what about the—what I hear  
30 about are the people—most of us do have a garden. We have many parks, but we do  
31 have nearby residents who do not have that. We have this beautiful space, and even with  
32 the proposal to let children come, why wouldn't we want adults to come also? They  
33 probably need the mental quiet more than we do. Most of us can afford to go somewhere  
34 where there's a lot of peace and quiet. A lot of the people near our community cannot do  
35 that. As a resident, I'd especially like to share our parks with those who live nearby, who  
36 don't have everything we have. I fully accept increasing access to Foothills Park.

37 Chair McDougall: Thank you, Christine. Ralph Levine followed by Herb Borock.

1 Ralph Levine: Foothills Park is one of the great perks of living in Palo Alto. I love to go  
2 up there, the serenity, the safety. I notice there's no one checking IDs on weekdays. I  
3 hope that doesn't get too publicized, that it's open to the world. Palo Alto has 37 parks.  
4 We shouldn't have to feel embarrassed that we're discriminating, that only 36 of them are  
5 open to everyone. All the parks are open to everyone's dogs. Los Alto and Los Altos  
6 Hills were invited to join with Palo Alto and not other places, not out of any bigotry but  
7 because those two cities are even closer to Foothills Park than Palo Alto is. Palo Alto  
8 [sic] is in a remote area. It's different from all our other parks. There are safety issues.  
9 There are fire issues even though there's a fire station up there. It's a big expense for the  
10 City. I love to go up there with guests and go as high as we can and have a picnic or  
11 watch a sunset and not worry about my car, not worry about my safety. It's a fabulous  
12 resource. I hope it continues to be one. We have a lot of free concerts; there's four this  
13 summer. I don't think we have to feel like other places are doing things that we're not  
14 doing. Stanford doesn't, even with the misconception of so many people that Stanford  
15 isn't Palo Alto. Let Palo Alto residents have the same access as Stanford people. To use  
16 any of the Stanford facilities, a Stanford person has to go to one of two places on campus  
17 and pay \$10 for a daily pass, and then a guest can come into the building. Lots of places  
18 have restrictions on entry. I hope that the restrictions on entry to Foothills Park remain as  
19 they are. Thank you.

20 Chair McDougall: Thank you. Herb Borock followed by Rita.

21 Mr. Borock: When I visited a relative in Great Neck on Long Island in New York, there  
22 was a sign that said the park was for residents only, so it's not just here. The various  
23 proposals that have been suggested all violate the Municipal Code. Therefore, if any of  
24 them are implemented, even if it's called a trial or if it's just for students or it's for the  
25 environment, it requires an ordinance to amend the Municipal Code that is subject to  
26 referendum. One of these suggestions about students may already have been  
27 implemented or ready to be implemented because there was a Request for Proposal  
28 issued for a contractor to provide three buses to leave in the mornings during the summer  
29 to take students to the park to spend the day there. There's no indication that was limited  
30 to Palo Alto residents. Perhaps staff knows about that Request for Proposal or what kinds  
31 of programs there have been this summer. The current rules are that one car can bring in  
32 two more cars for a total of 15 people. You can get more than 15 people on one bus.  
33 Former Mayor Levy mentioned a number of the parks he's gone to. I've gone to some of  
34 them as well, ones in the Open Space District such as Rancho San Antonio, Montebello,  
35 Los Trancos, Earthquake Trail Preserve, also parks in San Mateo County, Huddart and  
36 Wunderlich and Edgewood. The one thing I note is that Foothills Park is not the same  
37 Foothills Park it was in 1965. Since then, the Open Space District has been founded with  
38 63,000 acres in three counties. Not too far away from Foothills Park is the exact same  
39 habitat in the Open Space District. What is so special—who is it that feels they're being  
40 discriminated against that really wants to go into Foothills Park? I suspect it's the faculty

1 and staff housing at Stanford. They could have had a direct trail up to Foothills Park if  
2 Stanford, during the previous Use Permit, was willing to put a required trail straight  
3 through the Dish to connect with the Arastradero Preserve, and they refused to do that. In  
4 past years—it may have changed by now—looking at census data, the median income in  
5 the Stanford faculty housing was higher than the median income in any Palo Alto census  
6 tract. It occurred to me that the people who live there think it's unfair that they can't go  
7 into Foothills Park, but there is clearly the exact same habitat and the exact same  
8 opportunities to go to places nearby. It's astonishing why this keeps coming back. In the  
9 past it came back from Council Members with direct connections to Stanford, which was  
10 what my suspicion was about. Over time, the number of Rangers has been reduced over  
11 the decades at Foothills Park, which accounts for the fact of not checking on entry during  
12 the weekdays and also accounts for the neglect of maintenance in the park. Right now, it  
13 is a safe place, but it could be better maintained. Opening it up, I think, would be a  
14 mistake. If it's necessary to address the issue, the only way it could be addressed is with  
15 a change to an ordinance. Thank you.

16 Ms. Vrhel: I wanted to apologize. I think I put Judge La Doris Cordell's quotes for the  
17 bathrooms rather than Foothills Park. Now, I'm going to disagree with her. Foothills  
18 Park to me is a very special place. It's a fragile environment, and too many people going  
19 up there could have irreparable harm. I didn't realize we had 37 parks in Palo Alto, but  
20 36 of them, I'm sure, are open to the public. I know the Eleanor Pardee Park and the  
21 Rinconada Park have many, many visitors from other cities than Palo Alto and are  
22 heavily used. It's okay to have someplace special for people. Palo Altans paid for the  
23 park and are continuing to pay for the park. I think it's okay if they take their friends to  
24 the park. To open it to anyone and everyone every day, all the time would be a mistake.  
25 It again is a very fragile environment. We all know that people can cause damage to  
26 fragile environments. I'm against opening it up to everyone. I'm glad that Herb has  
27 reminded us all that if you are going to recommend that, there would have to be a  
28 referendum. Maybe that is the fairest way to settle the issue. If the residents of Palo Alto  
29 voted to open the park up, then I would go with that. This issue continuing to come up  
30 and getting various levels of support and then being discussed, I'm not sure why it has to  
31 keep continuing. If Stanford wants to open their beautiful museums to the people of Palo  
32 Alto, that's very gracious of them, but I don't think life has to be a quid pro quo. Thank  
33 you.

34 Chair McDougall: Thank you. Jerry Underdal followed by Mike Lee. Several of these  
35 cards that I'm now getting were submitted after the discussion started, and so I am going  
36 to start keeping track of 3 minutes.

37 Jerry Underdal: Good evening. My name's Jerry Underdal. I'd like to say how happy I  
38 am that it looks like you're going to address this finally and remove something that I feel  
39 is an embarrassment for the City. When I became aware of this regulation—I've been

1 living here for over 40 years, and I use Foothill Park and Hidden Villa and a number of  
2 things. The context for me was Palo Alto has something special that no matter what  
3 somebody else wants to do, if they're not a resident of Palo Alto, you don't get to.  
4 Membership is there. It's not economic. At the time I first came here, it wasn't exclusive  
5 economically because there were a lot of pockets of people here in Palo Alto who would  
6 not qualify as being or be considered in an economically advantaged position. That's not  
7 the case now by and large; there are exceptions. I want to second what Lee Levy said.  
8 It's time to make this change. It is an embarrassment. I remember in 1991 when Ron  
9 Anderson first brought this up, it doesn't smell good. It doesn't look good. My sense is  
10 that awareness of the details of 50 years ago of "you didn't kick in your money back then  
11 and so we keep this absolute privilege." How many people, who are currently residents  
12 in this town now and were here 50 years ago, have any idea of that particular back-and-  
13 forth between those communities? It's there, but it's trivial in the overall picture. You  
14 look at how Palo Alto is seen and represented now. It does not look good. It's time to  
15 drop it. You guys go and explore the most effective way to do it that doesn't harm the  
16 environment, that doesn't harm the park, that works, all of those things. A rule, even if  
17 not enforced, is still there. During the week, is it policy that they can't get in or just that  
18 we don't enforce it? That's a real question I don't know.

19 Commissioner McCauley: The latter.

20 Mr. Underdal: You don't enforce it. That's terrible. The rule is there, but what's the big  
21 deal? You can get around it; just come during the week. It doesn't work. It's time to  
22 drop it and do it well so the park is maintained. Improve those bathrooms. There's a lot  
23 of maintenance that needs to be done out there. It's not the shiniest place in the area for  
24 going as a park experience.

25 Chair McDougall: Thank you, Mike. Karen Holman. Did I miss Mike Lee? I'm sorry.  
26 Mike Lee followed by Karen Holman.

27 Mike Lee: My name is Mike Lee. I've been living in Palo Alto for 20 years. My wife  
28 and I in the past 10 years go to Foothills for hiking. The reason we go there is—we  
29 actually explore the many hiking area in the neighborhood, Cupertino, Saratoga, things  
30 like that. We end up here realizing that it's only for Palo Alto. You have to drive over  
31 there. One of the major reason we like it is the beauty of the nature. We try all these  
32 place and feel that that's probably the best thing we found. We utilize that every week.  
33 Also, you feel safe. The structure is (inaudible) in design and will accommodate a lot of  
34 people. We also realize that you can get a friend to visit. I don't know how many people  
35 go there. Every weekend I go there, they have to check your ID, whether you're a  
36 resident or not. After that, I feel safe because we're living—recently it's even more  
37 concern because that's the only place you're checked, a list of who you are. You feel safe  
38 there. The friends come here and give the feedback and wish their city can have

1 something like that so they can feel safe. With the limited control, it never feels  
2 crowded. Now, I learned the history and learned (inaudible) many years ago. This is  
3 good heritage to leave to the current generation. It's perfectly okay. We maintain it that  
4 way because they paid it. You don't have the open water park. I urge do not change that  
5 because whenever you change it to open, there'll be more people. It will be an impact. In  
6 the past 5 years, we're also realizing, seeing a pattern, it's not as good as before. I urge  
7 you maintain it as is. I urge the City and Council spend the energy on other (crosstalk).  
8 Thank you.

9 Chair McDougall: Karen Holman followed by Winter Dellenbach.

10 Karen Holman: Good evening and thank you. Foothills Park compared to Rancho San  
11 Antonio, they're very adjacent to each other. Rancho San Antonio on an annual basis has  
12 700,000 visitors. The Open Space District visitorship is growing every year, especially  
13 as we increase our population. Be careful what you ask for. I refer to Herb Borock's  
14 comments about ordinances and that sort of thing. East Palo Alto and the school groups  
15 there, I absolutely agree with access, education, and experience. I wonder if you'd  
16 consider a volunteerism program, and maybe you can earn a pass with a volunteerism  
17 program. I charge the Commission to create and foster a new generation of Friends of  
18 Foothills Park as the Roths have been. It's a definite need that has to happen. If there are  
19 going to be tours and shuttles to the park, there needs to be a rule that dictates what the—  
20 I hate the word dictate. There needs to be a restriction on the size of buses. I've been out  
21 there and seen very large tourist buses out there. They're jarring visually in that setting,  
22 and also they can't make the turn from the vista point to the meadow even though they try  
23 to. It's very dangerous. There needs to be a size restriction. To me, it's also a matter of  
24 prioritization. There are costs associated with anything you do that is different, trails  
25 management, staffing costs especially during the week, waste management, restrooms.  
26 No one is being denied access to parks in Palo Alto. No one is saying, "We can't get into  
27 a park." What I think the priority should be is creating dog parks where there is demand,  
28 creating restrooms in parks where there is demand, creating new community gardens  
29 where there's demand. There's actual demand because there's lack of those kinds of  
30 things. That's where I think the priority should lie. I want and have wanted for quite  
31 some time, probably 3 years—several people in the community have wanted this  
32 Commission to look at the dedication of several areas in town. There's a list that exists. I  
33 think staff has it. I think you all have it, at least most of you have it. A list of places that  
34 are used as parkland in Palo Alto but are not dedicated as parkland. They are vulnerable  
35 to other functions, other uses, being developed. I hope you will prioritize that. That's  
36 charge number two. Thank you very much. If you don't know how Foothills Park  
37 actually came to be, it's just a quick, short story. Russell Lee was going to sell the lands  
38 that are now Foothill Park to development. Some of you know this, I can see. Dorothy  
39 Lee, his wife, said, "No. This is going to be open space. I own half of that land." He



1 said, "Which half?" She goes, "Every other acre." That set the tone for it not being  
2 developed. Thank you.

3 Chair McDougall: Thank you. Winter Dellenbach followed by Peter Biffer.

4 Ms. Dellenbach: I want to associate myself with Karen's comments and Herb's  
5 comments. Nobody's mentioned what actually distinguishes this park from others in that  
6 there's a 1,000-person cap. We've mentioned the 1,000-person cap but not with enough  
7 importance. Whatever is being thought about being done, there's a 1,000-person cap.  
8 We're talking about excluding Palo Altans ultimately. I usually go into forums at City  
9 Council where we're talking about development, much more development, much more  
10 population coming to Palo Alto. There's going to be more need for places such as  
11 Foothill Park and all of our other parks by Palo Altans, much more use. Also, the  
12 population is expanding everywhere. We have a 1,000-person cap. That's important to  
13 keep in mind. It's also important to keep in place because this is what it is. It's unique in  
14 Palo Alto, Foothills Park. I'm in favor of keeping it as it is, no changes, as it is. The first  
15 time that a Palo Altan is kept out of Foothill Park because we've reached the 1,000-  
16 person cap, that's too bad. That's a shame. That is wrong. It's not a matter of racism.  
17 That is not what this is about. There has been race-baiting about this issue currently,  
18 which is terrible on the internet. It's stupid. I've lived up in those hills for 23 years of my  
19 life. I know it like the back of my hand. I know Foothill Park like the back of my hand.  
20 There is one place in Palo Alto that we can go that is really quiet. That's not hyperbole. I  
21 don't feel guilty about that. I don't feel bad about that. I spent my entire professional life  
22 as a civil rights attorney. I dealt with issues of discrimination all the time. I do not feel  
23 bad about this. To have one place that is peaceful in a place that is going to get more and  
24 more crammed with people, more and more frenetic, and more and more stressed out, this  
25 is a jewel we should be stewards of and that we should preserve. We should share  
26 everything else. This we should just keep as it is. We have 45 percent—we worked  
27 really hard to set aside a good piece of Palo Alto. About 45 percent is protected Baylands  
28 open space and all of the parks that we have. We didn't just do it. We took really big  
29 risks. We went to the U.S. Supreme Court twice when we downzoned our Foothills,  
30 twice before they said it's constitutional, so that we don't have a lot of houses in our  
31 Foothills and preserved most of that habitat. We decided to get rid of our boat harbor at  
32 the Baylands and preserve most of our Baylands. We have taken risks, we have  
33 committed money, we have worked at preserving it. It wasn't easy. We did this with  
34 great intention over 70 years. I'm hoping and depending that you are not going to think  
35 let's just do this because it's going to feel good. We have some sort of abstract ideal. It's  
36 a wrongly thought out and easy, feel good thought. Thank you.

37 Chair McDougall: Peter.

1 Peter Biffer: My name is Peter Biffer. I'm actually from Los Altos Hills. I appreciate  
2 very much that you do have the discussion. I understand that Palo Alto was upset 50 or  
3 60 years ago because Los Altos Hills made the mistake not to participate. In today's  
4 time, it's a potential negative PR timebomb you potentially may be sitting on. I also  
5 appreciate very much the way you look at the data. There may be one level of data one  
6 can look at. It's also how many people actually go hiking, how many people do just the  
7 barbecue. I like the approach to say there are certain peak times there need to be limits.  
8 First dibs go to the residents before it goes to other people, which may be the reservation  
9 system you're talking about. I don't think it necessarily needs to be the time of week,  
10 basically on the weekends only residents. There could be a layer of hours because very  
11 often early in the morning there are very few people. They come out for barbecue later in  
12 the day. The months are very different. I know all this because I hike through  
13 Arastradero into the park many times, and very many times there's not a single person  
14 there, especially more in the winter months. There's one other point, which I was  
15 surprised. Palo Alto divided it by residents, but there are a lot of people who contribute  
16 to Palo Alto. For example, as Los Altos Hills, Palo Alto School District, we do pay  
17 money for the schools, which is beneficial to Palo Alto, maybe not of this group but  
18 certainly for the Palo Alto School District. I'm also a part owner of a business which is  
19 run and operated out of Palo Alto, so that brings commercial value to Palo Alto. Even  
20 with all these restrictions, I feel I'm a resident of Los Altos Hills, which is correct, but I  
21 contribute at least as much as someone who rents an apartment in Palo Alto and lives  
22 here. I think it's a great idea to look at it. There are good solutions you can find to give  
23 the peak times preference to Palo Alto citizens, and at the same time, as I said, to  
24 potentially solve some longer-term PR issues. Thank you.

25 Chair McDougall: Thank you. Finally, Linda LaCount.

26 Linda LaCount: I've lived here for 30 years. I think no one is denied access to this  
27 sensitive part, and I say that because I want it to stay the way it is. I say that because I'm  
28 part of the San Jose dowers. I've just arranged for us to have our every-other-year picnic  
29 up at Foothills Park. Out of the people that we wanted to invite, only three people were  
30 Palo Alto residents. That means that we could get 45 people into the park just because  
31 there are three of us from Palo Alto. I have people coming from Sacramento, the Sierra  
32 Nevada dowers organization, and I have people from Marin, and I have people from  
33 Monterey. People are coming from all over because this is a day they get to get in.  
34 There's plenty of access, but how you get access is because people in Palo Alto want to  
35 invite or make arrangements so people can come in. You have to turn in a list of all these  
36 people you've invited, who are going to come, one week before your event. I'm just  
37 going on and on. This is different from the way anybody else has talked. It's very  
38 personal how it's been for me. I have found the Rangers and the people who can fax the  
39 Rangers for me can fax all the people's names that I want to bring in. I keep finding them  
40 willing to update my list of who they're going to let in the park. I think Palo Alto is

1 extremely friendly. We're very generous about letting people in during the week. That's  
2 just the way it is. All people have to do is know Palo Alto residents who can get them in  
3 the park. It's very simple. Thank you.

4 Chair McDougall: Thank you. With that, I think we've covered all of the community  
5 speakers on that subject. I'll turn it back to Ryan.

6 Commissioner McCauley: Let me highlight a few statistics. Daren can go into much  
7 more detail on these sorts of numbers if needed. When the park was founded, based on  
8 the historic records we have, the visitation was much higher, two times as high as it is  
9 today or it may have been more than two times. In 1969, the visitation was about  
10 292,000 people. A few years later in the early 1970s, it was 372,000 visitors per year.  
11 Our current visitation level is much lower than it was previously. I thought that was  
12 worth note. Based on staff's observation in more recent years, in the 2011 year, staff  
13 definitely observed a little bit of an uptick when we had approximately 50,000 more  
14 people in the park than we do on an average year, but they didn't note any negative  
15 effects on the park other than it was a bit busier. A couple of the speakers mentioned that  
16 the City Code also has the cap of 1,000 persons in the park at any time. Again, the  
17 feedback from the Ranger staff is that that cap was only reached once in the last 20 years  
18 during a special event, which I believe was a concert in the park. We have not come  
19 close to reaching the 1,000-person cap in the park at any time in the recent history. The  
20 two busiest days—this is noted in the memo—are Father's Day and Mother's Day, which  
21 is great. I love that fact. As we start thinking about the different potential options for a  
22 pilot, I wanted to note with what we're calling this dynamic advanced pass option, this  
23 provides a perfect example. On a weekend day in October, when it's relatively low  
24 visitation, you might have 50 passes available, but on Mother's Day you might not have  
25 any. That's the beauty of that particular option; you can dial it in based on this trove of  
26 data that Daren and his team have. A couple of last comments, then I will shut up. I look  
27 forward to comments from everyone else. A couple of people spoke about safety issues.  
28 It is entirely fair to think about the balance between the preservation of the park's  
29 resources and affording an opportunity for members of the public to enjoy the park. I get  
30 very concerned when folks start to say that they're worried about people from outside of  
31 Palo Alto creating a safety risk of some sort. We have to be pretty clear in saying there  
32 are a lot of good reasons for why the current policy might be in place, but saying that  
33 people from outside of Palo Alto will either pollute more in the park, leave more trash in  
34 the park, or that they somehow create a safety risk should be an argument that's off limits.  
35 Last, all of the commenters uniformly, both those who spoke in favor and against, noted  
36 that they want to try to maintain the character of the place. All of the pilot options  
37 actually are directed to exactly that. We're not opening the gates and having hundreds of  
38 thousands of people. We're talking about probably a few dozen extra visitors on any  
39 given day. With that, I will turn it over to others. Let me also say if the Commission  
40 would like to weigh in, it would be helpful to know your preference for any of these



1 potential options and other options that you might have in mind. With respect to the  
2 student-focused proposal, I think it's the view of the ad hoc committee members that  
3 students are a group we definitely want to reach. If there are other communities that you  
4 have in mind and would be appropriate to target in a way with this sort of policy, that  
5 would be good to know as well. Last, if we were to advance a proposal for the dynamic  
6 pass program, would we want to charge a fee? My personal view is we probably would.  
7 We could generate some income, and there would be benefits to generating that type of  
8 income. It's something I'd be interested to hear feedback on. That way the committee  
9 would have a little bit more direction on that point as well.

10 Chair McDougall: Jeff LaMere was the other ad hoc member. Would the rest of the ad  
11 hoc committee like to comment?

12 Vice Chair Greenfield: Yes, please. A lot has gone into this. As a member of the ad  
13 hoc, I've spent a number of hours researching and discussing ideas and assessing ideas to  
14 increase Foothills Park access. It's a very complex, multifaceted issue. It's a conundrum.  
15 No surprise many residents support increased access, and no surprise many residents  
16 prefer to keep things as it is. It's a hot-button issue within the community. I'd like to  
17 share some of my thoughts on various aspects and nuances of the process and potential  
18 pilot plan that I've gone back and forth on, frankly. Just to re-summarize the goals. The  
19 first thing we're trying to do is clarify what problem it is we're trying to solve. We want  
20 to identify a straightforward, palatable, ideally noncontroversial pilot plan, and then we  
21 want to minimize financial impact including staff time. We want to minimize  
22 environmental impact, and we want to maintain a quality visitor experience. All of this is  
23 a step towards potentially developing a compelling plan to recommend to City Council  
24 for consideration. Let's start with the problem analysis. This is important. First, we need  
25 to decide and articulate what is the problem we're trying to solve. This is ultimately  
26 going to drive a policy change recommendation. Is this a social justice issue? Is this  
27 increased access to natural environments for underserved communities that we're trying  
28 to address? Are we looking for equitable access to Palo Alto resources for Palo Alto  
29 school children? Is this a common sense, good neighbor to surrounding communities  
30 concern? Can multiple problems be addressed without confusing the focus and diluting  
31 the solution? As far as a pilot program consideration, we want to identify a plan to  
32 address the prioritized problem. This is ultimately going to become an implementation  
33 recommendation of a proposed policy change. We want to keep things as simple as  
34 possible. We want it to be easy for the public to understand. We want it to be easy for  
35 staff to implement and manage, including entrance gate staff. We want it to be easy to  
36 monitor and assess impacts of. We need to look at the risk and impacts and assess them.  
37 We're striving for a net zero cost impact, likely required for near-term acceptance. We  
38 want to consider requirements to maintain and protect natural environment and park  
39 improvements. Let me go through the pilot program options in a little more detail, the  
40 pros and cons as I see them. Here's where it gets complicated for me. The first proposal

1 to formally permit nonresidents on non-holiday weekdays. This formalizes the de facto  
2 current practice. That's a good thing. It removes a typically unenforced misdemeanor.  
3 That's a good thing. It potentially compromises future compensation from neighboring  
4 cities by formally opening it up to the neighboring communities. That's a potential issue.  
5 It potentially removes a useful Code enforcement mechanism that's not used frequently. I  
6 see this like the alcohol codes in parks regarding consuming alcohol. Go out to a concert  
7 in the park, and you're likely to find a lot of people consuming alcohol. It's against the  
8 Code of the City. It's not enforced, but the Code exists there to enforce at the discretion  
9 as needed. That's something to consider. Also, we need to recognize if we do formally  
10 permit nonresidents on non-holiday weekends, we are going to gradually increase  
11 weekday visitation rates as word gets around. It's something that's going to ramp up.  
12 The second proposal is to allow access to PAUSD and Ravenswood students. The pro is  
13 providing access to students and families from local underserved communities and the  
14 Palo Alto School District. It's generally consistent with Community Services Department  
15 policy to treat Palo Alto students the same as Palo Alto residents. Consistent with that,  
16 we would want to have no entrance fee associated with entrance for these groups. On the  
17 downside, there are operational complexities associated with this. Not all schools issue  
18 IDs, so student verification is very complicated. This becomes problematic at the  
19 entrance station where quick through-put is desired, and we want to have it simple for the  
20 entry-station staff. Passes at libraries is a possibility we talked about. This is also  
21 complicated and not simple in terms of how many there are, how do they get back from  
22 Foothills Park to the library. It's something that's possible, but it's not simple. This  
23 solution also excludes private schools in East Palo Alto and Palo Alto. This would  
24 exclude Eastside College Prep and the Chan Primary School in East Palo Alto as well as  
25 multiple Palo Alto private schools. In talking about the online reservation system, an  
26 advantage is this is definitely the easiest from an operational standpoint, as the staff has  
27 commented. It's an adjustable system. That's great. It's simple at the entrance station  
28 with no cash involved in the event that we do charge nonresidents using this. I would be  
29 in favor of that. It's also easy for strong, trial program data collection. That's a definite  
30 plus. The downside is permitting access to all communities is not well aligned with the  
31 goal of increasing access to underserved communities as it's likely to be more highly  
32 utilized by the affluent neighboring communities. Also, the online reservation system  
33 could set an access bar, which would be an issue for some. It could potentially  
34 complicate offering free admission to PAUSD and Ravenswood student families versus  
35 nonresidents from other communities. I consider the potential impact of the incremental  
36 cost for CSD and Foothills Park staff time that are going to be incurred. The overall  
37 impact depends on pilot program scope. There's going to be new, associated staff work.  
38 Either additional staff resources would be required or staff focus on other projects is  
39 going to be reduced. There are potential capital expenses. For example, a new entrance  
40 gate or exit gate monitoring equipment depending if it's needed to figure out how many  
41 cars we have in the park at a given time. We may need to improve marking or securing  
42 of parking spots. We may need to further secure fencing at the maintenance shop.

1 Considering the natural resources impact. For habitat, as we increase the usage in the  
2 park, there's going to be increased impact on the habitat. Hopefully this is moderated. As  
3 far as wildlife sightings, these are likely to decrease as we increase the population of  
4 people in the park. Trails should have fairly minimal impact; although, there have been  
5 some concerns about more bikes on trails. That's something staff should be able to keep  
6 in check.

7 Commissioner Moss: Time out. He has several more pages. I don't think this is fair.  
8 This topic, as you mentioned, is very complex. We probably should have three ...

9 Vice Chair Greenfield: With all due respect, I'm trying to provide input for the  
10 Commission to consider. I have another page to go through.

11 Chair McDougall: Jeff is an ad hoc ...

12 Commissioner Moss: I'm overwhelmed.

13 Chair McDougall: ... member, and I'm willing to allow him to continue.

14 Vice Chair Greenfield: As far as the overall experience for the park, I don't think we  
15 want to be approaching 1,000 visitors in the park very often. We need to be careful about  
16 that. I don't think the pilot programs proposed will address that, and that's a good thing.  
17 As we get to that size of group, parking management for large crowds becomes difficult  
18 since parking is spread out through the park and not necessarily where people want to be.  
19 We want to avoid turning cars away, resulting in parking on Page Mill Road. There will  
20 be increased operational and maintenance environmental stress. To summarize, in  
21 addition to the assessment of potential risk, there's are some big-picture financial  
22 considerations. We're all aware that the neighboring communities did not contribute to  
23 the purchase of Foothills Park, and that's contributed to how we got to where we are  
24 today. If or when Palo Alto increases access to Foothills Park, it's an opportunity for our  
25 neighbors to contribute to Foothills Park. There are lots of different ways this could play  
26 out. For example, we have an unfunded \$10 million Buckeye Creek restoration project.  
27 This certainly won't be lost on City Council. We need to make sure we don't compromise  
28 our position for these financial considerations by how we approach a pilot program and  
29 opening up the park. Timing is an issue. Council is busy, but one could observe they're  
30 always busy. This isn't a primary concern. For me, providing access to PAUSD families  
31 is a core goal of this project. I really appreciate that aspect as well as the Ravenswood  
32 School District families. Stanford families are likely to be the largest group to take  
33 advantage of allowing PAUSD access. I'm concerned about our timing with the Stanford  
34 GUP currently under negotiation. The City is on record disagreeing with the GUP's  
35 impact assessment on open space preserves including Foothills Park and park and  
36 recreational facilities. I'm concerned that offering increased access to Stanford during the  
37 GUP negotiation is highly problematic. As far as the Master Plan, there's no question

1 that we support the high-quality, accessible facilities and services and integrate nature,  
2 etc. The Master Plan doesn't specifically delineate its target scope. Is this Palo Alto  
3 residents or is it all local communities? It's not addressed. We do have a new 20-year  
4 Master Plan. Increasing access to Foothills Park was considered by the Parks and Rec  
5 Commission for inclusion in this Master Plan. It's noteworthy that increased Foothills  
6 Park access was not included as a Master Plan goal, policy, or program. This discussion  
7 comes down to priorities. Realistically, pursuing a plan to increase access to Foothills  
8 Park is going to consume significant political capital for the Commission. We must  
9 decide as a Commission is this a top priority to pursue, given that it's outside our Master  
10 Plan. We may decide that we do want to do this. We may decide not. We need to  
11 consider this. I appreciate the public's interest in increasing access, and I appreciate the  
12 concerns about the impacts of doing so. I'm interested in identifying how to  
13 incrementally increase access without creating more problems than we solve. We have  
14 lots of ideas. I'm struggling to find a balanced solution to pursue. Whether it's a hybrid  
15 or alternative pilot plan or another approach altogether, I'm interested in hearing what my  
16 colleagues have to say.

17 Commissioner Reckdahl: With respect to the Friends of Foothills Park, the people who  
18 are not Palo Alto residents, they can't enter the park on their own?

19 Mr. Anderson: If they were to come in with the Friends, which occasionally happens,  
20 that has happened, nonresidents.

21 Commissioner Reckdahl: If they just want to go hiking on an off day, they can't access it.

22 Mr. Anderson: That's correct.

23 Commissioner Reckdahl: To me, that's the most compelling reason to change this. The  
24 people who spending hours and hours digging out weeds and invasive species can't go up  
25 there on their own on their off days and hike. If I were to open Palo Alto Foothills Park  
26 to one group, it's the volunteers. What Mayor Holman said was if you volunteer, you can  
27 get in. That would be a compelling way of making people earn the ability to go there. If  
28 you're either a student or an adult and you don't live in Palo Alto but you go to the Palo  
29 Alto library and spend hours shelving books, you should on your off days be able to go  
30 up on your own and access Foothills Park. I'm not eager to expand Foothills Park access,  
31 but that would be a good way of doing it. That would be a self-selection. If you want to  
32 do it, if it meant a lot to you, you have a way of doing it. With respect to the whole 60  
33 years ago you didn't pay for it, we have to let that grudge go. To me, the most  
34 compelling reason to limit it at all is environmental. We don't want to ruin—I think the  
35 first speaker was saying, if you let too many people in, you'd ruin the experience. We  
36 have to worry about the environment and also the experience for the people who go in it.  
37 That's a really legitimate concern. If we open it up to anyone going in, we could lose the  
38 recipe to Foothills Park. The most compelling need to me would be incorporate it for

1 volunteers. The second most compelling would be for the students. When Jeff was  
2 mentioning about losing leverage with the Stanford GUP, Stanford says, "We don't need  
3 to build parks because we can use Palo Alto parks." During the GUP negotiations, I don't  
4 think we should be doing anything that's going to undermine our negotiations. I would  
5 take it slow on that aspect.

6 Commissioner Moss: I have comments on pretty much everything that Jeff went through.  
7 As far as the limits of cars and limits of people and limits of shuttles and limits of not  
8 buses and number of barbecues and people per party and weekday versus weekend versus  
9 holiday, I want to know from staff how do we work through these issues? I don't think  
10 we can work through these issues in one meeting. I also don't believe it's right that the  
11 subcommittee has to do all the work and come up with the exact way we're going to deal  
12 with this. I would like an opportunity as well. How do we do this over the next six  
13 months?

14 Mr. Anderson: My perspective, Commissioner Moss, is this is a Commission-led  
15 endeavor and initiative. The ad hoc's leading this, and the Commission will support it.  
16 I'm here as a staff person to support the ad hoc, to provide them good information, to  
17 provide realistic impacts that would—for each proposal, I've tried to analyze it and reach  
18 out to staff who used to manage Foothills Park going back 30 years and say, "What do  
19 you think of these proposals? What do you think would be some of the implications?"  
20 and share that with the ad hoc, share that with the Commission. That's what I've tried to  
21 do.

22 Chair McDougall: Excuse me, David. The purpose of this session is for us to give some  
23 direction. The only appropriate way, because of the Brown Act, is to send it back to the  
24 ad hoc with comments from the Commission about what they might want to look at to  
25 come back to us. This may come back a couple of times. The Commission's opportunity  
26 is to comment on what the ad hoc brings back the next time and to give them direction of  
27 what to do now. The only way structurally that we can do this is send it back to an ad  
28 hoc. Otherwise, we're violating the Brown Act.

29 Commissioner Moss: There is one other way. You have another breakout session like  
30 we have once a year—the public is invited—where we spend a morning going through  
31 this. It's that big and that complex.

32 Chair McDougall: That's a good thought. Let me work with staff to give that some  
33 consideration. I don't know that we can decide that now, but that's a reasonable idea.

34 Commissioner Moss: The only other way is—I probably have half-an-hour's worth of  
35 comments. Do you want them now or can I give them to you in writing or can we have a  
36 session? What would you suggest? Or we come back for three months in a row and I  
37 give 20 minutes, 20 minutes, 20 minutes.



1 Chair McDougall: At this point, if it's legitimately half an hour, it needs to be given real  
2 consideration. I would suggest give it to us in writing. If you'd like to give some  
3 directional comments now ... If your comments are that deep and meaningful, which I'm  
4 willing to accept, I would prefer that you submit them in writing.

5 Commissioner Moss: I do have comments about limits. I do believe with Commissioner  
6 Reckdahl that environmental impact is huge, and safety is a big consideration not because  
7 of different people from different cities. If we regularly have 1,000 people—I've never  
8 been in the park where there's been more than maybe 300 people. I don't come on  
9 Father's Day. Do we have 1,000 people on Father's Day? Maybe we have 500 or 400. I  
10 have a significant issue with limits. When I look at barbecues, the number of places that  
11 have barbecues, and I see them in far-flung places that have no business having a  
12 barbecue, I feel that we should be taking barbecues away. There are silly things like that,  
13 fire danger, not because of the type of people that would come here, but the sheer volume  
14 of 1,000 people coming here weekend after weekend after weekend. What Karen  
15 Holman said about Rancho San Antonio, it's unbelievable the number of people. These  
16 are just the tip of the iceberg.

17 Commissioner McCauley: I don't mean to interject, but I do want to provide a little bit of  
18 comfort.

19 Chair McDougall: Let him finish, and I'll let you come back.

20 Commissioner Moss: The other issues that I want more clarity on are costs, Rangers, fire  
21 protection, trail maintenance, invasive species, restroom redos, dealing with people who  
22 want to bring in dogs, dealing with people who want to bring in bikes, reservation and fee  
23 collection systems, many more volunteers and the costs of managing volunteers and  
24 attracting volunteers, maintenance of facilities, poison oak. All these things have to be  
25 paid for. How do you deal with that? The other thing is what Herb Borock said about  
26 requiring a referendum. That's a big deal to require a referendum, even to do a pilot. The  
27 other thing is that Palo Alto is growing. If we put a limit of 1,000 people, the mix of Palo  
28 Alto versus non-Palo Alto is an issue that's going to bite us soon. That's good enough for  
29 now.

30 Commissioner McCauley: I don't think anything we're talking about—to be more  
31 concrete, we're talking about on the lowest visitation day, weekend day, you might have  
32 50 passes available. We're not talking about hundreds of additional people in the park on  
33 a given day. I don't think. It's important to note that we're talking, I think, about very  
34 low impact in terms of number of people in the park on any given day from a pilot like  
35 this.

36 Commissioner Cribbs: I'm really glad the ad hoc put together the discussion and the  
37 report. I appreciate everybody's really thoughtful comments. I've been around this place

1 for a long time and have been through the comments about Foothill Park opening,  
2 closing, and all of that over the years and the history and that kind of thing. It's  
3 appropriate we're having this discussion once again. It's a really important community  
4 discussion. So many questions raised by people, so many definitely complex issues, I  
5 would love to see it go back to the ad hoc and have some really long and serious  
6 discussions about it, especially in view of including school children from disadvantaged  
7 and underserved areas and also Palo Alto School District and our private schools and how  
8 we really could serve the future generation while keeping control and really  
9 understanding what the ecosystem can embrace.

10 Council Member Cormack: I'll touch on each of the options that have been suggested.  
11 The first is the update to the Municipal Code. It does concern me if our Code does not  
12 match our practice. Not just here, everywhere. It's worth learning more about that and  
13 getting the advice of our City Attorney if appropriate. With respect to the student-  
14 focused program, Commissioner Greenfield may be unaware that the PAUSD cards are  
15 issued to everyone, and they actually function as a Palo Alto library card. Every single  
16 student has that available. With respect to number 3, the passes at the libraries was an  
17 idea that came up during the interviews for the Library Advisory Commission from a  
18 person who had lived in Chicago. It was a way that the museums in Chicago, which are  
19 quite pricey, would be available to everyone. That's interesting. It's always helpful to  
20 learn from other places. Those are my comments on the three suggestions.

21 Chair McDougall: The \$1.3 million and even the operating expenses since then. Over  
22 the last 50 years, any depreciation table would tell you that it's been depreciated.  
23 Reminding everybody that we paid for it, so nobody else should come, which is what  
24 some of the letters that we were sent do, I just don't think that's right. Daren, is this a  
25 park or a preserve? What's the difference?

26 Mr. Anderson: It's all dedicated parkland. We've qualified it as open space. Our four  
27 open space preserves, the Baylands Nature Preserve, Pearson-Arastradero Preserve,  
28 Esther Clark Park, and Foothills Park, all qualify under that open space category, but  
29 really it's all dedicated parkland with the same protections.

30 Chair McDougall: It's dedicated park, but it's not within the State definition of a reserve  
31 versus a park.

32 Mr. Anderson: That's correct.

33 Chair McDougall: The State has parks, go have a good time, do what you want, don't  
34 worry about the trails, climb the trees, throw your Frisbee. Go to a reserve, stay on the  
35 trails, don't throw your Frisbee. That's not the differentiation?

1 Mr. Anderson: Correct. I would look towards the Comp Plan and to our Municipal Code  
2 where we're got specific rules for specific areas.

3 Chair McDougall: I understand that. In terms of what problem we're solving, I have a  
4 personal belief that giving particularly school children the opportunity to be in nature is  
5 going to result in—you can't expect people to become stewards of nature, if they don't  
6 care about nature. They can't care about nature, if they've never been in nature. So many  
7 of the particularly Ravenswood School District kids haven't had that opportunity.  
8 Everybody agrees this is a special place. You can say, "What about Arastradero or  
9 whatever else?" These other parks don't have the quail, the flat space, and whatever.  
10 Giving those kids the opportunity to experience nature, maybe you can get them to  
11 understand nature, maybe you can get them to then love nature and become stewards. In  
12 fact, that's what Environmental Volunteers is all about, and you shouldn't be surprised  
13 that I'm saying that. Relative to Karen's challenge to the Board, Elliott Wright, who's the  
14 executive director, when asked has already said they would be happy to lead the effort to  
15 become the stewards, to look after the kids, to do the education. In fact, you could  
16 probably go further and ask them to be the equivalent of a mini Ranger so that they do  
17 have some ability to be stewards of the park. They want kids to be stewards. I think they  
18 would act as stewards. There's the basis of that. The current Friends of Palo Alto Parks  
19 does pull weeds. It is incredibly admirable. The things they've done to look after the  
20 park is just great. Increasing that particular organization or enveloping that organization  
21 into something bigger needs to be done, and it needs to be done in the context of what  
22 we're doing. I think it can be. The thing about exposing kids, it's also a question of  
23 exposing adults as well. There are lots of studies. This guy, Peter Wohlleben, wrote *The*  
24 *Hidden Life of Trees*. *The Hidden Life of Trees* goes through a whole series of things  
25 including what the Japanese call forest bathing. They deliberately make sure that they  
26 get into parks and then they experience the forest. In fact, it's come to the States. You  
27 can go the University of Santa Cruz and take courses in forest bathing because of the  
28 belief that that's valuable. We owe it as a generous community. We talk about generous  
29 community. The Mayor talked about outreach and being good neighbors. We ought to  
30 be good neighbors and provide that opportunity to our neighbors. In terms of the 1,000-  
31 person cap, I'm sorry that that got mentioned, and every conversation since then has been  
32 we can't allow 1,000 people in the park. What was the quote? We can't allow everyone  
33 every day and all the time. I don't think any of Ryan's proposals go anywhere near  
34 proposing that this should be 1,000 people every day. The issue about the Stanford GUP  
35 negotiation is beyond this Commission. We should come up with our recommendation.  
36 That doesn't mean anybody else should execute our recommendation if, in fact, it's  
37 damaging something else. That's a legitimate concern. The comments about can we  
38 reduce the number of barbecues, can we move the barbecues somewhere else, it occurred  
39 to me if we're still trying to find a use for the 7.7 acres, maybe that should become the  
40 group stuff. In terms of logistics like IDs and stuff, I truly believe in this day age a  
41 community like this can solve the logistics problems of IDs and so on. I encourage the ad

1 hoc to see what they can do to distill what they heard tonight, but to continue to be  
2 aggressive to move forward with a proposal of some sort, whether it's simply to fix the  
3 fact—Council Members today listen to this and say, "What do you mean it's not open?  
4 It's open. Anybody can go there on any day of the week." The answer is no, they can't.  
5 It's against the law. Either that needs to be fixed and nothing else, or we need to find a  
6 way through Environmental Volunteers and some other organizations as long as they're  
7 not conflicting with our City plans and the Junior Museum plans and whatever, their  
8 plans would be during the school year. Junior Museum does things there in the summer.  
9 As long as that's not conflicting, that's a possibility. Beyond that, we should move  
10 forward with every possibility we can. That would be the conclusion of my charge to the  
11 ad hoc.

12 Vice Chair Greenfield: I want to apologize if I went into too much detail. I recognize  
13 this process is constraining and awkward. There were a lot of details that I felt compelled  
14 to share. There's no other forum or method to share these. That was just trying to get  
15 them out. I was really trying to encourage Commissioner input on the ideas and get your  
16 feedback because this is the way that you can give feedback to us. There was a question  
17 about volunteers entering the park. We had some discussion about vouchers being issued  
18 to volunteers who participate in some process. Daren, do you recall that?

19 Mr. Anderson: That was more of a one-off ...

20 Chair McDougall: I'm going to suggest that we not at this point go into details like that.  
21 I am going to ask Commissioner Greenfield to make his notes available. That might help  
22 Commissioner Moss in writing his comments. It looked to me like it was particularly  
23 well done and shared. Within that context, some of the other specifics we can address. I  
24 did say I'd try to end by 10:00. We've taken almost 2 hours on this particular topic. The  
25 individual questions, like the one you were just suggesting, could go back to the ad hoc  
26 before they come back here.

27 Commissioner McCauley: Do you mind if I ask for—I'm a little bit reluctant to do this,  
28 but nonetheless I'll do it—a little bit of a straw vote amongst the Commission members?  
29 I'm interested to know if we think ...

30 Chair McDougall: I'm going to ask you to distill what you heard.

31 Commissioner McCauley: Fair enough.

32 Chair McDougall: Each of the Commissioners was explicit. I'm going to guess that your  
33 straw vote was which of the alternatives. I suggest that's an interesting topic the next  
34 time this comes up after the alternatives have been more distilled. Commissioner  
35 Greenfield has adequately described the complications of each. David will add further

1 complications to each. A straw vote at this point I would not recommend. With that, I  
2 would like to move to other ad hoc committee and liaison updates.

3 **4. Other Ad Hoc Committee and Liaison Updates**

4 Chair McDougall: Anything beyond what the handout has for us?

5 Commissioner Cribbs: Chair, I'm going to say goodnight.

6 Chair McDougall: Thank you very much for being here. We wish you continued  
7 recovery. The fact that you're still here with that tonight is—we're impressed.

8 [Commissioner Cribbs left the meeting at 10:03 p.m.]

9 Chair McDougall: Are there any other additions or comments relative to any of the ad  
10 hocs?

11 Vice Chair Greenfield: I wanted to note that I did meet with Sylvia Star-Lack, the  
12 Transportation Manager, regarding a Safe Routes liaison role. A couple of quick things  
13 that came out of that. She's very interested in working with us to develop a Safe Routes  
14 to Parks map, also integrating potentially libraries and schools and referring to this as  
15 Safe Routes in general. More specifically, we talked about the Mercedes development,  
16 which Daren mentioned in his report. We were talking about the additional bike lane  
17 that's being put in and how this is helpful, but it's something Parks and Rec is interested  
18 in as it is directly Safe Routes to Parks. A question was raised about the connection  
19 between the Embarcadero bike overpass connecting across the street. This is something  
20 that Sylvia considered a significant issue. This is on the Transportation Department, but  
21 she's very interested in this becoming a priority that we could raise. It would be some  
22 sort of signal, whether it's flashing lights across the highway or an actual signal of some  
23 sort that got put in. I'd like to request that staff pursue this.

24 Chair McDougall: Excuse me. Karen, as you're walking out, I'd like to point out your  
25 comment about dedicating various park spaces. You should know that we have an active  
26 ad hoc committee that's addressing that issue. Trying to be responsive to our important  
27 citizens.

28 Vice Chair Greenfield: If staff could pursue that, that'd be really helpful.

29 Chair McDougall: I would add a comment particularly relative to the Mercedes situation  
30 and the bike path and everything else. That went through the ARB but didn't come in our  
31 direction in any way that allowed us to comment before it was too late, where we were  
32 commenting outside of the committee. Your comments and interaction with  
33 Transportation people is totally appropriate. Does anybody else have any incremental

1 comments on any of these things? If not, I'll move on to whether there are comments and  
2 announcements or tentative agenda items for the next meeting.

3 **VI. TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR AUGUST 27, 2019 MEETING**

4 Chair McDougall: I believe Kristen has a laid-out agenda over the next couple of  
5 months. We'll circulate that rather than trying to address it here and have everybody  
6 scratch their heads about what ought to come next.

7 **VII. COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

8 None.

9 **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

10 Meeting adjourned on motion by Commissioner Moss and second by Commissioner  
11 Reckdahl at 10:07 p.m.