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**MINUTES  
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
February 25, 2020  
CITY HALL  
250 Hamilton Avenue  
Palo Alto, California**

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

15 **Commissioners Absent:** Jeff LaMere

16 **Others Present:** Council Member Kou

17 **Staff Present:** Daren Anderson, Catherine Bourquin

18 **I. ROLL CALL**

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

20 Chair Greenfield: Any agenda changes, requests, or deletions this evening? We'll move  
21 onto Oral Communications.

22 **III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

23 Chair Greenfield: We have one speaker, Monica Williams.

24 Monica Williams: Good evening, Chair Greenfield and Commissioners. I'm Monica  
25 Williams, President of the Palo Alto Pickleball Club. On behalf of the club, I want to  
26 give you a quick update on pickleball at Mitchell Park. First, I want to say that we are all  
27 extremely grateful to you, the Parks and Recreation Commissioners, also Daren and  
28 Kristen and the Community Services Manager, Adam Howard, for the work that you all  
29 did to bring these courts to fruition. We appreciate that the City Council had the  
30 foresight to approve their construction. We'd also like to commend Jeannette Serner  
31 [phonetic] for her hard work and supervision when the courts were under construction.  
32 Jeannette's perseverance, attention to detail, and not settling for anything but excellence  
33 has helped make these courts the best place to play pickleball in the Bay Area. The club  
34 provides paddles for any visitor who needs one, provides balls for every player, and we



1 are purchasing and replacing our temporary nets with seven portable net systems for the  
2 multipurpose courts in preparation for the Bay Area Senior Games, which we will be  
3 helping to host in May. Our ball manager predicts that our budget for balls alone in 2020  
4 will be \$7,500. We fund these purchases from our membership fees, which for Palo Alto  
5 residents is only \$30 a year. We teach pickleball classes. We have seven official  
6 instructors and nine assistants who are all registered through the Recreation Department.  
7 All 16 of these members volunteer their time to teach the City of Palo Alto classes, so all  
8 pickleball class revenue goes to the City. Classes are always full with a waiting list. We  
9 have ladders for all abilities, including a youth ladder. In the summer, we will be  
10 offering youth clinics. The new pickleball court facility is an amazing resource that the  
11 City has provided, so we encourage that it be used by everyone. The number of weekday  
12 players averages about 50, and on weekends we often get close to 100 players, many  
13 younger people, workers, and students. We welcome residents and nonresidents alike to  
14 these public courts, knowing that we do not have jurisdiction and that we cannot reserve  
15 the courts any time except for tournaments or City classes. We are working toward  
16 encouraging the use of the courts throughout the day and the evening so that everyone  
17 can benefit. We're accomplishing this by suggesting times on our website when players  
18 of similar levels may gather to have a more rewarding experience. We're happy to report  
19 that the number of our club membership will soon reach our goal of 50 percent Palo Alto  
20 residents. Our club motto is "arrive as a stranger and leave as a friend." We often get  
21 visitors who tell us that Palo Alto has the friendliest and most welcoming players on any  
22 pickleball courts they have visited. On behalf of all members of the Palo Alto Pickleball  
23 Club, thank you very much to all of you for making this happen. Thank you.

24 Chair Greenfield: Thank you.

#### 25 **IV. DEPARTMENT REPORT**

26 Chair Greenfield: We'll now proceed with the Department Report please.

27 Daren Anderson: Good evening, Daren Anderson with the Community Services  
28 Department. I wanted to make you aware of the North Ventura Coordinated Area Plan,  
29 NVCAP, and the Boulware Park expansion project. We're hosting a joint community  
30 meeting and open house workshop on Thursday, February 27, from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00  
31 p.m. The workshop's going to be at Gunn High School in the new student activity room,  
32 P115 and 116. There will be a presentation between 6:30 and 7:00 p.m., and then the rest  
33 of the meeting is an open house. You can come by for as little as 10 minutes or stay the  
34 whole time if you'd like. There will be interactive stations for you to participate and  
35 share your thoughts. The Green Streets for a Sustainable Community symposium is on  
36 Thursday, March 12, 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The description on the website for this—I'm  
37 going to read it to you—says our park roads and their rights-of-way are huge public  
38 assets that must be better managed in an imaginative and integrated way. The



1 symposium will bring together diverse stakeholders to explore how to better design, fund,  
2 build, and maintain streets to optimize performance on many dimensions. This will be at  
3 the Mountain View Community Center, and there is a registration fee. Registration is  
4 \$25 for the advance registration, and it goes up to \$50 if it's for the last minute. I wanted  
5 to make you aware that the Foothills Park Access Pilot Program is going to be discussed  
6 with Council on April 20. I also wanted to follow up on a community comment we had.  
7 A couple of meetings ago, a person spoke, and they asked a question and made a  
8 comment regarding park dedication for the new portion of Boulware Park. At the time,  
9 we didn't respond to them. There were already plans in the works, and it has since  
10 happened that the new addition, the .64-acre area of Boulware Park, went to Council for a  
11 Park Dedication Ordinance on February 10. There was also the question about the  
12 roadway, which has yet to be finalized as an option that we want to include. There's a  
13 roadway separating Boulware and this new parcel that we just purchased. Can it be  
14 closed and incorporated into the park? Staff is excited about this, but there are a few  
15 more hurdles before we finalize that. The question was does it have to be dedicated to be  
16 used as a park. The answer is no. We have a number of sites throughout the City that  
17 aren't dedicated parkland, but they're used in park-like ways. If we didn't dedicate it or  
18 for some reason there was another obstacle, it does not mean it can't be used that way, if  
19 we were given authority and permission to do so. That said, of course, we would try to  
20 dedicate it if we could. I wanted to follow up on that and make sure you're up to speed.  
21 A couple of meetings ago, Palo Alto Little League came to speak to the Commission  
22 about a proposal to slightly alter one of our fields. This is El Camino Park. They wanted  
23 to cut out a small section of turf, which would allow them to extend the base paths to 80  
24 feet where they're currently at 70. At first, it wouldn't quite work. We couldn't quite find  
25 the magical formula that would make this successful without impacting the safety or the  
26 conditions for other users. Staff and Little League and the ad hoc committee came up  
27 eventually with a successful proposal. We made that work. This new league, called the  
28 5480 League, will now be able to use under a pilot program that little section of El  
29 Camino Field that will accommodate them. We're glad to report that we were able to  
30 meet their needs without any impacts to other field users. I wanted to make you aware of  
31 Valley Water, Santa Clara Valley Water District now known as Valley Water, will be  
32 hosting two community meetings to discuss the Baylands tide gate replacement. They'll  
33 be running that project. On March 13 from 3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., they're going to have  
34 a site tour. If you'd like to participate, they ask that you meet at the Byxbee Park parking  
35 lot, and they'll walk out to the tide gate, which is a short walk from that site.

36 Commissioner Reckdahl: Can you repeat that date and time again?

37 Mr. Anderson: That's March 13, 3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. That's the site tour. The second  
38 meeting is April 14, 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. This one will be at the Palo Alto Art Center  
39 to discuss the project with people who couldn't make it to the site tour. The Earth Day  
40 and Great Race for Saving Water is scheduled for Saturday, April 25. That's always a

1 fun event. The tentative time for the Rinconada Park Improvement Project to start  
2 construction is August 2020. It's about a three-month construction project. At the  
3 December Commission meeting, we had a presentation on the Aquatics Program. We  
4 learned that swim lessons were down from prior years. Commissioner Cribbs had asked  
5 for an update on the status of those swim lessons. I was able to reach out to Jazmine  
6 LeBlanc, who provided some good information. I'm going to share that with you now.  
7 It's a bit of a misunderstanding to say that the number of swim lessons declined year over  
8 year. The swim lesson program, where families sign up for weekly 30-minute sessions,  
9 saw a decline in total lessons taught in 2019 versus 2018. In 2019, there were 7,738, and  
10 in 2018 there were 8,830. However, the swim camp program, which offers five straight  
11 days of 45-minute lessons plus a fun wrap-around camp experience, served far more  
12 families year over year, resulting in essentially many more swim lessons taught through  
13 that program in 2019 versus 2018. The total number of swim lessons taught by Tim  
14 Sheeper grew from 10,000 in 2018 to 11,253 in 2019. It's a pretty significant shift in the  
15 type of lessons that families wanted with far more families opting for the swim lesson  
16 embedded in the swim camp. The camps usually run from 9:00 to 2:00 every day with  
17 optional pre- and post-camps. There was also a question about adult lessons and what  
18 we're doing with that. The adult lesson development is an initiative for 2020. Tim  
19 Sheeper's team will be working on that. They launched a pre-Masters program in  
20 January. We've evolved the program, and it will soon relaunch as a swim for style and  
21 skill. It's open to the community and will target lap swimmers, Masters swimmers, and  
22 non-swimmers. More adult programs will launch later in the year. An update on the  
23 Masters team. I know that was an issue and a concern for the Commission. The Masters  
24 team has transitioned from being coached by Carole MacPherson to a new person hired  
25 by Tim Sheeper. There was a kickoff party in January. Lots of the Rinconada Masters  
26 swimmers attended to learn about the new team. Nearly all the old team has joined with  
27 the new team. The feedback so far has all been extremely positive, both the new  
28 participants and the old participants. That concludes the Department Report.

29 Chair Greenfield: Any questions?

30 Commissioner Moss: Can you say anything about last night's meeting with the City  
31 Council about Commissions in general and more specifically this Commission? If there's  
32 nothing for this Commission, then don't bother.

33 Mr. Anderson: Thank you for that comment. I think the Chair had some ideas that  
34 maybe we'd get an update from Council Member Kou when we get to the Liaison update.

35 Chair Greenfield: I was at the meeting last night as well. At the end of the meeting, we'll  
36 go over that. Thank you.

37 Commissioner McCauley: Daren, concerning Rinconada swim lessons, I totally  
38 appreciate the information that Jazmine shared. I think that's something that was more or

1 less shared back in December as well. There's a belief that it's probably a switch between  
2 lessons to these swim camps. In the back and forth at that meeting with Keith, one of the  
3 things that Tim Sheeper noted is that they're actually down at all of their programs, not  
4 just in Palo Alto but also in Menlo Park. By the way, that could be something that's just  
5 demographic entirely. The concern from my perspective is, is it potentially something  
6 that Team Sheeper has a problem. For whatever reason, their particular programs are  
7 seeing declines. It's nothing that you need to respond to now. For the next time that you  
8 bring an update to our group, that's the concern, at least from my perspective, that it's  
9 something specific to Team Sheeper rather than being a demographic shift or something  
10 else.

11 Mr. Anderson: Thank you. We'll look into that.

12 Commissioner Reckdahl: Maybe Sunnyvale or Mountain View lessons would be a good  
13 checkpoint. A question about El Camino Park. You mentioned separately about getting  
14 a pump to help the irrigation. That's going in. Is that anytime soon?

15 Mr. Anderson: Yes. We're working on that. When we initially spoke about this 5480  
16 field configuration, my staff had a lot of reservations for fear that adjustments to the  
17 irrigation would compromise the condition of the turf. Part of the reason we are able to  
18 make it work is this longstanding effort to get a booster pump for that site has come  
19 through. We should have that very soon.

20 Commissioner Reckdahl: The grass right now is very splotchy. Is that going to help it or  
21 is it just the fact that the soil is so bad?

22 Mr. Anderson: It's a combination. The better the irrigation system, certainly the better  
23 the turf. What we want is head-to-head coverage. Right now, we don't necessarily have  
24 that completely because of the lower pressure on that site. It will definitely help. I don't  
25 know that it will 100 percent resolve it. What Commissioner Reckdahl is referencing is  
26 the poor soil. You might recall in 2015 when the El Camino Park project was happening,  
27 an underground reservoir was placed there. A lot of the soil that was used on top of that  
28 reservoir was not necessarily of the highest quality for turf-growing. A lot of it had a lot  
29 of rock. Our staff's doing our very best to amend the soil every year with better nutrients  
30 and better conditioners to hopefully have a healthier stand of turf. Over time, we will see  
31 it continue to get better.

32 Chair Greenfield: Any other questions? I have a couple of quick comments regarding  
33 the Green Streets symposium. I am planning to attend it. I encourage anyone else who  
34 wants to attend, just let me know if you're planning to go. Regarding the tide gate  
35 replacement, I was on a tour with Valley Water and some environmental stakeholders  
36 yesterday. I encourage all the Commission members to try and make the tour in March.



1 It's something that potentially we may want to get on a future agenda as a presentation for  
2 community feedback.

3 Mr. Anderson: That one's scheduled for a Park Improvement Ordinance that would come  
4 to the Commission for a discussion.

5 Chair Greenfield: Thank you. That's all. We can move on with our next order of  
6 business.

7 **V. BUSINESS**

8 **1. Approval of Draft Minutes from the January 28, 2020 Parks and Recreation**  
9 **Commission Meeting**

10 Approval of the draft Minutes was moved by Commissioner Olson and seconded by  
11 Commissioner Reckdahl. Passed 6-0, LaMere absent

12 **2. Approval of Draft Minutes from the February 13, 2020 Parks and Recreation**  
13 **Commission Retreat**

14 Approval of the draft Minutes was moved by Commissioner Moss and seconded by Vice  
15 Chair Cribbs. Passed 6-0, LaMere absent

16 **3. Ramos Park Renovation Project Update**

17 Peter Jensen: Good evening, Commission. Peter Jensen, Landscape Architect for the  
18 City of Palo Alto. I'm going to go through a presentation about Ramos Park. It's up for a  
19 fairly small renovation as far as park renovations go. There are some key features that  
20 are going in there that we'd like your feedback on before we put the design together. This  
21 is to talk about the scope of work, what occurred, and the feedback that was provided by  
22 the community meeting and, of course, your questions and answers. I'll go through the  
23 presentation. If you have questions as we go along, you can ask me them as we go. I  
24 thought this would be an interesting slide I added to the presentation. This is a historical  
25 plan of Ramos Park. I can't quite see the date down there, but it's fairly a long time ago.  
26 You can that the majority of the park does look the same today. The framework of the  
27 structure of the park is similar to what the original design was. You can see Meadow is  
28 located out here. The playground exists in here. The large paved area in the back existed  
29 there. What's interesting to look at is you can start to see what type of striping was  
30 intended for that area. I think they have a volleyball court here and a little basketball  
31 court right there. Is that what it's saying on there? At some point, there was an  
32 elementary school adjacent to the park. That explains a weird nuance that occurs with  
33 some of the pathways. The school, I guess, was torn down at one point. This concrete  
34 pathway just ends where there was an existing pathway, but now it's gone. It still





1 remains that way today. That's something we'll talk about in the renovation plan.  
2 Overall, the park is maintained in good condition and is in its overall original design.  
3 Here's an aerial with East Meadow up on top of the screen. Here's the pathway I was  
4 talking about before, ending at that point. Of course, the playground is one of the main  
5 features of this renovation as well as looking at restriping the paved court area. The  
6 actual CIP language talks about refurbishing the court surface. Unfortunately, with  
7 concrete that's not really a possible thing to do. You pretty much have to rip it out if you  
8 want to make it a better surface. It is a quite large paved area. It's not in the best  
9 condition, but it's not in the worst condition. It's got one basketball hoop that exists back  
10 there. I think we can do some other things back there that can make it a little bit more  
11 usable as far as the space. This goes along with the historic ideas of the parks in Palo  
12 Alto, built mostly in the '50s and '60s. This had court striping on it, but I'm sure that at  
13 some point it was thought that it could be a roller skate rink as well. Most of our big  
14 paved areas were called out to be that. That is not something that is very popular these  
15 days. Finding other uses for the community to use that space is something we'd like to  
16 do. Here are some existing images of the playground. Currently, the playground is only  
17 for tots. That's between the ages of 2 and 5. The equipment that's out there is rated for  
18 that age. You can see there are climbing structures that are smaller scaled for younger  
19 kids in a tan bark area. There's a defined sand area that has a whole bunch of spring  
20 riding toys. More old school in the sense of a playground. I think the playground is  
21 somewhere between 50 and 20 years old. That's usually when we renovate the  
22 playground and swap out the equipment. That's something that we talked a little bit  
23 about with the community in the meeting. The project is made up of two different capital  
24 improvement projects, one for the park renovation work itself, which is funding of  
25 \$271,000, and for the addition of a new park restroom with funding of \$350,000. It was  
26 felt that Ramos Park, since it was on the schedule to be renovated now, would be best to  
27 include the bathroom in the work so it could all be done at the same time without having  
28 to come back later and trench the park work that had been done. The first community  
29 meeting was held about a month ago. It was very well attended. I think we had 32  
30 people or something like that, which is very good for a community meeting. The  
31 community meeting centered around a series of questions and sticker boards to gain  
32 feedback about the proposed renovations to the park, a question about the restroom,  
33 questions about the playground. We'll go through those things, the responses from the  
34 meeting. Subsequent to that, we've had an online survey going, which has garnered a lot  
35 of responses, and we'll talk about those. You can see at the bottom a sample. This is the  
36 questions and how they were asked and then voted on with stickers. The other thing we  
37 talked about in that meeting was the location of the restroom. We gave three options of  
38 where the restroom could be. I think the consensus overall from the community was they  
39 would rather have it closer to the street than more inward to the park. We're looking at  
40 those locations for putting the initial design together. These are the results from the  
41 community meeting. The question that was asked was do you favor a bathroom in the  
42 restroom, 21 votes for yes and 4 for no. The second question concerned the playground,



1 either maintaining it as a tot lot or mixing and providing equipment for older aged kids,  
2 ages 5-12. It was favored by the community to have some older children equipment in  
3 the playground. The striping of the court in the back was favored to maintain what's out  
4 there and keep the basketball. I think there are additional basketball courts or half courts  
5 that we can put back there to make it more usable. This is the voting for the restroom  
6 location. You can see the two that are closest to East Meadow are the ones that received  
7 the most votes. I think this one actually beat it out by one, that was closer to the  
8 playground. From the meeting, a couple of other questions came up about the park that  
9 were not in the original scope. One concerned security lighting. The community felt we  
10 needed to provide more lighting in the park. Questions about adding native or habitat  
11 planting to the park and the extension of the current dead-end walkway to make a  
12 continuous loop path. There was actually a lot of conversation about a dog park.  
13 Apparently, dogs are off leash in the park quite a bit. There was some vocal support for  
14 having a defined dog park in the area. That's not a part of the scope of the project in the  
15 current CIP, but it did seem to be something the community was interested in. Those  
16 questions were added to the questions for the online survey. The online survey started on  
17 February 3 and is going to run through this Friday. To date, 167 people have taken the  
18 survey. That is a very good turnout for a survey. We would expect somewhere in the 30-  
19 40 count of people to take the survey. A lot of people have taken the survey. The  
20 neighborhood reps have really helped to push out and promote the survey on email.  
21 That's done a really good job of getting people to participate. You can see, as things go  
22 with the restroom, that's always a polarizing topic. Currently the vote is 86 for and 80  
23 against. I think a majority of the neighborhood would like a restroom there. We'll talk a  
24 little bit more about why the City would like to see a restroom in that location. Adding  
25 playground equipment for older kids is something the community would like to see.  
26 They'd like to see the basketball court restriped and added to. The paved area is the one  
27 they supported. That question gave the option of writing things in. Summarized at the  
28 bottom is what those are, tennis, refurbishing, pickleball creating a loop pathway. The  
29 overall majority was to maintain and expand the basketball experience on the paving.  
30 Security lighting has a lot of support. Lighting is always a big-ticket item when you start  
31 to put electrical in the park. For our purposes, where lighting is lacking in the park is  
32 mostly around the picnic area. The dense trees make a dark place there. I think we can  
33 incorporate a lighting element on the restroom building that would illuminate that area  
34 enough, which the community would like to see done. The community supports adding  
35 native and habitat planting to the park, which it does lack now. It supports having some  
36 type of dog park facility there. That's something we will explore more in the next  
37 meeting with the community, locations of where that could be and the size of that. That's  
38 something we weren't expecting to find, but that's why we go through this process. I  
39 have talked to Daren about the funding that we have for dog parks. If it is something we  
40 do want to move forward with, the community is in favor of doing, then we can find  
41 some funding to have a dog park there. As far as our budget, which again is fairly small  
42 for a park, \$271,000, we are doing our best to enhance that by doing all the design and





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1 community outreach work in house, which means I do most of that work. It does save us  
2 a little money to have more amenities out there. This graphic shows where the proposed  
3 features could be that we could use that funding for. Along the street, we recognize that  
4 there is an unused turf area that could be converted into native habitat. The yellow line is  
5 the connection of the concrete walkway out to the street walkway. Right now, there is a  
6 nice loop path that goes around the park. As it gets into this location and into the picnic  
7 area, the path is not concrete. It is decomposed granite, which most of the time is fine.  
8 In inclement weather, it's maybe not as nice to walk on. Adding the extension of the  
9 walkway around, we can hook to the City sidewalk in front and make a continuous loop,  
10 which would be a bonus feature of the park as far as walking goes and providing that  
11 activity for the community. The playground area will remain where it is. We will look,  
12 at the next meeting, about what we're proposing to put in there as far as playground  
13 equipment and how it fits in that space. The location for the restroom, just by looking at  
14 the invert elevations of the utilities in the street, it is easier to place it in this location here.  
15 I also think it is a better location as far as lighting goes to illuminate this area here. We'd  
16 set it out there, closer to the street. This area here, I show a space for a potential dog  
17 park. We've talked about dog parks before. If we're going to try to install a new one, we  
18 try to have at least a half acre for the impact of the dogs on the area. Peers Park is used  
19 quite regularly and it's very difficult to keep the grass alive there. I think this is easier  
20 because the grass is in the sun in this location. The blue area shows a little over a half  
21 acre. I'm showing that so we can see what it looks like in a plan. That will be further  
22 discussed with the community, the size and location. This is a passive turf area and is not  
23 really used for programmed practices. It has the difficulty of being closer to the  
24 residential houses that back up to the park. If it was decided to have a dog park, we  
25 would fence 360 degrees around it and have a buffer between the houses, not use the  
26 house fencing as part of the fence. There are also quite a few residential gates that access  
27 the park. For the people that live there, we want to keep that access open to them. It is  
28 very difficult in some parks to add a restroom. The Parks Master Plan looked at  
29 formulating a list of parks that don't have restrooms but do have a fairly large size and  
30 multiple amenities, such as playgrounds, group picnic areas, play fields. By providing  
31 those amenities in a park, we should provide some type of restroom facility for those that  
32 are using the park. Ramos Park is no different. It has a wide variety of facilities. I know  
33 the picnic area is well used on the weekends. The field is used for children's practices.  
34 We would recommend moving forward with a restroom. It looks like we have majority  
35 support from the community for that. We can do better educating in this process of what  
36 the restroom facility is. There is an older idea of what the restroom is and that it attracts  
37 nuisances to the park. The new restroom designs are very hardened structures that have  
38 some security features. They automatically lock in the evening time when the park closes  
39 at 10:00 p.m. This particular feature, if we'd like to have it and we can discuss this more,  
40 has a timed door lock. You can only be in there for 10 minutes before the door lock  
41 opens. It has motion-detecting lights in the evenings. If you are inside there, it's very  
42 easy to see that someone is moving around inside the restroom. The restrooms are much



1 more hardened to use and much more secure than they have been in the past. The most  
2 recent ones are at El Camino Park, Juana Briones Park. I think they've been very  
3 successful. I haven't heard many complaints about them. They operate along the same  
4 level as this restroom would be. The restroom is two unisex stalls. They're ADA  
5 accessible. You can see the layout of them here. They're very easy to maintain. They're  
6 prefabricated offsite, so you basically set a structure onto a foundation. It's actually not  
7 built in the area. Once we get the utilities there, it usually takes about a day to install  
8 them and hook them up. There are some aesthetic options for the outside of the restroom.  
9 This one is not as fancy or vibrant as the other ones are. All the materials on the outside  
10 are made to be tamper proof and graffiti proof. If you'd like more aesthetics, you can  
11 have that. The restroom does go through the Architectural Review Board where they  
12 provide comment on the aesthetic value of the restroom. That is something we will take  
13 them for their comment. We'd like to have the second community meeting some time in  
14 April, go to the Architectural Review Board to discuss the restroom in April, do a third  
15 community meeting to look at the finalized design, bring that back to the Parks and Rec  
16 Commission for final comment, which would happen in the summer. Once that happens,  
17 we would have a Park Improvement Ordinance to do the work in the park, mostly for the  
18 restroom as it is a new facility. If we have a dog park, that would be part of the Park  
19 Improvement Ordinance. We'd like to bid out the project some time in late summer or  
20 fall and start working on it some time this year. Not an overly difficult project, so I  
21 would say the construction would be three months or less. That's my presentation. I'll  
22 take questions from the Commission.

23 Chair Greenfield: Do any Commissioners have a clarifying question before we get  
24 started?

25 Commissioner Moss: Can you put the restroom slide back up?

26 Chair Greenfield: I'm sorry, David. Before we get into comments, we're asking  
27 questions. Do you have any questions, clarifications? I think we'll have some  
28 community speakers first.

29 Commissioner Moss: I have questions.

30 Chair Greenfield: Go ahead with your questions.

31 Commissioner Moss: Do we need to do that first?

32 Chair Greenfield: Can you ask clarifying questions about the presentation before the  
33 public speaks? If you want to hold them to when talk later, that's fine as well.

34 Commissioner Reckdahl: Is that standard, that restrooms go to ARB?

1 Mr. Jensen: Yes.

2 Commissioner Reckdahl: For Briones, we went to ARB also?

3 Mr. Jensen: Yes.

4 Chair Greenfield: We have a couple of public speakers regarding this item. The first is  
5 Michele Rosenhaus [phonetic], followed by Lakshmi Sender [phonetic].

6 Michele Rosenhaus: Hi. I live right next to Ramos Park, actually right next to where  
7 they want to put the dog park. Ramos Park is very small. It's used by a lot of kids for  
8 soccer and baseball and picnics. I see it from my house, the volleyball courts and soccer.  
9 If you put the dog park there, you're going to take away a huge chunk of this area for  
10 people to play. It's true that there are a lot of dogs in the afternoon that are off leash.  
11 Maybe there are six dogs. If you build a dog park there, you're just asking more people  
12 to come and use it for dogs. It's smelly and noisy and dusty. Living right next to it is not  
13 the ideal. I think it would really ruin the park. I think Lakshmi has some better ideas of  
14 what to do with the dogs. Thank you.

15 Chair Greenfield: Thank you. Lakshmi Sender.

16 Lakshmi Sender: Hi. I'm Lakshmi, and I live next to Ramos Park, very close to where  
17 Michele lives. I've lived there for 20 years, and for 20 years I've had dogs. We walk the  
18 dog every single day through Ramos Park. I forget the number that I saw there. There  
19 were a hundred people who were signed up for wanting a dog park. Michele is my  
20 neighbor, and I totally understand if she has to face the dog park with a fence right in  
21 front of her door. As I was doing some research, I looked at what a city called Brookline  
22 in Massachusetts has done. They have a designated area of the park for dogs and  
23 designated times when they can be off leash. There is a very strong, tightly knit  
24 community that comes there every evening and morning. The owners know each other,  
25 and they feel comfortable letting the dogs play with each other. I know it's not allowed,  
26 but it still happens every single day. None of these people go to the JLS park because  
27 they don't know who's coming there. We've had many different aggressive behaviors of  
28 dogs, so they're not comfortable going to a place where they don't know the community.  
29 What I found in this Brookline, Massachusetts, place was that you have to register with  
30 the Parks and Rec, and you can get a green tag that you can put around the dog's collar to  
31 tell you that you have permission to let it off leash. You can have certain times when you  
32 can go and do that. There are rules and regulations that the dog owners have to adhere to.  
33 If you have an aggressive dog, if it's not spayed, if it's in heat, you can't let it off the  
34 leash. If there are kids playing soccer there, you can't let it off the leash. As a resident of  
35 this area for such a long time and a dog lover, I have made so many friends. It's an  
36 incredible opportunity to build a happy community there around these dogs and dog  
37 owners, if you could implement something like that. I did send an email to the Parks and

1 Rec Commission and a link to this green dog program. I think I've talked to almost all of  
2 the dog owners, and they all agree with what it could do. I hope you guys will consider  
3 something like that for Ramos Park. Thank you.

4 Chair Greenfield: Thank you. Now, we're ready for Commissioner comments and  
5 questions. David, would you like to continue?

6 Commissioner Moss: Can you put back the bathroom—yeah, that one. When I see that  
7 there's a survey out there with 84 people for and 80 people against, there's some  
8 misinformation going on. I want to know how we can counter that in these discussions.  
9 There's no question that having a restroom there with all those kids and parents and  
10 seniors, it's a health and safety issue. The people who are against it are probably against  
11 it for one reason, and that is they're worried that homeless people are going to come into  
12 the park and start using the bathroom. When you look at this list here, somebody needs  
13 to tell those 80 people that this list of technology that we didn't have even five years ago  
14 makes the homeless problem a lot less. You have to point to El Camino Park, for  
15 instance, where there would be a lot more homeless people and a problem if that really  
16 were a problem. I do want a bathroom in this park. I want a bathroom in every park.  
17 Whatever we can do to counter that discussion would be greatly appreciated. If you  
18 could put up a sign that says "if there are any safety issues, call 9-1-1 or call the  
19 Community Services phone number." There should be a big, fat number there. It's got to  
20 be stopped. Can you put up the one with the dog parks? Every place we go, everybody  
21 has a dog. Everybody wants a dog park. They just don't want it right behind their house.  
22 That is an untenable situation, and something has to give. The ideas that are put forward  
23 to make it smaller, make it a little bit in—I don't want them to say no, no dog park.  
24 Somehow, we have to have a dog park. When they say that their dogs are well behaved  
25 and everybody knows each other, what about when we get more and more people using  
26 the park as the population grows? You're going to have issues. I do want everybody to  
27 have a safe place for their dog to run. I don't know how we do this, but I don't want them  
28 to say no. If you want to take that looped path and put it between the dog park and the  
29 back fence, so they can get in and out of their house, that would be terrific. That gives a  
30 little buffer. You get the loop. Everything's great.

31 Commissioner Olson: I second the vote for the bathroom because I have young children.  
32 It's quite a crisis if there's a playground with no bathroom in our family. I agree that there  
33 could be a little buffer between the dog park, whether it's a sidewalk or maybe even  
34 putting a stretch of native plantings back there. That might be a good way to add  
35 something nice to look at for the folks who are adjacent to the dog park.

36 Commissioner McCauley: Thanks again, Peter, for the presentation. I believe that we on  
37 a seasonal basis have a port-a-potty located in Ramos Park, mostly for soccer users.

38 Mr. Anderson: Yes. Oftentimes, leagues will bring out one.



1 Commissioner McCauley: Have we had any problems with those facilities when they've  
2 been there?

3 Mr. Anderson: We have. Oftentimes, they aren't requesting permission to do it.  
4 Sometimes they don't pick it up. It'll stay out there and have a smell. It's not connected  
5 to a sanitary sewer, so it's more prone to smell issues.

6 Commissioner McCauley: From those perspectives, having a permanent restroom  
7 facility is preferable to the current situation?

8 Mr. Anderson: Yes.

9 Commissioner McCauley: Do we have an issue with people using the bushes, so to  
10 speak, when those port-a-potties aren't available at Ramos Park?

11 Mr. Anderson: Yeah. That's true of most of our parks.

12 Commissioner McCauley: Is it particularly the problem at Ramos? I know it is, for  
13 example, at Pardee.

14 Mr. Anderson: I couldn't say for sure. I've heard it from our park inspectors for almost  
15 all our sites. They didn't call out Ramos any more than any of the others.

16 Commissioner McCauley: I think it's a great idea to add a restroom as well. Peter, I  
17 know that you were thinking initially that you might actually have it be in the third  
18 location, which was the least preferred location. I'm wondering whether, because it's now  
19 going to be closer to the street and closer to utilities, you'll actually have some savings in  
20 the cost of installation that might allow you to have lighting that would extend down that  
21 new proposed path to near where the restroom was thought to be more central to the park.  
22 At the same time that you were to install that path, it might make sense to install the  
23 electrical conduit underneath the path potentially. Certainly, you'll have to do excavation  
24 for the path, and maybe that can dovetail with electrical pole installation there. For the  
25 playground, I think it's a great idea to add some playground equipment for older kids. I  
26 can actually say my daughter is not yet 2, and she sometimes gets bored on the 2-5-year-  
27 old playground equipment. I think that's a great idea. Are we going to be able to expand  
28 the footprint of the playground at all with the new equipment?

29 Mr. Jensen: The current footprint is the existing footprint that was designed originally. It  
30 wasn't planned to expand it. It would be difficult to do that because of the existing trees  
31 that are around it. If this area was a little bit more open here, it would be a great spot to  
32 expand the playground, but it is a stand of trees. That limits that space. No, there wasn't  
33 an idea of expanding the playground. What we were starting to look at was using the  
34 existing sand area, where the spring toys are, to mix tot equipment in there. It's not going



1 to have as many spring toys, but it's still going to have a climber and spring toys in that  
2 space and use the rest of it for older kids. That's trying to get some type of swings in  
3 there, which take up a large area, and a couple of other objects. I should mention that the  
4 surfacing will be accessible, so we are looking at replacing all the surfacing in the  
5 playground to rubberized surfacing and removing the sand.

6 Commissioner McCauley: You're going to be creative with the space and try and fit in as  
7 much as you reasonably can.

8 Mr. Jensen: From the learning that we've taken from Magical Bridge, being more  
9 inclusive and providing a variety of equipment that people with different abilities use is  
10 always what we focus on now.

11 Commissioner McCauley: Since we have a number of people who are community  
12 members here, it makes sense to note for the broader community that particularly for add-  
13 ons that might cost something, whether it's better playground equipment or the lighting  
14 issue, particular types of lighting, particular facades on a restroom, etc., if those are  
15 things that the community cares about—I think they are—there are ways through the City  
16 that they can help to make that a reality through organizing within their community and  
17 sponsoring those sorts of improvements. I think, Daren, it's called adopt a park. Is that  
18 right?

19 Mr. Anderson: That's correct.

20 Commissioner Reckdahl: I'll echo Jackie's request. Having that loop trail go all the way  
21 around closer to the fence would be good. It makes a longer loop and gives the neighbors  
22 some buffer. Having those native gardens along the edge would be a good buffer also. It  
23 would make sense if we are anticipating doing something with a dog park there, doing  
24 that right now, having that loop trail go on the outside now. I also like mixed-age  
25 playgrounds. There will be cases where you have an older kid and younger kid, and the  
26 older kid doesn't want to go to the kiddie playground. Having a wider range is always  
27 good for families. That back corner is right now kind of unused, and it's kind of an  
28 awkward location. Did you put any thought into what you could do back there?

29 Mr. Jensen: We've looked at that area. Right now, it is a passive turf space. This is the  
30 old image. I think it does get cut off, doesn't quite go back to the point that it's showing  
31 on the old plan. If it didn't have such a big tree back there that shades the area, I thought  
32 about a nice community garden.

33 Commissioner Reckdahl: That tree is healthy?

34 Mr. Jensen: Yeah, it is. Due to the size of the budget as well, that's something we did  
35 not add in there. It is something we could explore more with the next community

1 meeting. It's maybe something that we can work on over time. Of course, it's just grass.  
2 Just like the community garden at Rinconada Park, I can see the ivy out towards the  
3 parking lot starting to go away because people keep working on it. If we perhaps opened  
4 it up to be a community garden, it could start to do its thing by itself. That is something  
5 to consider.

6 Commissioner Reckdahl: If you could put benches back there, it could be a reading spot.  
7 A quiet spot in the park would be reasonable. If you have an awkward corner, that may  
8 be the best option, just to have reading. Thank you.

9 Vice Chair Cribbs: Peter, thank you very much for the presentation. I thought it was  
10 great. I also wanted to say that I thought your leadership of the community meeting that  
11 we attended was really good too. There was a great spirit in the room, and the neighbors  
12 and the community were very appreciative of the park and what everybody was trying to  
13 do and had really good ideas. I'm happy to see them incorporated in this. To the  
14 bathrooms, I'd just have to echo what everybody else says. It's a public safety issue. The  
15 more that we can talk about what bathrooms look like now and how they can be locked  
16 and how they're kept clean and all of that, the better off we are going to be to helping the  
17 public understand that this is a really important thing for us to have in all of our parks.  
18 That's one thing about the bathrooms. I'm glad to see all that information in there. That  
19 was great. About the dog park, I'm always delighted when you can find a space for a dog  
20 park, but I feel badly because it seems like we've talked about north Palo Alto having a  
21 dearth of dog parks. This would be another one in south Palo Alto. Since you said that  
22 there was no money right now and you would have to look for some money for the dog  
23 park, what (crosstalk).

24 Mr. Jensen: We do have the dog park fund for this year. We could tap into that and use  
25 it for this space, if that was (crosstalk).

26 Vice Chair Cribbs: What I was thinking is we could try the green tag dog program as a  
27 pilot program in Ramos Park for a while, while you were searching for money. If you  
28 have money, that's a different thing. I remember the obligation toward north Palo Alto.  
29 Finally, just to talk about the nice young man who was about 12 at the community  
30 meeting and who was very interested in making sure that the basketball court stayed and  
31 maybe another hoop and maybe we could stripe it. That's so great because kids need the  
32 opportunity to do unstructured kinds of things. The more we can provide for that, the  
33 happier everybody will be. Thank you very much. It's really good work on that.

34 Mr. Jensen: I would like to touch base on the restroom. In the next community meeting,  
35 we will do a more focused educational presentation on the need for the bathroom and  
36 what bathrooms are in the current state. That's one of the things to overcome, some of  
37 the fear of the restroom. We can educate the community on the newer restrooms and set  
38 them at ease with having a restroom in the park. I understand where they're coming from



1 with that, but for the park's purpose the restroom is something we'd like to have. The dog  
2 park, I know that we have discussed in the past and tried pilot programs for shared-use  
3 space. We've done it in bigger, open fields that were programmed for things like soccer.  
4 This particular piece of turf is unprogrammed. Maybe this is another that we want to  
5 explore that option and make hours that people can use it to have their dogs out there and  
6 define it to that side of the pathway. That could be an option without having to fence the  
7 whole thing. If there was an easy way to create a pretty barrier along the edge, that  
8 would be nice. Unfortunately, the only way to do that is with some type of fence. That is  
9 something to consider with this space. I think it has the opportunity to be more  
10 successful than the Greer Park one, which was on soccer fields that people wanted to play  
11 on. This park does have a close-knit group of dog users that do use the space. From  
12 what I've seen out there, they do patrol themselves fairly well. I think they would  
13 respond to a space like that. Because we do have some Code that makes that illegal and  
14 you can have some type of fine levied against you for having a dog off leash there, it's  
15 definitely used for that. We need to reconcile and figure out how to make that a thing  
16 that is legal for them to be doing in the park without fear of reprimand. I was happy to  
17 see that this came up because this was not part of the scope of work. It was brought up  
18 by the community with the recognition that there was a lot of dogs out there and perhaps  
19 a defined dog park would be needed. This has been the process of figuring out what that  
20 is.

21 Chair Greenfield: Thank you, Peter. I appreciate the presentation and the update you've  
22 done to encapsulate community feedback and expanding what you're presenting as  
23 options. Of the options that you're presenting, aside from the dog park, do we have  
24 budget for all of these within the current CIP? This includes the original items and the  
25 addition of some lighting, the full extension path, and some native planting.

26 Mr. Jensen: If we combine the funding from both CIPs, we can cover that scope of work  
27 that we're proposing. If we move in the direction of having a dog park and we can tap  
28 into that funding, that would help that out. We are helped out a little bit if we do move  
29 the bathroom closer to the street. We do save some money there. Even the concrete path  
30 that connects over there, we could start to incorporate that as an aspect of the restroom  
31 and access to it; use the funding for lighting the pathway and the restroom to get those  
32 features in; and then use the money for the playground, some native planting, and the  
33 court restoration; and hopefully maybe tap into the dog park thing and have the dog park.  
34 We have and we can locate enough funding to get all those things done.

35 Chair Greenfield: If we did not put in a dog park, would we have funding? I'm very  
36 much in favor of pursuing the off-leash pilot there. That's a great opportunity. I know  
37 from personal experience that grass area is not good for much. I've coached soccer there.  
38 If there's a game going on, just trying to get kids to warm up there, it's very uneven and  
39 mushy. It seems like it'd be great for dogs. It's a great opportunity. I'd love to have the

1 park amenities ad hoc spend time looking into the off-leash program and maybe coming  
2 back to the full Commission.

3 Commissioner McCauley: We are.

4 Vice Chair Cribbs: We are.

5 Chair Greenfield: I know I'm preaching to the choir here. That's great to hear. When  
6 was the last renovation of the playground at Ramos?

7 Mr. Jensen: That's a good question. I do not know when that was. In the schedule for  
8 parks, it usually follows the playground. The playground is the main catalyst that starts  
9 the renovation. That usually happens every 15 or 20 years, so I'm going to say 15 or 20  
10 years ago was probably the last time.

11 Chair Greenfield: I want to say it happened in '96, '97. I used to live right next to—the  
12 back fence backed onto Ramos Park for a couple of years, so I'm very familiar with the  
13 park. It was new then, and I had young kids. Our timing lucked out pretty well there.  
14 The playground certainly is in need of some work now. Regarding the paved area, I'm  
15 glad to see there's interest in putting a full-court basketball court there. It seems like a lot  
16 of pavement for just a half-court basketball. If we're not going to do something with the  
17 pavement, would we want to consider removing some of the pavement? If we were  
18 going to consider a full court, would we want to reduce the pavement, and would we have  
19 budget to do so?

20 Mr. Jensen: That would take up a significant amount of the budget to demo out some of  
21 the paving. We started to look at maybe having three half courts on each side of it, not  
22 even having a full court, because the span is too big to have a full court. There's one  
23 hoop out there that has no striping. It's just a hoop and concrete. I think we can get at  
24 least three basketball hoops there in a half court. We haven't really started playing with  
25 that yet. We'll see what we can figure out.

26 Chair Greenfield: I think it would be good to get some more community feedback on  
27 what to do with that paved area. Do I understand correctly that there would be some  
28 resurfacing included?

29 Mr. Jensen: No. Unfortunately, concrete is not an element that can be resurfaced. You  
30 either tear it out and start over or you live with what you've got. For our purpose, we  
31 have to live with what we've got. We can stripe it. Overall, it's not in bad shape. It's  
32 feasible to play basketball on.

33 Chair Greenfield: If we were to add lighting, would this be on a timer that would go off  
34 early in the evening, like at 10:00, or would be on all night?

1 Mr. Jensen: Eleanor Pardee Park has some big light poles, streetlight poles, in the park  
2 now that stay on all night. The idea would be security lighting, so the lighting is not  
3 intense. It's there to provide enough lighting to see but not to play a sport. Depending on  
4 budget, we could add a fixture to the restroom that would illuminate the dark picnic area  
5 that people are mostly responding to. I think it would operate the same as the lights do  
6 now, which I think are on when it gets dark and go off when it gets light.

7 Chair Greenfield: The lighting wouldn't have a negative impact on wildlife? That's a ...

8 Mr. Jensen: I can't answer that question. I don't know much about the impact of lighting  
9 on wildlife. That is low-intensity lighting. I don't know what the impact would be.  
10 Daren, do you have any insight on that?

11 Mr. Anderson: There are studies that indicate lights can be problematic for wildlife.  
12 Whenever possible, we try to minimize it. Safety concerns are a matter of balance, so it's  
13 worth discussing.

14 Chair Greenfield: Would a possibility be to have the lighting be brighter earlier in the  
15 evening and dimmer later in the evening and still have some security unless impact on  
16 wildlife? Some ideas to consider.

17 Mr. Jensen: The area we want to illuminate is in a stand of very large cedar trees. Some  
18 of them are 100 feet tall. It shouldn't impact the canopy as far as illuminating that. Birds  
19 in the trees should be okay. We should consider where we're going to do some native or  
20 habitat planting so that we don't put it in the area that the light is right on, that it's more  
21 on the street frontage or towards the back of the park where it's darker. That is something  
22 we should consider in the design.

23 Chair Greenfield: I'm glad to see you're looking at including a loop trail all the way  
24 around the park. I've never understood why it didn't exist to begin with. I'm definitely in  
25 favor of looking at the native planting and potentially pollinator pathway gardens in the  
26 locations you've indicated.

27 Mr. Jensen: A few community members that live around the park expressed interest to  
28 me at the community meeting in having habitat and also maintaining and caring for it and  
29 planting it. There would be a lot of community assistance with that, which is good.

30 Commissioner Moss: I wanted to address one comment made by one of the community  
31 members that said dog parks have a reputation for being smelly, noisy, and dusty. Is that  
32 really true? With the newest park at Peers Park with the wood chips, the artificial turf,  
33 and the recycled water irrigation, how true is that?



1 Mr. Jensen: It depends upon the surfacing that you use for your dog park. As we can see  
2 over time and as in any type of confined space, the more use it gets, the turf is  
3 problematic. It's just not built for that. It's also about how we respond to it. Peers Park is  
4 a good example of using the mulch material to keep a clean surface and to keep the dust  
5 down. It does very well there. Synthetic turf is another way to go. It just has a lot of  
6 costs associated with it. It has a little bit of heat island effect to it because it gets warm.  
7 The mulch is a much more organic way to treat that. We also have a few decomposed  
8 granite dog parks. Mitchell Park has half the area in decomposed granite. In that  
9 situation, if you had dogs running around on it, you could cause dust. I think this dog  
10 park would start out as turf. The bigger the area, the longer and more realistic chance  
11 you have of maintaining the turf. When you make it too small, it just goes away. That's  
12 something we have to see how it goes over time. If the turf was not a viable surface, we  
13 would probably move in the direction of mulch like we did at Peers Park.

14 Commissioner Olson: On the dog pilot question, I came from a town that did have  
15 shared use like that with baseball fields. It worked really lovely in our community. We  
16 had certain hours beyond which it was that other use, whether it was baseball or other  
17 people using it. Again, in the evening the dogs could come back in and be off leash. It  
18 sounds like the use here could be quite similar. The one thing that might be a little more  
19 tricky here is the road immediately adjacent without a buffer. You may have concerns  
20 that the dogs, once they start chasing each other, are a little hard to control. That would  
21 be the only thing I would say. Everything else looks pretty surrounded by other  
22 structures that would be okay there. I'd be happy to connect Daren with the staff in San  
23 Anselmo if you want to talk about how that worked there. We didn't have special tags or  
24 anything. It was kind of this community rule, and everyone knew the rules. It worked  
25 really well there.

26 Mr. Jensen: That would be the most economical way to do it, I agree. I also agree with  
27 you that, even if the space was designated without being defined by fencing, we should  
28 do something along the street frontage. We should probably run a little fence up there  
29 and plant around it with native plant materials, so it goes away and the balls can't go out  
30 there. If we designate the dog park there, we should do something to the street frontage.  
31 It is wasted space in the front. It's a little turf strip that could be changed to native  
32 planting that helps reduce maintenance and water use. All those things are positive in the  
33 conversion of turf grass to native planting.

34 Commissioner Olson: It seems relatively easy to phase a dog park later. The bathroom  
35 and playground, I can see you want to do it at the same time. If we wanted to try  
36 something with a dog park, we could phase that later if the Commission desired.

1 Mr. Jensen: Right. It could be a transition over time. We could start out with having the  
2 area as an ad hoc dog park area that's not fenced or defined for certain hours. We could  
3 always come back in the future and consider making it more defined.

4 Chair Greenfield: Council Member Kou, do you have any input?

5 Council Member Kou: All good.

6 Chair Greenfield: Thank you. Anyone else? Thank you for the community input and a  
7 good discussion and for the presentation and thoroughness as always, Peter.

8 Mr. Jensen: I would like to make a quick announcement. Thursday night is Boulware  
9 Park's second community meeting. We've joined with Planning to do a group meeting for  
10 the North Ventura Plan and Boulware Park, just so we don't burn out the community on  
11 community meetings. These things dovetail with each other. That meeting will be a  
12 presentation about the North Ventura Plan and also about Boulware Park. At some point,  
13 we'll break into groups, and there will be a specific section of Boulware Park stuff. That  
14 is Thursday night at Gunn High School, 6:00 to 9:00. It's in their new room, which is  
15 P115. If you're interested, that's what we're doing.

16 Chair Greenfield: Thank you. We'll move on to our next item, which is the review of the  
17 draft Community Garden Guidelines.

18 **4. Review of the Draft Community Garden Guidelines**

19 Chair Greenfield: I have some speaker cards already. If anyone else would like to speak,  
20 please bring your card up.

21 Mr. Anderson: Good evening. Daren Anderson with Community Services Department.  
22 My colleague, Catherine Bourquin, and I are here tonight to discuss the Community  
23 Garden Guidelines with you. We last discussed this issue with the Commission at the  
24 October 22 Commission meeting. The feedback from the Commission at that time was  
25 that staff should continue to work with the ad hoc committee and the gardeners to address  
26 the PVC issue within the gardens and make the document a little more user friendly.  
27 Catherine Bourquin manages the Community Garden Program, and she met with the  
28 garden liaisons and with the ad hoc committee to discuss how we should address the PVC  
29 issue. I'm going to turn it over to Catherine to give you some of the feedback from both  
30 the liaisons and the ad hoc.

31 Catherine Bourquin: Good evening, Commissioners. Catherine Bourquin, Community  
32 Garden Coordinator. I want to thank you for taking the time to review the Guidelines for  
33 the second time. As Daren mentioned, the steps that happened after the last review, the  
34 staff, the garden ad hoc and the garden liaisons met to discuss how to address the PVC

1 use in the garden. First, the challenge we have is that there are a few gardeners who feel  
2 that PVC has no place in our community gardens both for aesthetic issues and concerns  
3 about it not being appropriate in organic gardens. A large number of gardeners feel that  
4 PVC is appropriate in the garden and that there aren't other cost-effective or efficient  
5 alternatives to PVC to help them manage their gardens. The main use for PVC is to  
6 create a frame to protect the garden plants from pests. The material is easy to slide their  
7 netting over versus wood, which snags and causes damage to the netting. Staff and the  
8 garden liaisons along with input from the ad hoc committee came up with the following  
9 compromise to address this issue. "Any new PVC trellis or other garden structure that is  
10 3 feet or less in height is permitted." The majority of the gardeners use this type of  
11 covering. "When PVC is permitted, neutral colors are required, for example, green,  
12 brown or gray rather than white, and should be appropriately rated for outdoor use." This  
13 would only apply to trellises and structures 3 feet and under. "Any new PVC trellis or  
14 structure exceeding 3 feet is not permitted. Any preexisting PVC trellis or structure will  
15 be allowed but must be replaced with permitted material upon its deterioration, if it  
16 became brittle, discolored, and the stability structure was at risk, as determined by the  
17 Garden Coordinator." The ad hoc and staff debated on how to address this last section  
18 concerning replacing with permitted materials upon deterioration. We considered adding  
19 a time limit of something like five years because we aren't sure how long some PVC will  
20 last before it deteriorates. The Guidelines were also reorganized and will include a table  
21 of contents when this is accepted. I also wanted to bring to your attention a couple of  
22 edits that we found in the document and that we would like to correct tonight. Under  
23 fees, the old Guidelines state "low-income senior and/or disabled residents may apply for  
24 a fee reduction, 25 percent to 50 percent, through the City's Fee Reduction Program.  
25 Applications are available at Lucie Stern Community Center or in the Enjoy! catalog. No  
26 combining discounts. Only one will be applied to annual garden fee." What we left off  
27 here was "senior." Now, it's become available to "low-income and/or disabled residents."  
28 That was the change we made. Under watering, "flood irrigation (using a garden hose at  
29 full volume let down the soil without any attachment to spread water) is prohibited." The  
30 wording was incorrect. We have it now as "flood irrigation is prohibited. For example,  
31 leaving a garden hose at full volume in the soil without any attachment." That concludes  
32 my presentation. I'll open it up for feedback, please.

33 Chair Greenfield: Thank you. Any clarifying questions from the Commissioners before  
34 we hear from the public?

35 Commissioner Olson: On that first change on the fees, was that meant to be "low-  
36 income, senior, and/or disabled" or was it really only seniors who were low income?

37 Ms. Bourquin: The old version?

38 Commissioner Olson: Mm hmm.

1 Ms. Bourquin: It was low-income seniors.

2 Commissioner Olson: There's no special discount for seniors?

3 Ms. Bourquin: There is, 25 percent, but this is for fee reduction. They have to apply  
4 with their income paperwork. Otherwise, 25 percent is for fee reduction because they can  
5 get up to 50 percent.

6 Chair Greenfield: Anyone else?

7 Commissioner Reckdahl: Can you clarify that? Seniors get a 25-percent discount. Low-  
8 income gets 25 percent, and disabled gets 25 percent?

9 Ms. Bourquin: No. They come in with their paperwork so they can qualify for 25-50  
10 percent. Most of them qualify for 50 percent. They would choose the 25-percent senior  
11 without having to do any paperwork.

12 Commissioner Reckdahl: How about disabled? Disabled gets 25 percent?

13 Ms. Bourquin: It's 25-50.

14 Commissioner McCauley: It's a sliding scale. Dependent upon your income, you could  
15 receive either a 25 percent discount or a 50-percent discount.

16 Commissioner Reckdahl: How does the disability enter the calculation?

17 Commissioner McCauley: I'm not sure about disability.

18 Ms. Bourquin: It's disabled residents.

19 Commissioner Reckdahl: If I'm disabled but don't have low income, do I get a discount?

20 Ms. Bourquin: Correct.

21 Commissioner Reckdahl: I do?

22 Ms. Bourquin: Correct.

23 Commissioner Reckdahl: And that's 25 percent?

24 Ms. Bourquin: It depends on what the scale is.

25 Chair Greenfield: This is a standard City policy that applies to other programs?

26 Ms. Bourquin: Yes.

1 Chair Greenfield: Maybe we can get clarification and information on that forwarded to  
2 us at a later point.

3 Ms. Bourquin: Recreation handles the Fee Reduction Program.

4 Commissioner Reckdahl: I still don't understand. If I'm disabled but have a very high  
5 income, do I get a discount?

6 Ms. Bourquin: I'm not sure. I don't handle the program. Sorry.

7 Chair Greenfield: I've got speaker cards from six members of the public. You'll have  
8 three minutes each to speak. We'll start off with John McFarland. Rather than repeating  
9 themes, if you want to reference what someone else has said and cut down your time,  
10 we'd be happy to accept that. John will be followed by Nate Saul.

11 John McFarland: Good evening. My name is John McFarland. I'm 74 years old and, as  
12 my grandkids would say, I'm going on 75. I'm the longest gardener at Eleanor Pardee  
13 Park. I helped build that park. I was the one who put the fence up. I was one of many.  
14 I'm still suffering from banging those fence posts in. I've seen a lot over the almost 40  
15 years that I've been at that park. I do that by traveling the park and visiting the other  
16 plots, looking at their plants, the irrigation systems, protection against pests, trellises,  
17 gazebos, even sitting areas, which leads me to suggest a change in one of the proposed  
18 Guidelines. If you'll note on Number 4, general plot responsibility, under A,  
19 maintenance, it says "paths must be kept wide enough to accommodate full  
20 wheelbarrows." I'm actually not sure how that ever got in there. When the paths were  
21 designed, they were designed for people to walk down those paths, to visit their plots and  
22 see the other gardeners. We now have plots and paths, which are covered with plantings.  
23 That would be the gardener trying to either extend his garden so he could get more plants  
24 or to make it a trellis around the side. The problem is it's dangerous. It's a safety issue.  
25 There's a lot of seniors in that garden, and there's a lot of children running up and down  
26 the paths. When we allow plants to be in the middle of the path, on the side of the path, it  
27 brings down the width of the path. People cannot walk freely. I can't walk freely. That's  
28 why I'm looking for the change. The change I'm asking for is "paths surrounding each  
29 gardener's plot must be clear of any plantings." Simple. Do not put your plants in the  
30 path. Overall, the rules that are proposed should be restricted to safety and rules that  
31 protect one gardener from interfering with another. PVC colors, brown, green, in their  
32 use is not a safety issue. They don't restrict other gardeners' use of their plots. It's an  
33 aesthetic view, which I feel is like me telling another gardener how he should plant. I  
34 would not allow that. I would say let's keep the rules simple. Thank you very much.

35 Chair Greenfield: Nate Saul followed by Terry Andrea [phonetic].



1 Nate Saul: Hello, Commissioners. Thank you for your attention. I'm a native Palo  
2 Altan. I've been gardening over at Pardee for about ten years now. I have some concerns  
3 about the new rules, particularly around PVC. The first thing I want to mention is it  
4 sounds like all the gardeners came together as part of this ad hoc, and there was no notice  
5 to any gardeners about participating in that. I think there were some gardeners who did  
6 participate, but those are the ones who have a particular opinion. It's a little bit of a  
7 squeaky wheel situation, in my opinion. There are real reasons, real needs for the PVC. I  
8 get about half the produce from the plants that I put out there right now. Rats are a huge  
9 problem. I'm in Section A, surrounded all by fence near a big oak tree. Rats and  
10 squirrels are coming. There's literally rat feces and urine on our tomatoes that I have to  
11 wash off when we take them home for the ones that we get. The nice thing about PVC is  
12 it's easy to install, easy to take apart, easy to throw the netting over. Going to other  
13 colors, other materials, harder to install, harder to move, can be more expensive. It's  
14 going to be harder for lower-income people to afford to do that. That's one issue I have.  
15 Also, we're addressing the symptom, not the problem. If we can get Vector Control in  
16 there and help reduce the rat population, I'd be very happy to get rid of all the PVC that I  
17 use. Again, my understanding of how this started is, at least regarding PVC, a particular  
18 gardener was upset that their neighbor had a lot of PVC trellising. That's been  
19 influencing a lot of what we see in the rules. The primary purpose of the garden is to  
20 garden. I didn't get into aesthetics because it's problematic. Let me make some particular  
21 comments on the rules. Three feet is from ground. I garden all in raised beds, which  
22 means it's 2 feet up. Three feet leaves me 1 foot, which is essentially nonfunctional. My  
23 elderly mother also gardens there. The raised beds are very helpful. Again, it's listed as  
24 existing grade and not from ground or plant level. If the goal is to get rid of subjective  
25 wording, the phrase "contributing to the community garden's overall visual continuity" is  
26 problematic. That's still in there. I wouldn't want the liaisons to have to deal with that  
27 kind of language. I believe we shouldn't be in the business of dictating aesthetics or  
28 having the liaisons dictate their personal aesthetics and opinions and how that changes  
29 over the years. Seven feet is reasonable. I have no problem with that. If we're going to  
30 allow PVC at 3 feet, I guess I don't understand why in Number 4 we're actually banning  
31 new PVC even if it's in the new color between 4 and 7 feet. If it's an allowed material,  
32 why is it being essentially outlawed at those particular heights? That doesn't make any  
33 sense to me.

34 Chair Greenfield: Thank you.

35 Mr. Saul: Thank you.

36 Chair Greenfield: Terry Andrea followed by Penny Proctor.

37 Terry Andrea: My name is Terry Andrea. I am a Master Gardener and also a Master  
38 Composter. I teach most of the six or seven compost classes that we have here in town as

1 well as in Los Altos and other places. I garden at the Ventura Garden. I'm having a  
2 severe rat problem. For three years, I have not gotten any tomatoes, none. Last year,  
3 they also took the squash, and then they moved onto the kale, the peppers, the bok choy  
4 this winter, and have completely denuded my kale through the winter. Rats, not just an  
5 aesthetic issue but also a safety issue. I have written two letters to the Coordinator but  
6 have not heard responses on those. Tonight she said the City does not want to deal with  
7 this. I'm now realizing that I have other comrades who are having problems with this.  
8 There are many solutions we could look at. Obviously, extermination is one of the first  
9 ones we think of. After not hearing back from the Coordinator, I called County Vector  
10 Control. They're willing to come out, and I will call them again to have them. I have  
11 heard lots of other gardeners who are having problems. Can we maybe consider putting  
12 together a group? I saw in these notes that there was something called an ad hoc  
13 committee. Maybe something like that, where we can start to look at problems with the  
14 sanitary issues. There are many things we could do. We could be fencing the gardens  
15 more effectively. We could even divert the rats by teasing them to come over to the  
16 creek or some other location where they could eat nicely without disturbing our food  
17 crops. Palo Alto Master Gardeners' demonstration garden is also having problems with  
18 rats. People at Eleanor are also having problems. I think I've pretty well summarized  
19 what I would like to say. I could give up my plot, but the poor chump who rents it next  
20 year is going to have the same sad problem. Let's not pass it onto the next poor person  
21 and see if we can find some way to resolve this. In addition, one of the reasons that this  
22 came up for me was that I was considering creating a structure that would go through the  
23 soil and up 7 feet to be able to cover my non-determinant tomato plants. Some of the  
24 rules that we're considering tonight are not going to allow that. Also, it's very expensive  
25 to construct a structure like that. I'd prefer not to; I'd like to solve the problem on a  
26 garden-wide basis or a Citywide basis per garden. Thank you.

27 Chair Greenfield: Thank you. Penny Proctor followed by Melane Hennessey [phonetic].

28 Penny Proctor: I'm Penny Proctor. I'm the volunteer liaison for the Eleanor Garden.  
29 Overall, I think the new rules are wonderful. They're going to solve a lot of problems  
30 we've had in the past in the gardens and make the garden easier to administer. There's  
31 been so much work that has gone into it, and it really shows in the final result. The PVC  
32 has been really difficult. I had hoped that the dark gray PVC would be allowed for the  
33 structures higher than 3 feet. It doesn't show very much. It's about this color and blends  
34 in pretty well. The white doesn't, of course. It's very white. It's great for clamps to hold  
35 on various coverings. Overall, I feel like this compromise is workable and enforceable.  
36 It seems like a good thing. Thank you.

37 Chair Greenfield: Thank you, Penny. Melane Hennessey followed by Karen Holman.

1 Melane Hennessey: I'm just getting out my phone in case I have an extra minute to quote  
2 something that somebody sent to me. Hi. I'm Melane Hennessey. I live in Palo Alto. I  
3 have been a gardener at Eleanor Pardee Community Park since 1995, which is 25 years.  
4 My husband and I both had plots at the park before we were married. Between the two of  
5 us and the length of time that I've been a gardener there, we have had plots at three  
6 different locations. I'm actually, I believe, the reason that one particular gardener at  
7 Eleanor Pardee is very upset about PVC structures. I moved my blueberries three or four  
8 years ago from another plot at Eleanor into the plot adjacent to this particular person's. I  
9 had triplets at the time, and I was giving up a plot and concentrating on one. When I  
10 moved blueberries, I moved PVC structures made out of white PVC. I put blueberries in  
11 my original plot in 1998. I don't remember when I built my nearly 7-foot-tall structure to  
12 cover my blueberry beds, but it has been at least 15 years. However, those were  
13 originally in a plot far away in the garden from the person in question who's really  
14 behind, I think, a lot of this. I believe when I moved my blueberries into this adjacent  
15 plot and subsequently moved my PVC structures that have been there for a really long  
16 time, I might have opened up this can of worms. I apologize. What I can tell you is I  
17 spoke with Nicolette Heaphy at Hidden Villa Farm this morning. She's the farm liaison.  
18 They use PVC, and it is white, in the garden with netting to protect crops and to make  
19 structures. I asked to protect them from what. She said birds. I don't have a rat problem;  
20 I have a bird problem because I have blueberries. The rats have not apparently  
21 discovered that blueberries are tasty. If you don't put netting over your blueberry crop  
22 when it's in season and ready to pick, it doesn't matter if you're there every single day.  
23 You will not have a berry to pick because the birds like to eat them. I have a tall  
24 structure because I'm a 5-foot-6 person, and I need to get underneath and harvest  
25 blueberries. It is not the most visually appealing structure. Would it be more perhaps  
26 attractive to certain people or every person if it was made out of bamboo or wood? Yes,  
27 but it would also cost me a whole lot more, not be nearly as effective when it came time  
28 to drape it with netting, and would be a sort of crazy retroactive rule for something that's  
29 been in place for me personally for about 15 years. Thanks for your time.

30 Chair Greenfield: Thank you. Karen Holman.

31 Karen Holman: Hi, there. Good evening. Just to be clear, the aforementioned person is  
32 the only person and a single person. It's me. It's not just me. There was a letter sent for  
33 the last meeting. There seems to be a focus on me because I've been vocal about it.  
34 There was a letter sent for the last meeting from Carol Kiparsky. The letter didn't seem  
35 to get to you guys. It was in the next packet. She spoke very eloquently about the white  
36 PVC structures and how they don't fit in the gardens. There's a letter tonight that was  
37 sent about these being eyesores. There's another letter that Catherine has because there  
38 were two other people that were sending letters in today. They both had very busy days.  
39 One has now been sent to Catherine, and she should have that. Another one is coming  
40 later tonight. It's not just me. I want to focus a little bit on the mission. The mission of

1 the garden rules is Palo Alto Community Gardens are places where gardeners adhere to  
2 organic gardening principles, concepts, and practices with mutual respect for their  
3 gardening neighbors. Regarding structures, trellises, fencing, and garden materials,  
4 natural materials such as unpainted wood are recommended when developing garden  
5 plots. All trellises and other structures must be functional, orderly, safe, and contribute to  
6 the Community Garden's overall visual continuity. This compatibility and continuity  
7 thing is something that's typical. It's common. It's common, whether you're dealing with  
8 urban settings or pastoral settings. Continuity and compatibility is not a foreign term.  
9 All trellises and other structures must be in use. It's still not clear quite what "in use"  
10 means. If they're not in use, then they must be removed. As of when? This is not  
11 personal. Melane's plot is next to mine. The PVC structure hasn't been there for 15  
12 years. She said it's been moved. It isn't personal. You can put in earbuds. You can do  
13 something to block out noise. There's no way to avoid the PVC structures. It's not about  
14 one structure either. There's been a proliferation at Eleanor Pardee. It's an eyesore over  
15 there, if you recall the images that I showed last meeting. I'm sorry you weren't here  
16 then. I took a couple of you on a tour over there. It's quite an astounding impression that  
17 it leaves. If there must be a compromise, then the colored PVC and the height limit is  
18 good, but it's still inconsistent with the mission and other things. I ask if no new white  
19 structures are allowed that are tall, then you must surely think that the white PVC, large  
20 structures are not appropriate. Think about that. Any PVC trellis or structure will be  
21 allowed but must be replaced with permitted material upon its deterioration. PVC doesn't  
22 deteriorate really. You can run over it with a vehicle, but it doesn't really deteriorate.  
23 There's something in the staff report that talks about stability and that kind of thing, but  
24 it's not in the garden rules. Also, from the garden rules, no chemically treated wood is  
25 allowed. Only organic products may be used for fertilizer, weed control. If consistent  
26 with that, then PVC should not be allowed. There was an ad hoc committee meeting. I  
27 presume it was the ad hoc committee. I don't know what it was. There was one  
28 community meeting where I and many other people attended. I don't know about any  
29 other ad hoc committee other than maybe of you guys. It's come up that gardeners should  
30 be able to realize their investment. Some structures have been in existence for a very  
31 long time. Other gardeners have actually offered to help pay for replacement of  
32 somebody else's structure that hasn't been there very long. My understanding is it used to  
33 be that gardeners had to tend their own plots as opposed to having professional gardeners  
34 come tend them. I don't see that in the rules, but I understand and have been told in the  
35 past that was the case. It seems like a reasonable rule. Maybe that's one that would be  
36 good to add. Boards and Commissions, I would say, are—one last thing. I asked the  
37 Master Gardeners at Eleanor Pardee if they had rules about PVC, and they said no. I  
38 said, "What if somebody wants to use PVC?" I dare say they would say no. Boards and  
39 Commissions exist to advise on policy, plans, etc. While it always good and admirable to  
40 find middle ground if possible, it is incumbent on Boards and Commissions, just as it is  
41 on the City Council, to focus on the best practices, procedures, policies, plans, and  
42 regulations that are in the public best interest. To do that, compromise is not always the



1 best path. You are leaders. I ask for you to lead on this as you do on so many other  
2 issues. Organic gardens need to be respected as organic gardens. Thank you.

3 Chair Greenfield: Thank you. Commissioner McCauley, you're currently the community  
4 garden liaison. You and I have worked together on the updates to the park rules and regs  
5 and the community garden rules. Would you like to make any comments to start our  
6 discussion?

7 Commissioner McCauley: First off, thanks to everyone who's spoken this evening. I  
8 personally am impressed. I imagine the rest of the Commission members feel the same.  
9 I'm also very impressed by Catherine and Daren's diligence on this project. They've been  
10 working on it for a long while to try and come up with what they believe is the best set of  
11 rules to govern the community in a reasonable way that respects everyone as much as  
12 possible. I also recognize that what is an eyesore to one person is perhaps a minor  
13 architectural masterpiece to another, and vice versa. The aesthetic piece of this is always  
14 going to be difficult. From my perspective, having observed the work that the  
15 community garden liaisons have done and the work that Catherine has done to facilitate  
16 all these discussions, I think the compromise that's been struck is actually a good one.  
17 Again, it's intended to respect everyone as much as possible. The grandfathering of the  
18 PVC structures that are currently in existence is a good way to approach this without  
19 having new ones in the future. I realize that it's always easy to flyspeck or nitpick these  
20 sorts of proposals. It's actually time in this instance to try to wrap it up. I would  
21 encourage all of our Commission members, if you have big picture comments to  
22 contribute, that would be great with the thought that it's important that we bring this  
23 process to a reasonable conclusion. If you don't think it's ripe for that conclusion, that's  
24 fine. I am interested in hearing your thoughts on that. Given all the discussion amongst  
25 the community garden liaisons, the work that Catherine has done, this is probably in a  
26 place where with our final comments tonight Catherine and Daren can actually  
27 implement these new rules.

28 Chair Greenfield: Thank you. I will clarify that this is a discussion item for us. This is  
29 not an action. The final rules decision will be made by staff on this. This is something  
30 that's not going to Council for approval. The park rules and regulations, which we've  
31 previously discussed and acted on, will go to Council for approval. The new garden rules  
32 will be decided on by staff in the same timeframe. Previously, the garden rules were part  
33 of the park rules and regulations, code, policy. It was deemed that they weren't  
34 appropriate for that document, so they've been split out. Keith, would you go next?

35 Commissioner Reckdahl: I sympathize. This is a tough situation. I sympathize about the  
36 aesthetics. White PVC really is an eyesore. I also sympathize about the rat population.  
37 I've had kale just cut to the ground by rats. It's demoralizing. I also sympathize if people  
38 have made structures in the past that were legal and they've invested both their time and



1 their money making it, that we may force them to throw it out. This is not an easy  
2 problem. We heard people on both sides tonight. What I don't know is how  
3 representative is this. Is it 50/50? Is it 90/10? What's the dividing? If it closer to 50/50,  
4 maybe one long-term solution is you segregate the gardens. If there is a significant  
5 number that really don't want PVC, we'll push them to one side. The people who don't  
6 mind PVC, in fact maybe like PVC, put them on the other. Maybe that's one way of  
7 splitting the baby. At least, it's not a PVC garden. If you want a certain aesthetic, you  
8 aren't forced to have PVC right next to your garden plot. That may be one way to attack  
9 this.

10 Ms. Bourquin: Obviously, we have five locations. Eleanor Garden is the one that has the  
11 most PVC structures that you can visually see. The other ones in the other gardens are  
12 low just to cover what they're growing, not big, huge trellises made out of PVC.

13 Commissioner Reckdahl: What's proposed here is reasonable. If it's 3 feet, your  
14 neighbor will see it, but you won't see it across the garden. I'd be inclined to support this.  
15 I'd also be inclined to reach out to the gardeners and understand what percentage of the  
16 people really have an issue with PVC. If it is significant, maybe we do look at—if they  
17 really want one corner, one half to be PVC free, they may be more than willing to move  
18 their garden. One of the problems is that you may have gotten your soil just right, and  
19 now you have to move across the garden. Nothing's easy. I'm sorry. I do appreciate  
20 Ryan's work and also Catherine and Daren. This is a very frustrating situation. I think  
21 we're really trying to make the citizens get the most from their gardens, so I think it's  
22 worth it.

23 Vice Chair Cribbs: I don't really have too much to say on this except to appreciate both  
24 of your observations. I appreciate all the gardeners coming here tonight and continuing  
25 to work on this and certainly appreciate your work, Catherine. Thank you all. The two  
26 things I was struck by, beauty being in the eye of the beholder and different people see  
27 things different ways. It is an issue to try to solve. The second thing that I thought was  
28 interesting was this whole idea of a community rat patrol. The rats are terrible. They  
29 take things that don't belong to them and take food and stuff. It would be really  
30 interesting for the gardeners to come together and talk about this and see if collectively  
31 we could all solve the problem. I have this little dish at home that says planting a garden  
32 is a symbol of hope. I'm sure that we all can hope to get this all resolved and move on.  
33 Thank you very much.

34 Commissioner Olson: The thing that really struck me about all of the comments is how  
35 much you all love your gardens. I think that's a really beautiful thing. There are  
36 disagreements about what makes that garden special to you, whether it's the community,  
37 the actual things that you're getting from your plants versus the aesthetics. The common  
38 theme there is still that you all love your gardens. One thing I really wanted to get clarity



1 on, because I was not reading this to see the 3 feet as from the ground up. It says the  
2 structure doesn't exceed 3 feet. If you have a raised bed 2 feet, then you really can only  
3 have a foot?

4 Unidentified: (inaudible)

5 Chair Greenfield: Let's not have comments from the public please.

6 Ms. Bourquin: I've gotten this advice from the liaisons who know that if you install a  
7 trellis from 5 feet, it's going to exceed 7 feet that we've set our rules on. Most of the  
8 planter beds are a foot maybe. It's starting from there. It's not like this huge thing  
9 coming from this table and then starting it from that measurement. We've found that the  
10 pathways were the way to structure it from.

11 Commissioner Olson: That to me is not clear in the way this is written. I don't know if  
12 we need to make it clear that it's from the ground to 3 feet high. I'm still going back to  
13 the edits to the Guidelines. On the new language excluding seniors, if seniors are able to  
14 qualify for this fee reduction, I'd still like to have the word "seniors" in there maybe with  
15 a comma or something. It could say "seniors, low-income, and/or disabled residents may  
16 apply for a fee reduction," if that's in fact true.

17 Ms. Bourquin: The change was to remove the word "senior" because now it's open to  
18 anybody. They don't have to be a senior to get fee reduction. That's why we removed the  
19 word "senior." The way it was written before implies that you have to be a senior.

20 Commissioner Olson: If you're a senior with a high income, you wouldn't read this and  
21 think you could have a fee reduction.

22 Ms. Bourquin: I'll have to look at that.

23 Mr. Anderson: I think we can reword that to make it clear exactly who's getting the  
24 discounts, which is everyone that (crosstalk).

25 Ms. Bourquin: It's written that way through Recreation for anybody that's signing up for  
26 a class that has fee reduction.

27 Commissioner Olson: I just want to make sure if a senior can qualify for a discount  
28 without being low income or disabled, they're clear they can apply for that discount. We  
29 have to probably figure out the facts behind it before doing the language.

30 Ms. Bourquin: Seniors with low income would apply for fee reduction. Otherwise, if  
31 you're a senior, you get the 25-percent discount already without applying for fee  
32 reduction.

1 Commissioner Olson: With no application, okay. Is that somewhere else in these  
2 Guidelines, that the senior would know that?

3 Ms. Bourquin: Yes. It is ...

4 Commissioner Olson: It might be we're looking at one pullout section.

5 Ms. Bourquin: It's on Number 4, any gardener who is 60 years of age is eligible to  
6 receive a 25-percent discount.

7 Commissioner Olson: Perfect. That answers it. Thank you.

8 Commissioner Moss: I have no comment about the Guidelines. I want to echo what  
9 Vice Chair Cribbs said, that the best practices from the Master Gardeners to solve the  
10 pest problems of all kinds should be sent around to everybody. People should help others  
11 to use those best practices, whatever they might be.

12 Chair Greenfield: I want to thank all the community members for their input this evening  
13 and also for all the hard work that staff's put into this. It has been quite a bit of an  
14 around-and-around. I do agree with Commissioner McCauley that we're looking to get  
15 some resolution this evening and move forward. I did find Keith's what I'll term a PVC-  
16 free zone suggestion interesting. While we go with catchy titles, I wonder if we can have  
17 some type of cats for rats program. I'm assuming we're not encouraging cats in the  
18 community gardens right now. From my personal experience in the backyard garden,  
19 when there's neighboring cats who patrol regularly, things go pretty well. When there  
20 aren't, things don't go very well. I do have no love for rats. I know they may have been  
21 here first, but if there's anything we can do as a community to address this, I'm interested  
22 in staff's feedback on that. I'm sure this is not a new discussion. There was a comment  
23 about paths and needing to be clear. I think we already have something in the Guidelines.  
24 Catherine, do you want to comment on that?

25 Ms. Bourquin: Under general plot responsibility, maintenance, Item 7, all plants,  
26 planters, planter boxes, and trellis must be placed inside plot perimeter. Plants must not  
27 overhang into the walkway, neighbor's plot, or any fence adjacent to playgrounds.  
28 Overgrown plants that block walkways are to be trimmed back.

29 Chair Greenfield: Would you say that you're already enforcing plots not overflowing?  
30 Hopefully we're not having issues, and we have that under control. On the PVC issue, I  
31 do appreciate both sides of the argument. I appreciate the aesthetic issue. It's not what  
32 we're looking for in an ideal setting. I also appreciate the general need for it. We are  
33 working towards a reasonable compromise. Eventually, we'll be phasing out the larger  
34 structures. I'm not 100-percent comfortable with the language we have in terms of  
35 existing structures are grandfathered in until they deteriorate, which generally they don't

1 unless something happens that shouldn't happen. I'm wondering if we would want to  
2 consider something longer term, something like phase them out within five years or  
3 something like that. I'm interested in Commissioner feedback on that. I know there's an  
4 impact, but maybe there's a number that we would use to phase out the larger structures.  
5 Beyond that, I'm supportive of the staff effort and interested in resolution. Lydia, do you  
6 have any comment you'd like to add?

7 Council Member Kou: I heard that this discussion is just discussion, and there's no votes  
8 at all. How do you give staff directions or is this just left for staff to come up with?

9 Chair Greenfield: We're just offering our feedback in this discussion. Staff will make  
10 their own decision.

11 Council Member Kou: This is in staff's hands. Thank you.

12 Chair Greenfield: Any other comments? Thank you.

13 Unidentified: (inaudible)

14 Chair Greenfield: Thank you. I appreciate the sentiment, but it's not really the place for  
15 it. It's good to hear that nonetheless. We'll move onto our next item of business.

## 16 **5. Update on the Horizontal Levee Pilot Project**

17 Chair Greenfield: The update on the horizontal levee pilot project.

18 Mr. Anderson: Good evening, Commissioners. Daren Anderson, Community Services  
19 Department. It's my pleasure to introduce my colleague from Public Works. She's a  
20 Senior Engineer, and her name is Samantha Engelage. She's going to present on the  
21 Horizontal Levee Pilot Project.

22 Samantha Engelage: Good evening. Before we head into some of the details on the  
23 project, I wanted to give a little bit of background and some information on the drivers  
24 for the project, so you get a sense of the context and why we're looking into horizontal  
25 levees and looking at a Horizontal Levee Pilot Project. The current flood control levees  
26 that surround the Palo Alto Baylands do not meet FEMA standards. They currently  
27 experience some overtopping, especially when king tides and storm events occur at the  
28 same time. In addition, they are not set up to address any of the sea level rise projections  
29 that we are now evaluating. The flood control levees need improvement in order to  
30 secure Palo Alto and some key City infrastructure that is in the Baylands. That  
31 infrastructure includes the Regional Water Quality Control Plant, where all of our  
32 wastewater is treated, as well as the Palo Alto Airport and the golf course. To evaluate  
33 what improvements are needed and where along those levees, there are two major  
34 projects that the City is looking at. One of them is the SAFER Bay Project, and the other

1 one that we just recently started up is the South San Francisco Bay Shoreline Project.  
2 These two projects are looking long term at what can we do to those flood control levees  
3 to improve them so that we can face these impending sea level rise concerns as well as  
4 deal with existing problems for flood control and management. With those projects  
5 going on, there's also a discussion of how can we at the same time try and incorporate  
6 some natural and restoration improvement opportunities into those projects, how can we  
7 try and include habitat enhancement as a component of those larger flood control levee  
8 projects. There's been a regional agreement that these transition zones between terrestrial  
9 upland and the tidal marshes have been decimated throughout the Bay Area. The  
10 regional perspective is can we now take advantage of all of this money and effort to  
11 address flood concerns while also addressing this type of ecosystem that has been  
12 decimated throughout the area. With that in mind, we have this traditional flood control  
13 levee perspective, which is the top picture shown up there. You have a typical levee. On  
14 the Bay side of that traditional flood control levee is what we call riprap. That's these  
15 large boulders for wave attenuation and also erosion control. That's what is typically put  
16 in for large flood control levee projects, especially ones that are paid for and approved by  
17 the Army Corps of Engineers. On the bottom of the slide is what is called a horizontal  
18 levee. Instead of that riprap, you now have a long, vegetated slope that's more of a gentle  
19 slope rather than a steep traditional levee slope that now allows you to vegetate it with  
20 different types of ecosystems that would create this brackish marsh. The brackish marsh  
21 would be a combination of this tidal action and this freshwater action coming from the  
22 upland area. That's the topic the Horizontal Levee Pilot Project is focusing on. We're  
23 looking at how can we include this brackish marsh area into the traditional flood control  
24 levee projects. The objectives of the pilot project include habitat enhancement. We want  
25 to make sure that we are including high tide refugia for key species, including the  
26 saltmarsh harvest mouse and the Ridgway's rail, and also increase biodiversity in that  
27 area. Not just having it one homogenous, long strip of brackish marsh, but have some  
28 areas that have swales and some areas that have uplands and create lots of little nooks and  
29 crannies for species to inhabit and thrive in. Next is to help with sea level rise adaptation.  
30 Horizontal levees have been shown to encourage sediment accretion. Over time, it helps  
31 that tidal marsh move upland, if it has to, to try and adapt to rising seas. Instead of just  
32 losing the marsh out there completely, we would now have a place for that marsh to  
33 migrate up in those situations. It would help with flood management. It dissipates wave  
34 energy, so it would replace that riprap that we saw in that first picture of the traditional  
35 levees. At the same time, we want to make sure that we're maintaining the public access  
36 and the social infrastructure that is currently out there. We don't want to completely  
37 remove the trail that's out there. We want to make sure in this project we're reconnecting  
38 the trail so that people have a place to enjoy nature and really reconnect with the  
39 Baylands. Lastly, horizontal levees provide an opportunity for us to polish the treated  
40 wastewater that is occurring right behind these levees. This system is not going to be  
41 used to meet any limits for the wastewater treatment plant. The wastewater treatment  
42 plant is doing a fantastic job. It meets all of its current limits. This system would provide



1 additional polishing treatment. It would really remove more nutrients and some  
2 contaminants of emerging concern. Stepping back a little bit, some of the goals that this  
3 project is seeking to meet include implementation of the City's Sea Level Rise Adaptation  
4 Policy as well as some goals listed in the Baylands Comprehensive Conservation Plan  
5 that's currently in progress. Looking from a regional perspective, this project has gotten a  
6 lot of interest from funding sources. To date, everything for this project has been paid for  
7 by grants. We've partnered with some very strategic people. The San Francisco Estuary  
8 Partnership has been a key partner with use. They hold the grant contracts, and we are,  
9 therefore, the very interested stakeholder. They get to do all the contracting, and we get  
10 to participate and get something great built here in Palo Alto. On top of that, they have  
11 brought some great technical engineers through ESA. They've also brought on ecologists  
12 like Dr. Peter Bay. They are looking to extend the work that was done at the Oro Loma  
13 Horizontal Levee Project. Some of you are familiar with that. That was more of a  
14 research project that looked at a closed loop system similar to this one. This project  
15 would extend that project and look at something similar that would actually be open to  
16 the tidal action. We just completed a preliminary design for a small system that we are  
17 proposing to be built within the Palo Alto Baylands. The idea for this project is we  
18 would build it in a small location in Harbor Marsh. It's shown here in this green color  
19 and within this dotted box. We would learn more information about types of plants and  
20 how the tidal interaction occurs. The hope would be that we would be able to feed that  
21 information into these larger projects for future flood control levee projects so that we  
22 can see this type of system spread throughout the Baylands. I do want to point out a few  
23 key areas that are very close to this proposed location and that will become pertinent later  
24 in the discussion. We have the Palo Alto Airport, right behind the proposed location.  
25 We have the Regional Water Quality Control Plant over here. If you see this blue line  
26 here and this orange line here, those are the proposed alignments for the SAFER Bay  
27 Flood Control Levee Project. We're trying to connect and coordinate very closely with  
28 that project so that what we build out there doesn't cause any issues for them for  
29 permitting and is sustainable. When they come to build their levees, we can connect  
30 easily and make this a project that sustains. If we zoom into the proposed location, we  
31 have Embarcadero Road right here. We would have the flood control levee here. This  
32 brown line is the relocated public access trail. Following that, we would have utility  
33 setback and then the horizontal levee would begin down here. Maybe 2 feet from the top,  
34 the flood control levee would start sloping gently to where the tidal action is occurring.  
35 In that space, we're creating different types of habitats. We're creating wet meadows,  
36 alkali bulrush, a whole diverse set of ecosystems. Similar to what was historically seen  
37 on the shorelines, we're trying to diversify a bit and create both swales and upland areas  
38 for refugia. Now, I'd like to spend a little bit of time discussing a few of the challenges  
39 that we've seen in the preliminary design report and process. The first is this balance  
40 between public access and habitat enhancement. We want to make sure that we locate  
41 public access trails such that the community has an opportunity to connect with the  
42 natural environment and also that we're locating it in such a way that we're giving the





1 species that are using that habitat space to live and not be scared and to reproduce and  
2 thrive. That can be a bit difficult. There are some species that are sensitive and some  
3 species that aren't. We're going to have to do more work on evaluating what species are  
4 actually using that marsh right now and how best to address this particular challenge. We  
5 have gotten initial environmental stakeholder feedback that has echoed that concern.  
6 They've stated that the trail placement on the Bay side of the SAFER levee counteracts  
7 the benefit to improve habitat along the perimeter of Harbor Marsh for native species.  
8 They're asking that we relocate the trail to the road side of the levee, which becomes a  
9 little bit challenging when we're trying to provide that view and connection for the people  
10 who are using the public access trail. If we relocate that trail to the roadside, you're going  
11 to see 5 feet of sloped levee, but you're not going to see the Bay. Now, we find ourselves  
12 finding that balance between public access and habitat enhancement. To put that in more  
13 context, I wanted to show where the current trail is, what we proposed, what we  
14 compromised on, and what has been proposed by the initial environmental feedback.  
15 This white line is what's currently out there. It's pretty far along into the habitat. Right  
16 now, that habitat is pretty poor quality, and it's not quite marshland. It's not really what  
17 we're looking to ultimately have up there. That's why we need to restore it. While it does  
18 provide this interaction with the species, the species using it right now are somewhat used  
19 to people out there. They hear the noise, the dogs, what people are using it right now for.  
20 We want to improve on this. When we initially did the preliminary design and asked for  
21 feedback from the environmental stakeholders, we showed this red line for the location of  
22 the trail. It's a little bit down. It's not right on top of the levee. It's maybe 2 feet down on  
23 the Bay side, right before we start that habitat. The feedback we got was that's too close.  
24 We need a little bit more discussion on this. We need to bring in some experts, some  
25 more research resource agency opinions before we make a final decision. Until we can  
26 get that together and coordinate some workshops on that, we will move it up to the top of  
27 the levee for further discussion. That would be about there, maybe 2 feet further away  
28 from the original proposed location. The initial environmental stakeholder feedback is  
29 they would like it where the yellow line is, way back. These are the four choices that we  
30 have identified under the preliminary design. Right now, it shows it at the top of levee,  
31 and we've earmarked it and identified it as a place where we need to do more. We need  
32 to reach out to the community more. We need to reach out to some experts. What we've  
33 decided to do is not only discuss it with resource agencies and ecologists offline, but also  
34 create a workshop where we can bring the community and the experts together and see if  
35 we can come up with a compromise that reaches both of those goals. We want both  
36 public access, and we want species to enjoy the habitat that we're spending so much  
37 effort to restore. Moving onto the second challenge, which is a slightly easier one to  
38 discuss but also a bit of a disappointment. The previously identified location for the pilot  
39 was on airport property. We found that out a little bit far into the preliminary design.  
40 Once we started to get a sense of how many approvals are necessary through the FAA, it  
41 looked like that location was not going to work. The FAA is very much worried about air  
42 strikes, bird strikes. If we are enhancing habitat, we need to make sure that the type of





1 bird that we are bringing to that habitat is not going to cause a safety issue for the people  
2 using the airport. It's a great concern. I'm happy that we learned before we got much  
3 further in the process. That's why we do these preliminary design reports. Unfortunately,  
4 that means this location is not going to be the best for this particular project. In this  
5 picture, I show the airport right here. You can see the runway right here. This red circle  
6 is where we were planning on putting this horizontal levee. It's right on the approach to  
7 the runway. It's definitely a valid concern. In response to that challenge, we are  
8 proposing to relocate that pilot further in Harbor Marsh. The yellow is where we looked  
9 at under the preliminary design. The red is where we're proposing to move it for the next  
10 phases of the project. This is a location that was identified early on along with the yellow  
11 one in the conceptual designs. It has very similar qualities to the first location. It has  
12 poor quality habitat right now that needs to be restored. It's located close the Regional  
13 Water Quality Control Plant so that we can irrigate it relatively easily. It has some great  
14 opportunities for restoration and for public access aspects of the project. For next steps  
15 for this particular project, we're looking to continue the collaboration with the San  
16 Francisco Estuary Partnership. We just got another grant to move us to the next phase of  
17 the project. We are going to start to progress to a 60-percent design. Because we are  
18 relocating, we're going to have to step back a little bit and redo a few of the items that we  
19 did in the preliminary design. We are definitely on track, and we have enough funds now  
20 to move this project forward. Two community workshops are planned for this year, one  
21 focusing on the public access and habitat intersection. The second workshop is focused  
22 more on how we engage local communities, both disadvantaged and not. Mainly, we're  
23 thinking that engagement would focus on the planting and the management of the system,  
24 but we want to hear from the community. We want to know how we could engage  
25 everybody in an interesting way that would also teach people about sea level rise and  
26 these types of systems. We are continuing to try to secure funds for the next, next phase  
27 of the project, which would include construction. This system is relatively pricey, but a  
28 lot of agencies are very interested in this work and willing to bring money to the table. A  
29 few next steps on related projects include some community workshops for sea level rise  
30 adaptation work that is occurring as well as a community workshop for the SAFER Bay  
31 Project. We are continuing the three-year initial study on the South San Francisco Bay  
32 Shoreline Study, which is also evaluating flood control to those levees. Any questions?

33 Chair Greenfield: Thank you for your presentation, Samantha. Thank you for being with  
34 us later in the evening as well. I know that's an accommodation. Any clarifying  
35 questions from Commissioners before we comment?

36 Commissioner Moss: Thank you for coming back to talk about this. Yes, I was at that  
37 Oro Loma study. We learned so much at that. I'm hoping this will go faster because of  
38 that. I'm glad that you got to move it further down so that the FAA isn't a problem. I  
39 want to tell you to keep going. That's great.



1 Commissioner Olson: I think this project is really interesting. Kudos to you for all the  
2 discoveries along the way, including the airport. The only comments I had related to the  
3 bike path. I would second putting it away from the road and near the levee, not on the  
4 other side of the road. Part of my reasoning for that is if it's on the other side of the road,  
5 you have all those crossings to deal with, which is more of a safety issue. On the drawing  
6 of the bike path, it looked like there are sharp turns to go to the new path. I was  
7 wondering if we could round that out for safety. I love what we're doing. It looks great.

8 Commissioner Reckdahl: I realize the tradeoff between wildlife and use. In this case,  
9 especially since it's a demonstration, we should err on the side of public use. Part of this  
10 is PR. This is going to take more money to do more of this. The more people that get out  
11 and use it and see it and appreciate it, the more likely we can add to it. If I had my  
12 druthers, I would have the path on the top but maybe investigate potentially having just a  
13 little short path to go down into it at one or two spots. At least, the kids can go down and  
14 check things out closer, but yet most of the transportation is up at the top and staying  
15 away from the wildlife.

16 Commissioner McCauley: Thanks very much for the presentation. It's very thoughtful. I  
17 agree with Keith's comments. That would be ideal, what he just described.

18 Vice Chair Cribbs: Thank you very much for the work you're doing. It's very interesting  
19 to learn more about this. It sounds like there's a lot of opportunity for grants and all of  
20 that, so you don't seem to be too concerned about that.

21 Ms. Engelage: Always concerned about money, but we have received two grant funds so  
22 far, one from EPA Climate Ready Estuaries Fund and one from the Coastal Conservancy  
23 recently. Those opportunities continue to pop up, and we look really good to obtain  
24 significant money through future grant funding.

25 Vice Chair Cribbs: That's really exciting. Good work on that. Under the next steps, the  
26 very last sentence is about the second workshop meant to brainstorm youth and  
27 disadvantaged community involvement in the project. Can you talk a little bit more  
28 about how that would work and how you'd do that?

29 Ms. Engelage: The engagement itself or the workshop?

30 Vice Chair Cribbs: The workshop.

31 Ms. Engelage: We are trying to partner with some strategic community organizations  
32 that already have a lot of connections in that vein. We haven't completely reached out yet  
33 to solidify those partnerships, but we have a few in mind. Our first step is to reach out to  
34 them, see if they are interested in the project, and see what ideas they have first. We

1 want to bring more people to the table to discuss how that could look after we've  
2 constructed this and specific tasks that we can include the community in.

3 Chair Greenfield: Thank you again for the presentation. It's always helpful and  
4 appreciative for this body to learn about some important projects that are happening right  
5 in our backyard. How do you know that the length of the pilot project area is long  
6 enough to get good information and good data that will be useful moving forward?

7 Ms. Engelage: It's a great question. Ideally, we'd have a larger system and a larger  
8 connection to the tidal action that we're looking to evaluate. For this particular project,  
9 because it's one of the first of its kind in terms of the treated wastewater irrigation,  
10 permitting is seen to be a challenge. We want to try to streamline the permitting aspect as  
11 much as possible. We're zeroing in on areas that are already upland and limiting how  
12 much work we're actually doing out in the marsh that would trigger a lot of concern from  
13 permitting agencies. That's really one of the major limiting factors. The area that we've  
14 identified to relocate to is large enough to give us initial information about that tidal  
15 action and that connection that we're looking to answer.

16 Chair Greenfield: Good to know. I certainly appreciate the first challenge that you  
17 articulated, which is the tradeoff between natural habitat and recreational use. It seems  
18 like the trail at the top of the levee makes the most sense. I did read through the  
19 preliminary design report from Peter Bay, who is the local expert, from December of last  
20 year. It seemed to state very clearly that locating the trail at the top levee would be the  
21 optimal design choice. Does that carry a lot of weight and would you guess that the  
22 environmental community would appreciate that and go along with that to an extent?

23 Ms. Engelage: I do. I also think hearing it directly from the experts versus staff or  
24 reading it in something that staff has asked of the expert is the best way to convey that.  
25 They can ask questions directly to the expert and feel comfortable with that  
26 recommendation.

27 Chair Greenfield: The plan is that Peter Bay would be participating as part of the next  
28 workshop.

29 Ms. Engelage: We're going to try. We have our eyes set on a few different experts. He  
30 definitely is one of them that we would like to get there.

31 Chair Greenfield: Are there other experts in the field that have similar opinions?

32 Ms. Engelage: Yes. There are resource agencies that have dealt with this concern and  
33 this question previously as well, that we trying to also bring to that workshop. For  
34 example, BCDC and U.S. Fish and Wildlife also deal with this question quite a lot.

1 Chair Greenfield: That's great. It does seem like a reasonable tradeoff. I appreciate the  
2 comments of other Commissioners that erring on the side of recreation for a small pilot  
3 project might be a good approach. Somewhere I read something about the need to keep  
4 public and pets from treated and disinfected wastewater. Is that still an issue and is that  
5 part of the consideration? If you had the trail at the top of the levee, would that be  
6 sufficient?

7 Ms. Engelage: The trail at the top of the levee would be sufficient. Even if it was a little  
8 bit closer to the system, it would be fine. Because it's the first of its kind, we're dealing  
9 with a little bit more of conservatism than what is typical for water reuse and beneficial  
10 reuse of that wastewater. We currently send a portion of the treated wastewater to Renzel  
11 Marsh. The trail right now is along the perimeter, and there's no other barrier there other  
12 than the start of the pond. It's something we're working through with the regulators.  
13 More than anything, it's dealing with a gut reaction from the public, and the term  
14 wastewater being kind of icky.

15 Chair Greenfield: Again, this is probably something we'll want to err on the side of  
16 caution in a pilot program and make sure we do all the right things. Thank you very  
17 much.

18 Commissioner Moss: Based on what Commissioners Greenfield and Reckdahl said about  
19 having the path on the top of the levee, the reason not to do that was put forth by Shani at  
20 Audubon. You're going to have people, bicycles, pets and walkers, joggers. That may  
21 disturb the wildlife you're trying to attract. If there was some way to move it slightly to  
22 the roadside, not all the way to the roadside but halfway to the roadside, so that you're not  
23 right on top but slightly below the top. That was the reasoning. I hope when we get the  
24 experts in the workshop that that will come out and there will be some kind of  
25 compromise.

26 Chair Greenfield: I agree. In a workshop we want to hear from the experts and allow the  
27 community with differing opinions to hear from the experts and figure out what the most  
28 appropriate project plan will be and that represents a compromise that's acceptable to  
29 everyone and, given the expert guidance, that we can be comfortable with. Any other  
30 comments?

31 Council Member Kou: This is a great project. Also, would you be able to say about how  
32 much percent flood protection this might bring forth to Palo Alto?

33 Ms. Engelage: I can't give a percent, but the project is planning to provide flood  
34 protection for 3 feet of sea level rise. That's consistent with the SAFER Bay Flood  
35 Improvement Project's projections as well.

36 Council Member Kou: Does it accomplish the 100-year flood protection?

1 Ms. Engelage: That's a good question. I'm not sure what the 3 feet of sea level rise  
2 equates to in terms of the 100-year flood protection. I think it would, but there's a  
3 specific year where that starts to tail off. I'd have to look further into that.

4 Council Member Kou: That'd be great. Thank you.

5 Chair Greenfield: Thank you very much for joining us and for all of your efforts on this.  
6 It is a very exciting project. It's nice to see something cutting edge like this being done in  
7 our backyard. Next up is the Other Ad Hoc Committee and Liaison Updates.

## 8 **6. Other Ad Hoc Committee and Liaison Updates**

9 Chair Greenfield: Do any Commission members have any ad hoc updates they'd like to  
10 comment on or discuss that weren't included in the updates that went out in the packet?

11 Commissioner Moss: I wrote that there's a lot going on with the GSI committee and their  
12 new GSI Master Plan. I'm hoping that we can bring that in a future meeting to talk about  
13 their big and great work.

14 Chair Greenfield: We did mention earlier that last night at City Council there was  
15 discussion on the forthcoming guidance to Commissions and Boards. Council Member  
16 Kou, would you like to comment on that, or I can summarize it? I was at the meeting.  
17 There were five Commissioners from four different Commissions that offered comments  
18 to City Council, myself included. City Council ended up making a motion related to four  
19 specific areas that the ad hoc committee, which was Vice Mayor DuBois and Council  
20 Member Cormack, was studying. All of us had an opportunity to provide input to the ad  
21 hoc committee. Regarding work plans from the Commissions and Boards, the ad hoc  
22 will proceed with developing guidelines for consideration. The same is true for term  
23 limits. In general, the Council was in favor of coming up with options for these ideas.  
24 Regarding the selection process for Commissioners, the ad hoc will be moving forward  
25 with details for a single interview time period, likely in the spring, and also more  
26 selective pre-interview filtering of candidates to potentially cut down on the number of  
27 candidates overall. Regarding changes to the Commission, Council will be disbanding  
28 the Library Commission in the near future. Planning and Transportation Commission  
29 will remain as a single Commission, i.e., it will not be split into two separate  
30 Commissions. There were considerations to create a Climate/Environment/Sustainability  
31 Commission that has brought acknowledgement of sustainability as a priority. There was  
32 not consensus on the best path forward. It wasn't clear that establishing a Commission  
33 for this would be the best approach or not. There was a public speaker that was  
34 questioning this as well. The ad hoc will work to provide more information for  
35 consideration of this Commission. Regarding a Senior Commission, generally I think  
36 there was more support among the Council Members comments to use committees as  
37 needed rather than a new Commission. There was some support for a new Commission.

1 There was no consensus on the best path forward, and the ad hoc will again work to  
2 provide more information to consider. Anything else that you'd like to add that I didn't  
3 touch on?

4 Council Member Kou: No. I think you covered most of it. They might go back and  
5 review the application to make sure it does summarize expectations and maybe look at  
6 the relevant links that are included in applications. That was one other thing that they  
7 were looking at. You covered most of it.

8 Chair Greenfield: The ad hoc will be meeting in person with the Chair and Vice Chair of  
9 all Commissions as part of the evaluation process. At some point, as a Commission we'll  
10 look to get input from Commissioners for anything they might want to specifically  
11 forward.

12 Vice Chair Cribbs: What's the timeline for this?

13 Chair Greenfield: No specific timeline was discussed that I'm aware of.

14 Council Member Kou: According to the presentation from yesterday, it's expected to  
15 come back around the March/April timeframe with some of the work that Council has  
16 agreed to move forward and have asked the ad hoc committee to do.

17 Chair Greenfield: Any other comments regarding ad hocs and liaison updates? We'll  
18 move onto the tentative agenda for our next meeting, which is scheduled for March 24.

19 **VI. TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR MARCH 24, 2020 MEETING**

20 Mr. Anderson: We had a couple of items. They're a little bit in flux, so it's not a  
21 guarantee. Our hope is not to bring the 7.7-acre restoration plan as discussion but rather  
22 for action with the intent of it being a Park Improvement Ordinance. The plan is very  
23 close. We recently got some assistance from the Planning Department to help with some  
24 of the lingering questions, for example, the way to make the trail accessible, what does  
25 the surfacing have to be. I think we've got that now. We're getting pretty close, and it  
26 might make it to the March meeting. The first tee proposal regarding the golf course and  
27 some improvements to the driving range will be a discussion item. I'm reasonably sure  
28 we'll get that to the March one, but I'll confirm that soon. We had the possibility of Pam  
29 Rodrigues with GSI giving us an update. She had said March or April, so I'll confirm  
30 with her to see if March might be feasible. Perhaps coupling that with recycled water. I  
31 know that's been an interest of the Commission. I'll check in again with Karin North and  
32 Sam Engelage, if they would like to couple those and do those the same night. Lastly, the  
33 10.5 acres, potentially bringing that. A couple of them, I need more research, but those  
34 are the tones that on the docket for March/April timeframe.



1 Chair Greenfield: The other items that are on the radar are a first tee presentation and a  
2 trails overview, which is probably further out as well.

3 Vice Chair Cribbs: Is it possible in the next couple of months that somehow we could  
4 have the Youth Council come? I don't know what we call it, a joint session or hear what  
5 they've done this year or what their plans are for the future and hear what's important to  
6 them right now.

7 Mr. Anderson: I'd be glad to extend an invite.

8 Vice Chair Cribbs: I think it's important to us to know what our youth are thinking about.

9 Chair Greenfield: Great idea, thank you.

10 Commissioner Reckdahl: When we had our recreation opportunities ad hoc, one of the  
11 questions was what do the kids want to do. It'd be really nice to get their input firsthand.

12 Chair Greenfield: Anyone else? We'll move onto Comments and Announcements.

## 13 **VII. COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

14 Chair Greenfield: Does anyone have anything to share?

15 Council Member Kou: You know the Mayor's State of the City Address is on the 4th of  
16 March, 7:00 p.m.

17 Chair Greenfield: Yes, 6:30 to 8:30 at Mitchell Park. One other comment, something  
18 that came out of the Council meeting yesterday. There is a directive from City Council  
19 for Parks and Rec to report back with advice on planting recommendations for the Ross  
20 Road/East Meadow traffic circle. This came out of a transportation discussion. In  
21 talking with Daren, this is something he'll work on with staff. Maybe this would be best  
22 to go through the urban forest liaison to meet with staff and then have a presentation to  
23 the Commission that would be an action to provide advice to City Council as they  
24 requested. Lydia, would you like to comment any further on that?

25 Commissioner McCauley: Is this something that the City Council actually wants the  
26 PRC as opposed to the professionals in our Parks Department to weigh in on?

27 Chair Greenfield: They did specifically ask for PRC. I think that's maybe more of an  
28 opportunity for a plan from staff to come to the Commission for some discussion.

29 Commissioner Moss: There is a connection to green stormwater infrastructure with those  
30 circles and the strips on the outside of the road. Maybe we want to talk about that during  
31 that same meeting.

1 Mr. Anderson: Any of those designs in bioretention areas would also get reviewed by  
2 Pam's group in Public Works, with the GSI team.

3 Chair Greenfield: Daren, we'll leave that for you to provide some advice on how we  
4 proceed.

5 Mr. Anderson: I'll start with contacting the project lead and see where they're at and what  
6 they'd like to do.

7 Commissioner Reckdahl: For these type of traffic circles and medians, if they don't have  
8 irrigation, is adding irrigation a big thing or a little thing?

9 Mr. Anderson: In some areas, it is a big thing. The vast majority of the planted bulb-outs  
10 in the AMBLR areas do not have irrigation.

11 Commissioner Reckdahl: Piping that in would be hard?

12 Mr. Anderson: In some areas, yeah, very difficult and very expensive. They  
13 intentionally did not do that for the majority. The intent was to start them with a water  
14 truck. They'll drive by and irrigate them from the truck. The concept is it should self-  
15 sustain. We're seeing some areas where that's less successful and some areas where it  
16 does work. It's the nature of the game with landscaping without irrigation. Sometimes it  
17 does great, sometimes not.

18 Chair Greenfield: If I recall correctly, there were comments from the public that weren't  
19 happy with some of the landscape options that exist there now. That was the driving  
20 factor on this.

21 **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

22 Meeting adjourned on motion by Commissioner Moss and second by Commissioner  
23 Reckdahl at 9:45 p.m.