



**MINUTES
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
December 15, 2020
Virtual Conference
Palo Alto, California**

Commissioners Present: Chair Jeff Greenfield, Anne Cribbs, Jeff LaMere, David Moss, Jackie Olson, Keith Reckdahl

Commissioners Absent:

Others Present: Council Member Kou

Staff Present: Daren Anderson, Catherine Bourquin

I. ROLL CALL

II. AGENDA CHANGES, REQUESTS, DELETION

III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

IV. DEPARTMENT REPORT

Mr. Daren Anderson: Thank you Chair. Good evening Daren Anderson with the Community Services Department. I'll start with an update on Foothills Park specifically about the referendum. If there isn't a referendum Foothills park will open to the general public and will open this Thursday December 17th. If the referendum with the request of signatures is submitted by the deadline of December 16th by 4pm to the City Clerk Foothill Park would not open to the general public on December 17th. City Clerk will send the petition to the County state of registrars to verify the signatures and if the referendum signatures qualify the park will remain resident only while the referendum process continues. Its likely that the lawsuit for Foothills will continue and its possible that that decision will be made by the court. For additional information on this topic it will be better best to refer you to the City's blog on Foothills park frequently asked questions that I had sent out earlier to the Commission.

A little update on the Toy drive, forgive me if you didn't hear about this one. The Recreation department held a contactless toy drive this weekend to help local families in



1 need. We were able to collect several hundred toys and will have an additional drop off
2 time Wednesday from 3pm to 7pm at Mitchell Park Community Center. And again this
3 was sent to the Commission via email or will be shortly.

4 Chair Greenfield: May I ask is this requesting new toys or used.

5 Mr. Daren Anderson: I believe just new. There's a phone number if there's any clarifying
6 questions on that flyer that was emailed to the commission if you would like to look it up.

7 An update to the Baylands tide gate signage - you might remember this is a project
8 happening out at the Baylands this is the Santa Clara Water district doing this project to
9 replace a fifty to sixty year old structure that is failing. Recently the Tide gate Ad Hoc
10 committee and chiefly Chair Greenfield and staff have been reviewing some draft signage
11 this will be posted out at the site to inform people. It was such a long project it's crucial
12 that we get good messaging, especially because it separates out what is usable trail. There's
13 a section of trail that will be closed down for a significant amount of time. So it's really
14 important we get that right. Chair Greenfield and I and the rest of the Ad Hoc Committee
15 will be reviewing this shortly. That signage is currently with the Water District they will
16 send us a version and we will review it in more detail. And then we anticipate a January
17 February timeframe. I'm still waiting to hear confirmation from Santa Clara Water district
18 staff about when. But sometime around then they would come to the Commission with a
19 Park Improvement Ordinance to review this project and they will give you all the details
20 about this important upcoming, long-scale project. On the topic of the Santa Clara County
21 Public Health Office and the health orders, they implemented the State's Regional Stay-
22 At-Home order. It was put into effect Sunday, December 6th and will remain in effect
23 through at least January 4th, with the potential for longer temporary restrictions, based on
24 hospitalizations and ICU capacity. The County updated their guidelines on December 12th,
25 and the State updated their guidelines yesterday. We're still having conversations with our
26 attorney on some of the details about what can be open and under what circumstances. I
27 want to be careful to avoid spreading any misinformation, while still getting our attorney's
28 interpretation on some of the guidelines. What I mean by that is that there are times where,
29 between the County and the State, they don't make everything crystal clear, and it does
30 require a little legal interpretation, so I hope to have some more clarification on that soon,
31 which I can send to you. While this list I've got tonight is not comprehensive of every
32 recreational activity and exactly what you can do under every circumstance, I can provide
33 you with some details that I'll share now. Some of this has already been shared via email,
34 but I want to reiterate that our playgrounds are currently open. This includes the Magical
35 Bridge Playground. The State had reversed its decision on closing outdoor playgrounds,
36 and we re-opened them all after that brief closure, on Thursday, December 10th. The
37 visitation at Magical Bridge has been about 175 people a day, approximately. It's been
38 varying. Other things allowed via this State order is physical conditioning, practice skill-
39 building and training that can be conducted outdoors with six feet physical distancing and

1 within stable cohorts, are authorized, regardless of their County tier status. The State has
2 a helpful list of which recreational activities are allowed by current county tier and open,
3 during which the State says the following are open...I'm not going to go through them all.
4 I'll just highlight a few. One is the outdoor low contact sports. They include things like
5 biking, bocci, golf, lawn bowling, physical training like yoga, Zumba, tai chi, pickleball –
6 single only, not double pickleball; that's not allowed – running, swimming, diving, tennis,
7 track and field, walking and hiking. Those are all activities allowed currently. I just want
8 to also briefly highlight the State's guidance on face coverings. I know this is often
9 confusing for folks. I'm just going to read this verbatim. Bear with me. "This pertains to
10 youth and adult sports, and it pertains to participants, coaches and support staff.
11 Participants in youth and adult sports should wear face coverings when participating in the
12 activity, even with heavy exertion as tolerated, both indoors and outdoors, unless the face
13 covering would be a hazard. The face coverings must be worn when not participating in
14 the activity, e.g., on the sidelines of activities. Observers must wear face coverings indoors
15 and comply with the California Department of Public Health guidance on face coverings."
16 I should also note, "Spectators are not permitted at adult sports." Granted, there are many,
17 many health order-related issues that I think would be best if you could send me your
18 questions. I could run them by our attorney and get specific answers, things like, is
19 basketball allowed if you're playing just by yourself and shooting, or maybe with a member
20 of your household? Right now, if you look at the State order, that isn't very clear, so I'm
21 going to look into things like that and send you more information once I have it. Chair, that
22 concludes the Department Report.

23 Chair Greenfield: Thank you. Do any Commissioners have any questions about the
24 Department report this evening?

25 Commissioner Reckdahl: Daren, for Magical Bridge you mentioned 175 per day. Is that
26 lumped or is that spread out? Do we have any problems with overcrowding?

27 Mr. Anderson: No, lately we have not. Prior to that recent shutdown, the most we had was
28 a couple backups, midday, approximately. They were about 15-minute waits, tops, for
29 about 15 people, so very minimal waiting for the most part. That was just on the weekend
30 that we had the backups. None of that on weekdays. The colder weather and a little bit of
31 drizzle has dropped the numbers, and so far we haven't had any waits since we re-opened.

32 Commissioner Reckdahl: Okay, and if they let us keep it open, do we have to change the
33 number of people, the maximum capacity, right now, or keep it the same?

34 Mr. Anderson: No, that stays the same at 55.

35 Commissioner Reckdahl: Okay, thank you.

1 Vice Chair Cribbs: Chair, could I just commend Daren and the staff for all of these pivots,
2 from opening the playground to closing the playground, to opening the playground, to
3 putting the tape up and down, and all of that. It's totally understandable and unexpected,
4 but you guys are doing an amazing job, so I just wanted to say that right now.

5 Mr. Anderson: Thank you so much.

6 Chair Greenfield: Yes, absolutely, and keeping a positive spin on things as we jump from
7 hoop to hoop. Thank you.

8 Mr. Anderson: Appreciate it.

9 Commissioner Moss: Daren, if we want to get the complete list of guidelines from the
10 State, is it on a website or anything? Could you send us that?

11 Mr. Anderson: Yeah, thank you, Commissioner Moss. That should be coming from
12 Catherine very soon.

13 Commissioner Moss: Okay, because we walk the track at Cubberley every morning, and
14 there's, I don't know, a quarter of the people who don't wear masks as they're walking
15 around the track, and when you just said that even with heavy activity you should be
16 wearing a mask, that's counter to what I see. I noticed also that besides a phone number, if
17 you have an issue, you can send an online message to, I guess, Community Services Police,
18 or Police Community Liaison, to complain, I guess. Is that what I heard?

19 Mr. Anderson: I apologize. I hadn't seen the online version. We've been directing people
20 to call the non-emergency number for police dispatch, and they send out either a
21 Community Service officer or a police officer to talk to the person investigated.

22 Commissioner Moss: Yeah, I think this just came out two days ago.

23 Mr. Anderson: I will certainly look into it, but I know for a fact that the non-emergency
24 police dispatch number is what we've been using since the beginning and certainly will
25 still work.

26 Commissioner Moss: One other thing, and that is, the tide gate project – January/February
27 PIO would arrive, but we're not talking about starting construction until approximately
28 when? Was it fall? Was it September, after nesting?

29 Mr. Anderson: I apologize. I'll have to double check.

30 Commissioner Moss: I can't remember.

1 Mr. Anderson: I'll for sure have that in my January update, or I can email you sooner if
2 you like.

3 Chair Greenfield: I'm pretty sure it's October or November of next year.

4 Commissioner Moss: Yeah, something like that. I don't want people to think that we're
5 going to start this project in March.

6 Mr. Anderson: Right, that's correct.

7 Chair Greenfield: And touching further on what David suggested, it seems like we need a
8 robust communication campaign to get the word out that, really, people should be wearing
9 masks all the time now, and I'm sure that the City Coronavirus Update, which has been
10 coming out on a regular basis and has been very extensive, will be emphasizing that. I'm
11 wondering if there's any additional signage that could be put in place in a reasonably quick
12 manner, without too much burden, that could be effective.

13 Mr. Anderson: The answer is yes. We can do that. Both at the track and other locations as
14 well.

15 Commissioner Moss: At the pickleball annual meeting, they had a long discussion about
16 mask-wearing and how to approach people who...Everybody must wear a mask, but some
17 people wear a mask over their mouth and not their nose, and some people are worried,
18 because they go a hundred percent exertion, and it's dangerous to their health if they wear
19 a mask, so all kinds of discussion.

20 Chair Greenfield: Thanks. I think we're getting a little in the weeds here and should
21 probably move on.

22 Commissioner Moss: Yeah.

23 Chair Greenfield: Anyone else? Thank you, Daren. We'll now move on to the first business
24 item, but before doing so, I'll mention that anyone from the public who would like to speak
25 on the Ramos Park PIO, the Park Improvement Ordinance, which will be the second
26 business item we'll cover after approving the minutes, now would be a good time to raise
27 your hand through Zoom if you'd like an opportunity to speak. We'll get a staff report first
28 and then the public will have an opportunity, so you have some time to raise your hand
29 now as well, so this is your first cue.

30 **V. BUSINESS**

31 **1. Approval of Draft Minutes from the November 24, 2020 Parks and Recreation**
32 **Commission meeting**

1 Chair Greenfield: Does anyone have any comments or corrections to discuss? If not, could
2 I get a motion to approve the minutes, please?

3 Approval of the draft Minutes was moved by Commissioner Moss and seconded by Vice
4 Chair Cribbs. Passed 6-0.

5 Chair Greenfield: Thank you very much

6 **2. Approval of Ramos Park Improvement Ordinance**

7 Chair Greenfield: We'll now be moving on to the next order of business, which is the
8 approval of the Ramos Park Improvement Ordinance, or PIO. This subject has come before
9 the Commission a couple times this year already, in February and August, and staff has
10 worked to adjust the plans based on Commission feedback, as well as community feedback.
11 We've done a couple of meetings and surveys, which we'll hear about. I'll now turn it over
12 to staff for a report on this. Again, if any members of the public would like to speak on this
13 item, raise your hand please, and after the staff report, you'll have three minutes each to
14 speak on this. Thank you.

15 Mr. Anderson: Chair, I'd like to introduce Peter Jensen, Public Works Engineering and
16 City Landscape Architect. Also with Peter today is [break in recording]. Peter, thanks so
17 much, and Mega [phonetic] thanks so much for being here this evening.

18 Mr. Peter Jensen: Thank you, Daren. Good evening, Commissioners. Here tonight
19 presenting the Park Improvement Ordinance to the Commission. Tonight staff presents the
20 draft Park Improvement Ordinance to the Park and Rec Commission for their
21 recommendation to Council for adoption. Your vote tonight, basically at the end of this, is
22 a recommendation in support of the Park Improvement Ordinance to Council, where it will
23 go to them on the next step of this process, and they will actually be taking the vote on to
24 approve the Park Improvement Ordinance itself. Of course, we've looked at Ramos Park a
25 couple times already. Our main focus, of course, is the East Meadow park frontage, the
26 playgrounds, pathway connections, the planting and, of course, the restroom. Here is some
27 imaging you've looked at before of the existing playground. We're looking at two separate
28 capital improvement projects. The one for the park itself, which is mostly looking at the
29 playground, park amenities, ADA improvements, striping on the court and some planting
30 improvements as well; and then, another capital improvement project for stripping the
31 restroom itself. Both items, though, are part of the same Park Improvement Ordinance that
32 we're looking at tonight. Just recently we met and discussed the plan. I will point out that
33 on the plan, from our discussion last time, we have eliminated the direct path that leads up
34 to the existing walkway and have added the hard skinny walkway adjacent to the picnic
35 area for an accessible loop path around the park right there. That was the update from our
36 last meeting from comments from the Commission as well as from the community itself.
37 We basically have seven park improvement items that we're looking at that are part of the

1 Park Improvement Ordinance. That, of course, is to replace the existing playground, and a
2 part of that is to provide play equipment for older kids as well, five and up. Right now, it's
3 [inaudible] two to five. The installation of a pre-fabricated restroom, which we have right
4 here. The expansion of the concrete walkway loop, which is our yellow line right here. We
5 basically going to install site furnishings. We have benches, picnic tables, drinking
6 fountains, things of that nature that are scattered, mostly in this area here. There are a
7 couple around here that we will be replacing. We also have discussed adding a 42-inch tall
8 chain link fence that runs along the frontage at the East Meadow street frontage, and then
9 doing some native planting and removing the non-used turf there, just to, of course, provide
10 habitat to all living things that come along with native planting, but also to reduce water
11 use and the amount of maintenance that's needed. Number six is striking of the existing
12 concrete paving from the back and putting basketball markings along that piece of concrete.
13 Of course, I did mention the native planting along the frontage, and then as well as the
14 entry that comes off Ross Road at the back side. So, these are basically the items that are
15 approved in the Park Improvement Ordinance that we'll be focusing on our project. I've
16 just blown them up a little bit bigger here to make them bigger if you wanted to see them
17 for a second. This is the verbiage that's taken directly out of the draft Park Improvement
18 Ordinance. This is what that Park Improvement Ordinance looks like. I'm sorry I can't
19 make it bigger to actually see, but you can start to see our seven items right there. It also
20 directs the Council approving the Plan that it is based upon these seven elements at this
21 point. With that, I will take any questions and comments from the Commission about the
22 Park Improvement Ordinance or anything about the Park renovation. I do have a slide about
23 the schedule that we can look at. I don't know if you want to look at that first, and then
24 take any questions or comments. Probably we should just look at this. With our Park
25 Improvement Ordinance tonight, we will start drawing up the bid documents. At some
26 point in the middle, kind of as you draw up the plans, the Park Improvement Ordinance
27 will go to Council for their approval. Once we have their approval, around that time the
28 plan should be done, and we should be ready to bid out the project sometime in the spring.
29 We'd like to start the project in spring or early summer 2021. So, very shortly to start the
30 improvements of Ramos Park. With that, I will take any questions or comments at this
31 time.

1 Chair Greenfield: Thank you. Before we move to comments from the public, are there any
2 clarifying questions from commissioners?

3 Vice Chair Cribbs: How long will it take for the park to be finished?

4 Mr. Jensen: I'd say for the park improvement work, the playground, the pathway, things
5 of that nature, I would say probably it would take about two months to do. It's not a lot of
6 work. The bathroom takes a little bit longer to do, because there's utilities involved, and
7 utilities scheduling involved. So that could take somewhere between three to five months,
8 I would say.

9 Vice Chair Cribbs: So, you're looking at the mid fall. Will the whole park have to be closed
10 in order for all these improvements, or are parts of it closed?

11 Mr. Jensen: No, we'll just close the specific areas that we're working on at the time. So,
12 the majority of the park should remain open during the renovations.

13 Vice Chair Cribbs: Great, because I'm sure that everybody will be really anxious to be
14 outside playing after the COVID vaccine helps us, so thank you very much, Peter. That
15 helps a lot.

16 Chair Greenfield: Thank you. Any other clarifying questions? Then we'll move on to
17 Commission comments after the public has an opportunity to speak. Okay, looks like we
18 have one speaker. Again, to the community members that are joining us, this is an
19 opportunity to speak on the Park Improvement Ordinance for Ramos Park. The next item
20 is the Off-Leash Dog Pilot Program for Ramos Park, and you'll have an opportunity to
21 speak on that after this. It looks like maybe that's what everyone wanted to speak on, as
22 there are no public comments, so now we can move on to commissioner questions and
23 comments. Anyone want to raise your hand to start? Commissioner LaMere.

24 Commissioner LaMere: Peter, thank you so much for all you do. You always have great
25 ideas with our parks. One quick question I do have is how does one enter the restroom?
26 From what direction, or what's the path to get to the restroom, and how is that oriented?

27 Mr. Jensen: That's a good question. The restroom doors... Yeah, I think on the side of the
28 playground, so it will be over in this location here, along this wall. So you can either walk
29 down this pathway here. I would say that the doors will along this side here, and then the
30 access from the playground and the park area will be down this pathway here, of course
31 from the front sidewalk there. I'm going to have to say that as we get out there and start to
32 look at this, we will look to see if there is a more direct path from the picnic area through
33 the planting area to get to the door there, because there's no doubt people will walk through
34 there to get the bathroom. So, I would say that we'll probably extend the decomposed
35 granite. Most of this area is the decomposed granite. That then gets you over to the
36 pavement in front of the restroom.

37 Commissioner LaMere: Great. And the addition of the new basketball hoop – there's a
38 current basketball hoop there, correct?

1 Mr. Jensen: Yes.

2 Commissioner LaMere: Okay, so it would replace that, not add an additional one?

3 Mr. Jensen: No, the idea is that we'd add another one, so you'd have two instead of just
4 the one.

5 Commissioner LaMere: Okay, and then, previously I had asked a question about additional
6 court striping for things beyond basketball. Were there any ideas that were thought of or
7 generated, or things that might be needed that other sports could utilize?

8 Mr. Jensen: Yeah, that was asked of the community, and nothing else came up except for
9 basketball, which I think is the main thing that's played there, so no, nothing else.

10 Commissioner LaMere: Excellent. I guess the one comment was I read that restrooms cost
11 \$9,000 a year to maintain. I'm glad that we are doing that, but we also have to realize the
12 cost, but I think it's certainly worth it. I'm really glad there is a restroom there. I've used
13 that park many times, and see there's lots of practices that go on there and young kids, and
14 if there's not a restroom, they still find a way to make someplace in the park a restroom, so
15 thank you very much for doing that, Peter, and thank you for all you do.

16 Mr. Jensen: Thank you.

17 Chair Greenfield: Commissioner Moss?

18 Commissioner Moss: So, the 42-inch-tall fence only goes up to the restroom. From there
19 over to the left there's no fence, right?

20 Mr. Jensen: There's no fence over here, no.

21 Commissioner Moss: So, people can enter from East Meadow. With the native planting in
22 the way, the only way you can get into the park is right next to the restroom. Is that right?
23 Or is there a little opening...?

24 Mr. Jensen: No, the main entryway is right there at that [inaudible, crosstalk]. But they can
25 enter here. That's what I'm saying is that we're going to reconfigure the decomposed
26 granite and the picnic area a little bit so you can walk through here if you want to. I won't
27 be a straight paved path. If you want the pavement, you can come there and then walk
28 around the whole park itself.

29 Commissioner Moss: So the 42-inch fence won't include a gate to the left of it.

30 Mr. Jensen: No, it won't. That's not the way it's proposed now.

31 Commissioner Moss: Okay.

32 Mr. Jensen: The idea of it is to plant this heavy enough that you don't even see that the
33 fence is in there. It's just a secondary stop, basically.

34 Commissioner Moss: That's all I have.

35 Chair Greenfield: Thank you. Commissioner Olson?

1 Commissioner Olson: Thank you, Peter, for your work on this. When it comes to replacing
2 the playground and actually ordering the equipment that goes there, do you take community
3 input on some of the details there, or how does that piece work? Do you already know
4 what's going to go there?

5 Mr. Jensen: Yeah, in a previous meeting we looked at playground equipment and the layout
6 of it, of how it's going to be. I'm not sure if I have a...

7 Commissioner Olson: I do recall that. Is that the actual equipment that will go there?

8 Mr. Jensen: Yeah. That would be the actual equipment.

9 Commissioner Olson: Oh, okay, good. Then I think all the questions I've asked previously
10 have been incorporated here, and I really like the final. So, thank you. I have no other
11 questions.

12 Chair Greenfield: Commissioner Reckdahl?

13 Commissioner Reckdahl: It looks very good. The loop path – I like the idea of the loop
14 path. How wide is that sidewalk going to be?

15 Mr. Jensen: Currently the path itself there, it ranges between six to eight feet. I would say
16 that we would just continue the asphalt paving around the picnic area to be the same width,
17 the eight feet I think is what it is right there.

18 Commissioner Reckdahl: How close is that to the picnic tables in the picnic area?

19 Mr. Jensen: There is open space along that edge that is basically made for people to walk.
20 It's actually fairly wide. I think it's about 20 feet until you actually get to the tables. It's
21 definitely meant for people to walk through that space. Right now it's just decomposed
22 granite or mostly compacted dirt that's in there.

23 Commissioner Reckdahl: Okay, because I could see kids riding their bikes through there,
24 and if it's right on top of the tables, then that wouldn't be a good situation.

25 Mr. Jensen: No. The tables sit back here a little bit more under the trees in this park area
26 back here, so they would definitely have a little buffer – a good buffer, actually – between
27 them.

28 Commissioner Reckdahl: Can you refresh my memory. What does the restroom look like?
29 What kind of finish do we have on the outside?

30 Mr. Jensen: The restroom looks very similar to the restroom that's at the golf course.
31 Mostly it has a cinderblock, that's mostly what it's made out of, that's painted. Then, it's
32 got some wood siding on there, too. Here's the playground equipment. Here's the restroom.
33 This shows what it looks like. It mostly has natural colors made to blend in and not stand
34 out.

35 Commissioner Reckdahl: That's exactly what I was looking for. I didn't want it to be too
36 bright, and that looks like it will blend in.

1 Mr. Jensen: Right. It's our standard kind of two stalls, where it has the maintenance shed.
2 It will have a drinking fountain on it as well, I don't think we'll get a different type that has
3 the water cooler as well, but [inaudible] there.

4 Commissioner Reckdahl: It says, "Time locks during no field use hours."

5 Mr. Jensen: That's just at 10:00 p.m. when the parks close.

6 Commissioner Reckdahl: The cycle for park, it will automatically lock.

7 Mr. Jensen: Okay. Thank you.

8 Chair Greenfield: Vice Chair Cribbs?

9 Vice Chair Cribbs: About the restroom, I'm glad we're talking about that. I'm really happy
10 to see it going into the park. When was the last time we put a brand new restroom in a park?

11 Mr. Jensen: I think one at Briones was the restroom that we built. Was there one after that,
12 Daren? I don't recall.

13 Mr. Anderson: I think it's the golf course.

14 Mr. Jensen: Or maybe, what's it called? Stanford...

15 Vice Chair Cribbs: Mayfield?

16 Mr. Jensen: Not Mayfield, but the new park where we built the soccer fields and stuff.

17 Chair Greenfield: El Camino.

18 Mr. Jensen: Yeah, El Camino.

19 Vice Chair Cribbs: Oh, El Camino Park.

20 Mr. Anderson: No, the golf course was after. That was 2015, but yeah...

21 Mr. Jensen: Okay.

22 Vice Chair Cribbs: Okay, so anyhow, the point is that it's really great that we're doing
23 what the master plan suggested in putting restrooms in the parks, so I'm really glad to see
24 that, and I think it's going to be important for all of us to just monitor and make sure that
25 the residents and the neighborhood is happy with the way that the restrooms are maintained,
26 and there aren't issues that people worried about at some of the community meetings.
27 We've all talked about how the new restrooms can do a lot of great things, so I think it's
28 going to be important to keep track of that since it'll be great to have a good track record
29 when we go to the next park to place a bathroom. Other than that, Peter, it's all great. The
30 community meetings that you held were really very, I think, very important and very well
31 attended, so thanks for that.

32 Mr. Jensen: Thank you.

1 Chair Greenfield: Peter, thank you for your efforts on this, and thank you for responding
2 to the feedback which you've heard and incorporating the ideas from both the community
3 and the Commission so effectively and comprehensively. Just a couple quick questions.
4 The \$9,000 annual fee for the restroom maintenance, is that the standard number that we
5 have for other similar restrooms in parks?

6 Mr. Jensen: I'm going to have to let Daren answer that one.

7 Mr. Anderson: Yes, Chair. That is comparable. Some of the larger ones a hair more, and
8 some of the really small ones a hair less, but that's pretty close.

9 Chair Greenfield: Thank you. Just a quick question regarding the basketball court. Both of
10 the baskets and stanchions or poles, or whatever we're calling them, they will be the same?
11 Or at least the backboard and rims will be the same?

12 Mr. Jensen: Yes.

13 Chair Greenfield: Okay, that's important for compatibility, if you have a game going on.
14 I'm sure Commissioner LaMere will appreciate that. Certainly, you're on the right track,
15 in that we need to have a formalized trail between the path and the restroom, because people
16 will walk the shortest distance. We know that well, so to get ahead of the game and have
17 something planned will certainly be helpful. That's all the comments that I have. It looks
18 great. It's great to see it coming to fruition, and I appreciate the effort and look forward to
19 a new updated park for our community.

20 Commissioner Moss: Chair, I have one more question. That is, depending on how the Off-
21 Leash Dog Pilot works, if we had to add a dog park, that would be a separate project,
22 separate PIO, right?

23 Mr. Jensen: Yes, it would.

24 Commissioner Reckdahl: I also had a follow-up question, for Daren. This is \$550,000. Is
25 there any thought about holding off on this? How's the City's finances, and would this
26 money be better used elsewhere, or is this money constrained?

27 Mr. Anderson: Thanks, Commissioner Reckdahl. This project is actually funded for the
28 current year, so we've got until June 30th to use this funding or at least to dedicate towards
29 this project. I suggest we move forward with this. Peter and I have talked about this many
30 times, and we've looked at other projects. We've deferred enough, and we run the risk of
31 deferring too much down the line, where your playgrounds need to shut, and you have
32 amenities that fall into disrepair, and you can't do them, even if you had an overwhelming
33 amount of money, because there's not enough staff to implement them. So, I believe it
34 would be wise and prudent to proceed with this project as planned.

35 Commissioner Reckdahl: Okay. It's hard, because we hope that everything is going to,
36 with the vaccine, ramp up, but I'm just worried that in six months we're going to wish we
37 had our \$550,000 back.

1 Mr. Anderson: One additional point, Commissioner Reckdahl. The restroom money comes
2 from a separate account. That's Park Impact Fee funds, which can't be used towards regular
3 maintenance or sustaining of existing features. That's where new park items that add to the
4 capacity of a park, so that's where – how much is it for the restroom, Peter? Three hundred
5 thousand?

6 Mr. Jensen: Three hundred fifty.

7 Mr. Anderson: So the bulk of this money is coming from an account that couldn't be used
8 for other maintenance or other projects. The \$271,000 that you see on your screen is the
9 part that's dedicated to the other park infrastructure – the playground, pathway, et cetera.

10 Commissioner Reckdahl: Okay, well we haven't put this out for bid yet, so I would assume
11 that we should be getting pretty good bids on this. Do you expect, or do you have any
12 experience recently of the bids coming in lower than expected?

13 Mr. Anderson: I defer to Peter.

14 Mr. Jensen: I'm not aware of any of the current project bids that have come in, but I would
15 definitely expect that the inflation of pricing that we saw before has stopped, and that we
16 will definitely be getting more, better competitive pricing for the projects now.

17 Commissioner Reckdahl: Okay, so that might be one reason to push forward if we think
18 this is the lowest price that we're going to get.

19 Mr. Jensen: I think so.

20 Commissioner Reckdahl: Okay, thank you.

21 Chair Greenfield: Anyone else? This is an action item, and this evening we will be voting
22 on recommending this Park Improvement Ordinance to City Council for adoption, so if
23 there is no further discussion, perhaps we can entertain a motion.

24 **MOTION**

25 Commissioner Olson: Motion to approve.

26 Chair Greenfield: This is a motion to approve the staff recommendation for the Park
27 Improvement Ordinance for Ramos Park as written in the attachment.

28 Commissioner Olson: Yes.

29 Chair Greenfield: Do we have a second?

30 Vice Chair Cribbs: Second.

31 Chair Greenfield: Vice Chair Cribbs, thank you. Commissioner Olson, would you like to
32 speak to your motion? Do you have anything else to say, and is there anything you would
33 like to add? Any other Commissioners like to have any discussion before we vote? Okay,
34 Catherine, can you please give us a roll call vote on this?

35 Motion passed 6-0.

1 Chair Greenfield: Thank you, and thank you very much, Peter, for all of your work on this
2 and to all of staff for your support. It's great to see this moving forward.

3 **3. Ramos Park Dog Off-Leash Area Pilot Program**

4 Chair Greenfield: We will now move on to our next order of business, which is the Ramos
5 Park Dog Off-Leash Area Pilot Program. There will be an opportunity for members of the
6 public to speak on this after the staff report on this, so again, if you're interested in
7 speaking, please raise your hand via Zoom, and you will be given three minutes to speak
8 after the staff report and clarifying questions from the Commission. I'll now turn it over to
9 staff for a presentation.

10 Mr. Anderson: Just to introduce Peter Jensen again, for this next section. Thank you, Peter.

11 Mr. Jensen: Thank you. To continue our discussion with Ramos Park, this is the discussion
12 about the Off-Leash Dog Park Pilot Program. We basically want to...I'm not going to
13 spend a lot of time on reviewing the project. I think we know the status and what we've
14 been through. I do want to review the Off-Leash Pilot goals, the scope of the pilot, of
15 course, confirm the location. We can look at the rules, the time, and then I also want to
16 have discussion about the make-up of the Evaluation Committee and the metrics of failure
17 versus success of the pilot program, as well as how its evaluated. So there's a lot of things
18 to look at here. Basically, we just want to solidify all the aspects of pilot program itself,
19 how it's operated, and then in the end, how do we decide on if it was a success or failure
20 moving forward and doing it more in the future, or stopping it? So with that, I'm just going
21 to go through the presentation. Of course, you just looked at this image. There's our
22 existing Ramos Park. Again, funding for this, the pilot will come out of the capital
23 improvement project, as far as just signage and the poop bag dispenser goes. That's pretty
24 much a very minimal amount that we're going to use from this capital improvement
25 funding to make the pilot basically happen. Of course, we did do community outreach for
26 the project. The most important thing that we found was that there was definitely a concern
27 by the community of the dogs off-leash in the park itself. This was not something that we
28 had brought up. This was something that was brought up by the community to staff in the
29 meetings. A question on an online survey was asked about having a dog park in the park,
30 and the majority of the community does actually support having a fenced area there.
31 However, we have heard some pushback from the neighbors that live adjacent to the park
32 about having a fenced dog park area there and having it a continuous dog park, and the
33 sound, and of course, the reduced access to the park from their property. So as a result of
34 that, we discussed other options, and this was one of those options, to have a pilot program
35 in the park itself that would allow for off-leash dog activity during very specific parts of
36 the day. What we wanted to do by doing that, what the goals are, is to provide a clearly-
37 defined area for dogs to be off-leash in the park and times that they can be off-leash. We
38 want to reduce or eliminate the off-leash use of the program turf area that's right next to it,

1 that is programmed for kids soccer and things of that nature. We want to allow the
2 community continued use of the designated park area for off-leash purposes, so when it's
3 not an off-leash area, it can be used, of course, just by the general public as a passive turf
4 area. We want to eliminate the need and cost of fencing an area, of course. We want to
5 maintain the access to adjacent neighbors, which the off-leash pilot does; create an
6 opportunity for the community to be responsible for maintaining the rules of the off-leash
7 area. We recognize that dogs are off-leash in the park now, and we believe that if we give
8 them a location and times that they will hopefully follow the rules of having that pilot
9 program. We want to have a minimal impact on the park itself, of course. Having a fenced
10 dog park area would take up and would define a large area of the park as just a dog park
11 use. Having the pilot does allow the flexibility of that place to be used by park users at
12 other times during the day, which gives us multiple uses of the park, which is always good,
13 because we have limited parkland, so we want to have multiple uses of our facilities. The
14 off-leash area will not be promoted as far as advertising or things by the City. It is meant
15 for the local community, the community adjacent around the park, to use. It's not for the
16 regional off-leash area. The scope of the pilot would be a nine-month period. I think we
17 could go to twelve-month if it was needed and was felt by the Commission and the
18 Evaluation Committee that we needed more time to understand if it was working or not,
19 but I think nine months is how we have it set up right now. The review committee that
20 would be evaluating how the dog park off-leash was working would be two dog owners,
21 two neighbors, two park users, the two Parks and Rec Commissioners, which would be the
22 Ad Hoc Committee, and one City staff liaison, which would probably be a mixture of Daren
23 and myself, I would say. Staff is working at reaching out to these groups and identifying
24 those that can be part of this group. I think we have two dog owners currently now. I am
25 working with staff, as well as reaching out to the neighbors to identify these other basically
26 four positions for that. The committee will get together once prior to the off-leash pilot
27 start, to confirm their roles and what they're supposed to be basically doing. The committee
28 members will be required to visit the park six times at different off-leash times to observe
29 use for a minimum of 15 minutes, so that would be three morning times and three afternoon
30 times, as that's when the proposed off-leash area is open. The committee will convene a
31 total of three times during the off-leash pilot program, with a final meeting to review tally
32 of the observation forms and to make a recommendation to the Parks and Rec Commission.
33 So, basically once every three months in this process the committee will get together and
34 discuss how it's going and how it's working out there. There might be recommendations
35 to make some tweaks to time or things of that nature that could go on as well if some of
36 the committee feel that we need to change some things to make the pilot better. At the end
37 of the nine-month period, the committee will report to the Parks and Rec Commission, who
38 will eventually determine if the off-leash park area is not a program anymore, but just
39 becomes an established area in the park. That's kind of the way that we have it set up right
40 now. Of course, all these things, we do want input from the Commission on and further
41 discussion. This is basically the off-leash dog park area. You can see it in blue here. It's
42 0.58 acres, so it is a fairly good-size space that's there. There will be an image or something



1 like this on a sign that will basically define and let people know where the actual area is.
2 There are, I believe, five off-leash rules. I'm not sure if you've seen these before: No dog
3 shall be in a posted off-leash area except when in the charge, care, custody or control of a
4 person at least 13 years of age. No animals other than dogs shall be in any posted
5 off-leash area. Off-leash dogs are only permitted in the posted off-leash area during
6 posted hours of operation. No person shall have more than two dogs in a posted off-leash
7 area at any one time. Any off-leash dog in a posted off-leash area must be at least four
8 months of age, vaccinated for rabies, altered (if over one year old), and currently
9 licensed by the city's animal services division or other jurisdiction. All persons entering
10 the posted off-leash area are responsible for ensuring their dog is not sick, in heat,
11 injured, less than four months of age, or displaying aggressive behavior toward other
12 dogs or humans. If a dog is aggressive toward other dogs or humans, the dog owner must
13 leash the dog and remove the dog from the park. And, any person having charge, care,
14 custody or control of a dog in a posted off-leash area shall do all these things that are here.
15 I'll let you read these things. I don't think you need me to read all these things to you. The
16 one thing that we haven't settled on here, and we would like more feedback on, I would
17 say, too, that we are going to go out to the community on this and have a community
18 meeting, so they will also be giving their feedback on all these things. But what is the
19 number of dogs in the area under one time? So, I think it has been observed that up to 20
20 dogs have been running in the park at one time, so that's a number that we were looking at
21 having, but we really haven't settled on a number of dogs that can run free in the space at
22 one time. The off-leash times are 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. in the morning, and in the evening,
23 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., or sunset, whatever comes first. Of course, this time of year you
24 wouldn't have much of an open, off-leash area, because the sun is setting earlier. Then, a
25 conversation or discussion about the metrics and how we actually judge and engage and
26 evaluate the success of the off-leash area. So, we're basically making up a group of
27 questions and applying some type of points to them so if it's low or no, it's zero, or if it's
28 higher, yes, it's 10. We'll talk about how these are added up when we look at the form. It's
29 basically very simple. It's an evaluation form that is easy for the evaluators to use and
30 capture information that can be used to tally at the end of the off-leash period. Then, the
31 threshold of success pertaining to off-leash area is an average of 50 points. This is the other
32 thing we need to figure out is how many points – if that's the way we're doing it – do we
33 need to score to say that it is a success? The question and bullets that we're looking at here
34 are the questions that basically the evaluators will be looking at and judging or determining
35 as they're out monitoring the dog off-leash area, and they will then be assigning these
36 numbers to what they're observing. They will also be observing these things as well, as far
37 as noise goes. Something that we'll also be talking to the neighbors about, the noise, as the
38 pilot goes on, using the facility, number of dogs that are being used, and then if they've
39 noticed that there are people that are driving and parking and bringing their dogs there.
40 That's something that I think is relevant information to us, as far as the use goes. We'll
41 also be checking with the local agencies to see if there has been any instances or issues
42 reported to them at Ramos Park while the pilot is going on. This would be the simple



1 evaluation form that the evaluators would fill out each time they go to the park to observe.
2 You can see it basically captures the time, the date and the hour, the number of dogs they're
3 observing, again, people driving or parking at the park. These would be, then, the questions
4 that they would be looking at. Again, there's five questions here. We can add a couple
5 more. This is up to the Commission. I would say that this is just a proposed, or draft, of
6 this and we basically want to come to a conclusion on what this is. With that, if we can get
7 to those things and establish ourself, we'd like to, of course, start the pilot program and get
8 it going, but it is separate from the renovation project and has nothing basically to do with
9 the renovation project. We can start and have the pilot separate from the actual renovation
10 of Ramos Park itself. So, if we can do that and get it going sometime this spring, then we
11 can observe it over the next months, and maybe a year from now come back and decide if
12 it is a success or not. So, as you can see, there are a lot of things to talk about here. We can
13 go through them one at a time, or if the Commission just wants go through questions or
14 comments that they have on each particular one of these items, that's up to you guys how
15 you want to structure the discussion. I'll throw it back to you.

16 Chair Greenfield: Thank you, Peter. I think it'll probably be more effective for each
17 Commissioner to speak on all the issues or questions they'd like to raise and do that
18 sequentially. But first we'll go the public for comments. A number of hands are raised, and
19 again, if any other members of the public would like to speak, you can raise your hand via
20 Zoom. Before we go to that, do any Commissioners have any clarifying questions regarding
21 Peter's presentation? We'll have an opportunity to speak after the public.

22 Mr. Howard Hoffman: Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak on this. As the
23 founder of Palo Alto Dog Owners, I just want to say that our organization strongly backs
24 this pilot. There's obviously been a lot of thought gone into this, and the structure and the
25 rules should really help demonstrate the effectiveness of the overall program, so we look
26 forward to this. I normally would be anxious to get it started as soon as possible. I think
27 with what's going on with COVID-19, I'd almost as soon prefer to start more like April
28 rather than March, to have more people having had vaccinations and the impact that might
29 have, because my observation is that a lot of people have been staying away from the dog
30 parks in general. April, I think, would be a really good time to start. That's basically all
31 that I've got at this point, so thank you again for all the effort the staff and the Commission
32 has put into this.

33 Ms. Michal Shalon [phonetic]: Thanks again, Peter and Daren and all the Commissioners,
34 for all the support that we've gotten from Parks and Rec for more off-leash opportunities.
35 I live in North Palo Alto, not in this neighborhood near Ramos, but I am strongly in support
36 of having this pilot go forward. Unlike Howard, I'm a little more eager to start it. I think
37 outdoor activities with social distancing are not that dangerous, but people are probably
38 more hesitant. I don't know if at Ramos right now there are still groups meeting or not. I
39 know that my own group has fallen off a little bit in North Palo Alto, and we don't really

1 have a good place to meet either, so I'm really hoping to see that this goes forward. I would
2 have loved to even had the evaluation a little sooner, or maybe several evaluations so that
3 we could start in tandem with another pilot program closer to the North. I think there's a
4 lot of community hesitation around multi-field use that I wanted to address. One of the
5 things that I've noticed is that poop is often – refuse – is often left on fields. None of that
6 really happens when there's a group of people observing each other. Most of that – I would
7 guess a hundred percent of it – happens when people are walking their dogs on their own,
8 either off-leash or on, when there's no one around. But if you have a concentrated time
9 where more people are present, it doesn't happen. Everyone's looking at everyone else's
10 dog and notifying them, "Hey, your dog just pooped. It's right over there." So that's one
11 issue that I think comes up over and over in community meetings, and it's really not
12 correlated with the number of dogs on the field at the same time. I just wanted to address
13 that. I think it's really important that we have more opportunities to socialize, especially
14 coming out of this long period of relative isolation and for the minimal cost of just having
15 off-leash hours instead of committing a field and fence and all of that to a dog park, I think
16 it's a great idea to have more of those opportunities and more opportunity for neighborhood
17 connections. I thank you all again for your time and all the support for this project.

18 Mr. John Guislin [phonetic]: Thank you, Commissioners. I want to say bravo. This is a
19 great program that you're launching, and I also want to say that I agree with everything
20 that McKayla [phonetic] has just said. I'm also in North Palo Alto, so it's several miles to
21 Ramos Park, so I'm probably not going to be able to try this park out for myself, but I hope
22 that the dog owners who live close by will get to take advantage of it. I think the timing is
23 excellent, because two things. One, one of my biggest means of socialization is walking
24 my dog and talking to other dog owners right now, so that's a huge plus in our constrained
25 lives, at least for me. Secondly, in my small social group, there have been at least six
26 adoptions during this pandemic, people taking in dogs, I think, for comfort for themselves
27 and their families, so the time is perfect to get this launched. The only thing I will say about
28 the plan as it stands is that I'm a little bit disappointed that the hours at night are 5:00 to
29 7:00 p.m., especially during this daylight savings time, when at five o'clock it's dark, and
30 I'm not going to let my dog go off-leash. I think I might have suggested earlier that those
31 hours might be changed during daylight savings time, maybe start an hour earlier so there's
32 literally a window when you can take your dog to an off-leash site and be able to watch
33 your dog to make sure nothing is amiss. I encourage you to think about that. Thank you
34 again for getting this pilot program started.

35 Mr. Curtis Smolar [phonetic]: Thank you, Commissioners. Thank you for the opportunity
36 to speak. I want to thank you for taking this issue up. I think it's incredibly important. I
37 think that the last speaker addressed the importance of the dog parks to not only our dogs'
38 mental health, but our own personal mental health. I think you have the fact that there are
39 safe ways to interact outside. I'm not going to opine as to what they are. I'm not a scientist,
40 but I believe that the dog parks are a productive way to do so, and I want to thank you for

1 doing this. Also, thank you, Lydia Kou, for helping with all of this. Just so you know, I
2 attempted to be one of you, but I was not so chosen, but I do appreciate both as a father of
3 a son who played Little League and a dog companion, thank you for all your work, so thank
4 you all.

5 Mr. Parag Patel [phonetic]: Good evening, Commissioners. Thank you for taking up this
6 proposal and for having us speak. First of all, I want to thank you for what is a very
7 reasonable proposal. It just very smart. It's cost effective. As a dog owner who takes his
8 dog out every day and likes to see him play with other dogs, and I like to socialize with
9 other dog owners, I like the fact that this is limited in hours, so that we don't impinge on
10 other uses of the park, because I think the kids and soccer teams and all need it as well. I
11 think it's just a really well-crafted plan, so kudos on that. On the hours, I think the hours
12 are reasonable, except in the winter. If there's a way to define it so that the hours are at
13 least an hour before sunset, or an hour-and-a-half before sunset, then you cover the winter
14 months. In terms of start time, I might have a slightly contrarian view than what was said
15 earlier. I think the parks are lightly populated these days because of COVID. Most people
16 are staying away, which might be a good time to try a pilot, because you won't have many
17 people in the park, and you're likely to impinge on fewer people. So, starting this – and
18 let's say, I'm just going to throw out a month. I'm not wedded to it, but if you want to start
19 this in January, for example, in winter, you'd have fewer people in the park, which might
20 make it better for the pilot to test itself out. It's a great idea, and I think by and large, I've
21 found most dog owners to be responsible in looking after their dogs and cleaning up after
22 them, and I think having that extra bag stand will heighten peoples' attention to cleaning
23 up after the dogs. All in all, this is great. I would throw out the idea that if, after the first
24 three or four months, the pilot is going okay, it may be a good idea to try this in another
25 park in addition. The reason I say that is the fenced-in dog parks you have today are really
26 great, but they're all sandy. They don't have grass on them. My experience – and this is
27 one man's opinion – my dog certainly likes to run on grass much more than he does sand,
28 and we don't get as dirty and muddy, so one option could be to put grass in the fenced-in
29 dog parks in all the other parks, or just do something like this everywhere. Just my two
30 cents on that topic, but again, thanks for doing this, and we're looking forward to it.

31 Mr. Anderson: Thank you very much. That is all the public speakers, Chair.

32 Chair Greenfield: Thank you, and I want to thank all of the members of the public for their
33 input here. We appreciate hearing your comments. It's definitely nice to see more attendees
34 than panelists at the Commission meeting this evening. We appreciate the community
35 tuning in. We're here as a conduit for you to provide your opinions and input in the process,
36 and even if you are just listening in and not speaking, that presence is appreciated as well.
37 Before we move to Commissioner comments and questions, I'd like to start by asking Peter
38 a clarifying question. There have been a number of comments about the hours that are
39 specified for the evening, and I'm wondering if you can comment on that. I'm guessing it

1 may have to do with the use of the athletic soccer fields and trying to not overlap with that.
2 Could you clarify what your thinking is there, please?

3 Mr. Jensen: I think Daren is probably better on doing that. I was not the person that set
4 those times. I just put them in the presentation, so I'm not quite sure what the
5 overarching...I'm sure that the programming on the field does play, definitely, into that,
6 but I'll let Daren –

7 Chair Greenfield: Thank you. Let me direct my question to staff.

8 Mr. Anderson: Thanks very much. It was interesting, the Ad Hoc and several members of
9 the stakeholder group – Michal Shalon, Howard Hoffman and John Guislin,
10 some of our speakers tonight – helped us craft both the rules and contributed, at least, to
11 the rules and these hours as well. We debated that, too. When we brought in Adam Howard,
12 who oversees the recreation use of those fields, he commented about the potential conflicts
13 we'd have with the field users. Some of the thinking around those evening hours was to
14 help minimize conflict with the adjacent use. The spacing between where we're proposing
15 off-leash activity and where the sporting events would happen – mainly soccer – is pretty
16 narrow. As you can see from the depiction on the screen. The pathway is only eight feet
17 wide or less, so it's very, very narrow. There was some concern about dogs chasing balls
18 and interfering with some of the athletic activity. The nice thing about a pilot is you can
19 adjust it, and of course, this was just a starting place. We can certainly discuss that in more
20 detail, if there's a better way to phrase the hours. I will say, one thing that the Ad Hoc and
21 staff and the stakeholders all agreed up was it's really important to get a pilot right. That
22 is, start on the best foot and make sure it's going to work for as many people as we can to
23 build success, so that we can duplicate this in other places. With that, I'll turn it back to
24 you, Chair.

25 Chair Greenfield: Thank you for the clarification. That's helpful. I'll now open up for
26 questions to Commissioners. If someone wants to raise your hand if you'd like to speak
27 first, please do so. Otherwise, I'll call on someone. Commissioner Reckdahl?

28 Commissioner Reckdahl: First, one comment about the park noise. We always get this
29 about people and dog parks and saying it's going to be noisy. If you compare the noise at
30 a dog park compared to that of a playground, it's not even close. Playgrounds are so much
31 noisier than dog parks. I think this is some fear for people who've never lived near a dog
32 park, so I think that's one thing we have to push back on. I've said this before – we don't
33 have enough dog parks. Every significant park in Palo Alto should have a dog park. People
34 don't want to drive their dog to a dog park. They want to be able to walk their dog to the
35 dog park. We don't want them driving, either, from a community traffic standpoint.
36 Basically, if a park is big enough to have a playground, it should be big enough to have a
37 dog park. During one of our dog park meetings, there was a person who was talking about
38 he didn't have any kids, but he has a dog, and he walks by his neighborhood parks and

1 sees, not just one, but two playgrounds for kids and nothing for his dog. He feels very left
2 out. I think that's a common feeling. I think he's totally correct. We're not providing
3 enough dog parks for people. That said, I'm not a fan of this proposal. I think it introduces
4 more problems than it solves, and I think we'd be much better off just allocating the land
5 and saying, "This is a full time permanent dog park," and you don't have to have two hours
6 to squeeze in in the morning, and two hours in the evening. You can come whenever it fits
7 your schedule, because peoples' lives are hectic and to have to come home at five o'clock
8 so you can take our dog to the dog park just doesn't seem to be a good solution. I don't
9 have a dog, but I walk my in-laws' dog. She's an adorable dog, but she's very quirky. She's
10 a rescue dog with some history, and she does not like it when other dogs come up to her.
11 She gets very upset, so I'm walking her, and an off-leash comes up to me. That's the last
12 thing I want to see. I have to sometimes pick her up and carry her out of the park when
13 there's unleashed dogs and the owner is not nearby. I find that very irritating. I understand
14 that people want to have their dogs off-leash, and I understand also that most owners are
15 very responsible, but it doesn't take too many bad owners to mess it up. That's why, if you
16 have a fenced-in dog park, if someone's unattended for a little bit, the ramifications are so
17 much less. It's just not dogs pestering other dogs. My son, when he was young, he just
18 loved dogs. He was a toddler, and he was at the park, and a playful dog knocked him down,
19 and it frightened him so much he had a dog phobia for years after that. And that was a
20 playful dog. It could have been worse. If you look at the CDC, they have stats on how many
21 dog bites there are and how many people have to go to the hospital for dog bites, and having
22 the dogs inside a fenced pen is a much better solution. The worst case is much, much better.
23 Granted, most of the dog bites don't happen at parks, but still, you're increasing the risk
24 by having more dogs running around without leashes. But also, it isn't just dogs pestering
25 other people. They can hurt themselves. I was in midtown one day, and an off-leash dog
26 came up and jumped in traffic, and the car right in front of me hit it. It was a big dog, and
27 it kind of got caught under the car before it got run over, and it was still alive, but it was
28 severely hurt, and it was really a terrible, awful thing to see. When I see something like
29 that – this dog's in front of my car, dying and yelping in pain – I really don't think we
30 should be doing anything to encourage unfenced, off-leash dog parks, and that's what this
31 does. I do appreciate that Peter put that fence up front. That certainly helps, but that's not
32 going to guarantee it, and again, it would be much better off just to have a permanent
33 fenced-in dog park. You have the whole waste issue. When we lived near Hoover Park, it
34 would be the northeast side of the park we just couldn't use, because there was so much
35 dog poop. Our kids, if they played in that home, when they'd come home, they'd have poop
36 on their pants or poop on their shoes, so it's real. Again, I think most dog owners are good
37 about it, but it doesn't take too many bad dogs out there to make a mess and make parts of
38 a park unusable. That's not making the park more flexible. It's making it less flexible. I
39 always wondered, where's all this dog waste coming from? When my son was playing at
40 Middlefield, playing Little League, we saw firsthand what was happening. Back in those
41 days, they had spaces in the fences, so dogs could get into the outfield. Periodically, dogs
42 would run into that. Sometimes the dog owners would be there and get the dog out right

1 away, but it was amazing how many times we'd be yelling, "Dog, dog, dog," and the owner
2 was in a circle with his back to his dog. He had no idea where his dog was. So when you
3 see stuff like that, it's not surprising that we end up with dog poo over the yard. If he
4 doesn't know where his dog is, he doesn't know if his dog's pooing or not. Again, it would
5 be better off, if people really do want to chat with their friends and not pay attention to
6 their dogs, the ramifications in a fenced dog park are much less. These two-hour windows,
7 I would find that very annoying, if I had to go to the dog park and had to fit this in. I'm
8 really afraid that that's going to stretch. People are going to be a little early or a little late,
9 and they're going to say, "Oh, it was legal 15 minutes ago. I'm going just keep on doing
10 it." Enforcement is very expensive. That's something we know about off-leash dogs. We
11 have rules right now that we don't enforce, just because it's too expensive to enforce it, so
12 I'm afraid that if this continued for any type of period of time, the bad behavior would
13 come out. Now, maybe during the pilot program, people would be good, but you know, if
14 they're flouting the rules today, they're going to be flouting them two years from now, so
15 I don't have any illusion that this is going to get rid of the off-leash dog. In fact, it may
16 encourage it. We have a leash law in Palo Alto, and it wasn't arbitrary. It was made for
17 good reasons, and this pilot project doesn't mitigate these problems, so recommending to
18 Council to change the leash laws and saying, "Well, we're hoping that there's not going to
19 be problems." We don't have mitigations for that. The old saying, "Hope is in strategy."
20 What has changed about the situation compared to when they put the leash laws in? So
21 again, I think a far better solution is fence it off. We lose some soccer fields, but we have
22 more soccer fields than dog parks right now. Make it a permanent dog park that you can
23 bring your dog to any time and not have to juggle your schedule around soccer games.
24 Having a fence there eliminates the dog interactions between leashed dogs, between
25 humans with cars. It provides the dog community with more hours, and again, if the owner
26 is a little inattentive, it's not nearly as bad. So, I think a fenced dog park is a much better
27 solution. That's all I have. Thanks.

28 Chair Greenfield: Thank you. Peter, before we move on, could you display the slide that
29 has the four or five specific areas of comment you're looking for from the Commission,
30 just to help us keep that in mind as we make our comments? And then, I think I will ask a
31 member of the Park Amenities Ad Hoc to speak next, the group that's been working to help
32 develop the dog park, the Off-Leash Dog Park Pilot, and perhaps you can speak to some
33 of the issues and questions we've just heard. Anne, would you like to speak?

34 Vice Chair Cribbs: Yeah, I would, and before I start, I would like to say that I think
35 Commissioner Reckdahl makes some good points about fenced dog parks, and I'm
36 remembering back to when we first started with both the restrooms and the dog parks, when
37 I started on the Ad Hoc committee that had to do with park amenities. We did go through
38 all of the situation about there not being enough dog parks and there need to be more,
39 especially in North Palo Alto, but also in South Palo Alto for all the reasons that we've all
40 heard, and those reasons are still valid, but obviously we don't have enough money to put

1 a dog park every place we have a playground. In a way, you can say that that's too bad. So,
2 we came to the notion based on what other communities have been doing, creating an off-
3 leash program for dogs would be a solution that we'd like to look at. Thus was the pilot
4 program started, and I think this particular pilot program got to Ramos Park because Peter
5 heard from the community, "Well, what about a dog park?" So, as it evolved – and there
6 have been lots of meetings, lots of discussion with not only the dog stakeholders, but also
7 the athletic fields and others in the community – I'm very much in favor of seeing this pilot
8 program go ahead. I think it's been very thoughtfully done. The only thing that I'm
9 concerned about is that the late start, or the late opening, the late closing, the 5:00 in the
10 evening in the wintertime. It would be great if that hour could be adjusted, but I also think
11 that it is a good program to go forward and see if we can make it work. As somebody said,
12 we have to get it right the first time, because we can't transport it to other places in Palo
13 Alto if it's not working at Ramos. I think, Chair, that's what I have specifically to say about
14 it. I do like the evaluation form. I'm happy to participate in that. The schedule of pilot
15 implementation, I think March or April is probably a good time with all the rest of what
16 we're asking the staff to do right now, between Foothill Park and COVID and parks and
17 open all of that, I worry about the pressure on all of them. I think I'll stop right now, and
18 David, I think you're my colleague on the Ad Hoc committee now, so you're comments?

19 Chair Greenfield: Thank you, and before we proceed, Peter, is there a slide that has the list
20 of review of the Off-Leash Dog Park Rules? The review of the area times of use?

21 Mr. Jensen: I don't have a specific slide. [Inaudible] These were basically the things I
22 wanted to talk about. Mostly it's this area down here that we want to review these steps.

23 Chair Greenfield: Great, thanks. I was referring to the presentation. I can see that's another
24 slide. Excuse me, I was referring to the written report. David, please proceed.

25 Commissioner Moss: I'd actually like to go last.

26 Vice Chair Cribbs: We're only two of us, so you're last.

27 Commissioner Moss: No, no. I would like to go last.

28 Vice Chair Cribbs: Oh, I'm sorry. I thought Jeff wanted us to, as the Ad Hoc team, go first.

29 Commissioner Moss: I know, but I'd like to go last.

30 Chair Greenfield: Okay. I'll also just comment real quickly that members of the public that
31 have their hands up, you've had an opportunity to speak, and it's not going to be the format
32 of the meeting to have a second opportunity to speak. Commissioner Olson?

33 Commissioner Olson: Thank you. I have a couple of questions. On the overlaid map, is
34 there a fence that's between the park and the homes there on the right of the park?

1 Mr. Jensen: They're wooden fences, kind of typical of six-foot tall wood fences that are
2 there. Most of the neighbors do have gates that directly access the park itself as well, which
3 was a concern for them that if the area was fenced off that then their access to the park
4 would be diminished, but they do have a fence.

5 Commissioner Olson: So we don't have to worry about dogs running in there, which is
6 great. On the timing, I know in our prior agenda item we're building a fence along Meadow
7 Drive. Will that fence be up before this pilot starts?

8 Mr. Jensen: No, it will not, but we probably will put a temporary fence out there for the
9 pilot. Daren and I have not discussed that yet, but that's something that we definitely could
10 consider doing.

11 Commissioner Olson: I think that would make a lot of sense, just because there is really no
12 other barrier there for the dog that decides to chase that squirrel or whatnot. Okay, great,
13 and then on the evaluation form, the only feedback that I had was that we had a question
14 about dogs being aggressive toward other dogs. We might want to address dogs being – I
15 don't know if aggressive is the right word – but the whole jumping up on other people,
16 because I do know that does bug a lot of people. I am sensitive to Commissioner Reckdahl's
17 comment there. But overall, I am very supportive of this proposal, and I really appreciate
18 the overwhelming community support for this, both tonight and in the survey that you had.
19 I think that's really great. I think I've mentioned before that, prior to Palo Alto, I was in a
20 community that had off-leash hours very similar to this at a park that was our most-loved
21 park. It would be like doing it at Mitchell Park here. We didn't come from a community of
22 angels, but there was not dog poop everywhere. There were no problems. People really did
23 clean up after their pets. They knew if they could have a pet that could be off-leash or not.
24 We personally couldn't, because our dog is just the type to stay in a certain area, but people
25 do a great job of policing one another in a very kind way, and it's a great way to build
26 community with that morning coffee and chatting about your dogs. So, I appreciate the
27 attempt to make this work here, and hopefully we have some really good feedback through
28 the pilot that shows it'll be a success. I hope that's the case. Thank you.

29 Chair Greenfield: Thank you. Commissioner LaMere?

30 Commissioner LaMere: Thank you. I do share some of Commissioner Reckdahl's
31 concerns with dogs off-leash as well. Some of that comes from personal experience,
32 actually at Ramos Park, where we would have Little League practice, as well as some
33 soccer practices, and sometimes people would have their dogs off leash there, and you'd
34 get some interference. But with that said, just in the spirit of giving feedback on the pilot
35 program, I would like to address the evaluation form. Just want to get some clarification
36 on how they would do the evaluation form, in terms of just, is the baseline starting at 10?
37 So, if you observe a dog, and the dog does a good job, and nothing happens, is that a 10
38 straight down the line? That's one question, and then figuring out a metric where certainly

1 the number of dogs that are there will have a big impact on what the final score is, so just
2 figuring out how that is calculated, or whatever the formula that you would use with that,
3 in terms of taking into account how many dogs are there at the time. I don't know if
4 anybody can comment on the evaluation form, or who put that together.

5 Mr. Jensen: I can comment on it. Yes, it starts at ten and works its way down, so probably
6 switch around the numbers there, and go from high to low, would probably make it more
7 understandable and direct. I need more clarification on your second question.

8 Commissioner LaMere: My second question was that, it seems that if only one dog is at
9 the park for that time of evaluation and gets all 10's, that that would artificially inflate the
10 average of the evaluations.

11 Mr. Jensen: Right. I would agree with you on that. I think that's why we added the question
12 of how many dogs were there.

13 Commissioner LaMere: My only comment is just that, as we get these stats, to be aware
14 and be alert of how we calculate and how we interpret them. That's all.

15 Mr. Jensen: Right, and I agree with you, and I think that if there is only one dog there, that
16 some of these questions are kind of questions, because they're interactions between the
17 dogs themselves. We could say that you have to have a minimum of three dogs for the
18 evaluation for the scoring to be counted. I don't know. That's something that we could
19 decide, however you wanted to figure that out. I do agree with you that having just one dog
20 out there does seem...I don't think that will happen, myself. I think that, from the high use
21 of off-leash dog activity that exists in the park currently, that the dog owners will definitely
22 use the time, and there will be multiple dogs using the area.

23 Commissioner LaMere: I may have missed this in the presentation. I know you had a long
24 list of rules and regulations. Is that something that there will be signage with that, or is that
25 something that is..? How is that communicated to those that use it?

26 Mr. Jensen: We'll have somewhere – I would say somewhere in the middle here – we will
27 definitely have a sign that will show the defined area and then have all the rules. I think
28 that we talked about also having a waste bag there, but no receptacle, so people have to be
29 responsible to take the waste and we don't have to have more maintenance to go out there
30 and dump it. We can supply the waste bags and then clearly have the rules and the area
31 defined on the sign out there that's easy to see.

32 Commissioner LaMere: Excellent. Thank you so much for all of your work. I appreciate
33 the Ad Hoc as well, for the time that they put into this.

1 Chair Greenfield: Thank you. I'll make some comments now. Peter, thank you for the
2 presentation and your work with the community and the Ad Hoc in developing this
3 program, and with the rest of staff as well. Regarding the rules, I have one question about
4 the rule regarding leash in possession at all times. This is the fourth bullet in the rules. If I
5 understand this correctly, are you suggesting that the dog owner should have a leash on
6 their body the whole time that their dog is off-leash, as opposed to sitting...I'm just
7 wondering if that's pragmatic.

8 Mr. Jensen: I think it's the idea that the dog would be off-leash, but if they showed
9 aggression, you'd have to put it on-leash and then remove the dog. The leash doesn't have
10 to be on the dog, but they have to leash at the point they're aggressive, for removal.

11 Chair Greenfield: I guess I was referring to something a little different than the specific
12 rule that was in the package, but that's okay. I get the gist of what you're looking for, and
13 I agree that a leash should be available to use on a dog when needed. Regarding the
14 discussion of times of the park, I do appreciate the conflict between activities on the fields
15 and activities in the proposed off-leash area. They are quite close to each other, and in
16 addition to that, the proposed area for the dog run is used perhaps more frequently during
17 something like a soccer practice or a baseball practice by younger siblings who want to run
18 around, or other people who come to the park and want to do something. This becomes
19 kind of the overflow area, so I think from the standpoint of both community use and the
20 potential for conflict with the off-leash dogs running into the organized activity, I think I
21 am in favor of making sure that the off-leash hours do not include the same hours as soccer
22 practices, baseball practices and the like.

23 Mr. Jensen: Jeff, can I bring one thing up for that?

24 Chair Greenfield: Please.

25 Mr. Jensen: Because the run is so long, I don't know if we want to look at a nuance where
26 maybe if the location of the sign – kind of where my pointer is here – that if in the daylight
27 savings hours that we want to say that it's open at 4:00, but it's only open on this side of
28 the sign, and it's a smaller space that's a little further away and more detached from the
29 actual field, just to try to get the other hour in there. I'm just throwing it out there as an
30 idea.

31 Chair Greenfield: Thank you, Peter. I think that's worth considering with the Ad Hoc and
32 with the dog owner working committee, or stakeholders that you're working with. That
33 sounds like a good line to pursue. Also, I'm wondering if the wording and, if effect, the
34 policy would change, perhaps from sunset to dusk, to provide potentially more opportunity
35 for late hour use of the off-leash area. I'm wondering if the period between sunset and dusk
36 is pragmatic to be used for that and would be appreciated by the community. Regarding
37 the evaluation form, touching further on the ideas that Jeff LaMere was bringing up, I like

1 the idea of data gathering and a data-driven form. I'm concerned about the way that a form
2 would be used purely objectively without entering in subjective data, and I think the
3 example of the number of dogs that would increase the likelihood of a lower score is
4 significant to consider. I also think the amount of time that someone is monitoring will
5 have an obvious impact on that as well. I'm also wondering if some of the questions
6 shouldn't be weighted the same as others. In other words, it seems like the questions may
7 not be appropriate to be equally weighted. Some of the questions are phrased to measure
8 negative behavior verses positive behavior, so a negative behavior starting at 10 is a little
9 non-intuitive, so I'd suggest working to re-align all of the phrasing in a positive orientation.
10 Questions regarding noise, I think, are really relative. I think something we need to consider
11 is there is a lot of off-leash use at the park right now, and we recognize that the City doesn't
12 have enforcement available, so we can either come up with other ways to work to change
13 this behavior, or we can work to come up with a solution to accommodate the behavior,
14 which is essentially the will of the community and is certainly a nuanced and balanced
15 approach that needs to be undertaken to consider the needs of the whole community and
16 not just the dog owners, but others. I do appreciate concerns about off-leash dogs startling
17 people and startling other dogs. I've also heard from dog owners that they don't like to go
18 to the formal dog parks, because the dog behavior is a little bit more aggressive there than
19 the de facto off-leash areas, such as at Ramos Park, where it tends to be a little bit friendlier
20 and lower key, so that's something important to consider as well. I'm not sure if
21 Commissioner Reckdahl was suggesting that we'd be losing a soccer field by adding a full
22 dog park, or the off-leash, but that area isn't really appropriate for a soccer field. The turf
23 quality is not very even and not very good, so I think in general it's a appropriate area for
24 dog usage. Just a couple of general comments to staff. For recommendations like this, I
25 think it would be helpful to reference the Master Plan sections that are particularly
26 applicable when bringing a suggestion like this to the Commission. This doesn't just apply
27 to dog parks. This is a broader request. Also, I think it would helpful to get some sort of
28 signage up in place at the park, so that we can alert the broader community to what we're
29 planning to do. I think that Howard Hoffman's group has been well notified about what's
30 going on, and that's great. We want to hear specifically from the people who have interest
31 in this new program, but we want to make sure we have an opportunity to hear from the
32 community at large. I'm thinking that this applies to both public meetings moving forward,
33 which you may be posting notices for, but also for Commission meetings, to make sure
34 that we have notification. I will now turn things over to David Moss for his comments, but
35 thank you for the efforts, Peter, and the sensitive way in which you're looking at trying to
36 balance the needs of the community here.

37 Commissioner Moss: Thank you. As the other member of the Ad Hoc, we've been working
38 on this issue for several months now, and I did want to hear from the public and from the
39 other Commissioners, who I have not talked to. I didn't know their sentiments before, and
40 before I speak, because I probably have nine items to talk about. Like Commissioner
41 Reckdahl, I'm hesitant about this off-leash area. The main reason, I think, is the close

1 proximity to the playing field and that 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. evening slot. If that were removed,
2 completely removed, I would feel much better, and just have it during school hours, but
3 because dog owners like to have that evening time in the daylight, it completely conflicts
4 with the playing fields right next door, and I suggested that maybe there be a fence, a
5 temporary fence, between the two. That was not recommended. I suggest to Daren that you
6 no longer use that field for games or for practices after the evening time that you have this
7 off-leash dog area. So, if you want to have it from 3:00 to 5:00 in the evening during the
8 winter, then I say there's no practices after school on this field. I would even go one step
9 further and have you put a fence around the playground. That does not help for elderly
10 people and parents with strollers walking around the perimeter. They're still subject to dogs
11 running free, having a good time. The comments made from the public talk about the
12 wonderful camaraderie between dog owners, and speaks nothing to the non-dog owners
13 who are using the park. So, if the dog owners want camaraderie, they are far better off with
14 a dog park. That way, the non-dog owners and the dog owners can stay out of each other's
15 way. So that's the main thing is that 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. evening shift. I would say no games
16 or practices on that field during that time. The second thing I wanted to mention is that 60
17 percent of the people who came to the community meetings wanted a dog park. They didn't
18 say they want an off-leash dog park. They said they want a dog park. The only reason that
19 we are even looking at an off-leash dog park is because of five neighbors who are a little
20 bit worried about the noise and also about their access through their back gate into the park.
21 Well, we have dozens of parks in this city, and no neighbor has...very, very, very few
22 neighbors have access into the park from their back fence, and if that's the concern, I would
23 have a dog park fenced in that ends three feet before their back fence. So, I think a dog
24 park – not an off-leash park – would be far, far better. The other thing, going back to what
25 Commissioner LaMere said about statistics, if you just have one or two bad incidents,
26 they're not going to show up statistically, because, as the public has said, most of the time
27 people are well-behaved, dog owners are well-behaved, dogs are well-behaved, so most of
28 the time we won't have a problem. When there is a problem – and I just witnessed one last
29 week at Mitchell park, where a dog was on-leash, but was allowed to run up to a four-year-
30 old who was scared to death and ran screaming to their mother, and I have that same
31 situation with one of my kids when they were a child. It's going to happen. The other item
32 I have is that the North Palo Altoians said that they might or might not use this area and
33 that it's really for locals and it's not a regional park, but I just don't know how you're going
34 to keep that situation. I don't see it happening, especially with social media. It's going to
35 become...and that leads into my next point, which is 20 dogs. That's an unbelievable
36 number of dogs to be off-leash. I live behind Cubberley field, and there are many times
37 when the field is empty, and you'll have one or two, or maybe three dogs off-leash. One
38 time in all of this past, I'd say three years, have I seen more than maybe five or six dogs,
39 and they have the entire Cubberley field to play on, not this tiny little area. So, 20 dogs
40 seems outrageous. I would say five dogs. The other thing is that thing about not having
41 their dogs off-leash after dark. That is an issue in the winter, especially in the evening. So,
42 I would suggest...and one other thing and that is that the fence on East Meadow does not

1 go all the way across, so dogs can certainly still run out into the street. They can still run
2 into the playground, so I don't see it's going to be that effective. That was all of my
3 comments. Thank you.

4 Chair Greenfield: Thank you. I'd like to offer Commissioners an opportunity for follow-
5 up questions, or another round of comments, and I'd like to start that off by asking members
6 of the Ad Hoc – Anne, or perhaps staff – if you could describe activity and interactions
7 typical of the dog parks we have now and compare that to what we're envisioning for the
8 Off-Leash Dog Pilot area, which I envision is more similar to the pop-up off-leash social
9 groups that we have at parks right now. Because, I'm not sure these are not apples and
10 oranges we're comparing at a certain level.

11 Vice Chair Cribbs: Jeff, could you restate that? I'm not exactly sure what you're asking.

12 Chair Greenfield: I'm wondering if you can describe the activities that we have at current
13 dog parks in terms of the interactions of dogs and people verses what we're envisioning at
14 the Off-Leash Pilot area. Would you say these are the same? Are they different, and if
15 they're different, how do they vary?

16 Vice Chair Cribbs: When I have been to the...well, actually to all three of our dog parks –
17 now four – when there are people there, they talk, and when there's not people, the dogs
18 just...I'm not exactly – as you can tell – understanding, sort of, the question. Sometimes
19 there are no people at Greer Park. Sometimes there are more people over at Peers. I think
20 people just either talk to each other or watch their dogs and all of that, and they behave like
21 they do at a dog park. I think that the off-leash program probably, I would think that the
22 owners are more concerned about watching where their dogs are, because it's interesting
23 how the dogs know not to go where they're not supposed to go. When I was in Mountain
24 View, the off-leash program seemed to go fairly well. That's what, in talking to the staff
25 and talking to Mountain View, that's kind of what we based all of this on, so I don't know
26 that that's very helpful. I don't know that you can compare this. I go back to thinking
27 that...listening to all the conversations, yeah, it would be great to have a dog park in every
28 park that we have a playground, but that's not realistic. So, I think it's important to try to
29 figure out how to accommodate different stakeholders in our parks, and I believe that this
30 pilot program is what we suggested would be something that we could try, with some pretty
31 strict controls on it, for a certain length of time, and see if it would work or if it wouldn't
32 work. It seems like it will work, based on Mountain View's experience and some of the
33 other parks that we've heard about, but maybe not. But I think it's important to try it. Just
34 my thought.

35 Chair Greenfield: Daren, Peter, do you have any comments at what I'm suggesting, or
36 would you like me to clarify what I'm suggesting?

1 Mr. Anderson: Thank you, Chair. I understand your question and comment, and maybe I
2 could offer a little bit of information that might help illuminate this. I visited every single
3 one of Mountain View's off-leash areas, which have been in place for multiple years. I
4 visited every one of them at multiple times during the day, making note and talking to both
5 users and other park users to get their feedback on how successful it is, what kind of
6 problems there were. I made notes and shared it with the Ad Hoc. At that time it was a
7 previous iteration of this Ad Hoc. Trish McCauley [phonetic] was on it. This was quite
8 some time ago. Some of the things I noticed were not too unfamiliar with regular dog parks.
9 That is, as people approach the park, whether it's an off-leash area or dedicated one, let
10 them off leash the moment they touch grass, so as they're walking up to the sidewalk to
11 the park, that dog is off-leash, and he's sprinting through all different parts of the park,
12 including the playgrounds, and then eventually it'll join somewhat of a pack. I saw this
13 repeated over and over, in the neighborhood of about 15 people. It seemed to be about 15
14 dogs, max, every time I went. That was the most, and they were mainly congregated in one
15 large area. There was usually one or two random dogs that wanted to explore, but the bulk
16 stayed there. I say that to try to put the warts and all in the picture. It's not perfect. There
17 will be problems. The dogs will migrate out of that area, for sure, but when I talked to every
18 single park visitor that was there, no one seemed to have any problems. I heard that over
19 and over. It was really surprising to me. Even parents on the playgrounds, as dogs were in
20 there. Anyway, that was my experience. I think it's really valuable to see it with your own
21 eyes, to walk those. Maybe I had 12 visits. On another 12 it might look a little different,
22 but that's my feedback.

23 Vice Chair Cribbs: Daren, thanks for that. It was a really good explanation that you gave
24 us in the Ad Hoc a couple of years ago. It may be that Commissioners should go on a field
25 trip and go and look for themselves to satisfy that this would be a good thing to do.

26 Commissioner Moss: And did you say that these parks had games and practices going on
27 simultaneously?

28 Mr. Anderson: No, I did not see that. I didn't see any of the places I visited where there
29 was a game going on at the same time.

30 Commissioner Moss: Or practices?

31 Mr. Anderson: I did not.

32 Chair Greenfield: And is it possible that the people at the playground were somewhat self-
33 selecting, and if they were not comfortable with the off-leash dogs in the area, they would
34 not be at the playground, so your opinion poll may be a bit skewed?

35 Mr. Anderson: Absolutely.

1 Mr. Jensen: Jeff, can I bring up another aspect of this as well? I think we propose the area
2 in blue that's shown on the plan here, because that's basically the extent of that turf area
3 that's over there. It gives the most expansive and open area that we could, along that
4 corridor, for off-leash use. I know that David and others are expressing concern about the
5 proximity of the off-leash to the play area that's over here. The other thing that we really
6 haven't discussed – do we want to define a smaller off-leash dog area? Do we want to just
7 say that this is the space and that this is not in the space? There is a very dense planting
8 right here and a lot along the edge there that kind of already makes a natural barrier from
9 this space over there. So, that would be another option we could consider. I would say the
10 two, that if let's say the dog off-leash, if we do move forward with the off-leash pilot, and
11 it's not very successful, that this location right here seems to be not a bad spot for a fenced
12 dedicated dog park as well. I think that when you start to define this entire area as a fenced
13 dog park, that's quite a bit of land for the whole park area to use, but there may be a way
14 to even start to use this little dead-end pathway as the way that the gate leads into there,
15 and then the fenced area is here. It's still a good-sized area, definitely larger than most of
16 the dog parks that we have. So, it's another option, too, that we can look at. That's not
17 really something I thought we would discuss, but definitely, I think, along this conversation
18 that the finding may be a smaller area that is a little bit more buffered from the park itself
19 could also be something on the table as well.

20 Commissioner Moss: Peter, can you remind me, when we talked briefly in the Ad Hoc
21 about a fence between the playing field and that off-leash area, you said that that was
22 problematic. I can't remember what you said.

23 Mr. Jensen: Actually, I was in support of the fence, myself. I think that when we talked to
24 other staff that they felt that the fence was problematic to have out there, but there could
25 be a segment of fence that just runs along here, that divides the space, so there is a line, but
26 it's open at either end, or it's not all the way fenced off. Again, I think there's multiple
27 options that we can explore.

28 Commissioner Moss: Fence or plantings?

29 Mr. Jensen: I think for this purpose that the fence is probably the way to go. The planting
30 is difficult, and it just requires a lot more maintenance and water and time to grow. A fence
31 would give you something day one that would define the area.

32 Chair Greenfield: Do other Commissioners have further comments?

33 Vice Chair Cribbs: Peter, when you're talking about making that area that you have
34 designated right now smaller, do you have an idea of how much smaller it would be and
35 how it would compare, for instance, to Greer Park dog park?

1 Mr. Jensen: It would be a lot bigger than Greer Park. I would say, just by looking at this
2 and because I know that that fence planting is right there, that somewhere here would be
3 the division line that would be this space here. So, it would be a little less than half of what
4 we're proposing now for the off-leash area, but you can see there's two houses here, so
5 you're talking about basically two full lots of where houses could be built here that would
6 be open area, off-leash area. So, it would still be a good-sized area. I would say that, for
7 Greer, it's still probably ten times the size of Greer. It's still a good size.

8 Vice Chair Cribbs: Thank you.

9 Mr. Jensen: And again, let's say that the dog park pilot, we go forward, and it doesn't
10 succeed, we can always come back and consider this space as a fenced-off dog park.

11 Chair Greenfield: Thank you. Other comments from Commissioners? I have a couple more
12 questions.

13 Mr. Jensen: Jeff, I would also say that the dog park pilot, that Ramos Park is interesting in
14 the fact that it does have this passive, not overly programmed turf area that sets up nice for
15 off-leash dog use, but it also could, again, have a defined dog park fenced area. The
16 interesting part about having the pilot, though, and understanding the pilot is I think that at
17 some parks, especially at Eleanor Pardee Park, when we've talked about dog parks before
18 in the past, that it's difficult to define or figure out where a fenced area would go that
19 wouldn't really divide or mess up the entire field, the whole park. Perhaps understanding
20 if the pilot works here, maybe a pilot could work at that location, just because of the
21 difficulty of actually trying to fence an area off when we that that park in particular has a
22 high population of off-leash dog park users.

23 Chair Greenfield: Thanks, appreciate that. I do like your idea of potentially considering a
24 smaller off-leash area. I think providing a buffer between the field area and the off-leash
25 area is a good idea in general. I do not like the idea of fencing off the lower left portion
26 area between the playing field and the dog park. I think that will negatively impact the open
27 feeling of the park, and I think overall – particularly if something is a temporary hour
28 program – I think that would really detract. I did want to ask about the comment that was
29 made about considering the off-leash program only because five neighbors voiced concerns
30 about a formal dog park. Is this accurate? Are costs involved?

31 Mr. Jensen: The costs are definitely involved. Currently, we do not have the budget in our
32 current CIP to fence an entire area this size. We just don't have the funds for it right now,
33 so it's on that level as well, and then of course the response to the neighbors that are
34 adjacent to it. Those two factors were the big leading factors. I can't say if we decided to
35 have a dog park when or if we could ever...we could eventually get funding for such a
36 thing, but I think that in this current time that if we decide to have a dog park there and

1 don't do the pilot, we could be waiting years to get funding to actually install the dog park
2 there.

3 Chair Greenfield: Thank you. I was also under the understanding that the idea of an off-
4 leash dog park is something that's been batted around for a while, and we've been looking
5 for an opportunity and location to have a pilot program to try this out, so this seems to fit
6 that bill. I think these are other considerations why this might be –

7 Mr. Jensen: I think for the off-leash dog purpose, that this is a good location to try it out.
8 We do know that there are definitely a lot of dog users that allow their dogs off-leash in
9 the park, and they have this area. We have some means to establish and run the pilot, so I
10 think that there is definitely some validation there for it.

11 Chair Greenfield: Thank you. In summary, I think we've heard a lot of very good feedback
12 representing various points of views and pros and cons to consider. I'm not quite sure how
13 this information directly feeds to offer direction to staff and the Ad Hoc on how to proceed
14 on this, and I'm wondering if it would be helpful if each Commissioner made a very brief
15 15-second summary statement, where they stand in terms of their thoughts on generally
16 moving forward with a pilot, or preferring a fenced-in dog park, or open to various
17 considerations. Would that be helpful, Peter? Or, do you think you have a good enough
18 sense already?

19 Mr. Peter: No, I think that would definitely be helpful. I think we are definitely going to
20 look at, of course, the comments we receive about the evaluation form and things of that
21 nature. We will definitely be going and having a full community meeting. We'll be sending
22 out 1,500 postcards to the surrounding neighborhood as we did before and posting signs,
23 so it will be a full-scale community meeting about this topic to get more feedback from
24 them on it. Just to keep that in mind.

25 Chair Greenfield: I think what I'll do is I'll offer each Commissioner an opportunity to
26 briefly re-summarize your point of view, or you can let your previous comments stand as
27 well, at your discretion. Would anyone like to speak?

28 Vice Chair Cribbs: Sure, I'm happy to speak, Jeff. I would like to move ahead with the
29 pilot, with the option to reduce the amount of land that we're using. My preference would
30 be the whole pilot with the whole land that we have now.

31 Chair Greenfield: Commissioner Moss?

32 Commissioner Moss: My recommendation, either reduce the amount of space or move the
33 off-leash pilot to Eleanor Pardee, where there is less fields use and practice use in the back
34 corner there, or stop using this park for games and for practices after 3:00 at the beginning
35 of the off-leash dog time.

1 Chair Greenfield: Thank you. Anyone else? Commissioner Olson?

2 Commissioner Olson: I'll just repeat, I am supportive, but also mindful that any off-leash
3 pilot is only going to be as successful as the people who come and do a good job. I do think
4 we need to...I like all of the community engagement and monitoring that will go on. I think
5 we have to be sensitive and flexible as we hear of any concerns there.

6 Chair Greenfield: I'll just comment that I am open to the idea of pursuing a pilot project. I
7 think it's important to hear from the whole community, both the dog owner community
8 and the, essentially, people with an alternate opinion. I do think pursuing the smaller area
9 is a good approach and perhaps also considering different seasonal hours would be worth
10 pursuing. One other comment I'll just add, that I forgot to mention – I think perhaps a 12-
11 month pilot would be appropriate to be able to assess during all seasons of the year, because
12 of time constraints are different during the different seasons. Does anyone have any further
13 comments before we close this out? Thank you very much everyone for insightful and
14 thoughtful comments. I think we've given staff plenty to consider on this and it's one of
15 our more interesting conversations we've had, with various points of view, raising valid
16 opinions.

17 Mr. Jensen: Thank you for your feedback and input on this. I think it's definitely, again,
18 important to get it right, and it's good to hear everyone's feedback on it. We will be
19 bringing it back to you, of course, after the community meeting and sharing with you their
20 input as well, to make a final determination on it. Thank you very much.

21 Chair Greenfield: Thank you.

22 **4. Parks and Recreation Commission Outreach Best Practices**

23 Chair Greenfield: We will now move on to our next item, which is Park and Recreation
24 Commission Outreach Best Practices. This is something that the Vice Chair and I wanted
25 to discuss with the Commission. It's a little bit ironic that this evening we have a very well-
26 attended meeting with members of the public actually outnumbering the Commissioners
27 and staff and Council Members that are present. That's very heartening, but overall I think
28 there's a feeling that our attendance hasn't been very strong at our meetings the past year.
29 That's a little bit different in that some other commissions and City Council have had quite
30 active participation via Zoom meetings, where it's a little bit less of a commitment for
31 someone to speak and to have the option of just attending a small portion of a meeting. So,
32 we just wanted to talk about what we're doing right now as a commission for community
33 outreach, how we can potentially improve it, serving as a conduit between the community
34 and staff and council is one of our important roles. We all know that attendance and
35 participation varies broadly depending on an agenda topic, but with that said, last month –
36 and this is really what really initiated discussion between Anne and myself – when we had
37 the swimming annual report, the Aquatics annual report and the Golf Course annual report,

1 we didn't have any comments from the public, and we have had this in the past. We want
2 to talk about what we're doing for community outreach, what we can potentially do better
3 and hear your ideas on how we can work on improving this together. In addition, as part of
4 the latest guidelines and handbook for the boards, commissions and committees, the BCC's
5 that's being passed down from City Council, we are going to be requested to provide some
6 sort of annual data on public participation, so this is something we want to track
7 quantitatively moving forward, and I think we could all agree that there's room where we
8 would like to see more people attending. Vice Chair Cribbs, would you like to follow up
9 with anything?

10 Vice Chair Cribbs: No, I think, Jeff, you've said it very well. I was very surprised last
11 meeting that we didn't have swimmers and golf course people speaking to us. I think
12 community participation is incredibly important. In the time of Zoom, it seemed to me that
13 it would be easier for people to speak, rather than more difficult. I talked to a couple of
14 people in the community about the Commission meetings, and they said, "Well, I'm not
15 even sure I know how to do that." Well, we're all smart people, and they should be able to
16 figure it out, right? But, I think it would be really useful if we all thought about maybe
17 creating, inviting, people to join a Park and Recreation Commission mailing list, or making
18 sure that they get a notice from the City Clerk's office that there is a Park and Recreation
19 Commission meeting every month, and there are interesting topics that have to do with the
20 future of Palo Alto, especially recreation and parks. So, if we look for different ways to
21 make that clear, both from the Clerk's office and also in the *Enjoy!* Catalog and how to
22 sign up, I think that we could develop a pretty good group that would support Recreation
23 and Parks. I always think that recreation and parks need a voice. We have a lot of different
24 programs and a lot of different support groups, but overall it's such an important part of
25 the community, and that always comes up with community studies, but I really think it's
26 important for us to see if we can reach out and encourage more people to participate.

27 Chair Greenfield: Thanks, and one step that's definitely in the right direction is something
28 that got sorted out today. There is an email subscriber option, so that members of the
29 community, including ourselves, can subscribe to Parks and Recreation Commission
30 agenda notifications. This is similar to the other City notifications that are available. A
31 couple other boards and commissions use these right now, but not too many, and this is
32 something that's been suggested that all boards, commissions and committee utilize to
33 improve transparency and public notification. I think when that's done, that will increase
34 the number of people that will subscribe to the Parks and Rec notifications as well. When
35 more people are going to the site, looking to subscribe to something and seeing options,
36 that's going to increase things. If any of you are subscribed to this already, you should have
37 received a notification email today. This is the first one. There were some hiccups, and
38 staff has got that sorted out. This is an example of a step in the right direction, but things
39 like being able to do specific outreach to groups that would be specifically impacted or
40 would have specific input on an agenda item is something we should focus on, so I'm

1 interested in hearing from other Commission members what your thoughts and ideas are
2 on this, and also from Council Member Kou, if you have any ideas for us as well. Would
3 anyone like to speak first?

4 Commissioner Moss: I will be happy to talk.

5 Chair Greenfield: Commissioner Moss, followed by Commissioner LaMere.

6 Commissioner Moss: I think we should be looking at our successes, and there are several.
7 The community meetings that Peter Jensen has been leading for the CIP's for the different
8 Parks, are very well-attended, and we've been getting tremendous response and feedback
9 from those meetings. So, taking the example of the swimming, the Rinconada pool, if there
10 were some way that we could have community meetings at the pool, or of the different
11 stakeholder groups, I think that that would be extremely valuable. The second success
12 we've had is in spreading the word through our neighborhood groups. Commission
13 Reckdahl has done a great job with the Ventura neighborhood. I can feed information to
14 the Green Meadow and the Greendale communities very easily. We can get a lot of
15 response from those neighborhood groups, as we saw with Boulware Park and the North
16 Ventura project. We got tremendous response that way. The third is that we have groups,
17 like the Pickleball Club and the tennis players, and the Dog Owners Association, and the
18 Magical Bridge Foundation. Those stakeholders, those groups – and we also had it with
19 the Cubberley community – those groups give us tremendous feedback, so we should be
20 plugging in to them on many more subjects, I guess. That would be my suggestion, those
21 three ways.

22 Chair Greenfield: Thank you. Before moving on, I'll just ask if there's any members of the
23 public who would like to speak on this, since I failed to ask previously, but if you'd like to
24 speak, raise your hand, please. Otherwise, Commissioner LaMere, please go ahead.

25 Commissioner LaMere: Thank you. I think any outreach we can do to groups in advance
26 to notify them of agenda items is important. At one time I received Nextdoor notifications
27 for Planning and Transportation meetings. I don't know if that was something I subscribed
28 to, or if that was just pushed out to me. I'm wondering, do we use Nextdoor to notify about
29 meetings, or is there a way to use that platform, which is a platform that many people do
30 have and is widely used, in addition to the emails that you could subscribe to through the
31 City.

32 Mr. Jensen: I'll take that. We definitely do use Nextdoor. We use all of the social media
33 platforms that we can. We also have Twitter and Facebook that we do post to. For
34 advertising for my community meetings, I do send out a large swath of mail postcards, but
35 I do think that what David was saying just a minute ago, that the individual neighborhoods
36 or areas of town that are defined that have an active neighborhood meeting or leaders, or
37 group, then someone that has the email list is very, very powerful in getting the message

1 out there. For most of my community meetings, I usually email the representative of the
2 area, and they usually send out an email that I craft to their mailing list, and that is a very
3 powerful way to get people to meetings. I was going to suggest on that that maybe – there
4 could be more discussion about this – but maybe there is an ad hoc person from the Parks
5 and Rec Commission that takes that on as their project every year and is the leader of those
6 neighborhood associations and maybe just meets with them every year and talks with them
7 about the power that they have on getting the message out to people and how it is important
8 and updating the lists, their email lists, and getting people involved, and input, could be a
9 very effective way of helping to disburse information. There definitely are neighborhood
10 groups that don't have very good representation, that don't send out emails when we
11 contact them, and they don't have the input that other neighborhoods do, so I think it is a
12 very grassroots way of getting information out. It's not really from us. It's from one of
13 them, asking their community to come out to do it, which is much more powerful than just
14 us asking. That's something that I think could be considered.

15 Chair Greenfield: Thanks, Peter. I think that's a good idea and perhaps reaching out to
16 PAN Palo Alto Neighborhoods is a starting point as the umbrella group for all of the
17 neighborhood associations, would be the right way to go. I have a follow-up question
18 regarding our current social media outreach. Are we noticing each of monthly meetings
19 and the agenda items via social media, or just specific community outreach targets?

20 Mr. Jensen: I'm not aware. Daren or Catherine would have to answer what we send out
21 about the monthly meetings. I don't think that we do.

22 Mr. Anderson: I don't think so. I was just agreeing. That is correct. We don't do it for the
23 PRC meetings.

24 Commissioner Moss: How do they get it in the paper, the Palo Alto paper?

25 Ms. Bourquin: They contact us. Or I directly send it to them. They're on a distribution list
26 as well.

27 Chair Greenfield: Or, they can look for posted agendas.

28 Ms. Bourquin: Correct.

29 Chair Greenfield: One other change that's going to be coming with the new guidelines for
30 BCCs is that our agendas will need to get posted a full week before our meeting date, so
31 this will provide a better opportunity for community outreach, in that the agenda will be
32 finalized and posted a week in advance, so we'll have more time to spread the word on that
33 and more time for people to become aware of this and make plans to attend if they are
34 interested. Other comments?

1 Commissioner Moss: what Commissioner LaMere said about – no, I think it was Anne –
2 said that some people don't know how to get to it, get to the meeting, it would be nice if
3 the Zoom link that's sent out is one that's sort of permanent, rather than being sent out each
4 time, because then if you can send that out ahead of time, or if you could send out a link
5 where they can get to the link, then people know every month where to go and how to do
6 it. But if you do it every meeting differently, it's a little hard to get the message out.

7 Ms. Bourquin: That's true. The Clerk's office is going to show me how to keep repeating
8 the same number for the meetings. I'll look into that.

9 Commissioner Reckdahl: Right now we have the agenda, and the link is on there, which is
10 very nice, because you can send someone the pdf of the agenda, but on the webpage it
11 would be nice if we just had a standing link of, "This is the current Zoom meeting."
12 Because some people get to the webpage and they don't know to look at the agenda, and
13 they don't see anywhere on the webpage how to find the Zoom link. Another point – last
14 month we had Aquatics on, and I talked to some swimmers that didn't know about it. That's
15 pretty easy. They all go to one spot, so we could put up a flyer there. We should've done
16 that, put up a flyer a month before, because we know they're coming. A month in, say, "On
17 this date, we're going to have the annual report." That would be really easy to do.

18 Chair Greenfield: Agreed, and that's what we suspected. Having specific audiences
19 targeted based on a given agenda is a great idea. Commissioner Olson?

20 Commissioner Olson: Quite a few months ago, I believe it was Commissioner Cribbs, had
21 pitched volunteering types of ideas, like at Cubberley paint a room or something. Whether
22 we like that volunteer opportunity or not, I do think there is value in us sort of getting our
23 hands dirty at the parks, with folks who maybe want to connect with a Commissioner and
24 really voice their concerns that they don't want to come to a meeting for, or maybe that
25 breaks the ice for them and they will want to come to a meeting after they meet someone.
26 I know we're in a difficult time and it's probably not too practical right now, which might
27 also be why people aren't really participating as much this year, generally. I think people
28 are really tapped out, but I would like to think about something that the Commission can
29 do with the community to volunteer for any kind of park improvement type of project, and
30 just get out there with folks and hear what their concerns are.

31 Commissioner Moss: That does remind me also that some of us are liaisons to other groups.
32 Like, school district and other groups, and that is another opportunity for the
33 Commissioners to outreach.

1 Chair Greenfield: I'm not sure that we actually have a school district liaison. I know that
2 Keith sits in on the City Council and school district meetings, but I think your idea certainly
3 has merit, David. Part of a liaison role could be to pass on monthly agenda information as
4 appropriate, particularly when it's going to have a significant impact, or on a topic related
5 to a group.

6 Commissioner Moss: Commissioner LaMere has Stanford connections, so if there's
7 anything that involves Stanford, like El Camino Park, we have an "in" to spread the word.

8 Chair Greenfield: I do think we need to be careful what we wish for, or to consider it
9 another way, that when things are going well, we may not always hear from people. We've
10 had our largest crowd that's been because of high emotions in our community. It's certainly
11 easier to voice your opinion when you're concerned about something. I'm not suggesting
12 we need to go out and search for problems, but I think it is important to improve our
13 outreach. Council Member Kou, do you have anything you'd like to add?

14 Council Member Kou: I was going to just say exactly what you just said. A lot of times
15 our Council, we get a lot of comments and emails, precisely because, it's mostly to rectify
16 an issue that members of the community see or feel. It's perhaps that you are doing a great
17 job with community engagement, and Parks and Rec staff are doing fabulous jobs engaging
18 in their community meetings and so forth, so you don't have as many attendees. Because I
19 think, for sure, if there was a problem, they would let you know. But the Council does hear
20 it first, I think, a lot of times if there's big problems with too much garbage someplace, or
21 poop not being picked up. We hear it, too. So, I think you guys are doing a great job. I
22 don't have much to say, but I do agree that the neighborhood associations, their email lists
23 are pretty extensive. They've been carrying it for a long time, so that would be one place
24 that I do encourage you to go to, to reach out to the community. Social media, I'm not
25 really sure how much that does, but Nextdoor does get activity. So, keep it up.

26 Commissioner Moss: And if you hear something, do you pass it on to Daren in your
27 Council meetings?

28 Council Member Kou: I usually pass it on to the City Manager, and then I don't know. I
29 may have cc'd Daren once or twice and included Kirsten, but we have a hierarchy chart.

30 Commissioner Moss: Yeah. And then, the other question is, are there communities – I think
31 Jeff mentioned – that there are communities that are not as solidly represented. Has that
32 come up on Council that you wish that there were communities that were more
33 representative to you?

34 Council Member Kou: Representative to...?

1 Commissioner Moss: I meant, there are some communities, like Ventura, that are very
2 well-organized, and then there are some areas of the city that are not very well-organized.
3 That must impact you on the Council, not just us on the Commissions, that they are not
4 well-organized.

5 Council Member Kou: Which is why the City has multiple channels of communication, so
6 it's not just to the neighborhood association lists. They have Nextdoor, but then there might
7 be other names within that community that is included as well. But they use the bigger
8 channels to communicate, and for each of the Council Members, we also have our email
9 lists for information and to update people. Some of us, we use that.

10 Chair Greenfield: Thanks. Lots of great ideas, and I've noted these down. I think we can
11 all think about individually what we can do to improve outreach. Today I was going for a
12 walk around 4:00 at Mitchell Park, and I thought, "Hey, I should walk over to Ramos Park
13 and see if there are people out there with dogs that know about the meeting tonight." And
14 of course, there were a number of people with dogs off-leash and had some good
15 conversations. Some people did know about the meeting already and some people didn't
16 know about it, but that speaks to the need to have some sort of posting at a park when we're
17 going to have an agenda item specifically related to it. That's an obvious way to improve
18 outreach, and I appreciate Council Member Kou's comments. This is part of our continuous
19 improvement plan, and it's reasonable for all of us to continue to strive to be better and I
20 think there's definitely areas where we can improve here. Does anyone have any further
21 comments? Okay, then we will move on to our next agenda item.

22 **5. Other Commission Ad Hoc and Liaison Updates**

23 Chair Greenfield: Does anyone have any questions for Commissioners regarding their
24 updates, or do any Commissioners have any updates they would like to add or enhance
25 their descriptions with new updates? Keith?

26 Vice Chair Cribbs: Chair, on the Foothills Park Ad Hoc, I think our Ad Hoc would like to
27 work on some sort of a – it doesn't have to be formal or official - resolution. Something
28 to commend the staff for, not only the years of taking good care of the park as we may or
29 may not enter into a new phase, but just to thank the staff that's worked so hard over the
30 last two or three years on the park and the thoughtful re-opening of the park. I don't think
31 that we're there with all of the language yet, but we'd like to...I think that Jackie and Jeff
32 and I would like to do something from our Ad Hoc, or from the whole Commission to
33 really commend the staff for the work that they've done. We didn't put it in the report.

34 Chair Greenfield: Thank you. Keith?

1 Commissioner Reckdahl: I just now came from North Ventura, so the staff put together the
2 plans. They had three alternatives on how to design it, and they released that a little more
3 than a week ago, and then last Wednesday we went to PTC, and they had just a short
4 meeting that they continued until January 13th. So you still have until January 13th to look
5 over it. Go to the PTC and look at last website. I'll send Catherine a link, so you guys can
6 go directly to it. The bad news is that all three of the alternatives that they produced have
7 very little park space. We were shooting for four acres for every 1,000 people. That's the
8 standard in the Comp Plan and the standard in the Parks Master Plan, all of them were
9 about one or so. But that one is a little misleading, because they did things like count
10 landscaping strips, and the grass around buildings counted as open space. So, that's a very
11 generous counting on their part, so it's very low considering how many people we're
12 putting in there, they're not putting much land in there. So, I made a comment about that
13 at the last meeting. You guys are welcome to do that, but again, it's nothing that we've
14 done as group, so it would have to be just you as your own personal opinion.

15 Chair Greenfield: Thank you. Anyone else? Okay, let's move on.

16 **VI. TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR JANUARY, 27, 2021**

17 Chair Greenfield: Daren?

18 Mr. Anderson: Thank you, Chair. We've got two options for January, and that is the name
19 change for Foothills Park. That one will be on the agenda, pending conversation with Chair
20 and Vice Chair that one will be ready to go, and possible discussion of Foothills Park
21 update. These are the Ad Hoc discussions pertaining to Council's direction on Foothills
22 Park. That is, looking at limit and entry fees and studies, for example. Both of those are
23 potential items for the January meeting. I should just highlight two that we had discussed
24 before – Baylands Interpretive Sign by John Aiken. I did talk to John, and he isn't available
25 in January, but is available in February. The other one is the potential Tide Gate Park
26 Improvement Ordinance. I have emailed the Water District staff, and I am waiting for a
27 response, whether January or February would work with their schedules. One other one,
28 Peter explained, we could do Boulware Park as well, in January.

29 Chair Greenfield: Thanks and, of course, we will have our re-organization for the
30 Commission at the meeting next month as well, electing a chair and vice chair.

31 Commissioner Moss: The Foothills Park update in January is going include the results of
32 the referendum and whether or not we opened the park and what you notice, what you
33 observe, from that opening. It will be exciting.

34 Chair Greenfield: I don't think we need an agenda item to review the results of the
35 referendum or if the Park opens up, but some initial observations certainly could be useful.

1 Commissioner Moss: It could all be covered under Foothills Park update.

2 Chair Greenfield: Thank you. Anything else? That seems like it gives up plenty to work
3 on, or work with.

4 Commissioner Moss: Wait, there's one more, and that is that we try very, very hard to have
5 the annual retreat to determine the priorities for the year. We try to have that as early in the
6 year as possible. One year we had it in May, unfortunately. But, if we could have it in
7 February, that seems like a really good time to do that, so if somebody could send out a
8 doodle sometime in the this next few weeks, so that we could sort of have some idea of
9 when to have that. I don't think we should wait until the end of January to first start thinking
10 about it.

11 Chair Greenfield: That's great to bring up, and I certainly am in favor of looking to hold
12 our retreat in early February. I think we will want to wait until we have a Council Liaison
13 appointed to the Commission before we schedule that and before we start considering
14 dates. I can see Council Member Kou nodding her head. Do you know, Lydia, roughly
15 when a Council Liaison would be appointed?

16 Council Member Kou: It differs every year, but I think most of the time we get it by the
17 end of January. The Clerk has now started sending out the lists for Council members to
18 review during the holidays, so we should be looking at it pretty soon and the Council
19 members get to pick for second/third choices, so that the new mayor can start assignments.

20 Vice Chair Cribbs: I'd like to suggest – and I don't know if this needs to be a permanent
21 or a temporary something – that next year for discussion at the meeting, maybe as part of
22 Daren's staff report – that we always have something about the return to play and COVID
23 as it's unfolding and things are changing. I have a lot of concerns about what's going to
24 happen to our kids as we all come out of this, as well as what's happening to all of us. I
25 think it's really important for Recreation to keep that in mind and at least be updated by
26 things that are going on. The City is doing a great job with their newsletter and all of that,
27 but I also think from the Recreation and Park perspective, it's going to be important to at
28 least mention that topic on a monthly basis. I don't know how other Commissioners feel,
29 but...

30 Chair Greenfield: Thanks, Anne. This sounds more like something that would be included
31 in the Department Report than something on the agenda and probably fits better under
32 comments and announcements, which we'll hit next. If anybody has any suggestions for
33 the agenda, we'll take that; otherwise, we'll move on.

34 **VII. COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

1 Chair Greenfield: I think we all agree that a standing update on COVID and return to play
2 implications for Parks and Recreation for our community is something that we want to hear
3 about on a monthly basis. I think that's something that we have been getting every month
4 from Daren and staff, and we appreciate that. I think, noting our appreciation for keeping
5 us updated on a monthly basis, it is an ever-changing landscape, sometimes on a weekly
6 basis; sometimes on a daily basis, and we appreciate the work and effort the staff goes
7 through in trying to keep up to date on this. This is something we can help with as well,
8 reviewing policies is part of our charter, and to the extent that we can assist by reviewing
9 latest policies and forwarding feedback to staff, that's something we should consider
10 perhaps formalizing a bit more next year, as we create our liaison and ad hoc roles. I do
11 have one other announcement I'd like to make. As some of you may know, we have a
12 seventh member of our Commission that was appointed last night, and she has been
13 attending the meeting as a member of the public. She is Amanda Brown. She is with us,
14 and I just want to welcome her. She likes to go by Mandi, as she has told me. I want to
15 welcome her to the Commission. I did have an opportunity to speak with her briefly. She
16 hasn't been sworn in yet, so she isn't sitting as a panelist this evening, but I guess if there's
17 any members of the public who would like to comment on this item, that would be a
18 welcome opportunity.

19 Ms. Amanda Brown: I'm very excited and looking forward to it. I've been very much
20 enjoying watching this meeting as a member of the public.

21 Chair Greenfield: Thank you. We look forward to working with you.

22 Commissioner Moss: Welcome.

23 Ms. Brown: Thank you.

24 Mr. Anderson: Thanks so much. Welcome.

25 Commissioner Moss: I have a couple comments. Emily Renzel, who writes for a newsletter
26 that comes out every year for the Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge, and she is
27 responsible for talking about the Baylands. Two things she mentioned in this most recent
28 newsletter are noteworthy. One is that the Renzel Marsh has been a smashing success as
29 far as bringing back wildlife after the major draining and rebuilding/remodeling of the
30 ponds. There is a tremendous amount of wildlife out there, and every time I drive by there,
31 I see quite a few cars now, people walking around that loop. If you haven't had a chance
32 to do that, I strongly recommend that you take a walk around. The second thing that she
33 mentioned, which is noteworthy, is that ten years ago – hard to believe – but ten years ago,
34 they took away ten acres of the Baylands Park for the anaerobic digester. That was 2010,
35 and if they didn't use it, then it reverts back to parkland in ten years, which is next
36 November. So, we need to sometime during this next year, talk about that and what we're
37 going to do. I had totally forgotten about it, but that's what the law says. Those were the

1 two things that she had to say. The second thing I wanted to mention is that I went to the
2 Palo Alto Pickleball Club annual meeting, and they had several interesting things to say. I
3 think the most important ones are that they are acutely aware of masking and of singles
4 play, because they have a lot to lose if they screw up. They have 500 members, so they
5 have a tremendous task play by the rules, so it's a high, high priority for them. The second
6 thing that they mentioned is that they have spent a tremendous amount of effort thinking
7 about how to maintain a 51-percent majority Palo Alto membership. The way they do that
8 is that any new members, non-resident members, who want to join are put on the waiting
9 list until they know that there's room for them. They take their Palo Alto majority status
10 very...It's very important to them to be on good graces with the City, and the City gives
11 them benefits because they are majority Palo Alto residents. Then, they are very proud of
12 the accomplishments that they had with the rapport with Adam Howard to do with getting
13 new gates, new LED lights, and several other big changes to their facility in Mitchell Park,
14 and they look forward to additional changes that they are paying for. They love that
15 relationship with the staff, so I think that speaks well for them and for Adam Howard and
16 his team. It's really fantastic. Those are the things I wanted to mention.

17 Chair Greenfield: Thank you. Does anyone else have any comments?

18 Mr. Anderson: I don't know if now is appropriate, but I did look up the dates on that Tide
19 Gate project. If you'd like, I can share that, or I can email it. Whatever your preference is.

20 Chair Greenfield: Sure, you can share it real quickly.

21 Mr. Anderson: Sure. The Levy Trail surface improvement work – that's a portion of the
22 tide gate; this is what allows them to do the improvement with big heavy equipment –
23 would start in November of 2021 and be completed by the end of January, 2022. Then, the
24 actual construction for the tide gate structure would start in September, 2022, and be
25 completed by the end of November, 2026.

26 Chair Greenfield: Thank you, and during that time period there would be periods where
27 there would not be construction in place and they're working to keep the trail open, the
28 Adobe Creek Loop Trail, open, so it won't be closed for that entire period.

29 Commissioner Reckdahl: Is it two years that they'll lose the trail at the end? Do you
30 remember the number?

31 Chair Greenfield: I don't remember offhand. We can follow up with the specifics, and we
32 will be getting – this is an agenda item to the Commission soon as they request a PIO.
33 Any other comments?

34 Vice Chair Cribbs: I have one final item, Jeff. That is for all the basketball fans who are on
35 the panel right now. Tara VanDerveer has just won the most games of any coach coaching

1 women's basketball. I think it's 1,000-something. That just came through, so
2 congratulations to Tara and Stanford for all their commitment to women's sports. It would
3 be nice if the City did a recognition of that in some way.

4 Chair Greenfield: Maybe some sort of recognition could start from the Parks and Rec
5 Commission.

6 Vice Chair Cribbs: Maybe it could, with Council Member Kou's help.

7 Chair Greenfield: It's something we can figure out with staff.

8 Vice Chair Cribbs: Yes, good.

9 Chair Greenfield: I want to wish everyone very Happy Holidays and Happy New Year.
10 This is our last meeting of the year. It's been a unique year for all of us. Some would call
11 it a difficult year, and I think we're all hoping for something better next year. There's lots
12 of room to go up, and I'm optimistic that we're on our way, and I want to thank all of you
13 for your contributions, both the staff that does such amazing work for us, and the
14 Commission members that have all pulled together as a team to help support our staff and
15 council and community, and for our Liaison, who has been very diligent in supporting us
16 and attending our meetings and offering guidance. Thank you to everyone.

17 Council Member Kou: Happy Holidays, everybody, and thank you for your services.

18 Commissioner Moss: Thank you.

19 Vice Chair Cribbs: Happy Holidays, everybody.

20 Commissioner Olson: Happy Holidays.

21 Chair Greenfield: Thank you, and we're out before 10:00. Thank you.

22 **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

23 Meeting adjourned by motion by Chair Greenfield and second by Commissioner Reckdahl
24 at 9:48 p.m.