



**MINUTES
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
June 22, 2021
Virtual Conference
Palo Alto, California**

Commissioners Present: Chair Anne Cribbs, Keith Reckdahl, David Moss, Jackie Olson, Amanda Brown, Jeff LaMere (arrived late)

Commissioners Absent: Vice Chair Greenfield

Others Present:

Staff Present: Daren Anderson, Catherine Bourquin, Lam Do

I. ROLL CALL

Chair Cribbs welcomed the attendees to the meeting. She noted that tomorrow is Worldwide Olympic Day, June 23rd, a celebration of the Olympic Games all around the world to talk about fair play, friendship, honoring the competition, and peace.

[roll call]

AGENDA CHANGES, REQUESTS, DELETIONS

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

II. DEPARTMENT REPORT

Mr. Anderson updated the Commission on summer offerings that the Recreation is providing. They will host their annual Fourth of July summer event, typically called the Chili Cookoff. It will have no chili, but there will be live music by Radio City Allstars, a variety of food trucks, fun and games, and activities. It will take place from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Mitchell Park. No registration is required. He said summer camp season has begun. There are about 160 in-person camps and 37 virtual camps offered, ranging from arts, science, technology to sports, cooking and Foothills Day Camps. They will be hosting another movie night, Friday, June 25th, in Mitchell Park, featuring “The Goonies,” starting at 8:00 p.m. Registration is required, but it is free. He reported that Mitchell Park



1 Community Center rentals are available, provided all current guidelines are agreed to and
2 followed. Cubberley Community Center will reopen for rentals on July 13th.

3 Mr. Anderson reported, regarding the Highway 101 Bridge, the center piece of the bridge
4 has been installed. Between now and August they will be pouring the concrete of the deck
5 for the center span; installing bridge railing, fencing and lighting; completing the
6 pedestrian access ramp; concrete pouring on the West Bayshore Road, and completing the
7 paving on Adobe Creek Reach Trail; landscaping and irrigation; signage, striping and
8 miscellaneous site improvements. Completion should be sometime in August.

9 Mr. Anderson reported on the City Council meeting the previous night, stating it was
10 eventful and impactful for CSD, Recreation and the Commission. The Commission's work
11 plan was approved on Consent. The golf course contract with O.B. Sports was extended
12 for another three years, a mutually-agreed upon extension. The budget was adopted,
13 though it has been a very challenging budget season. Key outcomes from the budget
14 include that the Supervising Ranger position at Foothills, vacant for about a year-and-a-
15 half, will be restored, and will be funded again on July 1st. Staff will go through the
16 recruitment process to get a new Supervising Ranger onboard. Regarding the Rinconada
17 Park CIP, he reminded the Commission that there had been a discussion that perhaps it
18 wouldn't be funded, but it did get fully funded, and the park bids came back and were
19 within budget. They will go to Council tonight for approval of the contract. He said the
20 Rinconada Park project had a certain amount of Community Center funds going towards
21 it. These have been reallocated towards the Roth Building. To refund Rinconada Park
22 project, Park Dedication fees fund will be used. Regarding the Roth Building project, the
23 Council decided to help fund this, with funding coming from three sources. There would
24 be \$2 million from the Stanford University Medical Center funds (SUMC funds); the
25 Community Center Impact Fee funds redirected from Rinconada Park; and \$350,000 from
26 the Park Impact Fee funds to help pay for the restroom at the Roth Building, which will
27 actually serve the adjacent Heritage Park. Mr. Anderson reminded the Commission that
28 they had taken action by sending a memo to Council regarding the JMZ ticket pricing. He
29 reported the ticket pricing has been set at \$10, and the JMZ is expected to open in October.

30 Mr. Anderson reported that at Fire Station 8, which is within Foothills Nature Preserve,
31 staffing was started again. He explained that this is a new relationship where Palo Alto
32 Fire Department is teaming up with Santa Clara County Fire Department and Los Altos
33 Hills to fully staff the Foothills Fire Station between June 15th and the end of October.
34 Under the agreement, the City and the County will take turns providing staffing at Fire
35 Station 8. Palo Alto provides firefighters for the first two weeks of the arrangement, and
36 the two agencies will then begin rotating on a monthly basis, with Los Altos Hills County
37 Fire District providing some funding for the staffing under this one-year agreement, which
38 has potential to be extended for up to four years. The City previously staffed Fire Station
39 8 between July 1st and October 31st with three firefighters, but because of budgetary

1 constraints, the City has not provided full time staffing of the station since 2015. Instead,
2 they had been relying on red flag days – dry and windy conditions which make the area
3 more vulnerable to wildfire. There were 17 of these days in 2020.

4 Mr. Anderson reported on a message from the Palo Alto Pickleball Club regarding the Bay
5 Area Senior Games at Mitchell Park. The courts will be closed for drop-in play during the
6 Games, from Friday, September 24th, through Sunday, September 26th. Those interested
7 can sign up at pickleballtournaments.org.

8 Mr. Anderson shared information about the drought. On June 9, 2021, Valley Water’s
9 Board of Directors declared a water shortage emergency condition in Santa Clara County
10 due to the extreme drought and called for a mandatory 15-percent reduction in water use
11 compared to 2019. He noted the Palo Alto does not get its water from Valley Water, but
12 from the San Francisco Regional Water Supply System, which is currently in good shape.
13 The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission is asking for voluntary conservation in
14 case the water supply situation worsens. Mr. Anderson wanted to assure the Commission
15 and the community that the Parks team is already conserving water, using previous
16 experience from the drought in 2015 and 2016 about reducing water usage. He said during
17 the previous drought, when there were significant mandatory reductions, they took a
18 couple of missteps by cutting back water in certain areas too far, which impacted trees.
19 They changed course when they noticed this, and instead they strategically targeted areas,
20 usually aesthetic turf areas where trees would not be impacted. This is where they are
21 currently achieving some water savings.

22 Mr. Anderson reported that the City of Palo Alto is offering six rebates for water savings
23 for households, which can be found on the City’s website. Rebates include rain barrel,
24 cistern, rain garden, permeable pavement, landscape conversion and gray water laundry to
25 landscape.

26 Chair Cribbs invited questions from the Commission regarding the Department Report.

27 Commissioner Reckdahl asked if the Fire Station will be staffed 24 hours per day, or just
28 during daylight hours. Mr. Anderson believed it was daylight hours only. Commissioner
29 Reckdahl asked if there was sensing there, or simply closer proximity allowing for faster
30 response to fire. Mr. Anderson there would be faster response, because they are so close
31 to the hills and can quickly get to incidents, both medical and fire. Commissioner Reckdahl
32 said in the fire memo that was given, Council talked about potential for some sort of
33 cameras at Foothills Park. He wondered how far into the future this might occur. Mr.
34 Anderson said he thought there was a push towards funding for this type of thing, so there
35 was probably a more near-term potential for this. However, they have been talking about
36 cameras for a long time with limited success. He said he feels there will be a bigger push
37 in that area. The endeavor is led by the Office of Emergency Services. Mr. Anderson said
38 he will pass new information from them on as he receives it.



1 Commissioner Reckdahl referenced a map made by Mr. Anderson during the last drought,
2 showing areas of all the parks that he thought could be cut back. He wondered how many
3 of those areas are being watered again after the drought was over. Mr. Anderson said the
4 majority of sites returned back to normal irrigation but sometimes not as much as in the
5 past, both for financial purposes to conserve funding for water, and also to be water-wise
6 in areas that didn't need it as much. These are areas they are targeting now. He said
7 sometimes it is unclear whether trees are drawing upon some of these areas, depending on
8 how far the roots of those trees go. There is a risk of harming trees if you're not careful
9 and prudent with trees that are turf-dependent for irrigation. He said he thinks there is a
10 good understanding of where those are, and they are avoiding them but still realizing some
11 savings in water usage. Commissioner Reckdahl asked if there is any recycled water in
12 trucks driving around or just relying underground pipes. Mr. Anderson replied that they
13 are not paying for any recycled "purple pipes." He explained that, for mandatory houses
14 that had to de-water their developments, they would pay for purple pipes to take their
15 water, and the Department would tell them where to strategically use it to reduce their
16 irrigation in those areas. They are not paying for that, and Mr. Anderson added that it is
17 not especially effective. The amount of water carried and the time it takes to deliver it is
18 not a particularly prudent or effective means of irrigating any significant areas. In small
19 areas it may have potential, by that is not the effort they are focused on in conserving.

20 Commissioner Moss was grateful for the news regarding the Senior Ranger. He asked if
21 there are other key items that Mr. Anderson was particularly concerned about in the budget
22 besides the Senior Ranger. Mr. Anderson said there were a couple of ways to look at it.
23 There is what they had originally proposed as potential cuts that were more significant,
24 and there was even a second tier of cuts, which didn't end up making it to the proposals,
25 which were even more dire and more impactful to his group in particular. For example,
26 regarding the Park Landscape Maintenance Contract, where they maintain the vast
27 majority of urban parks. They had cut 27 percent - \$267,000 – last July due to budgetary
28 constraints. Those impacts are still becoming apparent. He said the weeds sometimes take
29 a while to show up, and areas that were well-maintained gradually slip into disrepair, so
30 they are still reckoning with that budget cut. He said it is frustrating to him, because they
31 have some issues with trash not being collected quite as frequently, and he is getting
32 complaints about it. There are some unsightly areas where weeds are present. He said,
33 frankly, it is the unfortunate consequence of cutting \$267,000 from that contract. He said
34 he doesn't have a lot of good alternatives but will have to deal with it. As far as what he is
35 happy about, he said there was yet another significant budget cut option on the table for
36 that contract, and he is grateful they did not need to exercise it.

37 Commissioner Moss asked regarding the Commission Work Plan, if this was all of the
38 work plans that they submitted "to prove why we're valuable." Mr. Anderson assured him
39 that the Council knows they are valuable, but it was to ensure that the Commission is on
40 the same page as Council, and said that the Council approves of the work that the

1 Commission would like to focus on in the coming year. By virtue of the Consent calendar
2 approval, he thinks they've got the green light from Council. Chair Cribbs added that they
3 were all happy to hear that their work plan was acceptable and she thinks they are all
4 anxious to get started. She asked Mr. Anderson what the next steps are. Mr. Anderson said
5 his feeling is they can march forward with the plan at this point.

6 **BUSINESS**

7 **1. Approval of Draft Minutes from the May 25, 2021 Special Parks and Recreation**
8 **Commission Meeting**

9 Commissioner Moss said he appreciated the volume of the minutes. Chair Cribbs agreed
10 with him, and said it is good to know where they have been, and she is glad they are doing
11 them in that form. She asked Mr. Anderson if it was going to be okay to continue with this
12 type of minutes. Mr. Anderson said based on feedback he received from the Commission
13 he will pursue this and that it was facilitated by Catherine Bourquin. Commissioner
14 Reckdahl asked how the cost of the service compares to the service for verbatim minutes.
15 Ms. Bourquin does not know yet, but will find out when she receives the invoice.
16 Commissioner Reckdahl thought it would be wise to evaluate the item again.
17 Commissioner Moss was fine with verbatim if it's significantly cheaper, but said he loves
18 the summary minutes.

19 [Commission LaMere joined the meeting]

20 **MOTION**

21 Approval of the draft Minutes was moved by Commissioner Reckdahl and seconded by
22 Commissioner Brown. The motion passed 6-0, by roll call vote.

23 **2. Ad Hoc Committee and Liaison updates**

24 Chair Cribbs acknowledged Commissioner Olson's upcoming departure from the
25 Commission. She expressed appreciation of Commissioner Olson for her thoughtful
26 approach and the way she looked to everything from a lens of what is fair and right, but
27 also how to make it work. She said Commissioner Olson's leaving is a big loss, but she is
28 excited for her and her family and wished her all the very best on the part of all the
29 Commissioners. Commissioner Moss appreciated having Commissioner Olson on
30 subcommittees. He was especially impressed by one of her comments, basically saying
31 that they should be very careful to let staff do what they need to do and be an advisory
32 role, as opposed to dictating actions of staff. He said staff does an incredible job, and
33 recognizes what it means to support them. Commission LaMere added that he worked with
34 Commissioner Olson on Foothills Park, which was often quite contentious, and always
35 found her to be very judicious in her thoughts and thinking of others. He has enjoyed

1 getting to know her and offered his best in her future endeavors. Commissioner Brown
2 added that Commissioner Olson was very warm in reaching out to her to join the
3 Commission at such a strange time, and it made her feel comfortable as they swapped
4 stories of being on the staff side of things. She appreciated her focus for the youth of Palo
5 Alto. She offered her best wishes. Commissioner Reckdahl said Commissioner Olson had
6 a passion for Parks and Recreation, yet was still reasonable and thoughtful, which he
7 appreciated. He said they would all miss her. Mr. Anderson said on behalf of staff thanked
8 her for her service and echoed what a pleasure it has been to work with her. They will miss
9 her and wished her the best. Commissioner Olson thanked all for the kind words and said
10 her cup was full after hearing from each of them. She said it's been a pleasure learning and
11 growing through the Commission. They are lucky to have wonderful opportunities for Palo
12 Alto and residents, wonderful programs, and the inspiring dedication of staff, particularly
13 during the pandemic. She thanked the Commission and hoped they would keep her family
14 in mind as they joined the "Great Migration" back to where they came from. Chair Cribbs
15 said they expect to hear from Commissioner Olson occasionally and hoped she would
16 keep in touch.

17 Chair Cribbs made note of the task to fill Commissioner Olson's position on her Ad Hoc
18 committees. She asked for a volunteer on the Foothills Park Policy committee.
19 Commissioner Reckdahl thought leaving just the remaining two might be sufficient, unless
20 anyone had a desire to join the committee. He suggested starting with two and if they need
21 more help, a third could be added later. Commissioner Moss asked Mr. Anderson his
22 opinion on this. Chair Cribbs said having only two worried her. There are some check-in
23 points coming up with a number of tasks, and another in January. Commissioner Moss
24 said the point at the end of the summer will be important in learning from the summer's
25 happenings. Commissioner Brown remembered that during the discussion, they wanted to
26 have one Commissioner from the original Ad Hoc to stay on, and this was Commissioner
27 Olson. Commissioner Moss felt that was not as important as there are many fresh issues
28 to consider. Chair Cribbs suggested leaving the Ad Hoc at two for now. Commissioner
29 Reckdahl expressed that he is happy to join the committee and will try to cover as many
30 of their meetings as possible. Chair Cribbs appreciated his offer and said he would be a
31 great addition.

32 Chair Cribbs proceeded to the Racquet Court Policy Ad Hoc committee, and wondered if
33 Commissioner Reckdahl thought two people was sufficient on this committee.
34 Commissioner Reckdahl responded there is not a lot going on right now. If someone is
35 interested, a second person would be useful, but he didn't feel it was mandatory.
36 Commissioner Brown volunteered to serve as the second member. Chair Cribbs stated she
37 would very much like to cover the Baylands 10.5 Acres Liaison. As there were no other
38 Commissioners requesting to do this, she was appointed. Regarding the GSI Ad Hoc, she
39 asked Mr. Anderson to remind the Commission about this Liaison position. Mr. Anderson
40 explained it pertained to the Green Stormwater Infrastructure, usually meeting with the

1 Public Works team, looking at opportunities for groundwater green infrastructure, such as
2 cisterns, conservation efforts, keeping water clean, et cetera. He said it could involve
3 looking at different projects to decide whether they could be incorporated, to stay up on
4 the latest. He didn't think it was an overly-involved appointment. Commissioner Moss
5 said he was the liaison for a time. They met once a month, or even every two months. The
6 main benefit of GSI for Parks and Recreation Commission is that they have source of
7 guaranteed funding, so if there are projects having to do with the drought or irrigation, it
8 might be valuable this year. Otherwise, it is a fairly low labor commitment. Chair Cribbs
9 asked Commissioner Moss if he would be willing to serve again. Commissioner Moss said
10 he was willing, on a temporary basis.

11 Chair Cribbs invited reports, comments or questions in regard to Ad Hoc committee
12 activities.

13 Commissioner Moss summarized the Foothills Park activities and said they consisted
14 mainly of watching and monitoring. There will be another meeting in July or August. He
15 attended a Jasper Ridge event which explored additional partners that could be used,
16 including the Santa Cruz Mountain Stewardship Network, and the Santa Clara Valley
17 Open Space Authority. These groups have experience in some of the issues Foothills has
18 faced, and they could, in turn, use Foothills' experience in the future.

19 Commissioner Reckdahl said he and Commission LaMere reviewed the Valley Water
20 Plan, which they will discuss later in the meeting.

21 Chair Cribbs said the Fund Development Committee did not meet. She attended a meeting
22 of the Recreation Foundation, at which they discussed the music festival that is being held
23 at California Avenue and University Avenue every weekend through June, which the
24 Foundation is helping to fund.

25 Chair Cribbs said next month's agenda will include an appearance by both the Recreation
26 Foundation and Friends of the Parks to talk more about the work they did last year for fund
27 development, now that they have an idea of where the budget is going.

28 Commissioner Moss said, similarly, with the CIP Review Ad Hoc, they have basically
29 been waiting for the budget to be approved. There is not much they can do this year to
30 affect the CIP schedule. They intend to meet again later this year to talk about what they
31 can do next year.

32 The Racquet Court Policy did not meet, but Commissioner Reckdahl said they will talk to
33 Adam and see if anything is going on there. Chair Cribbs thought there was something
34 about lines on the pickleball courts and asked if that was resolved. Commissioner Reckdahl
35 said Adam was going to look into that. The issue was that they prefer darker lines that are
36 more visible. However, this would interfere with tennis. Commissioner Moss said there

1 was question about the Cubberley tennis court being resurfaced. He thought next time they
2 could research the status on that. Commissioner Reckdahl commented that there is little
3 desire at present to put a lot of money into Cubberley.

4 Dog Parks and Restrooms Ad Hoc is being scheduled by Chair Cribbs and Commissioner
5 Brown with some of the staff and some of the neighbors. Mr. Anderson added that the next
6 park restroom will be at Heritage, and his understanding is it is a shovel-ready project. He
7 was unsure of the timeframe, but thinks it will be soon. The other one, perhaps concurrent,
8 would be the Ramos Park restroom project.

9 Chair Cribbs said regarding the New Recreation Opportunities Ad Hoc, there have been
10 some very good meetings around the skateboard park, discussions of locations and
11 components that are needed. She said the stakeholder group is excellent. They are
12 expanding the group. The Ad Hoc asked that they include a female or two in the planning,
13 which they are happy to do. She thought they would be able to come in July to speak to
14 the Commission. Mr. Anderson thought this was possibly the case, and said he would like
15 to meet one more time with them to work out a few details before then. If not July, certainly
16 August.

17 Regarding the Sidewalk Vendor Policy Ad Hoc, Chair Cribbs thought the group had done
18 a lot of work on this. Mr. Anderson said the Ad Hoc has had some good thinking on this
19 and has had consultations with Attorney's Office to clarify questions. It is a challenging
20 issue, especially the legal parameters they are dealing with, so there is a lot of back and
21 forth with the Attorney's Office that may take a little more time. He advocated not rushing,
22 to ensure a solid policy. Chair Cribbs said there were many questions that came up and
23 there is a lot to think about.

24 Chair Cribbs gave a Liaison report on Aquatics, stating everything is good according to
25 Tim Sheeper. He is targeting July 5th to return to traditional operations, with no more
26 reservations for lanes. They have tripled their workforce. It appears Mr. Sheeper is having
27 no problems getting people to work. They will be scheduling more open time/family swim
28 time shortly. The new schedule will be implemented on July 5th. Mr. Anderson said he
29 would do some more research and add it to the Department Report for the next meeting.
30 Chair Cribbs thought it would be good to hear how the swimming lessons are going and if
31 anyone has asked for lessons with any kind of scholarships attached, given the times and
32 fiscal issues for families at present.

33 Commissioner Olson said nothing new has come up for the Baylands 10.5 Ad Hoc.

34 Commissioner Brown said there was nothing to report regarding the Community Gardens.
35 Mr. Anderson commented in regard to the Community Gardens. The Ad Hoc has not
36 needed to meet recently because things are going well, which he attributes to Catherine
37 Bourquin's great management of the program. He wanted to mention something she

1 recently accomplished that at the newest Community Garden, arising from the relationship
2 with the Palo Alto church on Arastradero, there was a successful pollinator plant planting.
3 They brought in Juanita Salisbury, and she graciously did a design plan. Staff purchased
4 the plants and have added them. This is a part of the Parks Master Plan, to have corridors
5 of pollinator plants where these species have multiple ways to get to resources they need,
6 which is a good step and enhancement to one of the City's gardens. Chair Cribbs thanked
7 Ms. Salisbury for all her work, and said they are lucky to have her.

8 Commissioner Moss said in regard to Cubberley, they are still waiting for the City and the
9 School District to meet. According to Councilmember Kou, they are still talking about the
10 rules on how they will conduct this. The item is moving, but slowly.

11 Chair Cribbs said the Field Users Ad Hoc report will be deferred until next meeting when
12 Vice Chair Greenfield is present.

13 Commission LaMere said he had nothing to report currently on the Golf Ad Ad Hoc, but
14 he will follow up with Lam to get an update on the Golf Course as well as First Tee.

15 There was nothing to report from the GSI Ad Hoc. Commissioner Reckdahl had nothing
16 to report on the PAUSD/City Committee.

17 Commissioner Reckdahl reported that Ventura Plan did go to the Council. He said one of
18 his complaints about the plan is that they didn't have enough park space. He said Council
19 deliberated about this and were sympathetic, but did not make any conclusions. They have
20 pushed the discussion to August when they come back after the summer break. Chair
21 Cribbs asked if there is anything the Commission should do about this. Commissioner
22 Reckdahl said there is interest in the Commission to have a statement encouraging
23 sufficient parkland. He said he is concerned because there is a housing shortage and they
24 are adding a lot of density, especially apartments, where people don't have backyards. So,
25 many things that people need parks to do the things that others could do in their backyards.
26 He said he thinks of this as an equity issue. The people in other parts of the city get good
27 parkland, but the new residents in this high density, lower income area should get the same
28 parkland. He thought it would be useful to have a letter from the Commission to support
29 this. Chair Cribbs said she agreed, and shared that she lived in the Ventura area for a long
30 time and there weren't a lot of parks, and that situation hasn't changed. She said she would
31 like to pull out the statistics about parkland and the number of residents and see if they can
32 make a case for more parkland. She said she would be happy to work with Commissioner
33 Reckdahl on this. Commissioner Moss was also in favor of a letter. Chair Cribbs and
34 Commissioner Reckdahl will work on this and talk about it again at the next meeting.

35 **3. Selection of Liaison for the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District**
36 **Hawthorns Area Planning Process**

1 Mr. Anderson presented this item. He said this is not a City project, merely one happening
2 close to City property. Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District is undergoing a
3 planning effort for their Hawthorns Area of Windy Hill Open Space Preserve. This is a
4 79-acre area located at the intersection of Alpine Road and Portola Road, about a quarter-
5 mile from Foothills Nature Preserve, and about a half-mile from Pearson Arastradero
6 Preserve. Mr. Anderson shared a map showing the location of the area. He said it is in very
7 close proximity to the Palo Alto nature preserves, which is why he thought it would be
8 good to have the Commissioners aware of it, and have a liaison follow the project and
9 participate in the public meetings where feasible. The area is subject to a conservation
10 easement which allows low-intensity recreational uses and related developments that align
11 with improvements typically offered on District preserves, such as unimproved trails, split
12 rail fences, parking areas and directional signage. In 2014, the District Board approved 54
13 action items in their Open Space Vision Plan that prioritized conservation and
14 management efforts throughout their jurisdiction. For the Hawthorns area, the direction
15 included opening the area, which is currently not open to public access, and developing
16 trails connecting to Portola Valley and Palo Alto trails; exploring partnerships to protect,
17 restore and interpret historic buildings; and improving habitat conditions in Los Trancos
18 Creek. The Plan would prescribe future uses and management activities at the Hawthorns
19 area. The District is proposing to hold a series of meetings with multiple opportunities for
20 public comment during the first phase of the planning process. Because the area plan may
21 include opportunities to form regional trail connections with other nearby public open
22 spaces, including Pearson Arastradero Preserve and Foothills Nature Preserve, Mr.
23 Anderson feels it would be helpful to have a Commission Liaison.

24 Chair Cribbs invited questions from the Commissioners.

25 Commissioner Moss said he has been very interested in this subject regarding connections
26 to other open spaces ever since he walked from Palo Alto to the sea on public land. He
27 went through Foothills to Los Trancos Open Space Preserve, and then on to Montebello
28 Ridge. He has always been interested in being able to get from either Arastradero or
29 Foothills to Windy Hill. He explained that one must go through Portola Valley at Portola
30 Valley Ranch, and that is as close as one can get. He says they desperately need easements,
31 or some way to get from the edge of Foothills over to the general area. He said this will be
32 a help in doing that, but not good enough, because a quarter-mile away is a long way to
33 try to get a public easement. He thought the best idea would be to get Portola Valley Ranch,
34 because they have trails, but it is very hard to get from Foothills to there, and from there
35 to Hawthorns. He said he would love to see something like this come to fruition, but it will
36 have to be with some additional public easements.

37 Mr. Anderson noted that Vice Chair Greenfield had mentioned interest in being a liaison
38 for this project. Since Vice Chair Greenfield was absent, she suggested advising him that
39 the Commission would be thrilled to have him take this on, and if he should decline, they

1 will take up the matter again. She said it is a great opportunity for the Commission to work
2 through a liaison with other entities who have the same desire for open space and trails,
3 and for cities to work together. She thinks it is a good, and fun, opportunity. Mr. Anderson
4 added it is an opportunity to learn from the best, as Midpeninsula Regional Open Space
5 District is sublime in their land management, their staff are outstanding, and he thinks
6 participation from either Vice Chair Greenfield or himself or other staff in whatever they
7 are allowed to participate in within their public outreach could only help Palo Alto to learn
8 from their experience. Chair Cribbs said this is a good point. She has watched Midpen
9 Open Space for many years since they were a client many years ago. She has watched
10 them grow and watched their acquisitions and how carefully they steward the land.

11 **MOTION**

12 Approval to appoint Vice Chair Greenfield as Liaison for the Midpeninsula Regional
13 Open Space District Hawthorns Area Planning Process was moved by Commissioner
14 Moss and seconded by Commissioner Olson. The motion passed 6-0, by roll call vote.

15 **4. Park Improvement Ordinance for the Baylands Tide Gate Structure Replacement**
16 **Project**

17 Mr. Anderson introduced the Valley Water staff, advising this is an action item in which
18 staff recommends that the Commission recommend that Council adopt and approve a Park
19 Improvement Ordinance authorizing Santa Clara Valley Water District’s Palo Alto Flood
20 Basin Tide Gate Replacement Project. Valley Water staff making the presentation
21 included Robert Yamane, Associate Civil Engineer; Roger Narsim, Capital Engineering
22 Manager; Alexander Hunt, Senior Water Resource Specialist; and Rechelle Blank,
23 Deputy Operating Officer.

24 Mr. Yamane began the presentation on the Palo Alto Flood Basin Ted Gate Structure
25 Replacement Project – Park Improvement Ordinance. The existing tide gate structure was
26 constructed in 1957, and the tide gate structure combined with the Palo Alto Flood Basin
27 Levies create an approximately 600-acre flood basin that provide a 100-year flood capacity
28 for Adobe, Barron and Matadero Creeks and also protect against coastal flooding. One of
29 the gates has been modified into a motorized sluice gate which the City uses to help
30 enhance the water quality within the basin.

31 Mr. Yamane explained that the project objectives include replacing the existing tide gate
32 structure which is over 60 years old and has aged beyond its service life; providing a better
33 level of flood protection service for Matadero, Barron and Adobe Creeks as well as to
34 protect parcels on Highway 101 from coastal flooding if the existing structure were to fail
35 and also to address impacts to flood protection due to future sea level rise; as well as to
36 limit impact to existing habitat within the Palo Alto Flood Basin.



1 Mr. Yamane shared photos of the Flood Basin as well as photos of the condition of the
2 existing structure, including spalled concrete, exposed rebar and weathering of the over
3 60-year-old concrete structure in a marine environment, and not having the epoxy coated
4 rebar. The structure has reached the end of its service life. He said from a high level
5 perspective they are proposing a schedule of this year doing a surface improvement to the
6 levy surface, followed by four years of five-month construction windows by an external
7 contractor to do the actual tide gate structure replacement work and de-watering.
8 Temporary trail closures are estimated to be a total of 36 months. They are currently in the
9 process of obtaining environmental permits to do the work and are hoping to get those this
10 summer or fall, as well as complete the design 100 percent by the end of the year. The
11 dates are tentative, pending project development and acquisition of the environmental
12 permits.

13 Mr. Yamane indicated that the trail work will go from the tide gate structure down to the
14 San Antonio roadside. They propose to do the work this year, using Valley Water O&M
15 staff. The current levy trail is a soil/earth levy material and is more of a summer, dry
16 weather access. They propose to put down a geotextile fabric with a Class 2 aggregate
17 base, ¾-inch maximum, compacted well, to make it an all-season pervious surface that can
18 function as a trail and also provide protection against the construction traffic. He showed
19 a table indicating anticipated timing of when the trail segments that would be open and
20 closed, depending on the time of the construction. The table ties in with the color-
21 coordinated trail segments on the map, both of which are attachments to the agenda. He
22 pointed out two locations where they would need to keep the trail open for part of the
23 detour route. These would have shared traffic with the construction traffic.

24 Mr. Yamane said they plan to install 4’x4’ construction project signs as soon as they get
25 approval finalized. These would be one on each side of the tide gate structure. They want
26 to also install 11x17 laminated signs which would be replaced more frequently, as often
27 as needed, to post the trail closure dates accurately. He said they were hoping for feedback
28 from the Commission or the City regarding the temporary staging area, a donut area to the
29 east of the existing tide gate structure. Currently it is mostly barren, but there are some
30 patches of vegetation. He said weren’t sure if the City would like to see this more as a trail
31 use or would like to see it attempted to be seeded.

32 Mr. Yamane suggested that construction benefits will include continued flood protection
33 and continued use of the Adobe Creek Loop Trail. The new structure will be somewhat
34 wider and have more aesthetically pleasing railing instead of the chain link fence.
35 Educational signage, coordinated with the City, will be placed near the new structure to
36 inform visitors of the history of the structure. The new motor-drive sluice gate that will be
37 on the new structure will have advanced technology that can be operated remotely and set
38 up on a schedule, to provide better control of the water elevation within the basin. This
39 will help with mosquito breeding as well as maintaining consistent water quality in the



1 basin.

2 Mr. Yamane outlined the anticipated construction traffic route, which for Year 1 may enter
3 from the Embarcadero Road and exit from San Antonio Road. Regarding public outreach,
4 they would like to have a pre-construction public meeting prior to commencement of the
5 work. They will keep their project website updated at all times regarding trail closures,
6 maps, et cetera. They will do a Nextdoor outreach, as well as physical postcard mailers.

7 Mr. Hunt spoke next, acknowledging that Valley Water appreciates the very special setting
8 that this project occurs in. There are many sensitive and protected fish and wildlife species
9 in the area. In addition to the biological value of the area, the project area supports the
10 Adobe Creek Loop Trail which is part of the Greater San Francisco Bay Trail. During their
11 site visits they observed how heavily utilized the trail system is. Staff at Valley Water who
12 live in the area have also emphasized its importance to the project team.

13 He said with those impacts in mind they thought long and hard about ways to avoid or
14 minimize impacts on the environment. He said, first and foremost, they knew that they
15 were going to be limited to a work period between September 1st and January 31st in order
16 to prevent any impacts to the nesting of California Ridgway's Rail which is an endangered
17 species in the area. With that limited work window in mind, they evaluated various
18 options. Hydraulic modeling demonstrated that some options have the potential to cause
19 erosion along the edge of Hook's Island, which supports a large, very nice patch of salt
20 marsh habitat. They rejected any of the options that could result in this erosion and aligned
21 the proposed tide gate in a manner that ensured that the island was protected. They also
22 sought options and configured the approach with the goal of minimizing the total length
23 and duration of the trail closure. Given that there will be some temporary impact to trail
24 users, they found that it was important they incorporate some new educational signage on
25 or near the tide gate to highlight environmental and/or historic resources to the public.
26 They look forward to working with City staff on the details of what is most suitable at the
27 site.

28 In addition to the design considerations, Mr. Hunt said they would also be implementing
29 a number of best management practices to avoid and minimize impacts. In light of the
30 design efforts, the project still results in some environmental impacts, primarily related to
31 various biological resources, but they have developed a suite of mitigation measures as
32 part of their CEQA process to reduce these impacts. The measures include having
33 biologists onsite to perform surveys or monitor construction as necessary; adding
34 temporary fencing to keep critters out and making sure that they are staying in the area
35 that they are supposed to be in; providing training for their construction crews; capturing
36 and relocating fish prior to de-watering the project site; and providing compensation for
37 wetland impacts by purchasing credits from a local mitigation bank in Foster City.

38 Mr. Hunt reported, regarding environmental review, that they finalized their CEQA



1 Mitigated Negative Declaration in April. They received comments on the draft MND from
2 the City as well as from BCDC the Bay Trail and other agencies. They considered the
3 comments and incorporated them into the document for finalizing as appropriate. They
4 have obtained environmental permits from numerous agencies, as Mr. Hunt presented.
5 They have been, and plan to continue, engaging with these agencies to get the project
6 permitted in time to meet their construction schedule.

7 Regarding trail impacts, Mr. Hunt emphasized that they do understand how important the
8 trail is to the community and have developed their detour plan based on recommendations
9 received from BCDC and Bay Trail staff who had experience working in the area. He said
10 there will be clear signage regarding the detour and they will widely advertise the detour
11 well in advance so there are no surprises for the community, to make sure everybody is on
12 the same page about what is going to be happening. Mr. Yamane invited questions from
13 the Commission.

14 Commissioner Moss remarked that it is interesting that one person's blight area is another
15 person's beautiful place, sharing that the only way he gets his three kids to go on the long
16 bike ride from South Palo Alto was the "bike bowl," which will be taken over as the
17 staging area. They love to ride in this area, even though it may not look like much or seem
18 like it's of much interest to anyone. Therefore, he requested that, when construction is
19 finished, they put the "bike bowl" back the way it was. Mr. Yamane informed that they
20 are not actually going into the bowl at all, and only the flat surface on top could be used
21 for a staging area.

22 Commissioner Moss asked if, when they put the all-weather surface on the road, it would
23 remain afterwards or would need to be taken away at the completion. Mr. Yamane thought
24 the intent was to leave it there. They received a comment from Commissioner Reckdahl
25 asking about the same topic. He said they were not planning to do a DG on top of that
26 because of the additional cost, but could possibly talk with City staff about it.
27 Commissioner Reckdahl asked for a description of the fabric that they will put on the trail.
28 Mr. Yamane explained it is a plastic fabric that will be covered with a Class 2 aggregate
29 base, of which there are different sizes, so they are using the smallest size gravel. It will
30 be well-compacted. Commissioner Moss asked how long it would last, or if the plastic
31 would degrade into the environment in time. Mr. Yamane said it is not biodegradable, and
32 it is something they are still talking about. They haven't had a comment specifically about
33 the material yet, and there was no opposition at this point. He said there are fabrics that
34 are biodegradable, but with these, when the vehicles drive over it, the gravel tries to spread
35 out and it pulls the fabric in tension, so the biodegradable fabrics don't have the tensile
36 capacity to provide the support for the vehicles. His understanding is that there isn't really
37 a viable alternative for that function.

38 Mr. Narsim added that the proposed fabric is called a geomembrane and has a lot of holes

1 in it, so it adjusts itself. It is covered with the aggregate base, so the fabric isn't exposed.
2 They have used this specific fabric in creeks, and it can take a lot of construction load and
3 has a history of good performance. It is not biodegradable. He said with the construction
4 load of this much, with the existing soft side at the site, he thinks they need something like
5 this that can hold the weight. It will not be noticed, but will be covered up. Mr. Yamane
6 also pointed out the alternatives in terms of not using it at all, saying they would likely end
7 up with damage to the trail during construction, which could cause delays for the
8 contractor, which could then result in more closure and construction delays.

9 Commissioner Moss said if they are using it in other creeks, it would be nice to know what
10 kind of life span it has, and whether it will need to be removed in 10 or 15 years before
11 it gets to that point. He wondered about their experience with using it in creek beds. Mr.
12 Narsim gave an example, of Calabazas Creek, San Tomas Aquino Creek and Pond A8,
13 where they do a lot of sediment removal in the area. He said with the high groundwater
14 pumping, the fabric was holding up well. He said without the fabric they have to put so
15 much gravel in, and the gravel sinks into the dirt because of the water. This fabric stretches
16 out and acts like a bridging for the saturated dirt. They have found it to be very useful. He
17 estimated that they have about 10 years of experience using this fabric.

18 Commissioner Reckdahl asked how many inches of gravel the fabric will have on top of
19 it and how hard it is when compacted. Mr. Yamane answered eight inches, and Mr. Narsim
20 said they are requesting 90 percent compaction. For example, in street gravel they request
21 98 percent compaction before putting down the asphalt. This will be a little less compacted
22 with the aggregate base. Commissioner Moss asked if they will be able to ride bikes on it.
23 Mr. Narsim replied that yes, the gradation maximum is $\frac{3}{4}$ inch. Most of the aggregate will
24 be one-quarter to half-inch, compacted well and all mixed together, so it will be good for
25 riding bikes. They are using the same kind of base material for their levy surface roads for
26 the District in a lot of places. Commissioner Reckdahl asked if it would be suitable for a
27 road bike as opposed to a thick-tired bike. Mr. Narsim said a road bike is meant for asphalt
28 with tin tires. He did not know, but said they could get back to them on that. Commissioner
29 Reckdahl said he rides the trail going down to Sunnydale, and there are a lot of road bikes
30 on the trail. He said people will be unhappy if it will be something that's gravelly and
31 mushy such that road bikes can no longer use that stretch. He advocated making the
32 surface useable for road bikes, because it is heavily used for those.

33 Mr. Yamane said he believes the Class 2AB aggregate was installed on the west side from
34 the Tide Gate structure to the Bixby parking lot. He said Ray Bramer did the install, but
35 Ray believed the City had later added a type of shell material to the surface as an
36 enhancement. Mr. Anderson answered that staff shares the same sentiment – that it's
37 critical that the surfacing of the improvements on the levy be comparable to all the adjacent
38 levies. He said Mr. Yamane and he have discussed this in terms of compaction, size of the
39 material, and granulars inside for good compaction. He thinks, based on the prior levy

1 work he has seen the District do, that they should end up with something very similar, if
2 not better, that holds up just as well. He said he has in the past seen certain areas where
3 they have used rock that was too big, without fines, and it did not compact well, and it
4 was hazardous to bikes, and a road bike could not use it. With what Valley Water is
5 proposing, Mr. Anderson said he thinks they will end up with a high quality product that
6 will last a long time. Regarding the question about shell material or DG or anything else
7 on top, he would not recommend that as it is very expensive and does not hold up to vehicle
8 traffic at all as it gets mushy and leaves dents. The compacted base rock with fines will
9 hold up many times better, in his experience. He said they do have oyster shell trails, and
10 they are very expensive, in the neighborhood of 20 times the cost of a base rock trail, and
11 they don't hold up at all. He feels they are looking at the most durable and efficient
12 surfacing material possible at the Baylands.

13 Mr. Narsim said he totally agreed with Mr. Anderson and adding DG would not help for
14 street bikes. He added that if the surface is constructed really tight, then it is somewhat
15 like an impervious site. They would like to have a pervious surface, so it must be balanced
16 out. The proposed material provides a strong support as well as being pervious so that
17 water drains through. He said sometimes with DG, water does not drain through very fast,
18 but they have used these materials on District levy access roads and have had good results
19 with them. He said they will go back and look at where they have used street bikes on this
20 kind of levy surface and will provide that data. Commissioner Moss said that is why he
21 was wondering if it's better to remove it when the project is completed, or if laying
22 something over the top of it after construction with a finer grain for crossover bikes would
23 be feasible Mr. Narsim said they can definitely look into that and could probably have a
24 different gradation on the aggregate base as well. Mr. Anderson asked, if down the line for
25 some reason there is some lift or exposure of the fabric, Valley Water would come back
26 and make the necessary repairs to conceal, repair or cover. Mr. Narsim said they would.

27 Chair Cribbs invited any further questions from the Commissioners.

28 Commissioner Brown asked regarding the SCADA system, what sort of redundancy or
29 backup power is built in to make sure there is resilience, for example, in the case of a
30 power outage or emergency or natural disaster. Mr. Yamane said they are talking with
31 some manufacturer/vendors of sluice gates. He said it is another conversation he was
32 probably going to have with the City soon, if they can find a standard product that's already
33 made that could also be most cost efficient. He said there are a few different products.
34 Although they definitely have the power out there, it will be hard-wired. Some of the
35 systems do have a battery back-up, and this is why it might be a possible to have the battery
36 back-up as well. They are also putting in a hookup for a portable generator, so in the case
37 of a power outage a generator could be available. He said the sluice gate could also be
38 manually cranked open if needed. Mr. Narsim said there are three overrides, a Plan B and
39 a Plan C.



1 Commission LaMere asked what the estimated cost of the project would be. Mr. Yamane
2 believed the total project cost, including everything, overall from the beginning, also
3 including previous attempted repairs done in 2017, would total around \$39 million. Much
4 of the cost is a lot higher than expected for a structure replacement because of the multi-
5 year construction aspect, mobilizing and de-mobilizing. Also, before they can do any of
6 the work, he explained how de-watering the system is a huge cost, because in order to do
7 any of the work. A sheet pile needs to be installed into a large perimeter around the area
8 in order to keep the water out of the work area, so is much preparatory work to be done
9 just to get in the area to work. In addition, they can only work for five months, outside of
10 the California Ridgeways Rail breeding season, during which the contractors have to get
11 out and come back again the next year. The multi-year construction significantly drives up
12 the cost. He added that a large amount of water can come in if they have a 100-year storm,
13 so they can't cut off the existing structure until the new structure is built and put into
14 service, which is another justification for the high cost.

15 Commissioner Olson asked if they think the new tide gate will last as long as the old one.
16 Mr. Yamane said he they think it will last a lot longer, because they have better concrete
17 now. He said in this marine environment it is recommended to use and epoxy-coated rebar,
18 which probably wasn't practical or even available back in the 1950s when the tide gate
19 was constructed. The epoxy-coated rebar will prevent corrosion from getting in and the
20 rebar. Corrosion causes the rebar to expand and pop off of the concrete, so this issue will
21 be addressed in the new construction.

22 Chair Cribbs thanked the presenters for the information and comments. She said obviously
23 there will be schedule changes and they will hear from the public about the trails being
24 closed, and when they're opened. Communication will be very important, and it looks like
25 the Valley Water team has thought about all of that. From the Commission perspective,
26 they are interested in the schedules and in what they plan to do about communication, and
27 she thinks they have done a good job of informing them about that. Mr. Yamane said they
28 will continue to coordinate with Mr. Anderson and the Ad Hoc committee.

29 Commissioner Reckdahl asked the two extra feet referenced in the document for sea level
30 rise. He wondered what would happen if the sea level were to go above that. Mr. Yamane
31 explained that there are two functions of the flood protection. One is to drain the basin out.
32 The other is sea level rise, coastal flooding protection. They are actually raising the
33 structure to the levy height and coordinating it with the Shoreline Phase II project as well.
34 That is being designed for more than two feet of sea level rise. The issue is that the way
35 that the flood basin drains out is based on gravity. He said that the sea is not going to
36 overtop the tide gate structure. He said they are still far from that. The problem is not that
37 the sea is going to overtop, but that the low tide is now two feet higher than the current
38 low tide, so the basin can't drain out of the tide gate structure. It is with the fluvial flooding,
39 or riverine flooding, that they can't drain the water level in the flood basin to the level that

1 they need for the 100-year flood protection of the three creeks. Commissioner Reckdahl
2 asked if the extra two feet in the flood basin means it has less capacity now. Mr. Yamane
3 said yes, it has less capacity for the creeks. But this is an adaptive design, so it really needs
4 a supplemental draining capacity for the basin, which cannot actually be done with the
5 gravity. He said that even if they quadrupled the size of the tide gate with quadruple the
6 number of gates, it wouldn't change that capacity. Even if they made the structure taller,
7 it is the height limit based on the low tide. So what would have to happen at that point is
8 a pump station would need to be added at a later time to supplement this. This is like the
9 problems they face with sea level rise with the Shoreline Phase II study. At some time in
10 the future it will need to be supplemented with a pump station for active drainage, not just
11 passive drainage.

12 Mr. Narsim said the numbers change all the time for sea level rise. He said every day there
13 is new modeling, and it changes all the time. With the model they used, the two feet is
14 around 35 years. Based on this, it may be 10, 20, 30 years down the road that a pump
15 station may theoretically be needed. He said this new structure is elevated at 15.5 feet,
16 almost 5.5 feet higher than the existing structure. Mr. Narsim advised that the structure
17 may not look pretty, because it's going to be sitting very high up. He said he wanted to
18 let them know that the project's concern is about the future, and he believes the levies will
19 be improved to match the same elevation. The project is being planned in anticipation of
20 future needs. Commissioner Reckdahl visualized that if you're on the levy after the
21 completion, when you reach the tide gate you will have to go uphill a little, go across the
22 tide gate and back down. Mr. Narsim said the transition will have an ADA-compliant
23 slope. Mr. Yamane affirmed that the rest of the levies will have to be raised in the future.

24 Commissioner Reckdahl said they have been talking with the SAFER Bay people and
25 wondered if the reference to Phase II is referring to SAFER. Mr. Yamane said the U.S.
26 Army Corp. is coordinating with SAFER. Commissioner Reckdahl said SAFER is run by
27 JPA and wondered if they are part of JPA. Mr. Narsim confirmed this and said they have
28 been in those meetings and they used that report as part of the basis for their study.

29 Commissioner Reckdahl asked Mr. Hunt about the wetland credits they are purchasing
30 and wondered what the impacts were that necessitated buying the credits. Mr. Hunt
31 explained that there are Waters of the United States and Waters of the State, which are
32 effectively wetlands and open water bodies that, through their permit process, they have
33 to mitigate for impacts to them, or offset their impacts. In this case, the permanent impact
34 occurred along the outboard side of the levy in about a five-foot wide strip of salt marsh,
35 where there is permanent loss of salt marsh totaling about 0.09 acres, so it's quite a small
36 area. Their team worked with Daren and City staff to try to identify some onsite options,
37 some sort of project in the Baylands to offset the impact, but those projects tend to have a
38 much larger scale than offsetting such a small level of impact. Therefore, in coordination
39 with the regulatory agencies who they've been discussing this with over the past couple of



1 months, they will likely be purchasing mitigation credits from the San Francisco Bay
2 Wetland Mitigation Bank, which in Foster City. He said essentially you just give them
3 money, and they've already mitigated in advance for you. Commissioner Reckdahl asked
4 what a tenth of an acre of wetland costs. Mr. Hunt said they have to mitigate at greater
5 than a one-to-one ratio. Also, they have to mitigate for "temporal loss" of the de-watering
6 area. Any time there is an impact that extends greater than two years, there is the
7 requirement to mitigate for that, so they are buying for 0.4 acre, which will cost about
8 \$800,000.

9 Commissioner Reckdahl questioned about Hooks Island, stating they looked into the flow
10 that's going through and are worried about whether it's going to cause erosion. He asked
11 if this will this change how sediment is delivered and if it would affect the sailing area.
12 Mr. Hunt assured him that is something they specifically looked at. Part of the reason they
13 did the modeling is there is a tidal channel that runs from the tide gate basically straight to
14 the sailing dock. They were concerned that by adjusting the tide gate itself that the channel
15 might migrate away from the sailing dock. He said that the modeling suggests that this
16 will not be a problem. Mr. Yamane added that this is why they wanted the new tide gate
17 structure to have the outlet in the same slough as the existing one. There is a throat where
18 the existing tide gate structure goes up, and they are aligning with that. He said they also
19 looked at the velocity differences and concluded this is a good option, because it maintains
20 the same characteristics. Mr. Yamane and Mr. Narsim addressed Commissioner
21 Reckdahl's concerns regarding the flow and impacts to the sailing area in detail, explaining
22 that the new structure will be aligned with the same throat and the flow trained with pilot
23 channel grading in to flow in the same direction as currently exists.

24 Commissioner Reckdahl asked Mr. Anderson if there is any dredging of the sailing area.
25 Mr. Anderson said they haven't done this since the 1980's. Commissioner Reckdahl asked
26 if they would be able to do this, or if the permits would be hard to get. Mr. Anderson said
27 the permits are fairly restrictive, which is probably why they stopped it so long ago and he
28 imagines it is significantly more expensive and rigorous to get permitting to do so now.
29 Commissioner Reckdahl asked if they anticipated any issues with being able to keep using
30 the sailing area. Mr. Anderson said he didn't believe so.

31 Commissioner Reckdahl was concerned about outreach, and asked if Valley Water was
32 going to be doing the outreach or the City, or both. Mr. Yamane said they will definitely
33 do their outreach using the signage, Next Door, the postcard mailers, and a pre-
34 construction meeting. Mr. Anderson said the City intends on working closely with Valley
35 Water, as they have been the entire time. He said he thinks enhancing the outreach of
36 Valley Water through good communication with Meghan Taylor, the City's Chief
37 Communications Officer, so as to get flyers or other materials to help disseminate the word
38 would be even better. He didn't think the City would be hosting extra outreach meetings.

1 Commissioner Reckdahl asked if the Park Improvement Ordinance was to be approved
2 tonight, and when it would go to Council. Mr. Anderson said it would go to Council after
3 their break so the earliest would be early August to get it on the Consent Calendar. Two
4 weeks after that, they would have the second reading of the ordinance, and then a
5 construction could begin 31 days after that. Commissioner Moss said there is a tight
6 schedule to get it done so that they can start in September and be done by January. Mr.
7 Yamane clarified that this year they were looking to start in early November, when the
8 crews would actually be able to get out there.

9 Commissioner Reckdahl was concerned that people needed to know about this right away
10 He said there has been so much good planning, but when something like this is coming,
11 he feels that people take it better if they know it's coming, as opposed to not telling them
12 about it well in advance. He said no one that he talks to knows about the project and asked
13 if they can put up signs that say, "Proposed on this site..." or something, just so they know
14 something is coming. Mr. Hunt said as part of the CEQA process they put a number of
15 signs out there. City staff helped them post signs in seven or eight different locations. As
16 part of their BCDC permit, they will also be required to have signs and will probably be
17 posting them in the same location. He said the signs will be perhaps one piece of the initial
18 outreach onsite, but he thinks they are open to more. Commissioner Reckdahl said having
19 signs out there would be very good, because he just wants people to be informed.

20 Commissioner Moss added there should be a map of the detours, not just verbiage, but
21 something that indicates where they will be allowed to go. Mr. Narsim said he thinks they
22 need to mount a pole first and have a pocket to have flyers in. That way, it will have the
23 detours, plus more information. Mr. Yamane said there is a bulletin at the bathrooms on
24 the Bixby side. He also referred to the multiple locations they posted for the MND. Mr.
25 Narsim said they have been preparing the signs for the last six months. Discussion
26 regarding signage continued, with Commissioner Moss concluding that the Commission
27 just wants to make sure it happens. Chair Cribbs said what's important for the Commission
28 to convey is that they're anxious about advanced communication, signage, and letting the
29 community know that this is a big deal. It has to be done, and it's going to be happening.
30 It's going to be inconvenient, but it has to be done, so people need to know about it earlier
31 rather than later.

32 Commissioner Reckdahl said in looking at the proposed Park Improvement Ordinance, it's
33 talking about mosquitos and maintaining water quality. He asked Mr. Anderson to give an
34 overview of how they plan on using this. He wondered if they are actively raising and
35 lowering the sluice, or just basically letting the water come down and letting the passive
36 gates do their work most of the time. Mr. Anderson said it's different right now than it
37 used to be because of the condition of the existing structure. Prior to its most recent
38 problems, five or six years ago, the Rangers would come out and adjust the gate as
39 necessary. The frequency of adjustments to it varies. There are times when it can be left

1 static, when approximately six inches open would get about a foot tidal exchange, which
2 would bring in water and flush it out, and get a good exchange. He explained, you've got
3 the gravity-fed exit and the one tidal gate to allow water in. During the rainy season there
4 are times when they leave it closed and there aren't any tidal waters coming in, and the
5 water is just passively exiting from the basin to the Bay. The way the mosquitos factor in
6 is at a particular height – negative 2.2 feet in the winter – if the water rises above this they
7 start to get ponding. Water will accumulate in low areas in the marsh in that 600-acre flood
8 basin area, and mosquitos will breed, so it's very important to monitor the water. In the
9 past they would actively manage this. In more recent times, the past few years, the water
10 has started to flow underneath the structure. Valley Water came out and did a very
11 extensive repair to try to stop that, but there are a few other issues with the aged
12 infrastructure that causes water to flow in in ways that they can't control. This is the
13 biggest problem in terms of making sure there is good tidal exchange, which means healthy
14 water and avoiding things like low dissolved oxygen which can kill off fish. The other big
15 piece is the controlling of the water levels to control ponding that breeds mosquitos.

16 Mr. Anderson went on to say that his feeling is that this new infrastructure will be far more
17 effective in allowing them to effectively control the amount of water that comes in from
18 the Bay into the flood basin. Commissioner Reckdahl asked if the flood basin is brackish
19 or fresh water. Mr. Anderson said it probably varies depending on the time of year. When
20 it's closed for long periods of time, during the rainy season, there is only got fresh water
21 coming down the confluence of the creeks into the basin as well as some discharge from
22 mountain dew as it is discharged into the basin, and very little saltwater coming in. During
23 other times of the year, such as during the summer when they try to get a good tidal
24 exchange, it would probably be closer to brackish. He said sometimes you can look at the
25 plant species in the flood basin. There is a mix of fresh, brackish and saltwater plants. For
26 example, he said most people learn about pickle weed when they study the Bay plants. If
27 there is pickle weed in the basin, it's certainly got elements of saltwater vegetation and
28 salt water from the Bay. But there are plenty of freshwater plants, too. He said brackish is
29 probably more accurate, but it fluctuates depending on the time of year and whether they
30 allow Bay water in.

31 **MOTION:** Approval to recommend that Council adopt and approve the Park
32 Improvement Ordinance for the Tide Gate Project was moved by Commissioner Reckdahl
33 and seconded by Commission LaMere The motion passed 6-0, by roll call vote.

34 Chair Cribbs and Mr. Anderson thanked the team from Valley Water for their presentation
35 and wished.

36 **V. TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR THE JULY 27, 2021 MEETING**

37 Mr. Anderson said the memo discussed previously on the NVCAP, regarding advocating
38 for parkland, could be an item at the July meeting. An update from Friends of Palo Alto



1 Parks and Recreation Foundation is a discussion item. There are also three potential items
2 that he needs to vet further. One is the Park Improvement Ordinance for Boulware Park;
3 potentially a discussion with the Skate Park to bring the Commission up to speed on the
4 latest discussions with the Ad Hoc. Also, depending on progress, the Sidewalk Vendor
5 Regulations could potentially be on July’s agenda, but it seems it will be closer to August
6 before being ready for an action on this. It could be a discussion item for July, but he would
7 like to meet with the Ad Hoc and come to consensus on whether they are at a good point
8 to share and discuss, or if they need a little more time to come up with a proper
9 recommendation. Chair Cribbs suggested thinking about the two foundations – Recreation
10 Foundation and Parks Foundation – and then see if there will be enough time to talk about
11 fundraising in general. She thought it would be good to get Skateboard on the July agenda.

12 Commissioner Moss wanted to make sure there would be a Foothills update for August.
13 He also stated that ten years ago, the anabolic digester near the old Palo Alto dump was
14 taken away from Bixby Park and that ten acres is due to go back into Bixby Park in
15 October, so he hoped they could get something on the August or September agenda from
16 staff or Karin North about that and what it means. Mr. Anderson said this is Measure E,
17 and come November, 2021, there is potential for Council to rededicate that ten acres as
18 parkland. He will check with Public Works, who were heavily involved in the Measure E,
19 when it was undedicated.

20 Commissioner Reckdahl said there are two things on his wish list. First, a fire briefing. He
21 said it would be really nice if the Fire Department could come in and have discussion about
22 their plans for Foothills Park. He thought it interesting in the Fire Plan that the grassy area
23 of Foothills Park is designated as a safe refuge, so if people can’t escape because the roads
24 are clogged, they can go and hide in the middle of the grassy area and put up structures. It
25 would be interesting to hear their thoughts about both evacuation of the Park, getting
26 people off the trails, and also other issues like the safety issues. Mr. Anderson said he has
27 passed that request on to Fire and OES. They have received and acknowledged it, but have
28 not come forward with a commitment to a presentation, per se. Commissioner Moss said
29 there are new techniques for how to do fire breaks without introducing invasive species.
30 He wondered if Midpen was a good resource for that, and Cal Fire for the Santa Cruz
31 Mountains, and if there was some way to get an update on that at the same time, in that
32 same discussion. Mr. Anderson said he would look into that. It probably wouldn’t come
33 from the City’s OES or Fire Department, but he will research and try to find out what
34 they’re doing and borrow best practices. Chair Cribbs also hoped that they could do
35 something with fire; Commissioner Reckdahl had asked about it a couple months ago, and
36 she thought it was a good idea then and a better one now. She wondered if there any kind
37 of invitation the Commission could send out. Mr. Anderson said right now it would
38 probably be best to come from him, but it could be revisited if necessary. If it is not going
39 the way they want, they could also consult with Council Member Kou as well and find
40 some different ways to make it happen.

1 Commissioner Reckdahl said there are plans for extending the purple pipe. He said things
2 like Mitchell Park, Community Center and Library have been double piped, to take the
3 recycled water and run it into the bathrooms. He thought it would be nice to know the
4 long-term plan for the purple pipes. The plan was also to go up into the Stanford Research
5 Park. It would be nice to know what their timeline is and what their plans are, and also
6 what the Commission can do to speed it up since it has been on the table for quite a while.
7 Mr. Anderson thought Karin North came to the Commission quite some time ago and
8 presented a little bit on this. It was probably wrapped up into a bigger discussion. She
9 shared much the same, that they have long-term plans but nothing in the immediate works.
10 They have a proposed route that they had looked at, but the cost was very high, and there
11 has been no movement on that. Chair Cribbs asked if there is federal funding for that? Mr.
12 Anderson said Ms. North would know. He will get some basic information and include it
13 in next month's Department Report and put in a request to say, "At some point when
14 you've got some heft to a presentation, could you come to the Commission and give them
15 an update?" Commissioner Reckdahl said it wouldn't have to be a big thing, but just to
16 hear what the plans are, and if there is a lot of "to be determined," that's fine.

17 **COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

18 Chair Cribbs suggested they should all try to listen to at least one musical production on
19 either California Avenue or University, coming up either Saturday or Sunday, because
20 they've been fun and people are appreciating them. She wished the Commission a great
21 summer and Fourth of July.

22 **VI. ADJOURNMENT**

23 Meeting adjourned by motion by Commissioner Olson, second by Commissioner
24 Reckdahl, at 9:00 p.m.