



**MINUTES  
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION  
SPECIAL MEETING  
May 25, 2021  
Virtual Conference  
Palo Alto, California**

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

**Commissioners Absent:**

**Others Present:** Council Member Kou

**Staff Present:** Daren Anderson, Catherine Bourquin, Lam Do

**I. ROLL CALL**

Chair Cribbs welcomed the attendees to the meeting.

[roll call]

**AGENDA CHANGES, REQUESTS, DELETIONS**

**ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

Michal Shalon [phonetic] spoke about Palo Alto Dog Owners Association’s desire for an off-leash hours pilot program, to determine if such a program could work at any park in Palo Alto. She said most dog owners would love an enclosed dedicated dog park in every neighborhood. This use of the area in a park would not require adjacent homeowners to disclose such details to prospective buyers, thereby potentially affecting a future sale. If there are concerns with increased noise with a dedicated dog park, a pilot program would be reversible; the costs are minimal; and there would be frequent reviews for any adverse impact. She said that current budget cuts make a fenced dog park a very low priority, and adding a dedicated dog park has been noted to raise the ire of at least a few significant voices, and would probably be voted down. She feels an off-leash program for local residents could work without increasing traffic and parking issues and be kept under the radar in terms of not posting on city websites.



1 Ten-year-old, Cooper Phillips, asked the City of Palo Alto to not use pesticides. He shared  
2 that he was on a family walk last fall and noticed a yard sign about being pesticide-free.  
3 He said their website is [www.pesticidefreezone.org](http://www.pesticidefreezone.org). He talked with his family about what  
4 this meant and why it is so important, and shared the information with his classmates. He  
5 put yard signs in his yard and gave some to classmates to put in their yard to raise  
6 awareness about pesticide use. Cooper said he wrote letters to the Mayor, Governor  
7 Newsome and President Biden. He said the City has reduced its pesticide use by at least 90  
8 percent over the past 20 years and he encourages people to take the next step and become  
9 100 percent pesticide-free. He cited the dangers of pesticides to people, animals and  
10 gardens. They can cause cancer, Alzheimer’s disease and birth defects. He shared natural  
11 alternatives to using pesticides as well as herbicides, and asked people to keep Palo Alto’s  
12 great parks safe for people and animals by eliminating pesticide use.

13 Joel Gartlet [phonetic] said he emailed the commission in March asking why Gate D  
14 between Arastradero Preserve and Foothills Preserve was closed to bicyclists when it’s  
15 legal to ride to both sides of the gate. Information was sent to him by Mr. Anderson from  
16 2005 when the decision was made, discussing Arastradero Gateway acquisition and  
17 conservation easement and creation of the two new entrances to the preserve, one from  
18 Arastradero and one from Mid Pen’s Los Trancos. Since Los Trancos is currently closed  
19 to bicyclists it made sense that this entrance was limited to walkers, but the information  
20 didn’t explain why Gate D was limited to foot traffic. He is hoping it can be changed or  
21 understand why the decision was made. He wondered if it is better to advocate to the Parks  
22 and Recreation Commission or directly to the City Council to change this. He hoped that  
23 this question could be discussed under item three on the agenda. If not, he would like to  
24 know how to get it on the agenda for future discussion.

25 Chair Cribbs thanked the public speakers for their participation.

26 **II. DEPARTMENT REPORT**

27 Mr. Anderson started with a friendly reminder to complete the demographics survey that  
28 was emailed to all board, commission and committee members on May 20<sup>th</sup>, as part of  
29 citywide race and equity work. The Mayor has requested all board and commission work  
30 plans be sent to the clerk by the end of May, and they will go on the Council Consent  
31 calendar for June 21<sup>st</sup>. He said Parks and Rec was one of the first in the city to complete  
32 the work plan. An update was emailed regarding the Highway 101 pedestrian/bike bridge  
33 project. They were planning on installing the bridge over the center section of the freeway  
34 on Saturday, the 29<sup>th</sup>. However, the contractor had to reschedule for June 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup>. More  
35 information can be found on the website [cityofpaloalto.org/101bridge](http://cityofpaloalto.org/101bridge).

36 Mr. Anderson reported that the Recreation Division and Recreation Foundation will be  
37 hosting World Music Month on University and California Avenues. Music will be played  
38 on every Saturday and Sunday in June. More information is available at



1       parecfoundation.org. He gave a teaser regarding a Community Services in-person event  
2       that will be held on July 4<sup>th</sup>. As he gets more information, he will update the Commission.  
3       He said Cubberley has established their expected re-opening date, Tuesday, July 13<sup>th</sup>. They  
4       will resume limited rentals based on county and state guidelines at that time. Theatre  
5       rentals may resume before that date. They are opening up applications for the September  
6       2021 through August 2022 rental season this week. A field allocation for summer season  
7       has been established, and the fall season brokering meetings will be held mid-June.  
8       Summer camps start the week of June 7<sup>th</sup>. Summer class registration opens on May 27<sup>th</sup>  
9       for residents and June 3<sup>rd</sup> for non-residents.

10       Mr. Anderson shared a photo from May Fete. Chair Cribbs was pleased to see the photo,  
11       because the signs are of her grand dogs who occasionally reside with her in Palo Alto –  
12       Harley and Jasper, in their costumes for the parade. She thanked the staff for their  
13       creativity and the Palo Alto Recreation Foundation for the financial support.  
14       Commissioner Moss asked for an update on the May Fete. Mr. Anderson didn't have  
15       details to share but said he will send an email from the Recreation Division. Commissioner  
16       Moss said it would be nice to know details because it was so unique and impressive.

17       **BUSINESS**

18       **1. Approval of Draft Minutes from the April 27, 2021 Special Parks and Recreation**  
19       **Commission Meeting**

20       Chair Cribbs initiated discussion on the new action minutes, stating she was somewhat  
21       hesitant about the new format, because much of the background is lost. She invited  
22       comments from other Commissioners. Commissioner Reckdahl said he likes verbatim  
23       minutes because he can go back and search for words to find when something was  
24       discussed, which is time-consuming to do with the recording. He asked why the change  
25       occurred. Mr. Anderson replied it was part of the new handbook as a direction from  
26       Council. Vice Chair Greenfield described the new action minutes as “extra light” and the  
27       verbatim minutes as “very heavy” in detail and length and wondered if there was a happy  
28       medium.

29       Ms. Bourquin advised that summary could be used if the Commission preferred.  
30       Commissioner Moss said he prefers the verbatim minutes, at least for the Commissioners  
31       to read, to be able make sure their comments were interpreted correctly and also as a  
32       reminder of what was discussed. Ms. Bourquin elaborated that Council does action  
33       minutes and summary minutes. Summary gives more context to what is discussed, without  
34       being word-for-word. Commissioner Moss said he has gone back to past minutes to read  
35       what was said, which he feels is valuable. Vice Chair Greenfield wondered if the Council  
36       had intended it to be just action minutes or was intending to have summary included as  
37       well. He had expected something similar to the recent Council minutes. He asked Council

1 Member Kou if she had any comments on the Council’s intent. She replied she didn’t  
2 know if that was the intent, although she has personally always valued verbatim minutes.

3 Commissioner Reckdahl remarked there were summary minutes when he first started and  
4 it was changed to verbatim because of the staff time spent summarizing the discussion. It  
5 was felt to be better from a staff and an accuracy standpoint to just have verbatim minutes.  
6 Vice Chair Greenfield felt summary minutes will entail a more active period in reviewing  
7 minutes, where Commissioners can confirm some nuance that was included or left out of  
8 the minutes. Overall, he would like to get clarity on Council’s intention and work to adapt  
9 and figure out what is best moving forward and make a recommendation. Ms. Bourquin  
10 will check on this and report back to the Commission.

11 **MOTION**

12 Approval of the draft Minutes was moved by Vice Chair Greenfield and seconded by  
13 Commissioner Moss. The motion passed 4-0-2 with Commissioners Brown and Reckdahl  
14 abstaining.

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

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

18 Baylands Tide Gate – Vice Chair Greenfield said there was no status update on Baylands  
19 Tide Gate. They are waiting for Valley Water approval. Mr. Anderson thought the Valley  
20 Water board did approve it, and they are planning on bringing the Park Improvement  
21 Ordinance to the June meeting.

22 CIP Review – Commissioner Moss said there is one more milestone. The City Council is  
23 to meet one more time, sometime in the next week or two, for a final on the CIP budget.  
24 Mr. Anderson indicated that the Finance Committee did their budget wrap-up and their  
25 recommendation will be sent to Council on June 21<sup>st</sup>.

26 Dog Parks and Restrooms – Chair Cribbs said staff will be scheduling another meeting in  
27 regard to this situation.

28 Fund Development – Chair Cribbs said they did not meet, but as the Liaison for the Parks  
29 and Recreation Foundation she attended their meeting and learned about the support they  
30 are providing for community service programs.

31 Foothills Policy – Commissioner Moss said they had a long meeting in preparation for the  
32 presentation today, as well as starting the process of research for the end of summer and  
33 end of the year. He said it is an ongoing process, and they have another meeting planned  
34 this coming month. Vice Chair Greenfield added they are focusing on the leftover priorities

1 based on the last time with the Commission, and they highlighted specific areas to focus  
2 on, figuring the best way to move forward on items as they are able to.

3 Racquet Court Policy – the Ad Hoc had no updates.

4 New Recreational Opportunities – Chair Cribbs said most of their time has been spent last  
5 month talking about the skate park. They had two good meetings with staff who provided  
6 excellent information about potential location and design. The next step will be meeting  
7 with Sam and his colleagues to hear what they would like to see in the park and potential  
8 locations, which will drive the cost. She said it is exciting and they are moving forward.

9 Chair Cribbs stated is helpful to hear what the Ad Hocs are doing. She wants to see if this  
10 method works or if the Commission would want to go back to written reports, or a hybrid  
11 of doing both.

12 Vice Chair Greenfield gave an update on Safe Routes. Last Friday, May 21<sup>st</sup>, was “Bike  
13 to...Day,” replacing the more traditional “Bike to Work Day,” as transportation has  
14 changed over the past year. This is an annual event to encourage commitment to bicycle  
15 transportation. He said it’s nice to see this happening out on the streets and have City staff  
16 and members of Silicon Valley Bike Coalition out handing out bags. He also reported there  
17 is a South Palo Alto Bikeways project underway, a conceptual plan development targeted  
18 to end by August. There is a virtual route tour this Thursday at 6:30 p.m. that will be  
19 repeated on May 22<sup>nd</sup>. There is a summary meeting coming on June 22<sup>nd</sup> including a  
20 linkage to the 101 Bike/Pedestrian Bridge. More information is available on the City  
21 website by searching for South Palo Alto Bikeways.

22 Vice Chair Greenfield reported, as Field Users Liaison, work continues on new signage  
23 for Cubberley turf field and running track. He will be meeting with staff regarding what  
24 the specific guidelines should be. Chair Cribbs asked if the lights are still being used at  
25 night. Vice Chair Greenfield said the lights are gone, as they are no longer necessary after  
26 the switch to daylight savings time.

### 27 **3. Foothills Nature Preserve Update**

28 Mr. Anderson introduced the guests in attendance to present the update on the Foothills  
29 Nature Preserve. Park Ranger, Catherine Caldwell, would provide an update on visitation  
30 at the Preserve. Alex Von Feldt, Executive Director, Grassroots Ecology would talk about  
31 environmental monitoring efforts. Elliot Wright, Executive Director, Environmental  
32 Volunteers will share about a new video on Foothills Preserve that the volunteers helped  
33 create as well as a new program that the City and volunteers are collaborating on. He said  
34 the staff report contains further information in regard to these topics. The City Manager  
35 assembled this group in 2021 to identify and recommend potential improvements to  
36 Foothills Nature Preserve. This group has representatives from Grassroots Ecology,

1 Friends of Foothills Park, the Environmental Volunteers, Stanford University Haas Center  
2 for Public Service, Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve, Town of Los Altos Hills and PRC  
3 Chair and Vice Chair. He said he was very grateful for their support, time and energy.

4 Catherine Caldwell, Acting Foothills Supervisor, addressed the Commission. She collects  
5 the statistics and presents them to Mr. Anderson in a yearly memo. So far, it has been a  
6 much busier year, with increased visitation, given that the Preserve is now open to a much  
7 wider population. So far there have been about 124,000 guests in the Preserve from  
8 January through April. Measured against 2020, this was a 322 percent increase from the  
9 prior year. The number is a little skewed because of the closure and limitations presented  
10 by COVID-19. Compared against the historical average, this is up 193 percent, almost  
11 three times as busy as in the past. Closures for capacity were very common, 16 times  
12 during the first four months of operation. On weekends this was sometimes two to three  
13 times a day due to reaching capacity. This involved shutting down the park, waiting for  
14 people to leave, then re-opening, and still reaching full capacity. She said it took a while  
15 to fine tune this to where they were only doing that once. Closures due to capacity have  
16 become less common, and the last time was on April 5<sup>th</sup>, Easter weekend, which was  
17 expected.

18 Since beginning sale of passes, there have been 13,000 cars admitted on weekends. This  
19 includes all kinds of entries. Only 725 of those have been in the annual pass program,  
20 which make up the vast majority of the free entries to the Park, about 5.5 percent of total  
21 weekend entry. The annual pass has been a growing program. The “all other” types of free  
22 passes account for 1.5 percent. This includes students, veterans, people with ADA placards  
23 and active military. Being open to more people, there have been many more dog turn-  
24 aways, with 530 dog turn-aways recorded during the weekends from January through  
25 April. In the same period in 2020, it was only 47. Compared to the historical average, it is  
26 almost a 2,000 percent increase in people bringing their dogs to the park and being  
27 unfamiliar with the park rules.

28 Ms. Caldwell continued that the specific numbers are provided in the staff report. She  
29 shared a slide illustration of the impact that the increased visitation has had for the Ranger  
30 and OST staff at the Park. In 2021, they have responded to 15 calls for service, which  
31 include anything that has them going through dispatch or needing to write a report, from  
32 emergency medical response, missing persons, violations of park rules, responding to fire  
33 calls, or smoke checks. They have seen a significant increase in these types of things. From  
34 the historical average, they are up 50 percent, which is a lot more work for the Ranger  
35 staff, writing these reports.

36 One of the most common violations and complaints has been parking, with over 200  
37 parking violations recorded. They have issued 175 written warnings for people parked in  
38 red zones, people parked in the road and other no-parking areas; in 27 of these the Ranger



1 decided to issue an administrative citation. Each of these takes 45 minutes to an hour to  
2 complete the full report. The entrance operations are focused on operating the main  
3 entrance at Foothills. Normally it could be run with as few as one staff member but now  
4 takes three to five staff members to operate it safely, because the cash handling must be  
5 done carefully, and road safety must be maintained as there is a very small turn-away for  
6 the park. Many people back up onto Page Mill on a hairpin turn which becomes unsafe.  
7 Staff tries to move that line as quickly as possible while maintaining the cash handling.

8 Ms. Caldwell shared that all of the extra people also require more Visitor Services  
9 attention, more orientating of people to the trails. They also try to give these people breaks.  
10 At present, to operate safely and efficiently requires about three to five members, going  
11 beyond current staffing of Rangers for the weekends. There has been support from other  
12 members of CSD who are using their time on weekends to assist with staffing.  
13 Councilmember Cormack has also volunteered her time generously to support the  
14 operations.

15 The attention to Arastradero, which is the responsibility of their office, and even Foothills,  
16 has been limited with all the attention focused on the main entrance. Rangers are often not  
17 getting out to check on the parks and do the proactive patrols, but are mainly reactive and  
18 staying in the booth to make sure staff is looked after and providing a point of contact for  
19 the public. Patrols of other preserves have become severely limited on weekends, with  
20 many of those responsibilities pushed further into the week. The responsibilities of OSTs  
21 are now focused almost entirely on weekend operations, with less hours to operate during  
22 the week to do other park improvement or maintenance projects. With increased use of the  
23 park, janitorial costs have increased. This includes increases due to the cost of COVID  
24 sanitation, maintenance and increased requirements. There have been supply cost  
25 increases, which were anticipated, with more people in the park.

26 Mr. Anderson said many of the Commissioners were interested in annual pass sales. He  
27 said up to May 14<sup>th</sup>, a total of 482 annual passes have been sold.

28 Alex Von Feldt presented an Environmental update. She they had conferred with Mr.  
29 Anderson last fall Mr. Anderson, looking at what they could do for environmental impact  
30 monitoring. Grassroots Ecology stewards the site with all community volunteers. They  
31 came up with a plan for what they could do within their current staffing. Some of their  
32 measures are limited, given their current budget, and don't reflect the exhaustive  
33 environmental impact monitoring that might be seen on a bigger project. She said the  
34 main impacts they've seen are the trail widening in a few places, primarily the Chemise  
35 Trail from Vista Point to the lake, which was a popular place for people to park. The good  
36 news is none of the special habitat areas they've been monitoring have been impacted. As  
37 attendance is going down a bit they are keeping an eye on those areas to see if invasive  
38 species come in or if the land heals itself. She said that there were also social trails

1 happening – people making their own trails from the parking lot down to the lake. The  
2 park staff put up yellow caution tape and signs, and people generally adhered to that, so  
3 that social trail was healed by April.

4 She said the other part they were going to look at was the invasive species. The park is  
5 remarkable for the biological diversity existing within it. Friends of Foothills has been  
6 helping monitor and control non-native invasive plants. They are focused on making sure  
7 these species aren't coming in more often with more visitors. By the time of the report,  
8 some of the target species they were watching for, including yellow star thistle and Italian  
9 thistle, haven't germinated yet. They will keep an eye on that and provide updates moving  
10 forward. One of the main rare species in the park is the *Dirca occidentalis*, or western  
11 leatherwood. They were concerned it might be impacted, but mapping of it suggests there  
12 is no impact, and even new plants emerging.

13 Grassroots Ecology has been bringing out volunteers every year to remove non-native  
14 species, install native plants and learn about the local ecology. While they had to suspend  
15 their usual model of every Sunday 30 to 40 students coming out, for COVID limitations,  
16 they were still able to go out with “stable cohorts” of high school and middle school  
17 students and college interns. There was a session for each of the four seasons, 10 to 12  
18 students coming every week to learn about Foothills and help with plantings, mulching,  
19 removal of invasives. The college interns did great work, totaling about 500 hours of  
20 volunteer labor for the park.

21 Mr. Anderson acknowledged the excellent work of the Grassroots Ecology team and  
22 turned the presentation open to Elliot Wright from Environmental Volunteers.

23 Mr. Wright described the organization's love of science and nature. He was excited to  
24 share details of their activities, starting with accolades for the team in rallying around the  
25 124,000 visitors that came and had a safe, fun and meaningful visit at the Foothills Nature  
26 Preserve. He shared an informative video showcasing the Preserve as well as describing  
27 the opportunities that are there, and also listed some of the principles and instructions to  
28 “leave no trace,” in the Preserve.

29 [video presentation]

30 Mr. Wright said they are excited about the great opportunity to welcome more people. He  
31 detailed the Trail Ambassador Program, which trains volunteers to help with the  
32 challenges that the Rangers are feeling. They program's focus is to try to meet with people  
33 coming to the Preserve and help out with common questions so that the Rangers have  
34 more freedom to achieve their goals. They have focused their efforts on bringing Trail  
35 Ambassadors to a few sites. Some are walking volunteers throughout the Preserve. Others  
36 are situated at Nature Discovery Tables at peak volume times on the weekends. They have  
37 worked Saturdays since January and have had conversations with about 1,792 visitors and



1 several more with walking volunteers. On Saturdays and Sundays from 10:00 to 2:00 their  
2 table is at Lake Boronda. The volunteers do not have a Ranger appearance and don't have  
3 a uniform, but instead wear a "nature volunteer" uniform – vests, nametags – while sharing  
4 demonstrations and materials on their Nature Discovery tables.

5 Mr. Wright explained that many people have common questions, including hours, trails,  
6 how to park, simple questions. They also dive into questions about what they will see and  
7 experience on their hikes. They see it as a great opportunity for them to build the cup of  
8 curiosity that people will fill up with the water that day, with the goal up building  
9 excitement about their experience on their nature trip. Some post their experience on  
10 iNaturalist. Their goal is to grow the program. He gave credit to Councilmember  
11 Cormack, who is out there volunteering a huge amount of her time, helping to guide people  
12 into the right parking spots or just having a safe, fun experience at the Preserve.

13 Mr. Wright said they also want to create a team of 50 to 60 volunteers who are at the ready  
14 to help out in peak moments, but also on common weekends. He shared a link for a posting  
15 to join the organization and become volunteers helping out at Foothills. They see this as a  
16 partnership, linking arms to help out. The volunteers are not exclusive to one group; rather,  
17 if they have an interest in restoration, they'll be pointed to Grassroots Ecology or helping  
18 with the discovery, being a roving Trail Ambassador, or with Friends of Foothills Park  
19 helping remove the yellow thistle. He said it's been an honor working with the Committee  
20 and he is excited to work with them.

21 Mr. Anderson passed on the same gratitude to the entire Environmental Volunteers team,  
22 especially Mr. White, the docent who comes up on Saturdays to donate his time and who  
23 does a great job engaging with visitors. He explained another initiative from the  
24 stakeholder group, a list of infrastructure improvements aimed at protecting the habitat,  
25 improving visitor safety and the visitor experience. The group working on this topic met  
26 and walked toward the Preserve on several occasions discussing possible improvements,  
27 such as split rail fencing to help encourage visitors to stay on the trail; creating a pedestrian  
28 pathway through the Preserve so that visitors aren't walking on the road. This was very  
29 evident at the beginning when cars were parking everywhere, and there just wasn't a great  
30 place for people to walk. Better defined parking spaces with crosswalks, speed bumps to  
31 improve pedestrian safety, and additional signage were the main items called out. The  
32 group came up with this list and a crude drawing that needs to be refined professionally so  
33 that it can be submitted as part of a design package to get approval from Planning to make it  
34 happen. He will bring this to the Commission when he gets to that level for feedback,  
35 opinions and thoughts.

36 Mr. Anderson showed a photo of the fencing. There is temporary fencing that was  
37 surprisingly effective, though not labor-free. Considerable Ranger time was spent putting  
38 it up, and to maintain it they have to come out periodically and fix the tape, et cetera, but

1 it has been effective. They would like to replace the unsightly caution tape and t-stakes  
2 that is used in numerous sites throughout Foothills and Pearson Arastradero Preserve with  
3 attractive split rail fencing.

4 Mr. Anderson described the problem of parking, showing an example of cars parking such  
5 that there was no space for pedestrians to walk. They would like to see the pedestrian  
6 pathway to be for the most part just off the edge of the road, where oftentimes there is  
7 already a fairly worn area. The infrastructure group has proposed adding some curbing  
8 along the edge of the road and then formalizing the trail with a safe, durable accessible  
9 pathway for visitors to use and as much as possible have it throughout the entire preserve.

10 He said staff is developing a conceptual plan set. From there they will have some cost  
11 estimates and work on a funding source for this proposal and ultimately bring it to the  
12 Commission for feedback. Next steps include June 2021, staff will remove the nine hillside  
13 barbecues. The Commission had recommended this and Council approved for fire safety  
14 reasons. Right now, the barbecues are bagged, so no one is using them. On June 24<sup>th</sup> the  
15 adopted ordinance that the Council approved on May 10<sup>th</sup> will take effect. On  
16 approximately August 21<sup>st</sup>, he hopes to bring the infrastructure improvements for PRC  
17 review.

18 Chair Cribbs was excited to see the progress made and she congratulated all involved. She  
19 is impressed with the relationships and partnerships that have developed within the  
20 community groups and environmental groups and thanked all who participated in the  
21 presentation.

22 Chair Cribbs invited comments from members of the public.

23 Joel Gartlet [phonetic] reiterated his request for a few minute's discussion about Gate D  
24 between Foothills and Arastradero.

25 Hearing no further public comments, she invited comments from the Commissioners.

26 Commissioner Moss was excited about the partners and emphasized that the Commission  
27 could not possibly do this without them, given the monumental budget issues they are  
28 facing. To have two of these events happening simultaneously is above and beyond, and  
29 he appreciates all of the volunteer work. He mentioned that many more Rangers are  
30 needed. Even though the money is not there, the need for staff time is required to keep the  
31 park safe and clean. He said he is also very pleased to see the number of annual passes that  
32 are being sold and thinks over the summer there will be more sold. He recognized that all  
33 of the dog turn-aways is a major issue and anything that can be done to give people a  
34 heads-up he would like to promote. Regarding Grassroots Ecology looking for invasive  
35 species and dealing with social trails, they are doing a fantastic job, especially in spite of  
36 COVID and not having usual work parties, they still manage to come up with a cadre of

1 interns. He would love to see them even volunteer to give guided tours. He said he went  
2 to a Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve meeting and they had someone from the Santa Cruz  
3 Mountain Stewardship Network and also the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority.  
4 They are trying to do a stewardship assessment. They need test cases, such as what Palo  
5 Alto is going through to help other organizations throughout the Santa Cruz mountains to  
6 better deal with the same types of issues.

7 Commissioner Olson thanked Catherine for the data being gathered by her team which is  
8 helpful to the Ad Hoc in trying to prioritize things to see how the aggregated data is coming  
9 out. She had an opportunity to camp at the park recently and was impressed with the  
10 Rangers and their way of approaching people and with the wonderful staff there. She said  
11 before she had spent a weekend out there, she was aware that both Grassroots Ecology and  
12 Environmental Volunteers had done a lot at the park, but seeing all the people on the  
13 ground and how it all comes together was very impressive. She went out in the morning  
14 on Saturday and saw the volunteers out picking out amongst the grasses. Much later when  
15 she came back they were still there, hunched over picking out grasses. She was struck with  
16 the hard work they were doing , the great value they bring to the community. She told how  
17 her kids dragged her over to the Discovery Table as well. They were fascinated by the eggs  
18 and snake skins, et cetera. She encouraged all to get out there and enjoy, and recommended  
19 getting there earlier or later in the day to help spread out the visitors and avoid the parking  
20 problems.

21 Vice Chair Greenfield also commended the stakeholder partners and said we are fortunate  
22 to have the key partners of Grassroots Ecology and Environmental Volunteers which give  
23 outstanding service to the community. He thanked the Ranger staff as well, for jumping  
24 through hoops in the past months since the park has opened. Much work has been  
25 happening in many spheres in a short amount of time. He said it feels like we're on the  
26 right track, and we'll wait and see what happens this summer, as visitation to increases  
27 and the need to adapt continues. He said it is great to see the annual passes working out  
28 and, although there are lots of details to sort out, there are lots of people working together  
29 to make it happen.

30 Chair Cribbs added her thanks to all of the Ad Hoc for all the extra work that they have  
31 done. She said the Commissioners are obviously very pleased with all that has been done  
32 on everyone's part. She was glad to hear the comments expressed showing they have come  
33 a long way since the decision was made to open the park. There are still things to do and  
34 will continue to be things to do. In the interim check-ins from staff will be very useful, so  
35 that they will be able to focus on the remaining priorities.

36 Commission LaMere said he appreciates everything that people are doing to make the  
37 opening a success. He said we certainly need to be careful of the impact on the  
38 environment, but to see the number of people that are able to be exposed to the area is

1 fantastic, even as they continue to monitor the use and keep an eye on where the social  
2 trails are developing and the impact on nature. He appreciates so many people coming  
3 together to make this a success. He had one question from Ms. Caldwell’s presentation –  
4 what is an example of an administrative citation and why would it take as much time that  
5 is does?

6 Ms. Caldwell replied that the most common ones are a form of citation that they can use,  
7 instead of issuing a citation as a notice to appear in a courtroom, which would be common  
8 for an infraction or misdemeanor to go to court and argue it out. An administrative citation  
9 is handled within the City by its own legal staff. It’s a different pathway for dealing with  
10 a citation or violation that keeps it within the city and a smaller area for the infection level.  
11 It takes a long time to process, particularly parking violations, because of the requirements  
12 for the full report and narrative and the information which has to be obtained. It requires a  
13 large amount of paperwork, and right now, as far as parking goes, administrative citations  
14 are the only citation that they can use, so it becomes a time-consuming process.

15 Commissioner Brown was impressed with the presentation and the team. She liked the  
16 analogy of filling the cup. She said of all the people visiting the park, when their cup is  
17 full, they’re going to want to give back and volunteer and be part of the amazing team.  
18 She enjoyed the data; the percentages can be overwhelming, but there’s a obviously a  
19 learning curve. She looks forward to seeing the story that is told.

20 Commissioner Reckdahl thanked everyone for their hard work. He felt they have done far  
21 better than ever expected, including staff and also the Ad Hoc. He asked regarding the  
22 annual passes for the non-residents, what cities they are coming from. Mr. Anderson said  
23 he did not have that information but would check to see if that could be pulled.  
24 Commissioner Reckdahl said one of his concerns is they would just be coming from all of  
25 the neighboring areas, and the opening would benefit Los Altos Hills and not benefit EPA.  
26 He said it would be interesting to see if they are spread over the area. Commissioner  
27 Reckdahl said one of his remaining concerns is finances. It takes three to five Rangers to  
28 run the front gate, and when he looks at all the fencing and trails they want to add, he  
29 wonders how to fund all that. He asked about funding overall.

30 Mr. Anderson responded that he doesn’t have the answers to all the funding questions. He  
31 has some resources that come at the beginning of the next fiscal year to address some of  
32 the infrastructure improvements. For example, the fencing. He believes he will be able to  
33 handle that with existing capital budget. Others are going to be more complicated. The  
34 parking, for example could be more expensive and he needs analysis from a professional,  
35 meaning hiring a consultant. Some of the larger capital expenses haven’t gone away, such  
36 as replacement of three restrooms eventually. The added cost of things like janitorial are  
37 being dealt with right now. They have been limping along with support from other admin  
38 staff or CSD staff. Custodians at Cubberley, which was closed during COVID, have been

1 helping out in other areas with cleaning restrooms. Now that they will be back to their  
2 regular jobs there will need to be another plan. The additional cleaning work will need to  
3 be handled with staff, volunteers, extra help from Cubberley staff working one day a week,  
4 et cetera.

5 Commissioner Reckdahl asked if Arastradero or Baylands are being neglected by having  
6 the Rangers come up to Foothills. Mr. Anderson said yes, this is true. The extra demand  
7 and focus on Foothills has been to the detriment of attention that would have been spread  
8 out among the other preserves. This will eventually lead to a backlog of maintenance and  
9 other issues from lack of attention. Whenever they're able, they pull staff away to help at  
10 the other locations and do the work that needs to be done. He thinks it will help to fill the  
11 vacant Supervising Ranger position. This is in the budget proposal, and Finance  
12 Committee has not deterred from the proposal, so hopefully this would be able to be filled.  
13 There has been turnover, as usual with hourly staff, but if those positions get filled as  
14 approved, this will be a huge help in dealing with the backlog of maintenance and other  
15 issues. The long-term fix at this point is greater reliance on volunteers where possible;  
16 other members of the department and other departments giving aid and assistance to meet  
17 the demands; and making sure to take care of at least the minimum patrol and maintenance  
18 of the other preserves.

19 Commissioner Reckdahl pointed out that Arastradero has seen a lot of people during  
20 COVID. He is concerned about trail maintenance, especially since there are so many bikes  
21 there and asked if there is regular trail maintenance done. Mr. Anderson said that is  
22 fortunately not an area where there have been cutbacks. There is a contract with a trail  
23 maintenance contractor which was not reduced, so the maintenance of the trails at Foothills  
24 and Arastradero will continue. He said that visitation is high at Foothills and Arastradero,  
25 but the Baylands has probably close to 600,000 visitors a year, so very heavy visitation  
26 there, too.

27 Commissioner Reckdahl said there were early reports of people biking on the trails in  
28 Foothills Park. He wondered if that has gone away. Ms. Caldwell responded that reports  
29 continue and people on trails have long been a complaint that they respond to. There has  
30 been an increase, but more in line with the increase in visitors. They respond to this when  
31 they have the opportunity, but they don't have the opportunity right now, particularly on  
32 weekends, to get beyond the station or even out of the truck to walk the trails, which is the  
33 best way to encounter cyclists on trails. Commissioner Reckdahl wondered about  
34 additional signage. Mr. Anderson said there has been additional signage, and they are also  
35 hoping for an outcome from the Trail Ambassador Program to help with that messaging.  
36 Ambassadors can relay the message that bikes aren't allowed and point out where they can  
37 go. Ms. Caldwell added that every trail now has a "No Bikes" reminder sign throughout  
38 the park and on all of the gates. The majority are small, but there are large signs at the  
39 entrance D and at the other fire gates, saying "No entry."

1 Commissioner Reckdahl asked about Gate D, stating when it was opened, the Beta Ridge  
2 Trail was just a pedestrian trail, so it made sense at that time to not allow horses or bikes  
3 through. He said, now, as the public speaker mentioned, bikes are allowed on both sides  
4 of the gate, so he wondered why bikes are not allowed to go through Gate D. Mr. Anderson  
5 responded that Council made that decision when the trail was opened and it hasn't been  
6 re-examined since then. He said the argument may be that typically those are mountain  
7 bikes coming up from Pearson Arastradero into Foothills, and it would encourage more of  
8 those bikes going into the trails at Foothills where they are not allowed. Commissioner  
9 Reckdahl commented he would hope people would be able to follow rules. There are  
10 people on mountain bikes in Foothills Park now, who are law-abiding bicyclists who can't  
11 go through gate because they follow the rules, so it penalizes the wrong people. Bottom  
12 line, it is something that Council will have to address. Commissioner Moss said the  
13 Foothills Ad Hoc has an agenda item about a bike policy. It is very difficult to keep bikes  
14 off of trails, especially mountain bikes. You can put many signs up there, but you have to  
15 make sure that they stay on the roads, and that is difficult. Vice Chair Greenfield said the  
16 unfortunate reality is that there are a lot of people not following the rules. It is probably a  
17 minority that are causing problems for the greater majority, but bikes on the trails are an  
18 issue. He understands the perspective that letting mountain bikes in through that gate  
19 entrance will exacerbate problems and has concerns about changing that. He asked if  
20 horses are allowed in Foothills. Mr. Anderson said no. Pearson Arastradero Preserve is  
21 where horses are allowed.

22 Commissioner Reckdahl asked Ms. Caldwell if there have been issues related to smoking  
23 at Foothills. She answered that there has been no record of a smoking contact between the  
24 Rangers in the four months since opening. Commissioner Reckdahl asked about flora and  
25 fauna. Regarding invasive species, he wondered how invasive they are. She responded that  
26 it depends on the species. The reason they target the ones they are is that they are easily  
27 spread through both humans on trails as well as bikes, and when they get in, they get into  
28 disturbed areas and actively seed. They are fire hazards and take up resources from other  
29 plants. They keep an eye on them, because small, initial populations are much easier to  
30 control. Commissioner Reckdahl asked how much invasion occurred while COVID  
31 prevented people from coming in and cleaning out the invasives. She responded some  
32 species got a foothold last spring when volunteers couldn't go out. They have been  
33 working with volunteers since June of 2020 when they were allowed to go out. Friends of  
34 Foothill have been doing the same. She said even though they have fewer numbers of  
35 people, the fact that the same volunteers are coming out on a regular basis and are more  
36 skilled, the impact is about the same as in a pre-COVID year.

37 Commissioner Reckdahl asked about the animals. He said there used to be a camera, a trail  
38 counter, on Los Trancos Trail. Mr. Wright said he has seen this fairly recently. Ms. Von  
39 Feldt said the Rangers helped them install a wildlife camera at their nursery in the 7.7-acre  
40 part of the site. They started tracking that and have seen foxes, a bobcat and even a

1 mountain lion right outside of the fence looking in. Other than this, there is not any  
2 scientific monitoring for animals. Commissioner Reckdahl asked if there is a way to, once  
3 a week, go through it and do a count, maybe playing it at increased speed, et cetera, and  
4 using it as a trending tool. Ms. Von Feldt said they've worked with San Jose State at  
5 Arastradero students and volunteers to do some of that, although their budget and scope  
6 doesn't allow their staff time to do that right now. They have another partnership with  
7 Stanford students coming up this fall, so that is an idea, as well as some crowd-sourcing  
8 techniques that people are looking into. Right now it's anecdotal based on what can be  
9 seen on the wildlife camera. Commissioner Reckdahl said he would like to see this process  
10 automated and asked if the students could analyze this camera data. Ms. Von Feldt said  
11 usually when they talk with Stanford students they have a list of projects. That has always  
12 been one of them, but so far they haven't taken them up on that one, but they can continue  
13 to promote it. Commissioner Reckdahl asked if they have the ability to capture and deliver  
14 days of data on their wildlife camera if there was someone that wanted to automate the  
15 process. Ms. Von Feldt thought this was the case but would have to look into it.

16 Commissioner Moss said Jasper Ridge has been doing camera trapping for years. Jerry  
17 Hern is an expert at that, so he said by all means use those camera traps and get someone  
18 to donate some more and use them. They do have the AI software already for Santa Cruz  
19 mountain animals, so he encouraged taking full advantage of that. Chair Cribbs was glad  
20 it was brought up because it can be put on the list for the stakeholder group to talk about  
21 making contributions to that in future, and relationships with AI. Mr. Anderson  
22 commented that what has been used in the past in this regard is citizen BioBlitz's, stating  
23 if you do them with a frequency, such as quarterly, they might be able to come closer to  
24 achieving something like what they are talking about here. It would be all volunteer-led.  
25 The processing of that is all done by volunteers. This might be an option and a good one  
26 to bring up with our people group. Commissioner Moss said the Santa Clara Audubon  
27 often does a bird census, so they could be a resource as well. Commissioner Reckdahl said  
28 he appreciates all the work being done, especially the volunteer work.

29 Chair Cribbs asked about the annual passes and the video, what the plans are for promoting  
30 both of those. Mr. Anderson said the plan is to connect with their Chief Communications  
31 Officer, and also Elliot is also very skilled. It will be put out on social media, websites and  
32 all the other things the Chief Communication Officer recommends. He said publicizing  
33 and getting people excited about the annual pass option during summer is a wonderful idea  
34 that they will be pitching, probably on the communications push-out that Megan Taylor  
35 does. Chair Cribbs said she appreciates the data about the resident annual pass numbers  
36 and non-resident annual pass numbers. She said outreach to East Palo Alto and  
37 underserved communities is of particular interest to her. She also wanted to know if there  
38 will be camps at Foothills Park this summer. Mr. Anderson said yes there will be camps.  
39 He said there are programs planned for this summer. John Aiken confirmed that this is the  
40 case. She wrapped up the item by thanking everyone who has participated in this.

**4. Sidewalk Vendors in Parks Policy**

Mr. Anderson asked for feedback on regulations relating to sidewalk vendors operating in Palo Alto’s Open Space and Parks. Staff recommends that the Commission consider creating an Ad Hoc committee for this issue. In 2018, the State of California approved SB-946, which requires cities and counties to permit sidewalk vendors to operate within their jurisdictions. This includes city parks; however, the city can regulate the time, place and manner of the vendors if certain conditions are met. He said these are key, because for every regulation that they want to pass related to this, they have to be able to tie it to at least one of these:

- It must be directly related to the objective of health, safety or welfare concerns.
- It must be necessary to ensure the public’s use, enjoyment of natural resources and recreational opportunities.
- It must be necessary to prevent the undue concentration of commercial activity that unreasonably interferes with the scenic or natural character of the park.

Mr. Anderson said he had the City Attorney’s office review the draft list, which are just suggestions. The attorney looked at the draft list and felt that each met one or more of these criteria. The police department is currently drafting a replacement ordinance to be compliant with SB-946. As part of the process, staff are seeking input from both Parks staff and the Parks and Recreation Commission related to the rules for how these vendors would operate in parks. Staff created a long list of potential new regulations for the sidewalk vending in Open Space and Parks, the focus being to ensure sanitary, safe clean conditions, to protect wildlife and habitat, and to continue to provide positive visitor experience. Staff also recommends creating maps of limited areas in Palo Alto’s Open Space preserves where vendors are allowed to operate.

The thinking behind this is that all the rules become onerous to figure out where you can and cannot go. He suggested, and the attorney said it would be okay, to have a map for each area to say where vendors may go, as a starting place for the Commission to consider. It would be easier for staff who have to enforce the regulations. They are trying to ensure vendors can safely operate without blocking trails or parking spaces; damaging landscape vegetation; disrupting recreation for visitors; harming wildlife, ecology or views; damaging park infrastructure; encouraging food in problematic places; or encouraging pests. These are current problems, and they do not want to exacerbate them. He presented three slides of regulations for the Commission to consider, as shown in the staff report, which are fairly exhaustive in all the covered criteria. Mr. Anderson suggested the formation of an Ad Hoc in which staff can go through them and give feedback.

Regarding the maps, it was hard to find spots that wouldn’t be blocking roads, parking or trails. He highlighted one area at the Baylands, an open area, compacted base rock where cars do not park, but there is still good travel as a possible appropriate place to consider.





1 Likewise, at the Baylands Athletic Center, if not blocking a pathway or road or parking  
2 spot, there is a paved area at the Athletic Center. In the draft regulations it says if there  
3 was a concessionaire operating, like at the golf course, this would preclude someone from  
4 coming in and vending. There is a snack shack at the Baylands Athletic Center, so we  
5 could add a rule to the effect that it is not appropriate to vend when the snack shack is open  
6 or something to that effect. He said they would have to create more maps. The attorney's  
7 office thought it was not likely they could preclude a place from vending altogether.  
8 However, in looking at, for example, Esther Clark Park, there is only one trail that goes  
9 through it, a dirt trail. He looked at other agencies' rules around vending, and they don't  
10 allow them on dirt trails, so perhaps it could be just one of the adjacent streetside parking  
11 spaces if they wanted to operate there. It is questionable whether anyone would ever want  
12 to vend at such a place where there is only sporadic visitation. It is probably unlikely, but  
13 it doesn't stop them from having to go through this exercise and define the rules around  
14 vending.

15 The next steps in the process – June or July 2021, to have the PRC provide a  
16 recommendation on a regulation for the vendors, and August or September of 2021 would  
17 be the anticipated date for Council discussion and potential of a new ordinance. The  
18 Attorney's Office was not sure if these regulations would be wrapped into an ordinance or  
19 would be stand-alone regulations

20 Chair Cribbs invited public comments on the topic. Hearing none, she invited questions  
21 from the Commissioners.

22 Commissioner Brown asked if there had been complaints about sidewalk vendors and what  
23 the complaints have been in the past. Mr. Anderson said they have gotten complaints, most  
24 frequently regarding the Magical Bridge Playground, where there are 25,000 visitors a  
25 month, in that it causes a lot of waste material and mess on the playground equipment.  
26 Commissioner Brown asked, if this was required back in 2018, what the delay was in  
27 enacting the regulations. Mr. Anderson said it came to his attention about a month-and-a-  
28 half ago. He had not heard about it and thought maybe it was something the police  
29 department had been taking their time with. The Attorney's Office reached out to him  
30 about a month-and-a-half ago.

31 Commissioner Reckdahl said he was torn about this. In some situations, sidewalk vendors  
32 add ambiance and contribute to a community feel in a park. But if kids are getting the  
33 Magical Bridge dirty, or littering, he can see it being a problem. He is not sure how liberal  
34 to be in allowing vendors. One concern is the size of the vending. If it is too large, as  
35 people have to pass around it, you're blocking a lane of traffic. If it can be prohibited when  
36 there is already a concessionaire at the park, he wondered how large of a radius would  
37 apply to this, and if there are nearby cafes, for example in Mitchell Park, would that apply  
38 to the park? Mr. Anderson did not believe so, and they would still have to find locations

1 where it would be appropriate and those rules would be in place. Perhaps something  
2 specific could be added to Mitchell if necessary. He said the one that stood out most to  
3 them was the golf course, where there is a full-time open restaurant. That would cover the  
4 entire golf course, but the street up to it would be open for vendors, such as the sidewalk  
5 along Embarcadero Road. He did not know if that would hold true to the Mitchell Park,  
6 but he thought that in Mitchell Park they would probably still be allowed to operate. In the  
7 draft language, he said he added in a certain width of pathway, trails less than eight feet  
8 wide, which was his best guess. There are different sized vendors that have different sized  
9 carts so, depending on the crowd, it could draw more people in and take over a trail,  
10 depending on how popular the cart is.

11 Mr. Anderson remarked that the challenge is to be fair. This is intended to be something  
12 that allows vendors to operate, so they don't want to be overly restrictive. At the same  
13 time, they want to protect those assets. On a narrow trail, people will go around the vendor  
14 on the grass or landscaping, and it gets trampled and will soon kill off plants or grass,  
15 which they want to avoid. Another example is an increasing number of ground squirrels  
16 taking food out of peoples' backpacks, far more aggressively than have been in the past,  
17 to the point of being a problem. They had posted a "No Feeding" sign, and not having  
18 food in playgrounds is something they've been working on. They don't wish to lose the  
19 ground that's been gained on that issue. Also, there has been a problem where people are  
20 cooking in a park and the stains from grease get onto the surfacing and are impossible to  
21 get out. Mr. Anderson said he wants to also be cognizant of these things as well and protect  
22 resources from accidental incidents like that. Commissioner Reckdahl expressed that this  
23 will be a challenging subject.

24 Commissioner Moss remarked he is really sorry about this regulation. He unambiguously  
25 suggested there should be a monumental cost put on every piece of food sold by a vendor,  
26 to pay for trash cleanup and environmental mitigation. He dreads this in the Open Space  
27 Preserves. An ice cream vendor near the front gate strongly indicates the ice cream and  
28 the paper wrapper will be on the trails far into the park. Boronda Lake will have trash in  
29 the water. He said there is a cost that City Council is going to have to pay for to keep the  
30 environment clean and unspoiled. He said, of course, the ground squirrel issue will be  
31 worse in the Open Spaces. He feels putting a \$2 or \$3 ice cream cone surcharge on each  
32 purchase would probably discourage vendors. He reiterated that the cost must be  
33 considered, much as we would like vendors to be around.

34 Commissioner Olson asked if there is any sort of permit or permit fee that is being  
35 contemplated. Mr. Anderson said he believes Palo Alto Police would handle that, and there  
36 is a modest fee associated, but it is still under discussion. Commissioner Olson assumed  
37 this would not include a food truck, but be limited to sidewalks. Mr. Anderson said he  
38 believes that is correct. Commissioner Olson noticed some of the trails and grass areas and  
39 vegetated areas are shown, but she wondered if waterways are identified to be protected.

1 Mr. Anderson said this is a good idea. Commissioner Olson said she thinks the commercial  
2 potential will be more likely to drive some of this, with higher density parks the more  
3 likely areas where it will be seen, as well as the trash and waste problem. She suggested  
4 designated areas with extra trash cans around. She would vote for Commissioner Moss to  
5 be on the Ad Hoc for the item.

6 Commission LaMere asked if we know how food trucks are permitted, or if they are  
7 permitted in parks at any times. Mr. Anderson said he believes it is only by permit, if there  
8 is a special event where it will be part of the permit request which goes through a multi-  
9 department review, including the Fire Department to vet the owner and equipment.

10 Vice Chair Greenfield appreciated the first pass set of rules the staff have worked on for  
11 this big undertaking. He appreciates that Parks and Recreation Commission is being  
12 engaged on this. He asked if SB-946 distinguishes between parks and open space areas  
13 with respect to permitting vending and if we are required to permit vending in the open  
14 space areas. He wondered if Mid Pen has the same requirement to permit vending in their  
15 open space areas. Mr. Anderson said he can't speak to MidPen but he did ask that question  
16 of the attorney. His response was there would have to be a very good rationale for  
17 excluding them altogether. The example of Esther Clark is one where it's hard to imagine  
18 a place that's appropriate, but he said we need to be finding some options. The two areas  
19 that Mr. Anderson came up with for Baylands are two very, very small areas, for a 2,000-  
20 acre preserve. He said if we don't feel it's appropriate in most of the open space, we can  
21 find small areas where we think we could allow it. He did not include this in the map, but  
22 there are some for Pearson Arastradero, one small area that would be feasible in the  
23 parking lot, the only spot that would be safe for the vendor and for the public. Vice Chair  
24 Greenfield thought rather than getting into the details this evening, he would favor forming  
25 an Ad Hoc to pore over the policies and help craft a recommendation to the Commission  
26 to work more efficiently. Chair Cribbs agreed this is the next step on the agenda.

27 Chair Cribbs said she is hearing it's not possible to separate parks and open space, so that  
28 vending in open spaces will have to be allowed. Mr. Anderson said this is correct. In the  
29 designated areas, she asked if vendors could move around in the area, like with an ice  
30 cream cart, such as the one at Mitchell Park? Or would they have to stay in a fixed  
31 designated spot? Mr. Anderson had considered this question and said that these vendors  
32 would be parking outside the preserve and pushing the cart all the way in, so the  
33 assumption would be that they are along the edge of the road, stopping as customers come  
34 by. He said it's a situation where they do the best they can providing simple guidance that  
35 makes sense. Even in light of the challenge of enforcing this, Mr. Anderson thought it  
36 would be valuable to have something simple to say to vendors. Having a simple map for  
37 the Ranger to give them to inform them where they can go to sell would be valuable.

38 Commissioner Reckdahl asked if a surcharge would be allowed, assuming that regular

1 sales tax would be apply. Mr. Anderson said he would check with the attorney, although  
2 he thought probably not. There is a heavy concern about trash. There is an item that says  
3 they've got to provide their own trash and they've got to take it out and that they could  
4 make that more robust.

5 Commissioner Brown asked if, because these are a food service establishment, if they  
6 would be subject to the disposable food service ware ordinance in the city. Mr. Anderson  
7 confirmed this is the case. He added another issue is the three sort system. They should be  
8 providing all three services – trash, recycling and composting. He tried to envision how  
9 that would work, and a staff member suggested they could have three different-colored  
10 bags, one for each of those. This would be an added challenge for them, but a more  
11 responsible one. Vice Chair Greenfield commented it is an opportunity for them to be more  
12 forward-thinking and trend-setting.

13 Commissioner Moss offered that the regulation says that the cities can tell you when,  
14 where and how often. He suggested that you could provide for special events, like movie  
15 night or music in the park in Mitchell and not have to provide every minute of every day  
16 in every park. He would like the City Attorney to explain that in more detail and use that  
17 to keep them out of the open spaces, except maybe for a special event, like on a Saturday  
18 for a couple hours. He said he wants to know how much limits we can have on all three of  
19 those things mentioned.

## 20 **5. Establish a new Ad Hoc Committee for the Sidewalk Vendors in Parks Policy**

21 Chair Cribbs asked for any volunteers to be on an Ad Hoc for this item. Commissioners  
22 Moss and Brown and Vice Chair Greenfield volunteered to join this Ad Hoc.

## 23 **MOTION**

24 Commissioner Reckdahl moved to create an Ad Hoc Committee including Commissioners  
25 Greenfield, Brown and Moss, to explore policies for Sidewalk Vendors in Parks. The  
26 motion was seconded by Commissioner Olson. The motion passed, 7-0.

## 27 **6. Baylands Nature Preserve Interpretive Sign Project**

28 John Aikin, Director of Junior Museum and Zoo, updated the Commission on the  
29 Interpretive Sign Project, which got its start in 2016. He said they have been calling it  
30 Friendship Trail. He described the interpretive vision for the series of signs, which was to  
31 bridge two communities that are caring for a salt marsh – East Palo Alto and Palo Alto. It  
32 was conceptualized when the East Palo Alto facility was used while renovating the Nature  
33 Center. They realized how close they were and thought it would be great to challenge  
34 people to move between the facilities. He explained that there are specific ideas around  
35 how the signs will shape the visitors' experience. It will have focused content – focus on

1 things you can see, smell or feel at the site. Visitors will also learn about people protecting  
2 and preserving the marsh. The labels are in Spanish and English. The project connects  
3 facilities in East Palo Alto and Palo Alto. One could start at the Cooley Landing Education  
4 Center in East Palo Alto, come to the Lucy Evans Nature Center, go down to the sailing  
5 station launch and end up at the Environmental Volunteers EcoCenter.

6 Mr. Aiken shared an example of an interpretive sign on the deck of the Lucy Evans Nature  
7 Center. The idea is that all of these will have similar look and feel and language. There are  
8 limited interactive exhibits located in safe places where they can be managed. The budget  
9 is \$233,000, which is revenue from local and state grants. He thanked the Friends of Palo  
10 Alto Parks and Environmental Volunteers for their support. He said they pulled the design  
11 out of the grant request for the State Parks to increase the opportunity to receive the  
12 \$162,000, which is for fabrication and installation. Mr. Aiken recognized the partners in  
13 the project, who are working hard to protect the Baylands. He said they have been working  
14 with San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority, collaborating on their exhibits on  
15 Friendship Bridge, making sure the public has a seamless visitor experience.

16 He said the last time they met was in June of 2017. Since then the Planning and  
17 Architectural Review Board has approved the project. They received input from public,  
18 stakeholders and partners and came up with the idea of a working title for the trail system  
19 called Friendship Trail, because it goes across Friendship Bridge and is about bridging  
20 these two communities. They obtained grant funds for the soft costs and engineering costs,  
21 developed the design and surveyed for the deed restriction required by the State. The State  
22 of California requires that they put a deed restriction on land that they own so that that  
23 land stays in the purpose that these signs are intended for 30 years. Meaning, the park will  
24 remain a park. The open space will remain an open space.

25 Mr. Aiken said the original ideas for interpretive messages was a long line of signs all the  
26 way along the way, but everyone was rather appalled at that number of signs. They then  
27 found ways of clustering them into interpretive nodes, having one to four signs at each  
28 node. They talk about the neighborhood, particularly in East Palo Alto, because in meeting  
29 with the residents and the city managers, there is a great source of pride in the history of  
30 the neighborhoods. They thought the residents would enjoy it if they focused some of the  
31 interpretive messages there. The Boardwalk was built for the five interpretive nodes. There  
32 are special railings holding the signs. Some of the interactive elements will be in this  
33 location. The standard for attaching signs on the trails include some that are similar to the  
34 standards holding up the signs in Rinconada Park. Some will have a concrete footing and  
35 others will have pads. They are working with the Rangers to determine where the pads are  
36 needed, which are more expensive, and which type of construction is appropriate.

37 Mr. Aiken described the timeline for the project from the conception in 2016 to present.  
38 What is yet to be done is to complete the design and the deed restrictions. The text of the

1 signs is written and is being translated into Spanish currently. Those will be input for every  
2 sign, laid out, kerned, photos added, interactive elements installed and ready to be  
3 assembled during fabrication and then installed. He said they will bid the fabrication  
4 contract which will be a high contract requiring City approval. The plan is to bring the  
5 deed restrictions and fabrication contract to City Council at the same time later this fall.  
6 He said there is an installation window on the Baylands next to the marsh, because of  
7 threatened and endangered species' breeding periods and chick rearing periods in the  
8 spring and summer. Wintertime will be the opportunity to go out and install. They are  
9 working out all those issues but will try to do the install in dead of winter, trying to finish  
10 everything up in March of 2022.

11 Chair Cribbs invited questions from the public. Hearing none, she invited questions and  
12 comments from the Commissioners.

13 Commission LaMere expressed thanks for the work the Mr. Aiken has put into this. He  
14 appreciates reaching across and having two languages and a partnership between different  
15 people and with neighbors.

16 Commissioner Olson echoed the thanks and likes the signage being based off of the Lucy  
17 Evans Interpretive Center signage. It is engaging content on such a small area of space.  
18 She likes the clusters as opposed to the continuous signs and looks forward to seeing how  
19 the project manifests itself and is grateful for the dedication on it.

20 Commissioner Moss said he has been interested in this project since the beginning and has  
21 been to several meetings out at the Baylands. He is happy to see it coming to fruition.  
22 Initially there were many, many stations, and to see it clustered into a more manageable  
23 set of nodes is encouraging as it reduces the cost and the clutter. He feels this was a big  
24 improvement and notes that the messages they will present are important.

25 Commissioner Reckdahl was also excited about the project and complimentary of it. He  
26 asked Mr. Aiken to explain more fully making it "bulletproof." Mr. Aiken replied there  
27 are techniques and manufacturers that make things as strong as they can be. The signs on  
28 the Lucy Evans Nature Center deck are made by a company that makes freeway signs, and  
29 they are the strongest, most fade-resistant, cleanable surfaces there are. Some interpretive  
30 signs put up by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have been tagged and beaten into the  
31 ground, so they are going to try to continue working with East Palo Alto to get community  
32 members to help maintain the signs. They have limited the things that could be easily  
33 broken, like interactive exhibits, to areas where they can be protected. They are also going  
34 to need to have a program to clean them on a regular basis. He said it is not realistic for  
35 the Rangers to be able to do that. They have volunteers. East Palo Alto has volunteers, so  
36 having a group that comes together to do this will help foster ownership of it as well.  
37 Commissioner Reckdahl expressed concern at them getting tagged. He asked what the  
38 process for de-tagging is. Mr. Aiken said washing is the first step, followed by chemicals



1 that don't harm the surface of the sign but will take the paint off.

2 Commissioner Reckdahl asked if there will be benches nearby. Mr. Aiken said there are  
3 existing benches near some of the installation sites. They have purposely not put signs in  
4 front of benches so that people can enjoy the view. They are being conscious of  
5 accessibility. He said many levees are not currently accessible to all. Everybody is waiting  
6 for a levee-raising and rebuilding project. When that happens, the signs will be pulled and  
7 re-installed. He said that will be the time to make all of them fully accessible. They are  
8 definitely putting them in areas that are accessible, but there are some areas, because of  
9 grades and substrates over a vast area that it is not practical to make them fully accessible.

10 Commissioner Reckdahl asked if they know what the content is going to be. Mr. Aiken  
11 said they know the content in detail. Alex Hamilton has been going over and over the  
12 language. The educators have been reviewing it all, and it is now being translated. He said  
13 writing exhibit labels is an art, to be able to communicate something relatively complex in  
14 relatively few words in a way that is readable, and they have a good team working on it.  
15 Commissioner Reckdahl asked if Mr. Aiken could share the content with the Commission.  
16 Mr. Aiken thought this was possible. He will have to find a way to bundle them together.  
17 It is a fair amount of information and is organized by nodes and what you're seeing at each  
18 location, and then the text.

19 Commissioner Reckdahl asked Mr. Anderson about the path of the Friendship Trail ending  
20 up at Cooley Landing. The last stretch is not a real trail, but kind of a dirt volunteer trail.  
21 There was thought of getting an easement on that. Mr. Anderson said there was an attempt  
22 to make progress on that. They reached out again to the property owner, having done so  
23 twice before. On all three occasions they were denied. There is no interest on the property  
24 owner's behalf to provide an easement to do a developed trail. Commissioner Reckdahl  
25 said that's a bad decision from a public good standpoint. He thought it should be pursued  
26 in other ways. Mr. Anderson said they have not given up, but are still working with City  
27 of East Palo Alto and MidPen. These two and Palo Alto are all interested in seeing if we  
28 can work something out. There is an interest in teaming up, which they hadn't done before.  
29 He said maybe the multi-agency approach will bear fruit. They had started conversations  
30 and then COVID hit and they were derailed, but they will pick it up again when time allows  
31 to see if they can make headway.

32 Commissioner Moss said another option is cantilevering over the marsh itself which is  
33 very expensive. The other option is eminent domain, but you've got to have a very strong  
34 case. Commissioner Reckdahl thought this would qualify for eminent domain, the threat  
35 of which may be enough to get them to sell. Mr. Aiken said the building permits are  
36 through East Palo Alto and they are the ones that should apply pressure as a planning  
37 approval process. Commissioner Reckdahl suggested the Joint Powers Board may have  
38 that ability.

1 Commissioner Brown said, although it was a lengthy process, there was a lot of good input,  
2 down to the footings of the signs. She said she is very excited. Her best friend lives in East  
3 Palo Alto and they are both Spanish speakers, so she looks forward to enjoying this project  
4 with her.

5 Vice Chair Greenfield said it's great to see the light at the end of tunnel. He asked if there  
6 are any remaining challenges or significant concerns regarding getting to the finish line.  
7 Mr. Aiken said deed restrictions have always been tricky. Their attorneys met with the  
8 state attorneys to come up with a plan to say we're not going to book the entire parcel or  
9 even the entire levy, put a restriction on that because of various issues with moving of  
10 levies. What they've done is surveyed each of the installation sites and are just putting a  
11 deed restriction on those. They still have to go back and get approval from the state for the  
12 actual language, although they have approved it in concept. He said he feels like they are  
13 really in the home stretch and once that is done, he will feel safe.

14 Chair Cribbs said it is all great news and a wonderful presentation. She is happy to see the  
15 two communities working together to accomplish what is going to be a wonderful goal.

16 **7. Letter to Council Regarding Junior Museum and Zoo Ticket Price**

17 Chair Cribbs explained that she would like to have the Commission approve a letter to the  
18 Council regarding support for reduction of the \$18 entry fee to \$10, given our fiscal  
19 situation, with an encouragement to review the entry fees with the thought of reducing  
20 them further as the economic climate improves. It is a letter Mr. Anderson helped her write  
21 to support the recommendation of the Finance Committee and make sure that people  
22 understand that the Commission would like it to be less money, understanding the  
23 economic climate that we're in. She asked for discussion on the letter. Vice Chair  
24 Greenfield observed that the recommendation is consistent with what the Finance  
25 Committee has already recommended and simply supports the direction that a Council  
26 Committee is already moving in. He felt it was appropriate and reasonable, given the  
27 public outcry the issue has gotten. Commissioner Moss remarked that when this was  
28 discussed at the last meeting they were told that the \$10 fee would cover 60 percent of  
29 operating costs, whereas, \$18 would cover 100 percent. He wondered how staff would  
30 deal with this shortfall. Vice Chair Greenfield thought that this assumed that there would  
31 be the same number of paid entries to the JMZ regardless of the price point, and he felt  
32 that this might not be the case. The cost tradeoff for reducing from \$18 to \$10 per person  
33 is unknown. Commissioner Moss felt the \$18 fee is way too much, and \$10 is much more  
34 realistic. He said it will depend on how the costs are covered and how much cost is incurred  
35 by having more people paying less.

36 **MOTION**

37 Commissioner Olson moved to support the letter. The motion was seconded by





1 Commission LaMere. The motion carried, 7-0.

2 **V. TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR THE JUNE 22, 2021 MEETING**

3 Mr. Anderson said there are three potential items. One is the Park Improvement Ordinance  
4 for the Tide Gate project. If they are moving quickly enough on the Ad Hoc on the  
5 sidewalk vendor regulations, this could potentially be brought in June, but the attorney  
6 said they could also do July as an option. They will see how much progress is made with  
7 the Ad Hoc and how soon they are ready to bring it back for action. Lastly, depending on  
8 progress with the next meeting, perhaps a beginning skate park conversation.

9 Chair Cribbs asked if there would be information about the City budget in the staff report.  
10 Mr. Anderson said in the department report it will be just a couple days before. He said he  
11 could have at least the basics and some of the key impacts to Parks and Rec-related CSD  
12 budget.

13 Commissioner Reckdahl asked if Mr. Anderson had gotten feedback from the Fire  
14 Department. He said he would love to hear about fire safety. Mr. Anderson said he  
15 submitted a request. Commissioner Reckdahl had emailed him regarding the latest on fire  
16 safety for the whole Foothills area. He forwarded that to the Office of Emergency Services  
17 and the Fire Department. They are working right now on an informational report that will  
18 go to City Council on June 21<sup>st</sup>. He had asked if they would be willing, and they said they  
19 would look into that. He's got the both the Chief from Fire and the Chief from OAS  
20 looking into this and seeing if they might be able to either give us a presentation or whether  
21 that would go to Council, and PRC could listen in. Commissioner Reckdahl said he is  
22 very concerned with so many people up there. If something happened, evacuating the  
23 people off the trails is a logistics nightmare. He thinks they should put some thought into  
24 it now before it happens.

25 Vice Chair Greenfield asked regarding the agenda, if they are looking for potentially an  
26 update from Friends of Palo Alto Parks and the Palo Alto Recreation Foundation.

27 Chair Cribbs said they talked about it. The work plan approvals will be back, and they'll  
28 have their meeting after that. She said in some respects they can't do much until they hear  
29 from the attorney about fund-raising. She said they could talk to Roger and Jack Morton  
30 about potentially having those two groups come just for a discussion. Vice Chair  
31 Greenfield said it would be useful to get them primed to be coming sometime soon and let  
32 them think about what they want to present. Chair Cribbs thought maybe June or July.  
33 Vice Chair Greenfield asked about a Boulware update. Mr. Anderson said he would talk  
34 to Peter Jensen about that.

35 **COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

1 Commissioner Moss said Friends of Cubberley will meet on May 30<sup>th</sup>. He will be  
2 interested to learn what progress has been made between the school district and the City.  
3 Councilmember Kou is on the committee. The school district has been more forthcoming  
4 after the PG&E issue this winter, looking at the vacant parking lot, or if the City can move  
5 forward and do something unilaterally on their seven acres. Commissioner Kou said the  
6 Ad Hoc committee has not met officially but is trying to determine the framework of what  
7 the discussion will be.

8 Commissioner Moss also shared that the City of Mountain View has a beautiful new park,  
9 Fayette Parkway, which sits on top of the Hetch Hetchy right-of-way, behind the CVS at  
10 the corner of San Antonio and El Camino. He said it is worthy of people looking at it. Palo  
11 Alto has a stretch near Gunn High School that could use the same treatment, or possibly  
12 become a dog park or something like that. In considering new recreation opportunities,  
13 that could be one to look at in the future. He also commented on the Renzel Pond at the  
14 Baylands, saying it is spectacular in the growth and number of birds.

15 Vice Chair Greenfield asked Mr. Anderson about trash piling up in the parks, especially  
16 on weekends and wondered what the staffing level has been, compared to pre-COVID  
17 times and if it could be better addressed. Mr. Anderson replied that the challenge is a staff-  
18 related issue, primarily with contracted-out sites, the landscape maintenance contract with  
19 Brightview. They maintain the vast majority of parks. The contract was reduced last July  
20 by about 26 percent because of the budget deficit. It has had an impact, especially  
21 evidenced with weeds and trash. The increased numbers of park visitors since COVID has  
22 also had an impact on all parks and open spaces, with the same infrastructure, trash cans,  
23 et cetera. He said they are trying to work with Zero Waste, who instituted the “three-sort  
24 rule” to help with capacity and additional resources. Vice Chair Greenfield felt its very  
25 important for City Council to understand this as they are considering budget tradeoffs  
26 currently. It is demoralizing to see trash piled up around trash cans, clearly a  
27 capacity/servicing issue. He was asked if there are any stormwater runoff regulations that  
28 are being violated with the piled up trash. Commissioner Moss suggested they could  
29 possibly use some of stormwater’s funding to keep trash out of the storm drains. Mr.  
30 Anderson said they can certainly ask about this.

31 Chair Cribbs remarked that in the past “Adopt-A-Park” has been mentioned and wondered  
32 if this would be a possibility for helping with this problem. Mr. Anderson wasn’t sure it  
33 would solve this problem. The “Litter Gitter” program goes out and collects loose litter,  
34 but they deposit this in a park trash can, as opposed to taking it home. The capacity,  
35 especially on weekends, has exceeded what is available. So, it is a combination of  
36 additional resources to service parks, and in other cases, an exemption to the rule. If they  
37 wanted to add one more trash cans, they have to add three – recycling, compost and trash  
38 – and in many places that is not feasible simply for the space. An exemption for extra trash  
39 is needed, because the alternative is much worse. Vice Chair Greenfield said it sounds like

1 the bigger issue is increasing the capacity of the trash, as opposed to the recycling  
2 containers. Commissioner Moss said dumpsters instead of trash cans. He said the good  
3 news is when you look at Cubberley Field, for instance, having your partners, soccer clubs  
4 and camps, insisting that they clean up their trash when they leave has been successful.  
5 Using this as a model and getting all partners and insisting that people take their trash with  
6 them, would take some of the burden off. But there are areas that have nothing to do with  
7 sports, but more to do with picnics.

8 Chair Cribbs asked if they could get an exemption just for the summertime and call it a  
9 pilot program, getting one more can for just the trash. Mr. Anderson said in some cases  
10 the problem is moving forward right away with it. Boulware Park he has gotten a number  
11 of complaints recently. They will be deploying a single trash can rather than the three in a  
12 few key areas, just to address the immediate concerns, while working with Zero Waste for  
13 a more permanent solution. Vice Chair Greenfield said the single can approach is  
14 problematic because with one can you will get compost and recycling items in there that  
15 will go into the landfill that wouldn't otherwise. Chair Cribbs was thinking of keeping the  
16 three cans and bringing one additional can just for trash. Mr. Anderson said that is what  
17 they would do, although it may still end up collecting mixed garbage. Commissioner  
18 Reckdahl mentioned that the Council talked Monday about trash and recycling and it is  
19 worth looking at the video as the Councilmembers asked good questions. He thought the  
20 staff answered the questions well. The bad news is a lot of the mixed paper is going  
21 overseas, and we don't know if it's getting recycled. It's worth watching what the Council  
22 talked about.

23 **VI. ADJOURNMENT**

24 Meeting adjourned by motion by Vice Chair Greenfield, second by Commissioner  
25 Reckdahl, at 8:35 p.m.