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**MINUTES
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
September 1, 2022
Virtual Conference
Palo Alto, California**

11 **Commissioners Present:** Chair Greenfield; Vice Chair LaMere; Commissioners Nellis
12 Freeman, Shani Kleinhaus, Anne Cribbs, and Joy Oche

13 **Commissioners Absent:** Commissioner Amanda Brown

14 **Others Present:**

15 **Staff Present:** Daren Anderson, Lam Do

16 **CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL**

17 **BUSINESS**

18 **1. Adoption of a Resolution Authorizing Use of Teleconferencing for Parks and**
19 **Recreation Commission Meeting During COVID-19 State of Emergency**

20 Vice Chair Jeff LaMere moved to adopt the Resolution. Seconded by Commissioner Joy
21 Oche, the motion passed, 6-0, by roll call vote.

22 **PUBLIC COMMENT**

23 Jeremy Dahl, president of Stanford Soccer Club and resident of Palo Alto, commented
24 on the Mayfield north soccer field being closed due to infill clumping. A group of
25 volunteers have been organized and would like to assist the City in keeping the fields
26 cleared of infill buildup. If the infill is too difficult to deal with due to the heat, he asked
27 for a reassessment when the weather cools for whether the Mayfield north field could
28 open so the kids could play.

29 Patricia Smith, a long-time soccer parent in Palo Alto and previous field permit
30 coordinator for AYSO, spoke on behalf of the soccer community. She said the field
31 closure has been a big deal with scheduling for youth and adult soccer. She commented
32 on the Mayfield north field being one of the few lighted fields and other grass fields are
33 not good enough to play on. She stated about 40 high school-aged teams are impacted.
34 She asked how the community and the City could work together until there is a plan in

1 place.

2 Mike Endsley said the problem with Mayfield north field is not with stability but with
3 globs of gunk mucking up cleats. He stated about 50 volunteers are ready and willing to
4 remove the globs this weekend and members of the community are willing to maintain
5 after an initial cleaning. He asked for a quick decision from the Commission to give
6 them a chance to help. He also asked for more garbage cans in which to put the globs
7 and offered to buy them.

8 Chair Jeff Greenfield expressed appreciation for the public comments and added that the
9 Commission does not directly respond to public comments.

10 **AGENDA CHANGES, REQUESTS, DELETIONS**

11 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

12 **2. Approval of Draft Minutes from the July 28, 2022, Parks and Recreation**
13 **Commission Meeting**

14 Commissioner Anne Cribbs stated on page 10, line 23, it reads “service” but should be
15 “serve as”.

16 Commissioner Oche expressed her appreciation for the work that goes into preparing the
17 minutes, but she saw a lot of errors and wondered if there was an update on the new
18 vendor.

19 Daren Anderson stated these minutes were still with the old vendor with extra effort
20 from staff and expressed his apologies.

21 Chair Greenfield referenced page 3, line 21, changing “infield” to “infill”. Page 4, line
22 29, reword “If there is someone to,” for clarification. Page 4, line 38, cross out
23 “phonetic”. This applies to any other occurrences of the word. Page 6, line 6, between
24 “soccer” and “replacement”, add “field”. Page 10, line 13, between “this is” and
25 “challenge”, add “a”. Page 17, line 2, change “an” to “in” and line 3, change “have great
26 skate parks” to “has a great skate park”.

27 Motion by Commissioner Cribbs to approve the minutes of the July 28, 2022, Parks and
28 Recreation Commission Meeting with amendments noted by Commissioner Cribbs and
29 Chair Greenfield. Seconded by Vice Chair LaMere, the motion passed, 6-0 by roll call
30 vote.

31 **CITY OFFICIAL REPORTS**

32 **3. Department Report**

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1 Mr. Anderson of the Community Services Department spoke on recruitment updates.
2 The park maintenance position has been filled. Recruitment is ongoing for the parks
3 irrigation position and senior management analyst. The 3 program assistant positions
4 have been filled. The interview process is ongoing for CSD manager. They are in the
5 process for recruiting for a new park ranger, which is a new position approved by
6 Council last June. This position is funded for 2 years. An existing ranger is leaving, and
7 recruiting will begin for that position.

8 Public Works staff will begin the bid process for hazardous materials remediation for
9 Cubberley Gyms A and B. This will include mold, asbestos, and lead paint remediation
10 and removal and disposal of the gym floors and removal of damaged wall sections and
11 piping systems in the water-damaged areas of the gyms only. A claim will be submitted
12 to the City's insurance carrier for site remediation and any subsequent restoration and
13 repair work. Staff is working on an update on the immediate longer-term closure of gyms
14 A & B with past renters and tenants, some of whom were relocated to other City
15 facilities.

16 Staff held a community meeting on the Cubberley Field restroom project on August 17.
17 In attendance were 2 commissioners, 1 Council member, and 1 member of the public
18 who was supportive of the project. Due to the limited turnout, Public Works is putting
19 together a survey to get additional feedback. They specifically want to hear from the
20 neighbors on Nelson Drive.

21 The Moonlight Run will be on September 9 from 6 to 10 p.m.

22 Staff sent an email informing the Commission about the closure of the Mayfield Soccer
23 Complex north field due to deterioration of the synthetic turf infill. Fencing has been
24 installed closing the north field. The south field remains open but will be monitored
25 closely by staff and if there are reports of increased clumping of the infill, it may have to
26 be closed as well. The north field closure will be in effect for at least several weeks while
27 securing a vendor to remove deteriorated infill and install new infill in both north and
28 south fields. Mr. Anderson stated they are trying to expedite this process and he
29 recognizes how unfortunate the timing is but stated safety is the top priority. City staff
30 have been raking the fields and using sweeper machines to remove clumped infill but the
31 level of deterioration on the north field required it to be closed. Staff is open to ideas
32 regarding other grass spaces that could be used or other options, but Recreation staff
33 have reported there are not a lot of other options. Staff welcome the assistance of the
34 community in maintaining the south field, but the north field will remain closed. Staff
35 have purchased and made available 20 rakes and ask that plastic-tined rakes to be used
36 rather than metal.

37 The Magical Bridge Playground is closed through October 14 for renovations.

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1 Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District is hosting 2 public open houses regarding
2 the Hawthorns Area Plan, an in-person on September 29 from 6 to 8 p.m. and a virtual
3 on October 20 from 6 to 8 p.m. Thoughts on the Hawthorn Area can be shared through
4 an online survey.

5 There is a red algae bloom in San Francisco Bay that has killed hundreds of fish in the
6 last week. Three dead fish have been found in the Palo Alto Baylands in the last week.
7 San Francisco Regional Water Board does not know how long the red algae bloom will
8 last but suspect it will last a couple more weeks due to the warm weather.

9 There is an influx of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in California. Sick and
10 dead water birds have been seen in Palo Alto recently and in the last 2 weeks, 11 are
11 suspected to have had HPAI. Findings are being reported to the Fish and Wildlife
12 Service.

13 Vice Chair LaMere asked Mr. Anderson if the work on Magical Bridge is a regularly
14 scheduled service and if it is paid for out of the Parks & Recreation fund or from a
15 Magical Bridge maintenance fund.

16 Mr. Anderson responded that it is a capital improvement project and funded out of the
17 City General Fund with the exception of a contribution from the Magical Bridge
18 Foundation for the shade structure. He stated the repair work is needed earlier than
19 expected due to heavy use.

20 Commissioner Oche asked if the tracking information for HPAI can be shared with
21 residents.

22 Mr. Anderson stated that staff are not tracking HPAI information. Fish and Wildlife and
23 the Water Board are tracking it for the whole bay as well as across California.

24 Commissioner Shani Kleinhaus asked when the Mayfield Soccer Complex turf was
25 installed.

26 Mr. Anderson stated the infill is not degrading due to age but because it was the wrong
27 specification for the climate and a higher temperature rating is needed. The same thing
28 happened at El Camino Park and it was swapped out with appropriate infill.

29 Lam Do stated the turf at both Mayfield soccer fields was installed in 2016.

30 Chair Greenfield added that was 10 years after the fields opened in 2006.

31 Mr. Do clarified that the first set of artificial turf was from 2006 when the site opened,
32 and the second set was from 2016.

1 Commissioner Kleinhaus asked how artificial turf maintenance compares to that for live
2 turf.

3 Mr. Anderson stated there are water and fertilization costs for natural grass. The initial
4 costs for infill are much higher but it lasts 8 to 10 years.

5 Commissioner Kleinhaus asked about using recycled water to irrigate live turf and
6 mentioned contamination caused by artificial turf materials.

7 Mr. Anderson said recycled water is used to irrigate the natural grass fields at Greer and
8 Baylands Athletic Center.

9 Commissioner Kleinhaus asked if live turf could be considered as an alternative.

10 Mr. Anderson said another consideration is the amount of play a synthetic turf field can
11 handle over natural grass, but all aspects should be considered.

12 Chair Greenfield commented that lighted fields have extended hours of use which does
13 not work for grass quality.

14 Commissioner Oche, also a soccer mom, asked for clarification for the Mayfield Soccer
15 Complex volunteers regarding cleaning up the north field.

16 Mr. Anderson replied that the north field is fenced off.

17 Commissioner Oche asked what could be done in the meantime.

18 Mr. Anderson stated they are trying to expedite replacement of the infill. He is willing to
19 look at different options when the weather cools but for right now, the north field is
20 closed.

21 Commissioner Nellis Freeman asked why the decision to close the Mayfield north field
22 has to be immediate versus a gradual process.

23 Mr. Anderson replied safety was the reason it had to be closed.

24 Commissioner Freeman asked if an aggressive cleanup could delay closure.

25 Mr. Anderson replied no and that after hours of cleaning a field, the next day there were
26 clumps everywhere. He stated soccer cleats pick up clumps of gummy infill and cause a
27 safety concern.

28 Commissioner Freeman asked if there have been any injuries due to the current state of
29 the soccer field.

1 Mr. Anderson said there was a report of a non-contact injury on the north field.

2 Commissioner Freeman wondered how much investigation was done in making the
3 decision to close the north field.

4 Mr. Anderson stated they have emptied 5 dumpsters of infill, largely from the north
5 field.

6 Chair Greenfield asked what the criteria would be for closing the field or leaving it open.

7 Mr. Anderson replied it would be a combination of discussing it with the leagues, having
8 staff walk it, and continued conversations with the Risk Management team and the City
9 Attorney's office.

10 Chair Greenfield asked if there was a time frame for when the field would reopen.

11 Mr. Anderson said there was none.

12 Chair Greenfield asked if the immediate action was to clean up the infill so it's playable
13 before the infill is replaced or to keep the field closed until a contractor is hired to
14 replace the infill or redo the fields completely.

15 Mr. Anderson stated they have received one bid response with a price 4 to 5 times the
16 original estimate. They are conversing informally with other vendors. He hopes to have
17 more information soon.

18 Chair Greenfield asked about the status of the RFI.

19 Mr. Anderson said they are calling vendors directly and asking their opinion. He said the
20 value of the RFI has yet to be determined. Calls made to 2 vendors may serve the same
21 purpose. Mr. Anderson wants to find the fastest route.

22 Chair Greenfield asked Mr. Anderson if he expects the fields will need to be upgraded
23 and the infill replaced before Mayfield north field is reopened.

24 Mr. Anderson said that is the current understanding and not the only option, but it is the
25 recommendation at this point.

26 Chair Greenfield stated there is no guarantee that will happen this calendar year.

27 Mr. Anderson said he has no guarantee on when it will happen.

28 Chair Greenfield asked if it will go to Council for funding.

29 Mr. Anderson stated it will require Council approval if contract costs are above a certain

1 threshold.

2 Commissioner Cribbs stated the old field needs to be replaced as soon as possible.

3 Chair Greenfield asked what the cost would be.

4 Mr. Anderson was not sure about the cost of a full replacement. Bids are coming in 2 to
5 3 times what was estimated.

6 Commissioner Cribbs asked if the project will be managed by Public Works or Parks &
7 Recreation.

8 Mr. Anderson stated it would probably be Public Works and CSD working together.

9 Commissioner Cribbs hoped resources, knowledge, and experience at Stanford and other
10 soccer facilities could be taken advantage of.

11 Mr. Anderson stated he is open to checking with neighbors for better ways.

12 Mr. Do stated the cost is \$5/ft² to \$7/ft². For a field over 150,000 ft², it could range from
13 \$750,000 to \$1,000,050. He added pricing is off the map when they get bids. Square foot
14 cost does not take into account the base. As this would be the third life cycle of the field,
15 the base would need to be repaired as well as the Brock pad replaced, and these costs are
16 unknown.

17 Chair Greenfield reiterated the ballpark cost would be \$2M to \$3M.

18 **BUSINESS**

19 **4. Skate Park Recommendation to Parks and Recreation Commission**

20 Mr. Anderson recommended a modification on the staff report that they clarify the 3
21 points agreed to by the Ad Hoc Committee and to clarify that the Parks & Recreation
22 Commission recommends that Council adopt the findings.

23 Stakeholders, staff, and the Ad Hoc Committee agreed that a new, inclusive skate park
24 would be a valuable asset to the community and benefit both children and adults. The
25 Greer skate bowl is the only skate park in Palo Alto and the sport of skateboarding is
26 growing and new styles of skate parks are needed. A petition asking for a new skate park
27 received 2000 signatures.

28 Key features of a suitable location include 12,000 to 15,000 ft² of space, minimal impact
29 to neighbors, restroom access, adequate parking, safe biking access, and avoiding
30 displacing other park uses and targeting underutilized park areas. The area adjacent to

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1 the existing bowl at Greer was the preferred location and the desire is to integrate the
2 new skate park into the area without changing the existing one. At a virtual community
3 meeting on June 15, there was broad support for the concept, location, and process. The
4 Ad Hoc Committee believes a new skate park is one of the highest priorities in the Parks
5 Master Plan. The project would be community funded and would not compete with other
6 projects funded through the City's General Fund. Friends of the Palo Alto Parks have
7 agreed to serve at the fundraising organization and fundraising could begin if City
8 Council approves the project.

9 Regarding feedback from the July 28 PRC meeting, the Commission asked to notify
10 Greer Park field users about the proposed skate park. Staff reached out to Greer Park
11 field users and did not receive any questions or concerns. Regarding what trees are in the
12 proposed area, City arborists surveyed the area and found 4 Chinese Pistache, 1 Patmore
13 Ash, and 2 volunteer Privet trees, all of which are nonnative trees. As peak use times for
14 the skate park are likely to coincide with peak use by weekday after-school sports
15 practice and weekend sport field games, impacts related to transportation and trees
16 would be assessed in accordance with CEQA as well as for consistency with Council
17 policies, Comprehensive Plan goals and policies, and City regulations once a conceptual
18 plan is proposed. CEQA would be done once the proposed conceptual design is available
19 to adequately assess the impacts of the project.

20 Pending evaluation and recommendation from the Commission, the next steps are
21 Council review in October and fundraising could begin then.

22 Commissioner Cribbs asked if the timeline could be moved up to September.

23 Mr. Anderson stated it was unlikely, but he could try.

24 Commissioner Cribbs stated she was in support of the project and wanted to see it get
25 done as soon as possible.

26 Commissioner Oche asked how the Greer Park field users were informed.

27 Mr. Anderson said Recreation staff reached out via email to AYSO, Palo Alto Soccer
28 Club, AAYSA, PSV Union, and Stanford Soccer Club. There were also signs at the park
29 itself.

30 Vice Chair LaMere thanked Mr. Anderson for his work on the project and stated he was
31 in full support of this. He noted Sam Kaplinsky's involvement as a wonderful example
32 of youth taking action. He wanted to highlight Sam's involvement and encourage youth
33 engagement.

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1 Commissioner Freeman stated his support of the project and echoed the sentiment of
2 youth involvement and keeping Sam's name out there. He asked for clarification that the
3 new skate park design will incorporate the old skate park but that it would be unavailable
4 for use during build-out.

5 Mr. Anderson said if it happens as one project, it is very likely the existing skate bowl
6 will be closed during construction.

7 Chair Greenfield stated parking is currently an issue at peak use times and parking needs
8 will increase due to this project and that it is fairly unlikely the City would add any
9 parking. He said it is unfortunate there is no assessment of parking until CEQA analysis
10 is done and it is difficult to recommend this site knowing there will be a parking issue.
11 He said it is a bit irresponsible to not consider the parking situation and he felt it would
12 be a consideration important to the City Council as well.

13 Mr. Anderson spoke to Planning staff about this, and they said they would analyze this
14 when they have a conceptual plan. Without the plan, it is difficult to do such an analysis.
15 Mr. Anderson asked them about other options, and they said it could be added to the
16 recommendation that fundraising dollars be earmarked for conducting parking analysis.
17 The cost for hiring a consultant would be between \$8,000 to \$10,000 and this could be
18 added to the recommendation. CSD staff cannot do this, but a consultant could.

19 Chair Greenfield reiterated that City Council would authorize staff to begin working on a
20 conceptual design of the project with the heavy lifting being done by outside parties and
21 that it would be based on the fundraising outside parties would be doing for the project
22 with funds earmarked for parking analysis in addition to creating the conceptual design.

23 Mr. Anderson suggested doing this very early in the design process to know the impact
24 of parking before getting too far along.

25 Chair Greenfield asked if there was any precedent for this type of parking analysis.

26 Mr. Anderson says the situation is unique given the direction from Council to find a
27 suitable location with the intention that funding, and design are to be fundraised by the
28 group and not by City staff.

29 Chair Greenfield asked for thoughts from other Commissioners.

30 Commissioner Cribbs asked how the need for parking would be analyzed before having
31 a completed design.

32 Chair Greenfield mused that a certain number of cars would be estimated based on a
33 certain size of a skate park.

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1 Commissioner Freeman mentioned having events at the skate park coupled with soccer
2 tournaments, other park events, and the draw of a new skate park could make parking an
3 issue and should be thought through as part of the design. He suggested reaching out to
4 other communities to see what types of events take place at skate parks and how many
5 people attend.

6 Chair Greenfield stated he does not want to stop the recommendation from going
7 through but the issue is worth considering. He asked how the stakeholders would feel
8 about adding the recommendation for a parking assessment.

9 Commissioner Kleinhaus asked if there are issues with parking in that area currently.

10 Mr. Anderson said the parking lot can fill quickly on busy weekends with big
11 tournaments. He has not done any analysis on how side streets are impacted.

12 Vice Chair LaMere would like to approve the action item as is. He said they will have
13 the opportunity to assess the needs as it goes forward and as it comes back to the
14 Commission.

15 Chair Greenfield asked Mr. Anderson if that sounded reasonable.

16 Mr. Anderson shared that the Commission and others could weigh in on parking with the
17 Park Improvement Ordinance and it also goes through the Architectural Review Board.
18 Also, Planning staff factor in parking when analyzing the project.

19 Chair Greenfield asked if parking limitations were identified would Staff recommend
20 reducing the number of people able to use the park.

21 Mr. Anderson said he did not know what different options Planning might come up with.

22 Chair Greenfield said it would be difficult to meter the number of people using the
23 facility at a given time.

24 Vice Chair Jeff LaMere and Commissioner Cribbs both stated their support of the project
25 and the desire to move the project along quickly.

26 Vice Chair Jeff LaMere moved to recommend the project as stated. Seconded by
27 Commissioner Cribbs, the motion passed, 6-0, by roll call vote.

28 **5. Funding Opportunities Ad Hoc Update**

29 Vice Chair LaMere stated Commissioner Cribbs, Commissioner Oche, and himself met a
30 few times regarding the Funding Opportunities Ad Hoc. They are trying to get away
31 from Ad Hocs going year to year and they anticipate this will be the last of the Funding

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1 Opportunities Ad Hoc. They want the community to know they can get involved as well
2 as donate to projects. He stated the “Friends of” groups are important and there are
3 opportunities for targeted giving instead of giving to a general fund.

4 Commissioner Cribbs said she understands people want to contribute in an easy way to
5 specific projects and not necessarily to a general fund. Now that the website is up, they
6 want to create a special page in Community Services that would invite the community to
7 contribute. They want to use paid and pro bono resources with the City to spread the
8 word. For example, ads in the Enjoy! Catalog, something on the web page, and asking
9 for a reduced rate for paid advertising from the Palo Alto Weekly and Palo Alto Post to
10 publicize projects. She stated it is important to clarify and publicize how community
11 members can contribute to approved projects. The Palo Alto Recreation Foundation and
12 Friends of the Palo Alto Parks support Community Services and specific programs, and
13 they also hold events. She is hopeful the City will allow them to share information about
14 Friends of the Palo Alto Parks and the Palo Alto Recreation Foundation and the projects
15 they’re working on. People may not know they can donate directly to projects they’re
16 interested in. She proposed adding a short paragraph about some success stories like the
17 Cubberley track, the pickleball lines on the courts, and the dog parks. She would also
18 like to highlight volunteer opportunities that can support Community Services and new
19 projects. She would like to list education about other funding sources, and she said the
20 Park Master Plan lists the ways Community Services is supported. She suggested adding
21 menu items to the Community Services home page for funding and volunteer projects.

22 Mr. Anderson said they could develop a page for donations.

23 Chair Greenfield asked for clarification about the Enjoy! Catalog.

24 Mr. Anderson connected with Recreation staff who helps manage the Enjoy! Catalog
25 process. He stated there is great potential to add a page on a regular basis and said this
26 publication gets mailed to Palo Alto residences 4 times a year.

27 Commissioner Cribbs said this would help build a comprehensive list of people who
28 have an interest in recreation. She also mentioned the utility flyer that gets mailed to
29 everybody.

30 Mr. Anderson said there is a cost associated with the utility flyer but fundraising for CSD
31 in Enjoy! is free.

32 Commissioner Cribbs turned the discussion over to Commissioner Oche to talk about
33 grants.

34 Commissioner Oche stated grant writing and applications are very time consuming and
35 competitive and a professional grant writer should be considered. Her research has found

1 grants for skate parks. She said the benefits of the services of a grant writer may
2 outweigh the costs.

3 Chair Greenfield said he believed staff are on board with the suggestions from
4 Commissioner Cribbs.

5 Commissioner Kleinhaus stated her concerns over parks becoming “for sale” due to
6 ability to raise money and losing space to interest groups. She does not see a problem as
7 long as all the options are there, and limited options are not preselected. She stated in this
8 document, the options are limited, and she would add at least 5 other things that could be
9 important to a park system. She asked how they would utilize and support nonprofits that
10 do some of the work and how would they supplement it with their own work. She voiced
11 concerns about giving too much of the parks to people with the ability to raise money.
12 Commissioner Kleinhaus stated she was in support of a grant writer, but the cost is more
13 than just what the person is paid as the writer would need a lot of input from staff.

14 Commissioner Kleinhaus referenced the Parks Master Plan and the renovation of
15 exhibits in the parks’ nature centers, and she said fundraising could be used for this
16 project. She also mentioned restoration of the 7.7 acres and the big project in Foothills
17 Park regarding flooding. She said there is currently a lot of grant funding for those types
18 of projects. Of the 4 initiatives, she thinks the first one is important but to keep in mind
19 the options provided to people. She wants additional projects listed aside from the skate
20 park and family recreation center. Commissioner Kleinhaus suggested a survey to see
21 what people respond to, and she stated the people who want something may not be the
22 people who can fund it.

23 Commissioner Freeman said in addition to donating money, people can donate time and
24 expertise. Along the lines of a survey, he wanted to give people the opportunity to voice
25 what they would be interested in seeing to make sure funding is going where it should.
26 He said people might be concerned about fundraising and seeing money donated by
27 stakeholders and asked if that information would be publicized so people could see the
28 movement of money for these projects. He wanted to make sure expectations of the
29 people would be managed.

30 Commissioner Kleinhaus asked who would be managing it.

31 Commissioner Freeman replied that has to be factored into the project.

32 Commissioner Cribbs mentioned the work of the San Francisco Parks Alliance. They do
33 a park cleanup day for the community, and she would like to see something like that
34 here.

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1 Chair Greenfield commented that the Master Plan is an aspirational document and
2 funding is a key shortfall in making plans a reality. Maybe more significant are staff
3 resources. The Master Plan has a list of many competing equivalent priorities and
4 funding tends to be the factor that bumps up priority as exemplified by the skate park. He
5 said it is reasonable to put together a list of potential projects and post project plans on a
6 web page for people to see and if it is unfunded, people may be inspired to donate. Chair
7 Greenfield agreed that targeted giving is important as a motivating force. He said the
8 Commission would need a very specific list of content to post on the website including
9 photos, contact information, and volunteer opportunities. It would also need to include
10 the environmental partner organizations the Commission works with as this information
11 is no longer on the website.

12 Commissioner Cribbs said she believes that information is in the original Ad Hoc
13 reports.

14 Chair Greenfield asked for direction from Staff on how to proceed and what specific
15 details they need from the Commission.

16 Mr. Anderson replied meetings with Ad Hoc and Staff would be helpful. Staff would
17 then meet with staff from other parts of the department. Staff time may have been an
18 impediment in the past and is still an issue.

19 Chair Greenfield suggested delegating specific responsibility to Ad Hoc and that they
20 could meet without Staff on certain issues. On the subject of grant writing, Chair
21 Greenfield stated the Staff time needed to support the grant writer has continuously shot
22 down the idea of hiring a grant writer. He asked Staff what is needed to make it possible
23 to hire a grant writer.

24 Mr. Anderson said it was an excellent idea and recommended it be very targeted and use
25 contract dollars to reach out to a consultant who does grant writing for municipalities,
26 has insurance, and has done it before. The right conditions would be direction from
27 Council, input from the Commission, Staff availability, and a specific project to move
28 forward.

29 Chair Greenfield clarified the grant writer would be for specific projects where it is
30 known that grants are available.

31 **6. Utilities Department Update on Projects in Foothills and Arastradero Preserves**

32 Ramandeep Kaur, senior electrical engineer with the Utilities Department, displayed an
33 image of the tier 2 fire area as identified by the California Public Utility Commission. A
34 Staff pilot project to underground existing electric lines found it cost effective in addition
35 to significantly reducing fire risk. The project has been approved by Council and has

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1 passed through the budgetary process. The project would be divided into 5 phases. While
2 one phase is in construction, the next phase would be in design. There has been 7,500
3 feet of substructure work completed in the first phase. The second phase included park
4 trail closures and 5000 feet of work has been completed with 3000 feet to go. The next
5 step is to eliminate 72 poles in the 2 areas and remove the high-voltage cable, which
6 should be done by August 2023. All 5 phases should be completed by August 2025. A
7 staging area from an existing project is being used and when done with it, it will be
8 restored based on recommendations from an ecologist. Other contractors have been
9 required to cover areas with weed-free straw. A budget will be provided for Grassroots
10 Ecology yearly monitoring and documentation. The project of conversion of overhead
11 electric lines to underground is exempt from CEQA review under Article 15302.d. Due
12 to the sensitive area, the decision was made to bore conduits instead of doing an open
13 trench. Most of the construction is along utility access roads which is better for the
14 habitat and crew access and includes the installation of electric boxes and pad-mount
15 equipment.

16 Ms. Kaur said the Arastradero trail will be fully closed until October 15, after which
17 partial closures will continue with flaggers to direct traffic. There will be future closures
18 when the overhead poles and electric wires are removed. There will be future electric
19 shutoffs over the 9.3 miles for the new underground system cutover. She listed the
20 benefits of underground electric lines being a reduced fire risk, minimized annual tree
21 trimming, and improved aesthetics and animal welfare.

22 Commissioner Kleinhaus asked if the project was exempt from other laws besides CEQA
23 such as the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Clean Water Act, and other federal regulations.

24 Ms. Kaur responded since construction is along access roads, there should not be any
25 birds impacted.

26 Commissioner Kleinhaus said there could be impact and surveys are needed and
27 regarding the Clean Water Act, she saw some material in the creek and creeks are not
28 supposed to be filled without a permit. The hay bales to combat erosion did not work in
29 some of the staging areas on the creek. Commissioner Kleinhaus asked if there was a
30 best method to avoid environmental problems such as disturbing nesting birds.

31 Ms. Kaur asked Mr. Anderson if the erosion reference was for a different project.

32 Mr. Anderson stated it was the water tank replacement project that affected the creek and
33 the rangers asked for exclusionary fencing and straw wattles along the edge.

34 Commissioner Kleinhaus asked if guidance was available for making sure bird surveys
35 are done during nesting season and ensuring no deposits into waterways.

1 Ms. Kaur stated the plan was to stick to utility access roads. She said there were no birds,
2 and no such guidance is available.

3 Commissioner Kleinhaus asked if a biologist has determined there is no need for a
4 survey or if it was Ms. Kaur's impression.

5 Ms. Kaur stated the lines are accessed every year and no biologist was consulted
6 previously, and she said it was her determination.

7 Commissioner Kleinhaus stated the harm to biological ecosystems comes with attrition
8 and a biologist should look at it.

9 Commissioner Freeman agreed to moving as much as possible underground but at the
10 same time being aware of the environmental impact. He asked about the timing and if
11 first the underground conduits will be buried and then the overhead wiring deenergized
12 with the poles coming down eventually.

13 Ms. Kaur confirmed that the substructure is laid, new cabling is put in, everything is
14 switched to the underground system, and then the old system is removed.

15 Commissioner Freeman asked if the trail would be closed for the duration or periodically
16 opened and closed and if signage would notify the public.

17 Ms. Kaur stated that signage is up, and the trail is closed fully until October 15.
18 Currently boring is being done along the access road with heavy equipment blocking the
19 road.

20 Vice Chair LaMere asked about other risk assessments regarding doing the project and
21 impediments or things that could go wrong. He also asked about maintenance.

22 Ms. Kaur says transformers and most equipment will last 50 to 75 years. Inspections are
23 mandated by California and done on a 3-year cycle.

24 Vice Chair LaMere asked about risks to natural areas for these types of projects.

25 Ms. Kaur replied she was not aware of any.

26 Commissioner Oche reiterated what Vice Chair LaMere said about reassessment and
27 notification of the public. She asked how the community would get updates on the
28 project schedule.

29 Ms. Kaur said information is posted on the City website and residents will be notified by
30 the communication team before the cutover is performed due to shutdowns of their

1 electric power which will affect 200+ customers. Communication will include door
2 hangers and flyers.

3 Commissioner Freeman asked if there were 2 above-ground transformers involved.

4 Ms. Kaur replied all the overhead transformers currently on the poles will be pad-
5 mounted on the ground.

6 Chair Greenfield invited members of the public to speak.

7 Lynn Chiapella said a side effect of a previous project on the road was the road was
8 widened and asked if care was being taken to not widen the road further.

9 Ms. Kaur said they are trying not to open-trench and instead bore the conduits so the
10 road width should not be impacted.

11 Chair Greenfield said it was good to hear the road will not be increased. He asked if a
12 table including the trail closure plan and dates in an easy-to-read format could be posted
13 on the web pages of both the Arastradero Preserve and the Foothills Nature Preserve.

14 Ms. Kaur said this could be done and dates would be changed based on contractor
15 availability.

16 Chair Greenfield asked if there was a web page for this project.

17 Ms. Kaur said it is on the City of Palo Alto website.

18 Chair Greenfield asked staff to share the website link with the Commission and asked
19 that the trail closure plan be posted on the City's web page as well as those for the
20 preserves and to include a link to information about future trail closures. Chair
21 Greenfield asked for details on the 5 phases.

22 Ms. Kaur said the 5 phases were created to break the 9.3-mile project into more
23 manageable sections.

24 Chair Greenfield asked which phases are in the Arastradero Preserve and which phases
25 are in the Foothills Nature Preserve.

26 Ms. Kaur replied Phase 1 is in Arastradero Preserve and Phase 2 is more toward
27 Foothills Park.

28 Chair Greenfield asked if the section for Phase 3 is already underground.

29 Ms. Kaur confirmed this section is already underground at the picnic area, interpretive
30 center, and bathrooms.

1 Chair Greenfield asked if the project will put underground all power lines in the
2 preserve.

3 Ms. Kaur said yes.

4 Chair Greenfield asked if there was a map showing finer detail of the areas of the
5 preserve being impacted.

6 Ms. Kaur showed on Google Maps where work will be occurring at Foothills Nature
7 Preserve and where power is already underground.

8 Chair Greenfield asked if the web page has a map of the power lines.

9 Ms. Kaur said she can add that to the web page.

10 Mr. Anderson asked about pole work being done near Towle Camp area inside Foothills
11 Nature Preserve.

12 Ms. Kaur replied this phase has not been designed yet and will be called Phase 3. She
13 said everything up to Towle Campground is already underground and then it goes uphill
14 to a water reservoir.

15 Chair Greenfield asked if outside grants will assist with funding or if it's coming from
16 the City's General Fund.

17 Ms. Kaur says funding is through the City's Capital Improvement Electric Fund.

18 **7. Ad Hoc Committees and Liaison: Reports and Assignments**

19 Commissioner Cribbs presented a swimming update. There were 410 monthly lap swim
20 members, and 1,100 lap swim visits a week with 20,000 open swim visits over the
21 summer. There were 60 Masters members, 3,000 youth swimming lessons within the
22 summer camps, and 600 youth summer swim lessons.

23 Commissioner Kleinhaus said they looked at the 10-acre site of Measure E on Byxbee
24 and the potential to rededicate that parcel. They heard various ideas from staff on
25 potentially rededicating the hill site but not the flat area, which is about 5 acres, because
26 eventually the City may want to use some of that land to provide some kind of water
27 purification facility and they would have to go to the voters for that. It would be easier to
28 convince voters to give up that land if it was not dedicated. They thought if it has to go to
29 a vote anyway, why not rededicate everything. The City is using a facility there to
30 monitor functionality according to rules and regulations of the landfill. That facility will
31 probably not be moved from there as it is associated with the landfill, but a large parcel
32 remains that could be rededicated, and discussions are needed about what to do with that.

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1 They looked at where they are going to do the desalination plant and another water
2 cleaning facility that will both remove a lot of trees, and she stated the whole area is
3 becoming industrialized.

4 Chair Greenfield said that the Staff thought of not rededicating the one area was not
5 unanimous and this will come to the Commission next month with more details. He
6 suggested it would be helpful for everyone to see the area and there was talk of making a
7 site visit available to other Commissioners, and he asked if this could be done before the
8 next Commission meeting.

9 Commissioner Kleinhaus said a long list of dedication sites was provided by Enid
10 Pearson and they also received a letter from a neighborhood suggesting they look at one
11 site in particular, kind of an island, that could potentially be a park.

12 Commissioner Freeman said he saw an email regarding pickleball. He is trying to get
13 survey analysis and will having more follow-up at the next meeting.

14 Chair Greenfield said the Electric Advances Ad Hoc has met and will come to the
15 Commission perhaps next month with a first-phase discussion leading up to an action by
16 the end of the calendar year. He also mentioned the update and opportunity to do the
17 Hawthorns site area, the efforts and work going on there, and the Cubberley restrooms
18 community meeting.

19 Commissioner Cribbs mentioned surveying pickleball and tennis participation in various
20 courts around the city in the next couple weeks.

21 **COMMISSIONER/BOARD MEMBER QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, ANNOUNCEMENTS OR**
22 **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

23 Commissioner Cribbs said it would be great to get some information on the soccer fields
24 and share it with the soccer community and see if they could all work together to get the
25 issue solved.

26 Chair Greenfield said he and Commissioner Freeman are working to meet with Staff
27 next week to get an update. He suggested scheduling a meeting with field stakeholders,
28 the soccer clubs, to talk about what is going on.

29 Commissioner Kleinhaus asked what happens when they get letters from the public.
30 When they ask questions and make suggestions, they expect a response from somebody,
31 but those things are not on the agenda.

32 Chair Greenfield responded that now is the opportunity to reference letters and ask Staff
33 about questions.

1 Commissioner Kleinhaus specifically remembers a question. The neighborhood on San
2 Antonio Way wanted to know if the area across the street could be a park.

3 Mr. Anderson said he was in dialogue with the individual who wrote that letter and is
4 checking on ownership. The City owns a portion of it and some of it is public right of
5 way and there are easements. They are seeing what is feasible.

6 Commissioner Cribbs asked what happened with the gentleman who wanted to have a
7 committee about a swimming pool in south Palo Alto because Rinconada is getting
8 crowded.

9 Chair Greenfield said he did not know about this.

10 Mr. Anderson said he did not respond to this letter.

11 Commissioner Cribbs said the gentleman spoke at the last meeting.

12 Mr. Anderson said it was a matter of sharing thoughts with the Commission.

13 Chair Greenfield then directed the discussion to next month's agenda.

14 Mr. Anderson listed the racquet court policy and possibly ready will be Measure E, the
15 park dedication discussion; the electric conveyances, or e-bike, discussion; and
16 potentially a request from Elise DeMarzo, the Public Art manager, who asked if she
17 could bring a public art discussion to the Commission for the Boulware Park
18 improvement project to get feedback on the idea of having public art be part of that
19 project. She said the September meeting would be ideal, but October could probably
20 work but with the intention to move quickly to enlist the services of artists.

21 Regarding the advanced water purification system presentation, Mr. Anderson said more
22 time is needed as more in-depth discussions are being had with Urban Forest about what
23 to do with the trees. Potentially October but they will confirm that.

24 Commissioner Freeman asked how they would communicate to the soccer community
25 the plan going forward.

26 Mr. Anderson said the plan is still being developed. The vendor to replace the infill has
27 not been chosen and they are trying to expedite this. Communication needs to be
28 transparent with the process and timelines but there is no good information to share right
29 now which is frustrating for all parties. He suggested in addition to website updates,
30 direct email exchanges with the key representative of major groups with information on
31 what they're being asked to do about cleaning. At some point, a conversation is needed
32 regarding what happens with the north field when the weather cools. The Attorney's
33 Office, Risk Management, the City Manager's Office, etc., will need to be consulted as

1 well.

2 Chair Greenfield added that phone calls are important too. He said he would like to talk
3 more about this when they next meet. He said some of the groups are moving to open
4 slots at El Camino field and it is positive that Staff is helping with that but there are a lot
5 of moving pieces. He thanked Staff for weathering the storm and the Commission will
6 help the best they can.

7 **ADJOURNMENT**

8 Meeting adjourned at 10:46 p.m.