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**MINUTES
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
October 25, 2022
In-Person & Virtual Conference
Palo Alto, California**

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

14 **Commissioners Absent:**

15 **Others Present:** Council Liaison Tom DuBois

16 **Staff Present:** Daren Anderson, Javod Ghods

17 **CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL**

18 **BUSINESS**

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

21 **MOTION**

22 Commissioner Brown moved to adopt the resolution. Seconded by Chair Greenfield, the
23 motion passed, 6-0, by roll call vote.

24 **PUBLIC COMMENT**

25 Rich Pearson, Palo Alto Pickleball Club Board Member, was disappointed with the
26 commissioners' comments and reaction to the support displayed for pickleball court night
27 priority at Mitchell Park 7 nights a week. He presented a petition of signatures of nearly
28 400 Palo Alto residents and recapped the reasons presented at a previous meeting for
29 why pickleball needs night court priority seven nights a week. The group losing access
30 is tiny and has many other options for lit courts.

31 Jimmy Young, a South Palo Alto resident, described that there are 7 pickleball courts
32 shared with 2 tennis courts. The tennis players usually play singles, so 4 tennis players
33 can displace 28 active pickleball players plus the people waiting, sometimes up to 40

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1 people total when the 2 tennis courts are being used. He asked the City Council to
2 consider giving pickleball priority in the evening to serve the most active players on the
3 Mitchell Park Courts.

4 Monica Williams, representing the Palo Alto Pickleball Club, requested the court usage
5 policy for pickleball priority hours be updated to 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. seven days a week.
6 The Palo Alto Pickleball Club has almost 900 members, more than half of them Palo
7 Alto residents; the Palo Alto Tennis Club has 150 members. There are 51 tennis courts
8 in Palo Alto, but Mitchell Park is the only pickleball facility in Palo Alto. Pickleball
9 players are not asking for more courts, only more time at the current courts.

10 Joseph Afong, Palo Alto resident, suggested the staff go over the transcript of the last
11 meeting and provide answers to the commission members on their questions in order to
12 prevent repeated questions. He believed there had been enough time over the past year
13 to solicit input from the tennis players, the absence of such input is an input in itself, and
14 the most accurate, unbiased view by both tennis and pickleball players was already
15 provided by the court usage surveys over the past 1½ years. He advocated for an action
16 plan with a specific timeline.

17 **AGENDA CHANGES, REQUESTS, DELETIONS**

18 None.

19 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

20 **2. Approval of Draft Minutes from the September 27, 2022, Parks and Recreation**
21 **Commission Meeting**

22 Herb Borock requested a correction to his comments on the first page of the minutes
23 under Public Comments. He requested his comments be changed to reflect a single fiber
24 hut site, rather than plural, and also that the phrase "at Juana Briones Park" be added to
25 the end of his comments.

26 Commissioner Cribbs requested to clarify the sentence on page 4, line 13, which reads,
27 "Commissioner Oche asked for clarification of the cost." She questioned whether the
28 cost referred to the lights or the courts. Page 11, line 7 should say "Gamble Gardens."
29 Line 9 should say, "a contractor dropped out," and the blank on line 15 should be
30 "Docent." She wished to delete her comments on page 13, line 18 about final
31 communication.

32 **MOTION**

1 Commissioner Cribbs moved to approve the minutes of September 27, 2022. Seconded
2 by Commissioner Freeman, the motion passed, 6-0, by roll call vote.

3 **CITY OFFICIAL REPORTS**

4 **3. Department Report**

5 Daren Anderson, Community Resources Department, stated that recruiting for the vacant
6 park irrigation position and several open space technical hourly positions is ongoing.
7 The budget analyst and senior budget management analyst positions are in the final
8 interview process. He listed upcoming special events, including a Jack-O-Jaunt
9 Halloween event, a holiday tree lighting event at Lytton Plaza, Veterans Day recognition
10 at MacArthur Park Restaurant, a holiday toy drive for local youth in need, and a holiday
11 decorating contest. A test plot was completed safely and successfully at Mayfield Soccer
12 Complex to ensure safe removal of infill without damaging turf blades. The bid was
13 posted Tuesday, October 18, and all bids are due by the end of day Wednesday, October
14 26. The aim is to have the work done toward the end of November before the rainy
15 season starts, and the work will take approximately 12 days to complete. All the lights at
16 Mayfield Soccer Complex were replaced last week. Regarding the Foothills Nature
17 Preserve weekday entrance fee, the contract for the automated payment machine has not
18 yet been finalized. City Council approved the new skate park item, which allows the
19 Friends of Palo Alto Parks to begin fundraising. The Magical Bridge Playground
20 improvement project is scheduled to be completed Friday, October 28. Regarding a
21 question at the last meeting about JMZ ticket prices, increasing fees was mentioned at a
22 finance committee meeting and erroneously reported by the press as an announcement of
23 fee increases. There have been no discussions to date regarding fee increases for the
24 2024 budget. There was no update on the Cubberley Gym situation.

25 Commissioner Freeman questioned whether the Foothills Nature Preserve was currently
26 not charging an entry fee as the machine had not yet been installed and whether
27 communications would be sent to the public regarding that.

28 Mr. Anderson replied that he wanted to allow at least two weeks after receiving the
29 machine to communicate this to the public so people are aware.

30 Chair Greenfield asked how the 95% success rate at the Mayfield Soccer Complex
31 compared with that at El Camino Park.

32 Mr. Anderson stated that there was no test plot done at El Camino Park and that was
33 completely covered by the contractor, so that removal was more cautious. He gave a
34 rough estimate of 60% given the analysis after the fact. He anticipated far less old
35 material coming up and clumping at the Mayfield Soccer Complex. He added that one
36 contractor was confident the work could be staggered so that one field could be left open

1 at all times.

2 Commissioner Freeman asked about the number of bids received.

3 Mr. Anderson stated that he will not know until the bid is closed.

4 **BUSINESS**

5 **4. Palo Alto Youth Council**

6 Chris Penaranda, Recreation Coordinator with Community Services Department, stated
7 the members will report accomplishments from last year and goals and initiatives for his
8 year.

9 Julia Zeitlin, President of Palo Alto Youth Council, discussed the themes prioritized for
10 the 2021-2022 year, mental health, college support, and climate action, and the group
11 discussed projects and events related to these themes.

12 Kayley Spencer, Secretary of Palo Alto Youth Council, described the current year's
13 themes, mental health and civic education.

14 Matthew Lee, Palo Alto Youth Council member, discussed the group's Mental Health
15 Resource Guide.

16 Paul Cherian, Vice President of Palo Alto Youth Council, discussed the planned Finals
17 Study Cram Slam.

18 Ms. Spencer described a yearlong project, a monthly newsletter to get Palo Alto teens
19 more involved in civic education and political events.

20 Ms. Zeitlin stated the group hopes to organize a City Council Meet and Greet after the
21 November election to help bridge the gap between youth and political leaders.

22 Anika Raffle, Palo Alto Youth Group member, stated there is low engagement in local
23 elections among young voters, yet when teens vote, they are more likely to become
24 strong voters in the future. This incentivized the group to get 16- to 18-year-old students
25 to preregister and register for the upcoming election.

26 Mr. Cherian thanked Council Member Greer Stone and Commissioner Anne Cribbs for
27 attending the group's retreat several months ago. He also thanked the group's advisors
28 Chris Sanchez and was grateful to the Mitchell Park Community Center for allowing
29 them to meet there.

1 Ms. Zeitlin described the things the youth group would like to focus on in the future and
2 asked what the Parks and Recreation Commission would like to see from them.

3 Commissioner Cribbs felt privileged to be able to attend the youth council meetings and
4 congratulated the group on their outreach. She stated would like a better line of
5 communication and be able to ask the group their opinions on projects and what is
6 important to them.

7 Commissioner Kleinhaus stated she would love the group members to be more involved
8 and reach out to work on or learn about any of the Commission's issues.

9 Commissioner Oche stated she wanted more of the group's input and also wanted to see
10 the group invite the Commission for more events and possibly have a mentorship
11 program for younger people. She encouraged them to continue to embrace civic duties.

12 Commissioner Brown stated the planned civic education and engagement efforts were
13 wonderful. She encouraged the group to attend City Council and Commission meetings.

14 Commissioner Freeman encouraged the group to bring to the attention of the
15 Commission anything that would benefit the youth group to make sure the Commission
16 is reaching out to help them as well. He asked how they reach out to other youth within
17 other communities.

18 Mr. Cherian answered that they communicate and spread the word through student
19 councils and social media.

20 Ms. Zeitlin added that there is a lot of engagement through other teen groups in Palo
21 Alto, such as the Teen Arts Council and Teen Library Advisory Board.

22 Vice Chair LaMere commended the focus on mental health and reaching out to others.
23 He stated a youth voice is important and encouraged the group to attend City Council or
24 Commission meetings to speak of things that are of interest or concern to them.

25 Chair Greenfield agreed and stated it is a good opportunity and experience to be civically
26 involved. He asked about the interaction with the local high schools.

27 Ms. Spencer replied that group has members from a variety of schools and some
28 members also participate in student government, which both help with engagement.

29 Ms. Raffle stated there is a lot of support from school administration as well.

30 Chair Greenfield asked how the college admissions panel compares with those done by
31 the schools.

1 Ms. Zeitlin replied that there was help from school college counselors who were able to
2 provide advice. Unique to the group's panel was voices from current college students,
3 which she felt was helpful.

4 Chair Greenfield suggested a meet and greet with the Parks and Recreation Commission
5 outside of a meeting.

6 Mr. Cherian agreed that having informal meetings between government and citizens are
7 a great way to engage.

8 Chair Greenfield stated supporting youth programming is an area the Parks and
9 Recreation Commission would like to do more in and thanked the Palo Alto Youth
10 Group for attending.

11 **5. Park Dedication – Measure E Site**

12 Chair Greenfield stated this is part of the work plan commitment to consider
13 recommendations to City Council regarding the potential rededication of the Measure E
14 site, at the Palo Alto Baylands.

15 Mr. Anderson stated that in November 2011, Measure E passed and undedicated the 10
16 acres for a 10-year term to be used for an energy compost facility. In December 2014,
17 City Council directed staff not to pursue the development of the compost facility, which
18 was not cost effective. Public Works and the Utilities Department have no plans for the
19 Measure E site.

20 **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

21 Peter Drekmeier, representing Palo Altans for Great Energy, the sponsors of Measure E
22 in 2011, talked about the history of Measure E. In 2008, the dump, which had an
23 effective compost operation, was going to close and be converted to parkland. The
24 Planning and Transportation Department's blue ribbon task force recommended
25 anaerobic digestion. PAGE needed 4400 signatures to pass Measure E and had 6000,
26 65% of the vote. He asked why there is a rush to rededicate the land as parkland. He
27 stated it smells bad and is the worst location in Palo Alto for a park but the best location
28 for waste conversion.

29 Elaine Elbizri, resident of Palo Alto for more than 30 years, stated there is no shortage of
30 places to enjoy outdoors in Palo Alto. She agreed the 10 acres are not an inviting spot
31 for hiking. Residents accepted using anaerobic digestion to make use of solid waste and
32 provide gas to the city; Measure E meant having a system to contribute to the goals of
33 sustainability and zero waste. Since then, there are new methods to address municipal
34 waste disposal, and Palo Alto is in a perfect place to develop a state-of-the-art method.

1 Jeff Brown requested the Commission not recommend to rededicate the Measure E site
2 as parkland. In 2011, 65% of the voters wanted the land put aside for future use to be the
3 site of a bioenergy facility. Water treatment byproduct is one of the biggest sources of
4 biowaste, so there is no better place to site a bioenergy facility than directly adjacent to a
5 sewage treatment plant. He felt the ad hoc committee should have talked to supporters
6 of Measure E before coming to the Commission with its recommendations. He would
7 not expect Public Works or Utilities to have plans for the site. He asked the Commission
8 to extend their perspective to providing a future for Palo Altans.

9 Herb Borock supported the recommendation to dedicate the land as park. The
10 proponents of the initiative passed the initiative with a provision that the Council could
11 rededicate the parkland in 10 years. When the City made the decision not to go ahead
12 with an anaerobic digestion facility, Phil Bobel, the Assistant Director of Public Works,
13 stated, "What the City does with its waste is more important than where it does it." The
14 sludge facility removes all the water, and the pyrolysis project would use 30% of that
15 water. They cannot use that water if it is going to the planned advanced water
16 purification facility, and the equivalent would be needed for the pyrolysis project.

17 Karen Porter explained that this is the worst location for expanded parkland because it is
18 next to treatment site and directly under the flight path for arriving flights to the nearby
19 Palo Alto Airport, which is the busiest single-runway airport in the state. Not only noise
20 but leaded fuel emissions from piston-engine planes are a problem. She discussed the
21 health effects of lead exposure and stated that this airport is number 19 on a list of top
22 lead polluting airports in the United States. She felt the only use for this land would be
23 something that serves an environmentally beneficial purpose.

24 Rani Fischer, representing the Santa Clara Audubon Society, supported the rededication
25 of the Measure E site as an important wildlife corridor used by many people who enjoy
26 the park. It creates a natural connection between Harbor Marsh and the Emily Renzel
27 Wetlands and is not where an industrial facility bringing noise, light, smells, and traffic
28 belongs. The Measure E site can provide a new place to plant a grove of native trees to
29 replace those removed by the planned desalinization plant.

30 Susan DesJardin, Chair of Sierra Club's San Francisco Bay Alive Campaign, stated the
31 San Francisco Bay is a critical habitat for wildlife. Urban and industrial health have put
32 pressure on the Bay's environmental health, and climate change further impacts those
33 pressures. The Sierra Club has developed a campaign to restore the Bay's ecosystem.
34 She supported the restoration of the Measure E parkland to provide a functioning
35 hydrological and habitat connection and afford better resilience to sea level rise.

36 Debbie Mytels, a 40-year resident of Palo Alto who supported Measure E in 2011, was
37 disappointed that the City had not made progress on using the site for a forward-looking
38 approach to handling the City's waste. She felt the site next to the water treatment plant

1 was not suitable for parkland but was located in the midst of other sustainability services.
2 She felt the City needed to follow the voters' direction and refer the discussion to the
3 Planning and Transportation Commission, which handles land use decisions.

4 Susan Stansbury, longtime resident of Palo Alto, was disappointed at the plan to convert
5 the Measure E site to parkland. While the site has not yet been used for waste
6 conversion, technology has advanced and building infrastructure will help the City reach
7 its Climate Action Plan goals. She felt pyrolysis was a better alternative than trucking
8 organic waste miles away for handling and also felt the site was not ideal for parkland
9 and not suitable to convert into wetlands. She suggested letting the voters decide.

10 Bob Wenzlau, Palo Alto resident, stated the reason for Measure E was that the City
11 needs infrastructure for sustainability and that it is essential to minimize water quality
12 impact on the community. He spoke about environmental justice, balancing the interest
13 of preservation toward the impacts of the efforts to create a pristine bubble in Palo Alto
14 by shipping waste materials to the Central and South Valley, impacting economically
15 distressed communities. Communities like Palo Alto need to do their fair share. He
16 suggested talking to the youth council about this issue.

17 Michael Ferreira, former Palo Alto resident and currently on the executive committee of
18 Sierra Club's Loma Prieta chapter, seconded Ms. Desjardin's comments. He stated he
19 was the conservation chair of the Conservation Committee at the time of the proposal of
20 Measure E, with a vote of 11 in opposition and 2 in favor. He stated the supporters of
21 Measure E had 10 years to come up with something and have not done so. He
22 commended the Commission for wanting rededicate the land.

23 Kip Husty believed the vote was clear and that it was disingenuous to suggest that no
24 other form of materials could be converted at that site without a ballot initiative. It has
25 been 10 years but with a lot of delays, and he believed there should be a fair and full
26 hearing on this land before making a decision to return it to parkland.

27 Eileen McLaughlin, representing the Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge, stated
28 that any empty 10 acres that nobody does anything with is going to look shoddy.
29 Thinking about the future, with sea level rise will come groundwater rise, with enormous
30 restoration possibilities. Tidal marshes are carbon exchange engines and cost nothing
31 when allowed to develop. She believed that allowing nature that is already there to grow
32 and expand would be of more value over time than this potential plant and recommended
33 keeping the land as parkland, allowing it to be restored, and making it fit into the
34 environment around it.

35 Cedric Pitot de Beaujardiere asked the Commission not to rededicate the site back to
36 parkland. The feasibility study commissioned by the City for doing anaerobic digestion
37 on the Measure E site showed this was the best option from a financial and climate

1 emissions perspective, but the Council did not pursue that. Because the City is not
2 handling the organic waste locally, many trucks move the materials hundreds of miles,
3 which has a large climate impact. He believed this site is not great land for a park but its
4 adjacency to the water treatment plant is key in addressing climate goals.

5 Karen Holman stated there are many ways to be the best possible environmental
6 stewards and listed reasons not to pursue the project, including odors, noise, truck trips
7 in and out, and visual impacts of the facility. She questioned investing millions of
8 dollars in an area subject to sea level rise and stated it was not economically or
9 environmentally feasible for every city to have its own facility. The area is a wildlife
10 corridor, critical for the survival of wildlife. She suggested another way to reduce
11 landfill impacts is to ask City Council to require salvage of demolitions to avoid trucking
12 thousands of tons of landfill.

13 Annie Yang asked to recommend rededication of the Measure E site. She stated that
14 holding the land indefinitely for new technologies belies the promise that the land would
15 be converted to open space. The final language of the ballot measure promised that if an
16 environmentally protective waste processing facility had not moved forward within 10
17 years, the land could be returned to its previous parkland designation. It has been 10
18 years, and the City has had that time to explore the options. She believed delaying
19 rededication would be inconsistent with public expectations.

20 Emily Renzel stated if something were built to process sewage sludge on this site, it
21 would put the rest of Bixby Park even closer to the sewage plant. In 2022 when the
22 Council approved the new sludge hauling contract, they said newer technologies were
23 studied but not considered the best option. She urged the Committee to rededicate the
24 site.

25 Winter Dellenbach stated that at a recent City Council meeting discussing the proposed
26 potable water reuse facility and salt removal facility close to the Measure E acreage,
27 serious concerns were expressed about investing in building infrastructure adjacent to the
28 Baylands in light of a potential sea level rise of multiple feet. She believed the
29 Commission should move forward of this site and find a different location if the facility
30 is a viable idea.

31 Chair Greenfield discussed the role of the Parks and Recreation Commission in
32 considering this action. Assessment of the technical merits of potential future plans and
33 concerns about sea level rise are beyond the scope of the Commission. The City Council
34 will consider things beyond Parks and Recreation's area of expertise.

35 Commissioner Oche wanted to know if a recent study had been done to weigh the pros
36 and cons of rededication or going ahead with a future energy or compost facility.

1 Mr. Anderson responded that there is not a recent study weighing pros and cons of
2 compost versus parkland.

3 Karin North, Assistant Public Works Director for Environmental Services Division,
4 stated the ballot initiative gave direction to look at different technologies. The digester
5 was very expensive, and the Council held off and then decided on a sludge dewatering
6 and haul-out facility while technologies changed and evolved. Since that time, staff has
7 been working to rebuild the liquid side of the wastewater treatment plant and has not
8 been directed to do an analysis on Measure E pros and cons, mostly due to staff
9 constraints.

10 Commissioner Kleinhaus stated the study in 2019 looked at 7 alternatives for how to deal
11 with the sludge and 5 alternatives were considered potential. She asked about the
12 comparative emissions that those 5 alternatives would have and also wanted to know
13 more about Mr. Borock's comments about the loss of water with pyrolysis.

14 Ms. North stated that staff has not yet done a thorough analysis on the different options.
15 When staff updated the biosolids facility plan, it was a high-level update to determine
16 cost. Staff will be directed to look at an analysis and may need to add resources to do
17 that analysis.

18 Vice Chair LaMere asked about the climate plan or concerns for the water treatment
19 plant and asked about the elevation.

20 Ms. North anticipated needing to protect the current wastewater treatment plant from
21 rising sea level. All critical infrastructure is being raised for flood protection, and she
22 anticipated also building a levee to protect the facility. Those determinations have not
23 yet been made by Council.

24 Commissioner Freeman asked for elaboration on the timeline regarding protecting the
25 sewage treatment and analysis on how to handle biosolids in the future.

26 Ms. North stated the vulnerability assessment was done in the last year and a half and
27 anticipated working on the adaptation plan for climate protection for sea level rise in the
28 next year. In tandem, staff is also working with larger agencies on potential levee
29 alignments, which can take a much longer time horizon. It is anticipated that the sewage
30 treatment plant will need to be protected, like all the sewage treatment plants around the
31 perimeter of the Bay Area. In regard to solids, the timing may change based on Council
32 and the Climate Action Plan goals. The current plan is to look at solids processing after
33 the secondary treatment plant process is upgraded, which is a 5-year project.

34 Commissioner Freeman clarified that it has been ongoing the last 2 years but there is a
35 resource issue that staff may or may not be able to do all of the planned analysis.

1 Ms. Brown agreed that there are competing demands on time and a finite amount of
2 resources. If Council determines that biosolids and hauled food waste and yard
3 trimmings need to be handled on site, then staff would need to reshuffle priorities to do
4 more analysis.

5 Commissioner Cribbs asked where the sludge is going.

6 Ms. Brown stated with the current contract, a majority goes to Fairfield-Suisun and is put
7 through an anaerobic digester and reduced into fertilizer and a third of it goes to the
8 Central Valley and is repurposed into biosolids. None of the sludge goes to San Jose.

9 Commissioner Cribbs was concerned that the ad hoc did not talk to the Utilities
10 Commission and Committee for Sustainability.

11 Chair Greenfield stated the committee spoke with the Public Works Department and
12 went on a tour of the site. They also met with the Director of the Utilities Department
13 and the Chair of the Public Utilities.

14 Commissioner Cribbs stated the Commission's role is to protect parkland and keep as
15 much as possible. She wondered if it would make a difference if the ad hoc or the
16 Commission went back and interviewed anyone else.

17 Chair Greenfield suggested finishing up with questions before making comments. He
18 asked if there is a rough dollar amount in terms of staff time and consultant fees that
19 went into analyzing proposals for the use of the site consistent with the guidelines in
20 Measure E.

21 Ms. North stated there was a consultant on board that was probably a couple hundred
22 thousand dollars and it took a considerable amount of staff time. The measure was very
23 specific that it needed to be all three, food scraps, yard trimmings, and biosolids, for an
24 energy compost facility, so that is what the analysis was done on.

25 Chair Greenfield wanted to clarify that any future use of the site per the terms of
26 Measure E would require treatment of all three types of material. He questioned if
27 rededicating the site as parkland or using the site for a purpose that did not include
28 addressing all three types of materials would each require a vote of the public.

29 Ms. North stated she would need to check with the attorney about the interpretation of
30 both questions.

31 Mr. Anderson stated the City Attorney's office had not made a decision on that, so more
32 research is needed to form a legal opinion.

1 Chair Greenfield stated there were 3 plans considered and then 3 more after that. He
2 stated ultimately in 2014, City Council advised staff not to pursue an active project on
3 the site any longer.

4 Ms. North stated it was not that clear. Hauling was an option for handling the biosolids
5 but it was more of a stopgap measure while technologies changed and based on staff
6 resources.

7 Chair Greenfield asked the last time staff reviewed a potential project for the Measure E
8 site consistent with Measure E.

9 Ms. North replied 2014.

10 Chair Greenfield stated the site has been sitting in limbo for 8 years. He questioned how
11 long it would take to approve a new plan for the site.

12 Ms. North stated if the staff resources were available and it was a direction from
13 Council, a new plan could probably been done in a year or two.

14 Chair Greenfield asked if the footprint of the maintenance facility currently on the
15 Measure E site has changed since 2011.

16 Ms. North stated that the landfill was not officially closed at that point in time. It is a
17 post-landfill closure location and needs to be maintained. The footprint is slightly larger
18 than in 2011, but the landfill area has remained consistent.

19 Chair Greenfield asked if there is funding available to improve the landscaping of the
20 site.

21 Mr. Anderson stated there is a CIP for the Bixby Park Improvement Project slated for
22 FY26 with money allocated toward the parking lot, landscaping, native planting,
23 irrigation, and additional seeding. On a smaller scale, there are existing funds to do
24 incremental work but it would require a more robust plan.

25 Chair Greenfield asked what other potential sites the City could use in terms of the
26 Measure E site being used for a future project.

27 Ms. North replied the sewage stream plant site is space limited. Staff has not looked at
28 space for increased treatment of the facility. The Los Altos Treatment Plant site is
29 currently being looked at by Valley Water for a regional purification facility but not for
30 handling of yard trimmings and biosolids.

31 Commissioner Kleinhaus stated it seems like a lot of soil was deposited along the road
32 and wondered when and why.

1 Ms. North reported the City capped and closed the landfill in 2015. There has been a
2 major grading project and minor grading and settlement repair work throughout the
3 landfill. Staff recently completed a settlement repair project in the area overlooking the
4 Measure E site for positive draining so the rainwater is not pooling. Staff is trying to
5 keep the contours as close as possible to the final grade at the time of the landfill closure.
6 She was unsure about the extra soil on the Measure E site. There have been issues with
7 subsidence, and staff has had to add dirt to keep it consistent with when the landfill was
8 closed.

9 Vice Chair LaMere asked if, when this was voted on in 2011, it was before the current
10 Bixby Park.

11 Ms. North confirmed that it was passed before the landfill was officially closed and
12 turned into Bixby Park.

13 Mr. Anderson clarified that phase 3 of Bixby Park had not been opened yet.

14 Chair Greenfield listed the options available to the Commission regarding voting on
15 making a recommendation to the Council. He was unsure how much taking time to hear
16 more about the plans would help. He did not believe this commission was the best group
17 to make an assessment in terms of the viabilities of various plans. There was the
18 consideration that the public voted on this and also a time consideration that after 10
19 years City Council had the discretion to rededicate the area as parkland.

20 Commissioner Brown did not think the role of the Commission was to protect parkland
21 at all costs but to advise on planning and policy issues related to parkland. She also felt
22 a more recent study and more work on this issue was important and that it was premature
23 to recommend action at this point one way or the other. She stated what was absent from
24 the conversation is the state legislation related to SB 1383. In theory, the legislation
25 allowed for renewable energy purchase, but that is not realistic right now and there are
26 fines associated. That cost has to be factored into any analysis moving forward as well.
27 Every other jurisdiction is trying to deal with the increase in processing of compost. It is
28 not just a Palo Alto problem; it is a regional and statewide challenge. There were
29 comments made that Public Works and Utilities have no plans for the site, but this has
30 not been prioritized or budgeted for. The analysis on the benefits of the parkland
31 conversion is equally incomplete. She felt the issue required more study but it was not
32 the purview of this Commission and would need to be referred to the City Council. She
33 felt it was irresponsible to make a recommendation based on a 2014 study without
34 looking at the technology and legislation requirements.

35 Council Member DuBois stated there have not been any recent policy decisions from the
36 Council on Site E. He felt the point about the scope was a good one and that ultimately
37 the Council would have to make a decision based on the different factors. He stated that

1 whether Parks and Recreation makes a referral that the land should be dedicated or that
2 the Council needs to make a decision, it would be good to get this in front of the Council.

3 Commissioner Kleinhaus stated this area is important to a lot of people. There are funds
4 available under 30x30 now that may not always be available for nature-based sea level
5 rise solutions. She understood people want to study more but the measure had a
6 potential sunset date of 10 years. People did not vote to keep it open and in limbo
7 forever. She believed if there was a good proposal in the future, a vote should be
8 considered again. She referenced a study done in 2019 that looked at various options
9 and was surprised some of these technologies were presented as a better solution when
10 the net energy consumed and greenhouse gas emissions for some are much higher than
11 sending 2 trucks a day to the Central Valley. There are impacts of building projects that
12 also contribute to climate change. She hoped City Council would look at the study and
13 look at how much water would be retained out of the sludge with these new
14 technologies. She suggested rededicating the site while staff is busy with so many other
15 projects and these 10 acres that people would like to see restored are not being used.

16 Commissioner Freeman stated the Commission needed to make a decision. The
17 technology is still fluid and changing and could be out 5 or 10 years. He suggested
18 taking advantage of what is in hand now with rededication as parkland.

19 Chair Greenfield felt it was reasonable to make a recommendation to City Council to
20 look into this item. He believed everyone on the panel would be in favor of a viable
21 project on this site that is environmental for climate change purposes if this site is the
22 best location for it. It has been 8 years since the area has been assessed for a viable
23 project, and any future project is going to take years. If the project is not consistent with
24 the terms of Measure E, it is going to have to go to the voters to be approved, and
25 rededicating it as parkland makes it more transparent to the voters. He believed it was
26 reasonable to revert this back to parkland and was in favor of making that
27 recommendation to City Council.

28 **MOTION**

29 Commissioner Kleinhaus moved to recommend to City Council to rededicate the
30 Measure E site as parkland. This was seconded by Chair Greenfield.

31 Commissioner Kleinhaus stated keeping the land in limbo and looking for a magic bullet
32 that has not been found yet is unjustifiable. She stated if something appropriate is found
33 in the future, it should be considered at that time.

34 Chair Greenfield added that he takes into consideration the fact that the public has voted
35 on this and is certain that City Council will take that into consideration when they
36 consider this action to rededicate the area as parkland. He felt the clause that after 10

1 years the area could be considered for rededication was important. It is likely to be a
2 number of additional years before a project is put forward. The area has been neglected
3 for too long.

4 The vote passed 4-2, Brown, Cribbs no, with Vice Chair LaMere abstention, by roll call
5 vote.

6 **6. Open Space and Parks Electric Bicycle and Electric Conveyances Policy**

7 Chair Greenfield stated this is a discussion point on the work of the ad hoc and staff and
8 various outreach undertaken. It will return at a later date with an agenda action.

9 Mr. Anderson gave definitions for e-bike and other electric powered mobility devices by
10 California Vehicle Code, which also prohibits the use of class 3 e-bikes on recreational
11 trails and paths unless the public agency with jurisdiction chooses to permit them. New
12 legislation, AB 1909, takes effect on January 1, removing the prohibition on class 3 e-
13 bikes from trails and paths. Instead local public agencies would be able to prohibit the
14 operation of an E-bike of any class on equestrian, hiking, or recreational trails. The ad
15 hoc has met several times to prepare this draft and met with Transportation staff and the
16 Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee (PABAC) to get feedback on the policy.
17 Transportation staff noted a significant increase in the use of e-bikes, especially on
18 school campuses, and felt the proposed restriction of class 3 bikes from open space and
19 park trails seemed appropriate, with an allowance for students who travel on park trails
20 to get to schools being able to use e-bikes. The draft policy was updated to note that e-
21 bikes and regular bikes should be parked in designated parking locations where bike
22 parking is available and was also changed to reflect that e-bikes are restricted from trails
23 but not paved roads. PABAC recommended the draft policy be changed to allow e-bikes
24 access on the unpaved trails at the Baylands Nature Preserve as the Bay Trail is often
25 used by people commuting to work. Mr. Anderson discussed reasons why staff and the
26 ad hoc ultimately decided against including this in the draft. He reviewed the current
27 draft policy. Next steps are to meet with PABAC on November 1 for feedback and to
28 later target an action item with this commission.

29 Vice Chair LaMere asked what class of e-bikes is allowed at Baylands.

30 Mr. Anderson stated class 1 and 2 are allowed on paved roads and paved trails and
31 prohibited elsewhere and class 3 are not allowed at all.

32 Commissioner Freeman stated it is hard to differentiate visually between the different
33 classes and believed it would get harder as manufacturers look at ways to make the bikes
34 more traditional.

1 Chair Greenfield added that some bikes can be switched between classes so simply
2 looking at the bike does not tell you what class it is. There is a speed limit on trails, but
3 it is self-enforced, looking to the community to understand the speed limit.

4 Commissioner Freeman questioned how the rangers handle enforcing the speed limit
5 currently.

6 Mr. Anderson stated staff is not trained to enforce speed limits. In the case of someone
7 obviously exceeding the speed limit in a hazardous way, the ranger may stop them and
8 request they honor the speed limit. He was not aware of any citations having been issued
9 and stated there is not staff capacity to do so.

10 **PUBLIC COMMENT**

11 Arthur Liberman hoped the Commission would reverse the decision not to allow class 1
12 and 2 e-bikes on unpaved trails in the Bayland open space where bicycles are currently
13 allowed. The Midpeninsula Open Space District allows E-bikes on the same kind of
14 unpaved, improved trails that are in the Baylands. By allowing e-bikes in the Baylands,
15 the Commission would be following the Midpeninsula Open Space Guidelines for the
16 nearby Ravenswood Preserve. He did not believe the environmental damage from e-
17 bikes to these trails would be any different from what is done currently by cyclists.
18 People already ride e-bikes on the Baylands Trails, and if they feel the rules do not make
19 sense, they will likely not follow them. There is a sign that marks the boundary between
20 the Baylands and Bixby Park, but the trails are identical. He felt it made no sense to
21 allow e-bikes in one place and not the other.

22 Paul Goldstein, 50-year resident of Palo Alto and longtime member of PABAC, urged
23 the Commission to allow class 1 e-bikes on the improved trails in the Baylands. He
24 seconded Mr. Liberman's comments and added that while Foothills Nature Preserve and
25 the Baylands are both nature preserves, the trails in each are different. Bike are currently
26 allowed on the Bayland trails, and conflict with pedestrians and wildlife is minimum.
27 Many older bicyclists are now using e-bikes in order to keep up with younger bicyclists.
28 The trails in the Baylands are essentially improved roads. He stated bikes are allowed
29 and class 1 e-bikes should be allowed.

30 Cedric Pitot de Beaujardiere concurred with Mr. Liberman's and Mr. Goldstein's
31 comments. He believed the e-bikes should be allowed anywhere regular bikes are
32 permitted. The City is actively trying to encourage people to get out of their cars and
33 onto bikes as part of climate goals. Some places are more accessible with electric bikes.

34 Karen Holman, Midpeninsula Open Space District board member, stated Midpen had
35 long discussion on whether to allow e-bikes and comments were split down the middle.
36 She listed the areas in Ravenswood and Rancho San Antonio where a 1-year trial was

1 done to allow class 1 and 2 e-bikes. One of the issues was enforcement as it is not likely
2 that speed will be enforced. She did not believe e-bikes belonged in urban parks and
3 unpaved trails in the Baylands, other than with ADA allowances.

4 Commissioner Kleinhaus felt the policy was difficult and appreciated how carefully
5 considered the document was in balancing all the issues.

6 Commissioner Freeman stated it is important to be proactive versus reactive and trying
7 to catch up. E-bikes are fast growing and bringing in people from all demographics and
8 age groups. An e-bike gives a little more flexibility, and he believed more people would
9 be willing to take advantage of the outside. He believed it was necessary to provide
10 realistic regulations that do not prevent people from taking advantage. The ad hoc was
11 able to look at what other agencies and neighboring communities are doing and mirror
12 that as much as possible while being good stewards in the approach.

13 Chair Greenfield stated it will be an evolving policy as time goes on. He believed
14 compatibility with bike transportation corridors and safe routes to school was an
15 important consideration. He felt it did not make sense that a class 2 electric bicycle
16 would be allowed on a park path or trail as it is like a moped in that someone can ride
17 without pedaling, but maintaining compatibility with neighboring jurisdictions and
18 people using this as basic transportation to get to school overrides that sensibility.
19 Encouraging ridership and getting people out of cars needs to be balanced with safety
20 concerns. Parking concerns are an issue for both e-bikes and all of the other electric
21 conveyances that are not properly supported in terms of parking. Class 3 e-bikes should
22 be permitted in the same places where motorized vehicles are permitted. They need to
23 have access to parking lots but also bike parking lots, which are typically not part of the
24 car parking lots. Speed and enforcement of 15 miles an hour is a major concern and the
25 overriding reason for not permitting e-bikes on the unpaved portions of the Baylands
26 area. The Baylands is right next to Bixby Park, where bicycles are allowed, and he
27 believed it made sense not to permit e-bikes on the trails of Bixby Park with the slopes
28 going down. Regarding the comment that the Midpen policy allowed e-bikes on the
29 trails that this policy suggests they would not be permitted on, e-bikes are only permitted
30 on a very short unpaved trail at Rancho San Antonio; for most unpaved trails throughout
31 the Midpen network, e-bikes are not permitted. The ad hoc wanted to maintain
32 consistency with the Midpen policy.

33 Ms. Holman stated that was accurate. Midpen does not allow e-bikes on any paved or
34 unpaved trails in any preserve other than Ravenswood and the very limited ones in
35 Rancho that have been mentioned.

36 Chair Greenfield stated that the most expedient path for commuting along the Bay Trail
37 through Palo Alto is the paved trail, which is open to e-bikes.

APPROVED

1 Vice Chair LaMere appreciated the clarification on class 1 and 2 e-bikes and viewed a
2 class 2 bicycle differently than a class 1 because it can go on its own without being
3 pedaled. Class 1 bicycles are being used more by riders, especially older riders, who
4 may not be able to pedal as far anymore or get to where they want to go. He suggested
5 thinking about class 1 bicycles as a separate entity.

6 Commissioner Freeman stated there is no distinctive difference and it would put more of
7 a challenge on the rangers to try. He agreed that it would be nice to be able to separate
8 them but was unsure how to do so.

9 Chair Greenfield stated the fundamental concern is that if someone is not pedaling, they
10 are inherently in less control. If the device is capable of going 22 miles an hour, it is a
11 concern if it is not reliably enforceable. The next step is to hear from PABAC and likely
12 back to the Parks Commission in December as an action.

13 Mr. Anderson felt it would be valuable to hear from the rest of the Commission in
14 particular on the Baylands unpaved trails or with any feedback on which more research
15 was needed.

16 Commissioner Freeman suggested reduction of speed when approaching a pedestrian
17 might address any concerns about not hearing a bike approach.

18 Mr. Anderson stated that R 120 says bicyclists, e-bike and other powered mobility
19 devices, and equestrians are required to slow to 5 miles per hour when passing others or
20 approaching blind turns.

21 Chair Greenfield stated e-bikes are heavier than regular bikes and take longer to slow
22 down. He also asked other commissioners for their input on access to the unpaved trail
23 through the Baylands.

24 Vice Chair LaMere was in favor of allowing class 1 the same places regular bicycles are
25 allowed but acknowledged the problem with being able to tell what is a class 1.

26 Commissioner Cribbs agreed that she would like to see class 1 allowed on the unpaved
27 trails at the Baylands.

28 Commissioner Freeman suggested entertaining a sticker for class 1 e-bikes that would be
29 obvious to the ranger.

30 Mr. Anderson stated the rangers would probably not be able to manage that, but he was
31 glad to discuss it with them.

32 Commissioner Kleinhaus stated there are a lot of different types of mobility devices. It
33 gets complicated to start deciding which ones are allowed.

1 Chair Greenfield stated that it is quite practical and reasonable to ride an e-bike to the
2 Baylands but less so for Foothills Park, Arastadero Preserve, and Esther Clark Park,
3 which is the reason for the different distinction for Baylands.

4 Commisioner Oche inquired about the results of the trial period of Midpen mentioned by
5 Ms. Holman and questioned the main concerns.

6 Chair Greenfield stated there is a link to the findings in the report.

7 Ms. Holman stated the trial was done in 2 areas to see how many complaints or positive
8 comments were received, and the results were mixed. There was information brought
9 forward about other places where e-bikes have been allowed, with indication of damage
10 to trails. The enforcement issue and the element of surprise were concerns. She
11 suggested allowing it on a trial basis because once it is city wide, it is very hard to take
12 back. E-bikes were not allowed in the preserves because they are powered by other than
13 human power and can go farther and longer, which means more interaction with and
14 disturbance of wildlife.

15 Chair Greenfield appreciated the work done by Midpen on the e-bike policy.

16 Commissioner Brown agreed with the comments made by Commissioner Cribbs and
17 Vice Chair LaMere. She felt this policy was a great start and has done a good job of
18 trying to be as simple as possible but also include the nuances of Palo Alto being
19 different from the other agencies that have similar policies. A lot of the enforcement will
20 come though public education and signage.

21 **7. Urban Forestry Annual Update**

22 Chair Greenfield suggested postponing this item to the next meeting, Tuesday,
23 November 22, 2022.

24 Peter Gollinger, Urban Forestry Project Manager, was agreeable to this.

25 **8. Ad Hoc Committees and Liaison Updates**

26 None.

27 **COMMISSIONER/BOARD MEMBER QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, ANNOUNCEMENTS OR** 28 **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

29 For November, there are 4 items: CIP review, advanced water purification system returning as a
30 discussion item, racquet court policy returning as an action, and Urban Forestry annual report. For
31 December, the items are a discussion on family rec center progress, an action for e-bike park and open
32 space policy, and hopefully a discussion item on the Baylands Comprehensive Conservation Plan.

APPROVED

1 Commissioner Kleinaus invited everyone to a symposium by the Sierra Club and Audubon about dark
2 sky and bird safety on November 16 in the afternoon.

3 **ADJOURNMENT**

4 Meeting adjourned at 10:48 P.M.