

Baumb, Nelly

From: mark weiss <earwopa@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, April 12, 2021 2:56 PM
To: Council, City
Subject: In support of skateboard park investment

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

Dear Council:

I've done a bit of research on the skateboard issue and published my findings at my blog, Plastic Alto. FYI.

To wit:

Palo Alto City Council has agendized for next week, Monday, April 12, a discussion of skateboarding. There is also a memo written by members Alison Cormack and Greg Tanaka on the topic.

What should we do with the Greer Park skateboard element, which is abandoned?

Should we push, perhaps as a public-private-partnership for a state-of-the-art (or usable) skate park, like kids enjoy nearby in Menlo Park, Fremont, Newark, San Jose?

Palo Alto built an early public park but no one uses it now for sundry reasons. The graffiti adds a roux to the scene but is evidence that Community Services has given up here.

Kieran, a 16 year old Paly student and neighbor, agreed to meet me at Greer yesterday to teach me about his world, to help me try to impact the result of these discussions.

He said he had not been to the park in eight years.

He had gone to Burgess the day before.

He has gone as far as Oregon to skate new parks (with his family, if I got this correct — he and friends with cars go to Bay Area and south bay parks frequently, it seems).

Kieran is a talented skater, who has won prizes in competitions. Maybe he would go pro after high school*, although both his dad and uncle are Stanford professors and scientists. His uncle Mark played tennis for Stanford (and Gunn — I knew him, slightly, since grade school).

Ironically, a skater like Kieran approaches Palo Alto's publicly-financed skate park like street skaters approach the built environment: what can we do here? Our park is not suitable for skating per se but you can use your head — if you are someone who is always looking to make do or improvise to turn the odd bench, curb, stairs or rail into your domain — to find some use for it.

Kieran is not political so this might be his only input on this issue. His parents had opinions on the topic — dad had signed the petition — and sent me some links but didn't say whether they would chime in on April 12 or continue to advocate.

I want Palo Alto to talk to and learn from the brightest and most interesting people on this topic and not just crank thru with a bureaucratic response.

My ollies on this are: Cormack, mayor Tom Dubois, commissioners Keith Reckdahl, Jeff LaMere and David Moss, and activists Rebecca Eisenberg and Aram James (whose friend Jameel Douglas is a pro-level skater).

I don't know how to prioritize this compared to stopping Castilleja expansion, helping the homeless, building a police station, preventing police dogs from biting the innocent or 10 other things I have had opinions on. But I do think this is an opportunity to do right by a fairly substantial sub-community, albeit a special interest.

At least two famous skaters are also great musicians: Steve Caballero of Soda and other bands; Tommy Guerrero. Jon Wurster of Superchunk published a childhood photo of himself on a board. Jazz and improv musician Philip Greenlief played in my series at Palo Alto Art center, skates and even wrote a letter to Berkeley City Council, who are responding to a similar opportunity. Gunn graduate Colt Cannon is also a known skater.

Here are two short clips of Kieran teaching me his skills:

(video)

(video)

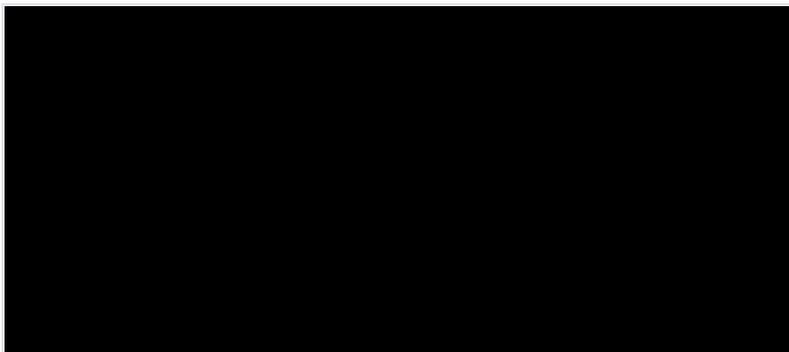
If Greer were better designed or upgraded, Kieran would catch some air and continue or flow to more features and tricks, and not end up in the grass.

The skateboard initiative points out that contemporary parks would accomodate beginners more than Greer's archaic and disused feature does or could or did.

You can view the clips at Plastic Alto, "Fieldwork regarding the skate park".

or:

[Fieldwork regarding the skate park initiative in Palo Alto](#)



Fieldwork regarding the skate park initiative in Palo Alto

Palo Alto City Council has agendized for next week, Monday, April 12, a discussion of skateboarding. There is al...

Mark Weiss
in Palo Alto
from the clay wheels generation

PS Kieran's mom contacted me shortly after I published this essay to say that her son is not actually contemplating a career in skating, beyond imagining being a lifelong skater.

If Council member Tanaka, beyond having unusually good balance for a middle-aged man knows any skateboard tricks, like the "ollie", he could reveal such...and we will take his word on it. I actually have a clip of him riding his board down the hallway at Cubberley...I mean beyond 360 effects on his GoPro camera...