



City of Palo Alto

COLLEAGUES MEMO

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DATE: December 12, 2016

TO: City Council Members

FROM: Council Member Holman, Council Member Filseth, Vice Mayor Scharff, Council Member Burt

SUBJECT: COLLEAGUES MEMO REGARDING SUPPORT FUNDING FOR THE BARRON PARK DONKEY PROJECT

Goal:

Provide support funding for continuing the neighborhood and community tradition of keeping and caring for donkeys in Barron Park.

Background and Discussion:

Donkeys have been a part of the landscape in Barron Park since the Depression Era when Cornelis and Josina Bol's 13 acres of farmland included a donkey pasture. Cornelis Bol was a long-time Stanford professor who also invented the mercury vapor light. The Bols allowed neighborhood children to visit and ride the donkeys. Donkeys have served as neighborhood pets ever since.

When Cornelis Bol died in 1965, the neighbors taxed themselves to create Bol Park, a wish of Bol's. The park opened in 1974, a year before Barron Park was annexed into Palo Alto. When Josina Bol passed away in 1996, neighborhood volunteers "adopted" Mickey and brought Niner and Perry to be his new companions.

Donkeys have served as Gunn High School mascots at football games, are Sunday regulars in Bol Park for personal attention from children, and Perry is famous as the model for Donkey in the Shrek movies.

Among those who regularly visit the donkeys are staff and patients of the VA Hospital, Stanford Research Park employees, young children with parents, and countless students coming and going from Gunn High School.

The community was reminded of how important the donkeys are when passersby kept asking when Perry was coming home after the recent passing of Niner. And at the memorial for Niner on November 20 when some 120 or so neighbors came to pay their respects. And by the

excitement of children and adults to get a look at Perry and his new friend Jenny who both arrived at the pasture on November 15.

In August 2013, the Acterra / Barron Park Donkey Project was established between Acterra and the subsequent owner of the Bol property, James Witt, who continues the donkey pasture as the home for the donkeys. A prior relationship with Acterra had been established providing a non-profit umbrella so that donations made to cover expenses for the donkeys could be tax deductible. Acterra also holds these funds and pays approved bills for the Project.

The donkeys are supported by individual donations, and to secure the donkey tradition, the Barron Park Donkey Project has begun a fundraising effort to cover the next 5 years of expenses estimated to be \$125,000. Routine expenses account for veterinary costs, Acterra fees (including insurance), pasture lease expense, food and misc expenses totaling \$75,000 over the 5 year period. Special expenses such as just experienced with the care for Niner plus clean up and maintenance at the pasture in coordination with efforts by the owner come to \$20,000 based on experience. And finally, a reserve of \$20,000 with a goal of \$30,000 (replenished as needed) is held at Acterra to assure there is funding for potential extraordinary expenses such as just described. Because of recent special expenses, this reserve needs to be rebuilt.

Recommendation:

We ask Colleagues to join us in committing \$15,000 from Council contingency funds to support the Barron Park Donkey Project fundraising goal of \$125,000 to cover 5 years of donkey-related expenses. The first \$10,000 from the City will serve as a challenge toward other fundraising and the remaining \$5,000 upon successful match of the \$10,000. In doing so, the Council will help ensure the tradition of donkeys in the Barron Park neighborhood and continue the strong community they generate.

This memo requests that Council make this decision at the meeting of December 12, 2016. To do so, Council should:

1. Direct and authorize the City Manager to prepare and execute a Memorandum of Agreement with Acterra to make an initial grant of \$10,000 for donkey-related expenses, and, upon successful private fundraising by the Barron Park Donkey Project of \$10,000, provide an additional City grant of \$5,000.
2. Amend the Fiscal Year 2017 Budget Appropriation Ordinance for the General Fund budget by:
 - a. Increasing the Community Services Department appropriation for grants and subsidies in the amount of \$15,000;
 - b. Decreasing the Non-Departmental City Council Contingency appropriation in the amount of \$15,000.

Staff and Fiscal Impact:

There is more than sufficient funding in the Council Contingency fund to allow this expenditure. A modest amount of staff time will be needed to prepare the Memorandum of Agreement and administer the transactions.