



HSR City Council Committee

Members

Patrick Burt
Larry Klein
Nancy Shepherd
Gail Price

Special Meeting

Thursday, May 13, 2010
8:30 am – 10:00 am
Council Conference Room
Civic Center
250 Hamilton Avenue
Palo Alto, CA

Minutes

CM Price is absent.

1. Oral Communications

Public Comment: Hinda Sack said it would be useful for the Committee to discuss roadway and railway separation. There are houses potentially on each side of the grade separation. She is trying to organize her community to discuss these issues.

Public Comment: Tony Carrasco said the alignments in the Alternatives Analysis are so complex. Therefore, we need to look at these in reference to cost.

Public Comment: Brian Steen asked when Hatch Mott McDonald would be presenting to the Committee. Mr. Emslie responded on May 20.

Public Comment: Rita Wespi said she attended the Senate Transportation Hearing last Tuesday. The Senate is starting to draw a line for support of HSR if more concerns begin to rise. Ms. Wespi also presented a community stakeholder map to the Committee. She said all cities should have a copy of this map to make sure it is accurate.

2. Approval of Minutes from April 15, 2010 and April 29, 2010

Chair Klein said this item would be carried over to next Thursday's meeting since there is no quorum.



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3. Schedule for Monthly HSR Update to Council

Mr. Emslie said we conducted our May update this past Monday. We will have another update to the Council on May 24 regarding the Alternatives Analysis.

4. Update on HSRA Information Requests

Mr. Emslie said a draft letter is being put together by staff with an attachment of a spreadsheet, outlining all requests.

CM Shepherd asked if it were possible to get the dates on the spreadsheet of when all these requests were sent out.

Mr. Emslie responded yes. Most items date back to 01/15/10.

Chair Klein asserted that the City of Palo Alto is being too polite in the letter and we need to be more specific.

Mayor Burt said he met with Gayle Likens and Steve Emslie last week to work on this item. The attachment is based upon the cumulative responses from these documents.

Mr. Keene said we have not received responses to our requests yet. Therefore, we should be more specific that this is a time sensitive matter and the turnaround time is unacceptable. The lack of response is limiting our ability to respond to the Alternatives Analysis.

Mayor Burt stated we should include our original request and their individual responses.

Chair Klein asked who we would send this letter to.

Mr. Emslie responded to the new Executive Director.

Chair Klein added that we should also send it to the normal list of players.

Mayor Burt said we should send the letter to JPA Board members, Robert Doty and Dominic Spaethling as well.



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Chair Klein suggested the Committee discuss item #7 on the agenda now, as it is the most pressing issue.

7. Discussion of Guiding Principles

Chair Klein said CM Price and himself wanted to keep this document short and to the point.

Mayor Burt said some acknowledgement that the Program EIR has been decertified should be included under "Background".

Mayor Burt suggested that "City Staff" be included under "Background" in the last paragraph. The Principles under Grant of Authority is not intended to be the sole definition of the Committee.

Chair Klein stated the Committee has two roles: 1) traditional role of advising the City Council of pertinent subject matter, and 2) the Committee has the authority to act without the full Council if necessary.

CM Shepherd said the Committee should put something on the Consent calendar for the City Council.

Mayor Burt said informational items should go to Council as a vehicle of information to the Council, not necessarily on Consent.

Chair Klein suggested we add "...and to implement Council decisions and policies" in the 2nd paragraph under "Grant of Authority".

Mayor Burt said we should consider short informational reports (rather than long ones) by staff for updates in the packet.

Mr. Keene said there is a question of how to inform the Council. We need to inform and discuss, and then take action. We need to do a better job on the staff side of things, in terms of acting as more of a vehicle of communication between the full Council and the Committee.

Nadia Naik suggested staff maintain some type of log to monitor action and have it accessible online. Also, staff should provide ongoing goals online as well.



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Tony Carrasco recommended the Committee include the City's support of Caltrain and electrification in the Guiding Principles as well.

Bill Warren said there should be some statement from the Council to indicate whether they want Palo Alto to be on the High Speed Rail route.

Chair Klein said the statement that the City's opposition to an at-grade or above-ground alignment of HSR is controversial because Council has never taken a formal vote on this topic.

Mayor Burt preferred to delete the portion that read "at-grade". "Above-ground" includes "at-grade" though. We should use "elevated" instead of "at-grade or above-ground alignment". All Committee members agreed.

Mr. Keene suggested the Committee should invert the third policy.

Mayor Burt said we need language that does not imply specificity since we have different stations, geology, geography, etc. throughout Palo Alto.

Mr. Keen said the Palo Alto alignment is seen as a vertical whole even though the Alternatives Analysis divides Palo Alto into segments.

CM Shepherd suggested adding "impacts" at the end of the third policy. All agreed.

All agree on policy #4.

All agree on policy #5.

Mayor Burt said we should spell out the acronyms in policy #6.

All agree on policy #6.

Mayor Burt said we may want to add a reference to the State Auditor's Report in policy #7. It is also worth looking at how to organize this list.

All agree on policy #7.



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Mayor Burt stated the intent of policy #8 is to move away from being reactive and become more proactive. We have economic strategies, but no plan yet.

Chair Klein said he does not see how economic strategies would be impacted by High Speed Rail.

Mayor Burt stated HSR could affect hotel development strategies for example.

All agree on policy #8.

Mayor Burt said the CSS should be funded adequately and in a timely manner.

CM Shepherd stated that we need to be ware of the possibility that the HSRA might not use this document.

Mayor Burt said we still want to advocate that we support it under certain conditions.

Chair Klein said the Committee should add "that is effectively funded and implemented by HSRA".

Rita Wespi suggested the Committee include the PRP in the policy as well.

All agree on policy #9.

Mayor Burt said we should delete "and the" and "it provides" in policy #10.

All agree on policy #10.

Chair Klein said the Committee would support electrification of Caltrain even if HSR dies tomorrow.

All agree on policy #11.



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All agree on policy #12.

All agree on policy #13.

All other items on the agenda to be postponed.

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