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**MINUTES
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
December 14, 2016
DOWNTOWN LIBRARY
270 Forest Avenue
Palo Alto, California**

Commissioners Present: Jim Cowie, Anne Cribbs, Jennifer Hetterly, Abbie Knopper, Ed Lauing, David Moss, Keith Reckdahl

Commissioners Absent:

Others Present: Eric Filseth

Staff Present: Daren Anderson, Catherine Bourquin, Rob de Geus, Peter Jensen, Kristen O'Kane

I. ROLL CALL CONDUCTED BY: Catherine Bourquin

II. AGENDA CHANGES, REQUESTS, and DELETIONS:

Chair Lauing: Is there any agenda changes, requests or deletions? Nope.

III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:

Chair Lauing: This is the time for oral communications, but I don't see anybody from the public. We won't spend much time on that. The person coming in is not part of the public. He's a Council Member.

IV. BUSINESS:

1. Approval of Draft Minutes from November 16, 2016 Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting.

Approval of the draft November 16, 2016 Minutes was moved by Commissioner Hetterly and seconded by Vice Chair Knopper. Passed 6-0 Cowie absent



2. Parks, Trails, Natural Open Space and Recreation Master Plan.

Chair Lauing: Second item on the agenda is Parks, Trails, Natural Open Space and Recreation Master Plan. We'll turn that over to Kristen for presentation.

Kristen O'Kane: Good evening. I'm Kristen O'Kane, Community Services. There's a couple of things I want to talk about, but I think it will be brief. Before we get into the actions that are on the agenda, I wanted to just give a brief summary of the public review comments that we received on the draft Master Plan. Peter, if you could go to the next slide please. We had an online community review period that began November 16th, and it officially ran through December 9th, but I believe it's still open. If people want to still submit comments, they can still do so. To date, we've received 82 responses. Attachment B that was in your packet may have been confusing because it was included in the bound Master Plan document, but it's at the end of this. It is a summary document of the comments we've received. We have received 82 responses to the online form and 40 written responses, which have open-ended questions. 96 percent of the respondents were residents of Palo Alto. What we did is start out by asking some overall questions, sort of to circle back to where we started from. Just a check-in to see now that we have the draft Master Plan in place, how should we apply what we started out with, the principles and the goals, to move into implementation? The first question had to do with which of the principles is most important to you, and they were asked to just choose their top three. The results were that about half of the respondents said that healthy and sustainable were in their top three choices. Nature was also one of the top three. You can see how it ranks from there. Do you want to go to the next slide, Peter? We did the same for goals. I think this one is a little bit more interesting. I've summarized the goals here. Goal 3, which is supporting health, wellness and social connections through active and passive opportunities, 60 percent of the respondents ranked that as one of their top three, followed by Goal 4, which was the goal related to preserving and integrating nature and natural systems and then enhancing what we have and then accessibility, inclusiveness and equitably distributed was also fairly high. The one that I found the most interesting was Goal 5, which only 20 percent of the respondents ranked as one of their top three, is the goal related to developing strategies to expand the system. I just thought it was an interesting outcome of the survey. Granted there were only 80 respondents to the survey, but out of those enhancing and improving what we already have seemed like a higher priority for those respondents than expanding the system. We then had some questions where we asked people to rank, when we implement the Master Plan, how they think the City should focus our efforts. Programs, classes or activities versus physical improvements or new facilities. In the Attachment B that you had, it had an average of 3.69. I actually think that median was a better measurement. I went back to my high school and college algebra and felt that median was a better measurement of this. The median here was 4; it was on the higher end. Physical improvements or new facilities seemed to be the priority versus programs, classes or activities. The next one

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1 was rating major upgrades or new facilities to smaller improvements throughout the
2 system. Again, it was a median of 4. It seemed like it was more heavily ranked towards
3 the smaller improvements throughout the system. That was all I had for the community
4 survey. Like I said, we did receive 80 responses. Not a lot, but I think it confirms what
5 we've heard throughout the process, that people do want to see our facilities and our
6 programs enhanced and improved and upgraded, maybe not as much of the large, big
7 infrastructure changes. Are there any comments on the survey? No. I just wanted to
8 then focus on the two handouts that you received. The first one is a letter that we
9 received from Stanford University. They have some comments related to the Master
10 Plan, specifically where we specifically call out Stanford and the partnership
11 opportunities we potentially have with them. I wanted to see if there were any comments
12 on their comment letter. I think from a staff perspective, with their comments and their
13 changes we will, unless there is disagreement from the Commission, go ahead and make
14 those changes for the next draft. I did want to hear from the Commission if there were
15 any concerns about any of their proposed changes.

16
17 Commissioner Hetterly: I think it's exactly what we expected them to say. I'm fine with
18 the changes.

19
20 Chair Lauing: I would agree with that.

21
22 Commissioner Cribbs: I would agree with it too. I think the good thing is that it's in the
23 document and at least we're talking some (inaudible).

24
25 Chair Lauing: That we're talking about ...

26
27 Commissioner Cribbs: That we're going to talk about it, some possibilities. That's a
28 good thing.

29
30 Chair Lauing: Of ongoing partnerships?

31
32 Commissioner Cribbs: Yes.

33
34 Ms. O'Kane: I'll talk about next steps, and then the letter from the Commission and then
35 the action. The next steps are we intended to go to Council in January of 2017. We had
36 planned to go January 9th, and that's no longer on the agenda partly because we, Rob and
37 I, needed to check in with our City Manager, Jim Keene, and just do a check-in before we
38 move to Council that this is where we are, this is where we're headed and this is the
39 status. We haven't had the opportunity to do that. The Council meeting is undetermined
40 right now what date we will go, but we still anticipate going in early 2017.

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1 Rob de Geus: Definitely. We did finally get a date actually for next week now, which is
2 good for Jim. Jim Keene, the City Manager, and Ed Shikada, the Assistant City
3 Manager, both have a copy of the full draft Plan, and they're reviewing it. We will have a
4 chance to meet with them next week, but we still won't make the 9th on the meeting.

5
6 Commissioner Moss: I was wondering why we haven't had checkpoints with City
7 Council or the Manager until now. I would have thought that we would be checking in a
8 couple of times ...

9
10 Mr. de Geus: We have.

11
12 Commissioner Moss: ... more formally.

13
14 Mr. de Geus: We've had several study sessions with the Council. We will return to
15 Council in January again. There's a question of whether it will be another study session,
16 maybe not. Maybe it's a discussion or even an action item so they can give some
17 direction, which they can't do formally at a study session, before we bring it back for a
18 final action. We'll talk with the City Manager about that next week.

19
20 Ms. O'Kane: We will be starting our CEQA process soon. We just received approval
21 from Council to amend MIG's contract to begin the CEQA documentation process. We
22 anticipate that there will be a public hearing for the CEQA review at a PRC meeting.
23 We're anticipating that would happen at the February meeting. We'll update that and
24 keep you up-to-date on the status of that as we get closer. That's our anticipated date
25 right now. Hopefully go to Council in March or April with the final Master Plan and
26 CEQA document for adoption at that time.

27
28 Commissioner Moss: We won't hear anything about CEQA in the January meeting. Is
29 that right? We won't have an update or anything like that?

30
31 Ms. O'Kane: We could provide an update on the status. I think it depends where they are
32 in the schedule. February will be where we will invite the community to come, the public
33 to come and comment on the CEQA document and the Master Plan at that time. The next
34 thing I wanted to mention is there is a letter in front of you that's called a Message from
35 the Parks and Rec Commission. This was drafted initially by the Parks and Rec
36 Commission ad hoc meeting, and we went back and forth a little bit and refined it. The
37 intent is to have this be really the first page of the Master Plan document. This is a
38 message from all of you. It will also be a message from the three new Commissioners
39 that come in, because they'll be ultimately the ones who are making the final
40 recommendation to Council to adopt the Plan. It'll be a message from the Commissioners
41 to the community, a call to action, just sort of an inspiring message to say this was a big
42 effort to get here, and thank you all for your participation in that effort, now let's all

1 commit to implementing this Plan. I know it wasn't in the packet, so you all didn't get a
2 chance to review this in advance.

3
4 Chair Lauing: We should take the time now, even if we want to pause here and make
5 sure you all read that. Her summary is exactly correct. The ad hoc went through huge
6 rounds on that. The ad hoc being Keith, Jennifer and myself. We circulated it back and
7 forth to staff, and the typical enhancements happened. However long this takes, it can be
8 2 minutes or 2 hours. I just want to make sure everybody gets their oar in on this of
9 where they would like to ... Maybe we should add that if it needs rework, we can bring it
10 back next month. Any comments from those who have finished reading it?

11
12 Commissioner Cribbs: I had just a question on that. The ad hoc committee is
13 comfortable and happy with this, the letter, since you wrote it? Staff is happy with it? I
14 think it's really good. As the new kid here at least for the next year, I'm wondering if
15 there's a way—maybe it's not appropriate as part of this. We've done all this great work.
16 What happens now? We're not very specific in the end about what's going to happen,
17 how we're going to reach out to people, how people can get engaged. What's the call to
18 action or does the call to action not belong in a document like this? There's all this
19 enthusiasm that has been generated. We've said that and we've thanked everybody.
20 Now, I'm like what are we going to do now. It may not ...

21
22 Chair Lauing: That is part of the debate that we've had over the last couple of weeks. I
23 can assure you of that.

24
25 Commissioner Cribbs: (inaudible)

26
27 Chair Lauing: No, no. It's on the table. Somebody from the ad hoc want to address that?

28
29 Commissioner Moss: It says that this Plan outlines the roadmap and process to do both.
30 That's what we're supposed to—we're supposed to follow with this road map and process.
31 As far as which program we do first, which goal we address first, I'm not sure that we
32 have to go into that here. We have all of these programs that we need to address. They
33 have all kinds of things in them. How else can we say it?

34
35 Commissioner Cribbs: If I'm a person reading this and I'm excited about parks in the
36 future and the vision based on Palo Alto's parks in the past and what we have, what do I
37 do next? Who do I call?

38
39 Chair Lauing: Abbie.

40
41 Vice Chair Knopper: I kind of looked at this slightly differently. I looked at this as a
42 welcome letter, because this is the first page of a—I forget how many pages, like 150.

1 This is just that this vision can only be realized with the community's enthusiasm and
2 commitment.

3
4 Ms. O'Kane: Could you repeat that, Commissioner?

5
6 Vice Chair Knopper: I just said I like the way this letter ends, where it says this vision
7 can only be realized with the community's enthusiasm and commitment. I felt like that is
8 a call to action, that we will need you.

9
10 Mr. de Geus: Chair Lauing, Council Member Filseth had a good suggestion. Instead of
11 saying "will be calling," just say "calls on all Palo Alto residents."

12
13 Commissioner Hetterly: I think that's much better. I was toying with the success of this
14 Plan depends on participation by all Palo Altans, but we call on all (crosstalk).

15
16 Chair Lauing: A direct call to action. I like the edit a lot.

17
18 Commissioner Reckdahl: Do you want to say anything about it?

19
20 Commissioner Hetterly: No, I like it. I think that's good.

21
22 Commissioner Reckdahl: I mean the document as a whole.

23
24 Chair Lauing: A lot of collective effort went into drafting the letter.

25
26 Ms. O'Kane: Are we ready?

27
28 Chair Lauing: I don't think we need to—you've got our comments?

29
30 Ms. O'Kane: Yeah. Moving on then. Do you want to go to the next slide? I included
31 the action on here. They're a little lengthy, so this will require some explanation. Our
32 intent initially was to come here tonight and ask the Commission to make their
33 recommendation to Council to adopt the Plan. Unfortunately, we were advised by the
34 City Attorney that we could not do that because we don't have the CEQA document
35 completed yet. It would be inappropriate for the Commission to recommend a Plan
36 without knowing what the environmental impacts of that Plan are. We did feel like it was
37 important for there to be an action tonight, especially for the three Commissioners who
38 this is their last meeting and who worked a lot to get us to this point. There's two
39 recommendations here. The first is to accept the Master Plan as the embodiment of the
40 programs and policies that are tentatively recommended by the Commission. The second
41 action is to direct staff to perform CEQA review based on the programs and policies
42 described in the Master Plan. Those are the two actions on the table.

Chair Lauing: Was there any discussion about approaching this in a way that you could address the first one, take out the words "tentatively recommended." "Contingent on approval of CEQA"?

Ms. O'Kane: That was my original language that I proposed. That was not allowable.

Chair Lauing: According to the City Attorney?

Ms. O'Kane: According to the Attorney, yeah.

Chair Lauing: Attorneys always want to slow things down. There's a lot of attorneys that (inaudible).

Commissioner Moss: Can you ...

Chair Lauing: The unfortunately thing about that is that three of the seven are leaving, and three brand new ones will be approving. It's a bit ironic after the years. The Council's going to understand that. It's our agreement in the minutes, Jen and I, we need to do something tonight to be on record that the old Commission is supportive of the document that we have before us.

Ms. O'Kane: I think we'll have the same—I don't think issue is the right word. When we go to Council, there will be new Council Members who haven't been involved in our study sessions and this whole process. There will be a little bit of a recap to do there as well.

Commissioner Moss: Tell me again what the CEQA review is supposed to do.

Ms. O'Kane: The CEQA review is assessing whether the proposed project, which is the Master Plan, is likely to have significant effects on the environment. The way a CEQA document is done for a Master Plan is a little different than building something that has a finite start and end. Because this is a program, it will be a more programmatic CEQA document, meaning it will have some assessment of impacts based on what we know today. As we move forward with, say, a dog park, it may or may not have enough detail in that CEQA document to say whether that dog park will have significant effects on the environment. There may be additional CEQA that needs to be done depending on the project and how much is covered in this.

Commissioner Moss: That's my point exactly. It seems like it's not necessary to do it now because you're going to have to do a CEQA review on almost every action that we take. Therefore, it seems like you could accept the Plan knowing that you're going to

1 have to do CEQA reviews on every thing and part of the process. Of course, this is going
2 to have an impact on the environment. Hopefully, a positive one. Why do we need to do
3 it now and with every program?
4

5 Mr. de Geus: It's really advice from a legal ... It's a question of how specific the Plan is.
6 If it's really unspecific, then we don't need to do any CEQA. Their evaluation was it has
7 enough specificity that we need to do at least a—what do you call it? An initial study of
8 some sort.
9

10 Commissioner Hetterly: You do not necessarily have to do CEQA for every project as
11 you move forward. Just like when we renovate a park, we don't have to do a CEQA
12 analysis (crosstalk).
13

14 Commissioner Moss: And restroom ...
15

16 Commissioner Hetterly: I think, restroom we don't.
17

18 Commissioner Moss: This is the blanket CEQA that in addition to the blanket CEQA ...
19

20 Commissioner Hetterly: There may be some (crosstalk).
21

22 Commissioner Moss: ... there may be some additional ones for the some of the programs
23 required.
24

25 Mr. de Geus: Right.
26

27 Ms. O'Kane: We may be able to include enough analysis in the programmatic CEQA
28 document for some projects so we don't have to do it later. Larger things definitely are
29 not going to be in here. Some of the smaller projects, for example dog parks again, we
30 may have enough detail in this document that we avoid that stuff later, and we can get to
31 the implementation of that project sooner.
32

33 Peter Jensen: I think the overall idea of doing it is to clarify that the document itself does
34 not have the impacts. It's that study that, hopefully when it gets through the initial study,
35 declares what is recommended in here does not have negative environmental impact.
36 When people ask—they do, because this is the standard operation that you have. The
37 backup material says we did the study and looked at it, and it is either this or this.
38

39 Commissioner Moss: If we direct you to perform that CEQA review, it will only take a
40 month to do?
41

42 Mr. de Geus: A little longer than a month.

1
2 Ms. O'Kane: Right, because the public hearing would be in February, and that's the
3 opportunity for us to hear the public's comments.
4

5 Commissioner Moss: I go back to do we need an update in January so that we know
6 what the CEQA says before you go to the public. The Commission.
7

8 Mr. Jensen: I think we should have enough information by then to give you an update of
9 what the initial studies are showing.
10

11 Commissioner Moss: I'd like that.
12

13 Commissioner Cowie: Just a technical question for Rob and Kristen. Do we really have
14 the power to direct you as opposed to requesting you?
15

16 Mr. de Geus: It's more of a request to get direction from Council, the City Manager. The
17 Commission advises the Council.
18

19 Ms. O'Kane: That's a good point. That's language from the City Attorney. I think the
20 spirit of it is that you as a Commission accept these and now let's move onto the next
21 step. I think that was the spirit of that language.
22

23 Chair Lauing: Is there other discussion from Commissioners about this? You need this
24 (inaudible)? I would suggest that one of the Commissioners on my left and right should
25 make the motion, and the other one should second it.
26

27 Commissioner Cowie: I'll make the motion to approve it subject to that tiny modification
28 we made in Bullet Number 2.
29

30 Chair Lauing: I was trying to get the retiring Commissioners to make and second the
31 motion.
32

33 Commissioner Cowie: I'm sorry. I did not (crosstalk). Sorry I didn't let you. Forget that
34 motion. I withdraw it.
35

36 Vice Chair Knopper: Jennifer, why don't you make the motion?
37

38 Commissioner Hetterly: I move what that says.
39

40 Vice Chair Knopper: What? Seriously, make the motion. You can do better than that.
41

MOTION:

Commissioner Hetterly: I move that we accept (crosstalk) as the embodiment of the programs and policies that are tentatively recommended by the Parks and Rec Commission and request that staff perform a CEQA review based on the programs and policies described in the Master Plan and return to the Commission for a final recommendation.

Vice Chair Knopper: I second that motion.

Chair Lauing: You like that motion, huh? Does anyone have any further discussion now that it's a formal motion or questions? I think we're ready for a vote. This is as close as we're going to get with this Commission. All in favor. Any opposed?

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

Chair Lauing: Progress after almost 2 years. Onto Council to do their job. A lot of effort all around right up to the end in a collaborative way with the staff, all the staff, Peter and Daren and Kristen and Rob and beyond. One of those things that years from now when you're thinking back on what you did on this Commission, that's going to be one of the big ones and hopefully will be real as opposed to the gorgeous document that went through a lot of drafts.

Commissioner Cribbs: Could I just say as a latecomer to this party I thought it was amazing. The whole catching up when I started and the whole process through this last year, seeing the ad hoc committee work together with the staff, seeing the staff so excited about getting it done, the changes that you all were able to make so quickly, this is an amazing document and one that, I think, everybody—I'm sure proud to have my name on it, just a little piece of it. I think it's remarkable. I think it's going to stand Palo Alto in good stead for the future. Now, we have to figure out how to fund it, but my hat's really off to you all. Congratulations.

Chair Lauing: Thank you. Now, you're the veteran. That item concluded.

3. Other Ad Hoc Committee and Liaison Updates.

Chair Lauing: Do we have any ad hoc committee or liaison updates, which can be informal or formal from staff or the ad hocs? We have some dog park ad hoc, right?

Vice Chair Knopper: No.

Chair Lauing: (inaudible)

1 Mr. Anderson: I've got two. Daren Anderson, Open Space, Parks and Golf. I've got two
2 updates. One on the Buckeye Creek hydrology study. We had Commissioners there as
3 well. If they'd like to interject, please do so. Also on the dog parks. We had the public
4 meeting on the Buckeye Creek hydrology study on December 6th up at Foothills Park.
5 Pretty decent showing of participants; we had about 15. Met for about 2 hours or so. At
6 the meeting, ENGEO, the contractor who's done the study, explained that they've done
7 the analysis. That is, they've studied the hydrology of the creek, and now they've got
8 some recommended concepts, meaning what are we going to do to address these erosion
9 problems. We have two, and they're not fully developed. They're really rudimentary in
10 terms of how much effort they put into them, because they didn't want to go too far down
11 the line before checking in with the public, our stakeholders and eventually the
12 Commission, to make sure we're on the right track. The great part of the meeting is we
13 walked away with almost unanimous belief that these two concepts are on the right track,
14 that they are going to be the appropriate way for solutions in that creek. A lot of the
15 questions that came up, though, were things that require further study on those concepts
16 before we can really start answering some of the questions. It's difficult for me to explain
17 without visuals exactly what those concepts are, so I'll just do them in very broad terms.
18 Essentially it would be widening the creek in a few sections, allowing it to meander, in
19 particular in front of the Interpretive Center up at Foothills Park. In the other part of the
20 part called Wildhorse Valley, the creek there, one of the concepts is to do something a
21 little different. It would actually have two channels in that portion. You would have the
22 existing channel that is deeply channelized and eroded and not functioning well, and then
23 a bypass channel to cut through Wildhorse Valley and meander and connect up again.
24 One would accommodate a higher flow, and the other one the lower flows. Again, it's
25 not fully fleshed out. That'll be the next step that we'll start working on. Shortly
26 thereafter, they'll meet with the regulatory agencies. There's another key thing before you
27 invest a lot of time developing concepts, is it permissible. Will these agencies approve of
28 this before you've spent thousands of dollars developing them? I think we're on the right
29 track. I think we should be able to come back to you soon, January or February, with
30 those concepts and some more information from ENGEO. Any comment from the
31 Commissioners who were at that meeting?
32

33
34 Commissioner Moss: When the creeks meander, they're also going to be widened, and
35 it's going to be a gentler slope. Those are key pieces to that study, to slow things down,
36 to try to absorb some of the flow so it's not so cutting, so eroding. I thought that was
37 really important.
38

39 Mr. Anderson: A key piece of it.
40

41 Commissioner Reckdahl: The other thing that I did not appreciate was these streams both
42 are not in their native locations. They've been moved by man. If we want to move them

1 back to their natural location, we're not allowed to do that. The current route of the—I
2 should say we're not necessarily allowed to do that. The current path of the creek does
3 have a preference. It's very difficult to move that. For example, Buckeye Creek along
4 that grassy area has been pushed in the center of that grassy up to the side. It's causing a
5 lot of erosion on that hillside. If you wanted to move that over and have it go down the
6 center again, it'd be a tough fight to get that through the government.

7
8 Chair Lauing: Which government?

9
10 Commissioner Reckdahl: The State or Federal?

11
12 Mr. Anderson: It'd be a variety of regulatory agencies that we'd deal with.

13
14 Commissioner Reckdahl: Even though it's not where it used to be 100 years ago, it's in
15 its preferred location right now. Vegetation around it has grown up and become
16 dependent on it. There's issues with that. That does complicate our lives. We can't just
17 decide what we think is the best route; we have to go through the permitting agencies.

18
19 Commissioner Moss: I guess one last comment is that the part in front of the Interpretive
20 Center is a big, open, grassy field. This would be not in the middle of it, but close to the
21 middle of it. Therefore, you wouldn't have this wide-open space of grass. There are
22 good things and bad things. The good thing about it is it costs a tremendous amount of
23 money and Hetch Hetchy water to keep that grassy lawn watered and maintained. The
24 bad thing is—the good thing is that you won't be able to use it for playing fields like a
25 soccer field, but there's still plenty of room for people to have natural play. I think it's a
26 good compromise.

27
28 Mr. Anderson: There's impacts to recreation. Some of them positive, and some of them
29 taking away how we might have traditionally used that turf. We analyze that, and bring
30 that to you for further discussion when we come back. Any other comments on Buckeye
31 Creek?

32
33 Chair Lauing: Do you have a relative timeline yet as to when something could be done
34 up there? Whatever the choice may be.

35
36 Mr. Anderson: This project will give us the roadmap and the plan for what to do. We
37 have to submit a new capital project to actually do it, build it, change the creek. I think
38 that'll come out of this process, and we'll figure that out.

39
40 Mr. Jensen: This is going to be like one of the processes of the Master Plan, doing an
41 initial study on something and then coming back. It is not going to be a small-scale
42 project. It's basically recreating a stream bed up there that was destroyed, because we

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1 decided to pave a road through it. This project connects to the 7.7 acres, because it is just
2 part of the natural system that's up there. Eventually the recommendation will be,
3 whatever happens to the creek itself and the 7.7 acres is going to have a price tag to do
4 such things but will need to be done. Again, just something else now to consider,
5 constant funding to do.

6
7 Mr. Anderson: The other update I had for you is the dog park topic. We had a public
8 meeting yesterday to look at adding a dog park at Eleanor Pardee Park. Thank you to
9 Commissioners who came; really appreciate that. Well attended, about 70 participants.
10 Successful in terms of getting lots of feedback. That's always good. Successful also in
11 letting us learn a lesson in terms of—it's a mea culpa. I probably should have known
12 better, but we had started with an option in the center of that park. There were factors
13 that were unknown at the time that forced us to move it from that preferred location to
14 another. It ended up being very, very close, right on the fence line to some neighbors. It
15 just is unpalatable to a significant number of them. There were a lot of messages, and it's
16 tough to convey it in a concise way right now. The takeaway for me—I'm interested in
17 hearing the Commissioners' thoughts on this too—was putting it right on that border of
18 someone's backyard is really not the way to go. We have to consider other places at least
19 for this park. Maybe if you lucked out and found a dog owner that couldn't wait to get
20 into that dog park, it might work. But not here, not at Eleanor Pardee. There was enough
21 responses that said this is not the right place. There still are options in my opinion from
22 what I heard from everyone still within Pardee to put one, but it's going to take a little
23 more creativity and maybe compromises on the size a little bit to make this work. We'll
24 also have to have more negotiations with our environmental stakeholders, because it's
25 likely that we'd have to put this somewhere near the oak trees. That was feedback that
26 we heard from Canopy and Audubon Society, that impacts from dogs would be harmful
27 to both the oak trees and to the wildlife associated with those trees. I think more
28 negotiation and more meetings; it's possible. Tomorrow we've got a meeting for Peers
29 Park about adding a dog park there. It's got fewer of those problems. We're 75 feet from
30 the nearest resident backyard fence. It's significantly larger. We've got more room to
31 play with if we have to make that a bigger buffer. We've got a little more option there.
32 I'm interested in seeing what comes of that meeting and looking forward to it. I'll be back
33 soon to update you on that as well. Any comments from our Commissioners?

34
35 Commissioner Reckdahl: One thing I want to say is we want to take into account the
36 neighbors' opinions, but we can't give them a veto of what we do in the parks. They
37 bought that house; the park was across the back fence, and they knew we were going to
38 use it. The purpose of a park is to be used. If it's not a picnic table or recreation, any use
39 of the park is going to make noise. I think we need to have an appropriate buffer between
40 it. I don't think we want to go right up to the fence. We also can't kowtow to their every
41 desire. We have to balance that, and it's a very difficult problem.

1 Vice Chair Knopper: The one thing I would say, in addition to what I said last night, is
2 that it would be helpful moving forward if we actually had specific scientific facts on tree
3 impact and bird wildlife impact instead of opinion. As we know, the trees at the Hoover
4 Park site haven't been impacted at all because they're deep-rooted trees. Having the
5 blanket statement "dog urine hurts trees," factually let's find out so we have a specific
6 counter-discussion point. If indeed we find out it really hasn't hurt the trees and we have
7 this evidence in front of us, I think that's helpful. People were following me to my car,
8 quite literally. I think the people feel like—one of the last public speakers said, and this
9 resonated with me, "I have two little dogs. They're my children. I don't have children."

10
11 Commissioner Cribbs: He was almost in tears actually.

12
13 Vice Chair Knopper: He was. He said, "I walk past that park, and I feel like I'm not
14 welcome there with them." That resonated with me, because I thought, "Here we are
15 trying to be completely inclusive, and dog owners don't feel that way. They feel like they
16 have so many restrictions on them with regard to it has to be on a leash or you can't be in
17 a park. People are judging." Several people said that to me last night, that that
18 gentleman really was in tears in about that. Lastly, I know we can build a dog park. I
19 might not be on the Commission, but I'm going to help you build a dog park. I just want
20 to publicly, on camera say I will help you, because so many residents want it there. Even
21 my friend who lives on the fence line came over, and he's like, "I don't mind a dog park
22 in Eleanor Pardee. I just don't want it on my fence. Just a little bit over." I think most
23 people can be reasoned with, and we can get one. To staff, I just want to commend them,
24 because the things said to them were sometimes terrible. They just take it so politely and
25 professionally. I admire that.

26
27 Commissioner Cribbs: I'm glad you said that. I've been (inaudible) the staff are really
28 terrific responding to everybody. I actually came away—because I didn't make the
29 statement nobody followed me to my car—being very encouraged about the fact that
30 there will be a dog park at this particular park, that there were enough people who were
31 really enthusiastic, understood the reason that there needed to be one there, wanted
32 something in north Palo Alto. I really loved the gentleman—I should have followed him
33 to his car—who said how can we pay for this, how can we help to pay for this, what are
34 the details and how can we get started doing that. That was very encouraging. There
35 were some really good, thoughtful people there who, I think, understood this has been
36 going on for a long time and we should get it done.

37
38 Commissioner Reckdahl: That brings up another topic. The Magical Bridge and these
39 dog parks, people really like them. I think it'd be appropriate to put a sign up saying the
40 Friends of Palo Alto Park helped pay for this. If you want more things like this, please
41 support the Friends of Palo Alto Parks. You can send your check in and earmark it for
42 whatever you want. That's how people speak and that's how they move. Speaking to

1 your point earlier, that's how you can get through. If you really want to fund a project,
2 it's going to be much more likely to happen than if you don't fund it. What would we
3 have to do to put signs up, like Magical Bridge?
4

5 Mr. de Geus: Magical Bridge, it wasn't just the Friends of Palo Alto Parks. They created
6 their own foundation, the Magical Bridge Foundation.
7

8 Commissioner Moss: It's on there.
9

10 Mr. de Geus: And it's on there. (crosstalk)
11

12 Commissioner Reckdahl: Does it say that?
13

14 Mr. de Geus: ... who the governing board was. I don't know if there's any ...
15

16 Commissioner Reckdahl: Does it encourage people to contribute or just say this money
17 was given to them?
18

19 Mr. de Geus: I don't think it encourages them. It recognizes the people who did
20 contribute.
21

22 Commissioner Moss: And that you would be giving to other Magical Bridges around the
23 country rather than Friends of the Palo Alto Parks, the Magical Bridge Foundation, to
24 build other ones in Redwood City, for instance.
25

26 Mr. de Geus: That's a good point. If you're at a park and having a good time, to see
27 somewhere that there is a local group of residents that love our parks and are trying to
28 help the City improve them, that you see that or read about that. If you're so compelled,
29 you might want to give. We'll think about that a little more, because I think it's a good
30 idea.
31

32 Vice Chair Knopper: A woman spoke last night—I didn't get her name because she was
33 like speaker number 60. She said that she was one of the founders of Palo Alto Park, the
34 Friends of, and that she would be willing to orchestrate, organize. I think people are
35 motivated. I think there's enough people motivated that it could be a private-public
36 partnership that would be very successful. People didn't love the idea that it would just
37 be barebones, like fence and call it a day. They always referred to the one ...
38

39 Mr. Jensen: In Mountain View.
40

41 Vice Chair Knopper: They want statutes. They want the thing down at San Antonio
42 Village with giant hydrants, artificial turf.

Mr. Jensen: I do think that brings up an important point. In the Master Plan, the hard part is funding everything that's in there. There is a Friends of the Parks group that is established. It would be nice to promote and build that group to be the mechanism of funding, because it's going to take that to achieve what we have to do.

Commissioner Moss: There's also a dog owners association, 400 members strong. They're behind all this as well.

Vice Chair Knopper: We know who heads it too.

Commissioner Moss: My feeling is that there will be a park there and at Peers Park. Whether they get done at the same time or right after one another, I think they're going to happen very soon. The only problem is really the exact location. There was room a little bit to the west. They did talk about the garden behind it, towards the north, as being totally useless as a garden, so you could push a little bit in that direction and come in from the fence a little bit. The third suggestion was along Center. You don't want little children playing right next to the busy street, so put a long dog park that's fenced in right next to Center, which is what I was hoping would happen at Bowden right next to Alma. You can't have little kids playing soccer right next to Alma. If you put a dog park along that strip, away from the fence lines, it protects the rest of the park. It's a buffer for the rest of the park from that busy street. That was it.

Chair Lauing: Thanks, Daren.

Mr. Anderson: Thank you.

Chair Lauing: (inaudible) as always. Other ad hocs or liaisons before we move onto Department Report? No.

V. DEPARTMENT REPORT

Chair Lauing: Department Report from Kristen or Rob.

Mr. de Geus: I had a few things to report. One, the Lucie Stern Community Center is closing for some construction activity, new heating, new air conditioning and a variety of other things. It's closed at the end of December 19th through March 31st. We're scattered, the staff that work there, all over the place. I'll be at City Hall. Kristen will be at Mitchell Park for a month, and then Cubberley for a month, and then with Daren at the MSC. I wanted to let you know about that. We are bringing forward a contract for the swim lesson program with Tim Sheepier to expand the lessons in such a way that doesn't have an impact on the lap swimmers or masters, because we need to do additional public

1 outreach there. We're doing that. I met with, I think, eight lap swimmers for an hour and
2 a half a week or so ago. We had a great discussion, and I better understand where they're
3 coming from. We're also doing coffees at the pool. That's been good mostly. I noticed
4 Kristen got yelled at today, which wasn't very nice. That was unusual. Most were very
5 ...

6
7 Commissioner Moss: Not fair.
8

9 Mr. de Geus: It's just part of the process, to make sure that people really do feel heard
10 and that we do understand where they're coming from. That will take just a little more
11 time before we consider additional things for Tim Sheeper to do. Do you have a
12 question?
13

14 Commissioner Hetterly: I do have a question on the pools. I think having the
15 organized—the masters obviously is an organized group, and the lap swimmers are more
16 or less organized. That makes it easy to communicate with them. What about the rec
17 swimmers who are maybe not lap swimmers, who are maybe the summer users, the open
18 swim people? How are you reaching out to them? It seems like it all overflows
19 somewhere when you add a use. I think you should figure out a way to get in touch with
20 those swimmers.
21

22 Mr. de Geus: We've talked about that. It is more difficult, that group. They have a real
23 interest too. They want to see more recreation swim time. We want to do that too. Even
24 to do that, that does mean there may be a little more sharing for some of the other groups
25 if we want to do later evening recreation swim and other good stuff. You may have more
26 information on this than I do. One thing I believe we're doing is reaching out to the
27 parents that had kids in swim lessons, because they are from the same families that are
28 taking advantage of the recreation open swim, with surveys. Beyond that, are we doing
29 anything else, Kristen?
30

31 Ms. O'Kane: We're exploring that. We've asked some of the lap swimmers to offer
32 suggestions on how we might reach some of the other pool users. Someone
33 recommended putting a notification on Nextdoor, some of those other social media sites.
34 It's not just the rec swimmers; another group that we aren't hearing from are those people
35 who may want to use the pool for lap swim, but the current times don't work for them.
36 That's a group that we really don't know who they are or if they exist even. It's how do
37 we reach that group that isn't in one of those organized groups or quasi-organized groups,
38 like you said.
39

40 Commissioner Hetterly: It might be helpful to talk to the pool coordinators at Eichler or
41 at Green Meadow, because they every summer have a similar conflict with their swim
42 teams. Everybody wants all the lanes. During the competitive season, there's a lot

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greater demand on the pool, but that's of course when all their members want to have rec swim. They struggle with that every year, and they may well be able to share some insights about what really mattered to them more was not hours, not having two lanes open for 8 hours a day. It was having five lanes open for 2 hours a day. That kind of thing might be informative. I think both of those pools have longtime managers at this point.

Mr. de Geus: That's a good idea. We'll reach out to them. We're just taking more time with this. If and when we do something more, there will be small, incremental changes for the good hopefully and evaluation before we start making drastic changes.

Commissioner Moss: When did you want to be done with the—you wanted to be able to have swim lessons starting in May?

Mr. de Geus: April.

Commissioner Moss: You want to be done April 1st or something like that?

Mr. de Geus: We would meet with Council in January, probably their first action meeting on the 9th, which will be just for the swim lessons. We'll be utilizing the pool when it's currently not utilized at all. It's just closed. Any other questions on that? The golf course is going well. I was out there again a couple of times. I took the City Manager out there and Lalo Perez, our Chief Financial Officer. Still on schedule and under budget. I wanted to let you know about that. Also the Council—maybe Council Member Filseth wants to talk about this—had two Colleagues' Memos this past Monday. One was to reaffirm Palo Alto's commitment to diversity and supportive, inclusive and protective community in light of some of the national things that have been happening. Did you want to say something?

Council Member Filseth: I thought it was pretty straightforward and noncontroversial.

Mr. de Geus: It was just reaffirming the values that the City has. There was also a Colleagues' Memo to support the donkeys at Barron Park. The City is putting in, I think, \$15,000, and then there's a fundraising campaign for the next 5 years to make sure that the donkeys are cared for and protected. Great news there.

Commissioner Moss: Is the donkey paddock part of parks? Is it considered (crosstalk).

Mr. de Geus: It's actually private property.

Commissioner Moss: It's private property.

Council Member Filseth: Acterra is the official operator.

Mr. de Geus: Does the maintenance. They can't afford to be doing that.

Commissioner Moss: Are we intending to annex that or anything like that?

Mr. de Geus: The property?

Commissioner Moss: Yeah.

Mr. de Geus: I think it's private property, and they have the donkeys on that property. I don't think there's any discussion about it becoming City land.

VI. COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. de Geus: We have a New Year's Eve event which actually happens during the day for seniors, which we do every year. We do a countdown to midday. Always fun. There's live music and good food. If you want to volunteer, that's one that's ...

Ms. O'Kane: Just a note on that. This year it will be at Avenidas.

Mr. de Geus: Yeah, a great partnership. Also we have a Commission recognition event tomorrow evening. I wanted to just check to see who was going to attend.

Commissioner Reckdahl: I can't.

Mr. de Geus: Two Commissioners will be there. I remember going to one of these and there was no Commissioner. It was pretty embarrassing. I had to go out there and get a picture (crosstalk).

Commissioner Cribbs: (crosstalk) the Commission or the dog park committee.

Mr. de Geus: I know not good timing. There's so much happening this week.

Commissioner Reckdahl: The holidays is a bad time to have it. We have so many conflicts.

Mr. de Geus: I'll pass that onto the Clerk's Office. The last thing I wanted to mention is that we're starting to prepare the budget for fiscal year '18. There does look to be a gap in the budget as we look ahead, as much as \$6 million that we need to figure out. It's not a 1-year budget gap; it's a structural gap. There needs to be an ongoing reduction or increased revenues or some combination of both. Every department in the City needs to

1 take a good look at some different scenarios that will help close that gap. We're just
2 starting ...

3
4 Commissioner Reckdahl: Is it due to a revenue down turn or they were spending more
5 money or both?

6
7 Mr. de Geus: I think it's more on the spending more money side and the cost of
8 healthcare and pensions and those types of things. Revenues are still on a trend up in
9 most categories.

10
11 Council Member Filseth: I think the expenses are increasing and revenues increasing.
12 The good news is revenues are increasing. The bad news is expenses are increasing. The
13 question is how fast are they growing relative to each other. The City has had a number
14 of one-off windfalls in the last years. One year there was a huge real estate transaction,
15 so we took several million dollars in documentary transfer taxes, but that was only that
16 year. There was one year where Tesla—we got sales tax on every Tesla sold. We had a
17 big sales tax year that year, several million dollars. That was just that year. We're more
18 like the norm (inaudible).

19
20 Mr. de Geus: We'll be working through that process.

21
22 Commissioner Moss: Public-private partnerships are far more important now.

23
24 Mr. de Geus: They are, and they will continue to be. One of the areas we do need to
25 look at is just how we deliver services, can we do it a little differently that still gets us to
26 the quality that the public expects and they're still accessible and affordable, but maybe
27 done a little differently. We'll be working on all of those things.

28
29 Commissioner Moss: I'm thinking of the AT&T property and how we would get enough
30 money. I was reading from some other environmental group how they built up a fund
31 ahead of time for private donations to be able to jump on critical pieces of property. We
32 need to do that because the odds of us being able to jump on something—considering that
33 we have this shortfall on top of everything else, we have to do something like that.

34
35 Mr. de Geus: That's all I have to report. Anything, Daren?

36
37 Mr. de Geus: The only one I wanted to mention is I'm losing two amazing
38 Commissioners that were on my ad hoc for dog parks. Gaining stakeholders I hope.
39 We'll need replacement ad hoc Commissioners to help me with this process as we go
40 forward. I just want to put it out there.

41
42 Vice Chair Knopper: Do you have new Commissioners?

Mr. de Geus: I had the same question, because they did the interviews on the 30th. They're postponing the decision into January. I'm not quite sure why that's happening. Just because there's three new Council Members as well, but they didn't participate in the interviews, so that just seems a little bit ...

Council Member Filseth: I wasn't sure why it took so long either. There was a lot of stuff on the calendar. We did get out before midnight every time.

Mr. de Geus: It was probably just too full on the agenda; although, it usually goes pretty quick in terms of that vote. In any case, it hasn't been (crosstalk).

Chair Lauing: Are they going to be seated before the January Commission meeting?

Mr. de Geus: That's the question I had. I was assured yes. They're keeping the applicants updated. Early January, the first couple of weeks, they'll make a decision.

Council Member Filseth: There's four of them, right?

Commissioner Reckdahl: Four total.

Mr. de Geus: Yeah. Those next (inaudible) on Council.

Council Member Filseth: No, no. On the Parks and Rec Commission.

Mr. de Geus: Anything else?

Chair Lauing: There has been precedent if a new member is not seated, other members can (inaudible), but it sounds like that's not a problem.

Mr. de Geus: I wanted to know that, so I could share that with you this evening, if that might happen. They said (inaudible).

VII. TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR JANUARY 24, 2017 MEETING

Chair Lauing: The tentative agenda for the January 24th meeting. The list was in the packet. I thought we decided that we didn't need to do the Junior Museum and Zoo, because it's already gone to Council. I don't think that needs to be on there. I'm not sure there's any more on the hydrology study.

Mr. de Geus: I'll check in with the consultant. I do want to come to you soon. If not January, it'll be February. I need to make sure that you guys are on board.

Commissioner Reckdahl: During the meeting, there were a lot of questions where you said, "I'll look into that." You may have some updates for us.

Chair Lauing: You'll need to elect officers. That goes on there. You might want to consider at that meeting determining, or even tonight, a retreat date.

Ms. O'Kane: What are we going to do without you keeping us in check?

Chair Lauing: I think it's too early for any of us to be guest speakers for the retreat. You've got this one on your (inaudible).

Mr. de Geus: I think we skipped comments and announcements. You might want to do that.

Chair Lauing: I'm sorry. I thought we got into that after the staff (crosstalk).

Mr. de Geus: We did a little it.

Chair Lauing: There was so much back and forth. Go ahead.

Ms. O'Kane: We have a token of appreciation for the three Commissioners who will not be coming back next month. On behalf of all of us, your involvement and your insight has just been priceless. We thank you for everything that you've done and all the hours you've spent outside of these meetings to help us out and review draft after draft. Just your enthusiasm and commitment is very much appreciated. We thank you, and we are going to miss you very much.

Council Member Filseth: Since most of you folks are not going to be able to make the party tomorrow evening, thank you very much. It's just (inaudible) work with people volunteering your time. You look at stuff like this. This is just so important, and it takes so much time to do. You don't do it very often. Thank you once again. I very much appreciate it.

Chair Lauing: We were at the last recognition that Council did for us, the plaque for our service. We got them again.

Commissioner Hetterly: I'd just like to say it has been an absolute privilege to work with this staff in particular and Community Services and Public Works. You all have been really phenomenal, your commitments, your smarts, your dedication, everything you know about what's going on. I couldn't imagine working with a better group of people for stuff that's really important to the whole community. I want to thank you.

Chair Lauing: I wanted to say from my perspective and not to speak for everybody else, it's sincerely mixed feelings. It's a tremendous amount of work. I think you and the first-year Commissioners are getting a glimpse of it. You're not going to get a lot of applause from the public. I think that's okay, because we're doing it on behalf of the public, but the public is lots of little splinter groups that have their own interests like any political group. That's okay. We listen to them, and they help make decisions better. We try to plod on. To reflect back on, in our case 7 years and 3 years ...

Vice Chair Knopper: Almost four.

Chair Lauing: Four, that's right. There were lots of good things that got done. We take that with us with a lot of contentment, I think. To directly overlap with what you just said, from the get-go I've been so impressed with the—wrong word and not glorious enough, but the work ethic of all of our City staff. The dedication that they have to these issues and the accomplishments not necessarily because you're Palo Alto residents but because you're committed to that job and to the work of parks, the wellbeing and the health, that we know we're helping people in that way. That camaraderie and partnership has just been terrific across the board. Council Members also are these highly paid folks that do the same thing that we do here basically, just put in a lot of effort.

Council Member Filseth: We make infinitely more than you do.

Chair Lauing: It's the same dedication. It's for the people and the place. It's just been a great experience. I thank all of you for being as active and involved and dedicated as you are.

Vice Chair Knopper: I would like to say thank you to everyone. This has just been such an eye-opening experience for me. I certainly was guilty of this; you just take for granted that your City just runs. You turn on the faucet; clean water is going to come out. You walk to your park; there's going to be a lovely rosemary bush that your dog can pee on. You just take certain things for granted, especially living in Palo Alto. The last 4 years, it just every week, every month, every meeting that I went to, I just see the dedication and the hard work and the commitment and the thankless hours sometimes when people are not so nice, like what happened today to Kristen. Oftentimes, you get many nice people come and say thank you. The fact that you get up every day and you do it for the betterment of my family—this benefits my family, my community. I just want to say thank you so much. It's been a tremendous educational experience for me. It really has. I just appreciate it so much. I hate to say that I love this orchid, it's so beautiful, but it'll be dead in (crosstalk). I have like a black thumb. I'm going to try, really because it's so lovely. Just thank you. Jennifer pretty much said everything I wanted to say. It's just been wonderful, and I can't thank you enough.

Commissioner Moss: I want to make one more comment. Daren said that two of you were integral to the dog park committee. You're also integral to the community gardens committee. I spent an hour, more than an hour today, talking to one person about the community gardens. I took everything for granted. The fact that there is no issue about the community gardens, no big issues, is a testament to the fact that things are running okay. No news is good news.

Commissioner Hetterly: I do my best.

Commissioner Moss: Thank you very much for all the work you did on that committee as well.

Mr. de Geus: I'll just say something as well. It is one of the most interesting parts about the work, I find at least. What's different than the private sector is that it's a real partnership between citizens and City Hall. Almost always we make a better decision when we're at the table together, really honestly thinking about how to improve a service or a program or a park. It's really rewarding in that sense. You three are going to leave a big hole in particular. For Jen, you challenged us and our thinking about a lot of things. It's almost always come out better because of it. I really appreciate that. I hope you stay involved. I still have your number, so I'll call you. Ed, you've been a great leader, just steady, keeping things moving, just the right kind of poise and then a great sense of humor. We're going to lose a lot here, I think, actually. Big shoes to fill.

Commissioner Reckdahl: No matter what the subject, they always were intelligent and (inaudible).

Mr. de Geus: I think Keith's coming back, so that's good.

Commissioner Reckdahl: If I don't, I get an orchid.

Mr. de Geus: Thank you.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Lauing: I think that's it in terms of action items for tonight. Motion for adjournment?

Meeting adjourned on motion by Commissioner Hetterly and second by Vice Chair Knopper at 8:02 p.m.