



**MINUTES
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING**

**December 18, 2018
CITY HALL
250 Hamilton Avenue
Palo Alto, California**

Commissioners Present: Anne Cribbs, Jeff Greenfield, Jeff LaMere, Ryan McCauley, Don McDougall, David Moss, and Keith Reckdahl

Commissioners Absent: None

Others Present:

Staff Present: Daren Anderson, Kristen O'Kane, Natalie Khwaja

I. ROLL CALL

II. AGENDA CHANGES, REQUESTS, and DELETIONS

Chair McDougall: The agenda is available to everybody. Are there any changes, additions, requests, deletions? We don't seem to have a large audience of people that would cause me to want to change any of the order. If not, we'll continue with the agenda as published.

III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Chair McDougall: That gives us a chance for Oral Communications. I think there are people here with interests, but I don't have any cards for Oral Communications.

IV. DEPARTMENT REPORT

Chair McDougall: I would invite the Department Report.

Kristen O'Kane: Thank you, Chair. Kristen O'Kane, Community Services. I have a couple of things to announce. First, I wanted to let the Commissioners know that last night the City Council did approve our contract amendment for the Cubberley Master Plan. That is to include Greendell School and 525 San Antonio properties into the Cubberley Master Plan scope. The School District Board of Education will be voting on the same item tonight, not the contract but the cost sharing agreement between the School District and

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the City for that amendment. Last week, as I'm assuming everyone knows, Council did approve the contract with Team Sheeper for operation of Rinconada Pool for a five-year term. That includes subcontracts with PASA, Palo Alto/Stanford Aquatics youth swim team, and Rinconada Masters. Finally, I wanted to mention that Friday, December 28th, is our annual senior New Year's Eve Brunch from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Mitchell Park Community Center. The Tenth Avenue Band will be playing. They're an awesome band that has a great following. They're really fun. Tickets are on sale now for \$10 at the three community centers and Avenidas and also online at Eventbrite. That's all we have today.

Chair McDougall: Thank you. Are there any questions or comments?

Vice Chair Greenfield: Could you repeat the time of the lunch please?

Ms. O'Kane: It's 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Friday, December 28th, which I understand is not New Year's Eve. We find we have a better turnout if we don't do it in the middle of the craziness of New Year's Eve.

V. BUSINESS

1. Approval of Draft Minutes from the November 27, 2018 Parks and Recreation Commission meeting.

Approval of the draft November 27, 2018 Minutes was moved by Vice Chair Greenfield and seconded by Commissioner Reckdahl. Passed 7-0

2. Aquatics Annual Report

Chair McDougall: Next, I'd like to invite Stephanie Douglas to provide the annual aquatics report. I'll let her introduce her guest.

Stephanie Douglas: Good evening. Stephanie Douglas, Superintendent of Recreation. I'm joined tonight by Tim Sheeper, CEO of Palo Alto Swim and Sport. I'm here tonight to present on the 2018 annual report, which is required to be submitted by Palo Alto Swim and Sport on an annual basis based on their contract. We started working with Tim Sheeper back in 2015 when we had a crisis with staffing and we needed some assistance with getting lifeguards. That's when we first created a partnership with Tim Sheeper. In 2017, we furthered that agreement by having Tim Sheeper take over all of our aquatic operations including lessons, swim camps, and lap swim. They offer swim lessons, aquatic camps, lap swim, open swim, and oversees contracts with Rinconada Masters and PASA. To make it easier to digest the information that was provided in the annual report, I took a snapshot of the data between 2017 and 2018. That time period is August through October. In the 2017 report, that was the information that was provided. In 2017, there were 146 resident monthly memberships. In 2018, there were 212 resident monthly memberships. That is a

45-percent increase. In 2017, there were 2,771 resident drop-ins. In 2018, that number increased to 4,873, a 161-percent overall increase in drop-ins. In 2017, 1,297 nonresidents dropped in, and 5,748 nonresidents dropped in 2018. Altogether that's an increase of 161 percent with both residents and nonresidents. Four thousand two hundred seventeen enrolled in swim lessons in 2017. That number did decrease a little bit to 3,205 in 2018, but there were more enrollments in the aquatic camps, which might be the reason why we had a decrease in the swim lessons. The decrease in swim lessons was about 23 percent, but the increase in summer camp enrollments was 233 percent, a substantial increase in the camp enrollment. Overall, 84 percent of swim lessons respondents reported that they were extremely satisfied or satisfied with the swim lessons, and 96 percent of lap swimmers also reported they were satisfied or extremely satisfied with their lap swim experience.

Chair McDougall: Stephanie, have you moved to a new slide?

Ms. Douglas: No. That information is just a side note; it's also in the report. For 2019, Palo Alto Swim and Sport does have some goals that they'd like to achieve. Overall, they do want to increase lap swim, swim lessons, and swim camp opportunities. They want to add water exercise classes for adults, spring board diving for youth, and scuba diving certification for adults, some new, innovative programs that we haven't offered in the past. They also want to expand operating hours and limit facility closures. Facility closures can happen for a number of reasons. Right now, we do have the JMZ construction happening, and that's required a couple of unexpected closures. We're hoping to curtail those in 2019. Most importantly, ensure continued safety of all programs including subcontracted programs. You do have a copy of the report. I also have Tim Sheeper, who can answer any questions you may have pertaining to specific programs.

Chair McDougall: Before we go to Commission questions, I do have one speaker card relative to this. I'd like to give Jan Colee [phonetic] an opportunity to speak if she'd like. Jan, you'll have three minutes.

Jan Colee: Hi there. I'm a Palo Alto resident and a lap swimmer. I just have three questions that I wanted to ask since the City will be the go-between with Tim and the lap swimmers. On the proposed schedule starting next January—on Saturday and Sunday the lap swimmers currently swim on Saturday from 6:30 a.m. to 9:30, on Sunday from 7:00 a.m. to 9:30. The proposed schedule for January has 8:00 to 9:00 closed to lap swimmers and all 14 lanes are given to Masters. This was a proposed schedule prior to Carol Macpherson's Masters being agreed upon. It may have been when Tim Sheeper was going to bring his own Masters in. We have not seen the new schedule, so we'd like to know as lap swimmers whether we'll be continuing to get our primetime hour of 8:00 to 9:00 a.m. both Saturday and Sunday rather than handing that over to Masters. We understand that the City has the final say with the schedule and the fees. We see that fees are going up again in January. They went up when Tim took over the pool in August 2017. For the

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seniors, they went up 66 percent and, I believe, for the non-senior swimmers 50 percent. We're wondering why an increase again when the pool starts in January. I'm putting in a plug that every time work has been done in the last few years on the pool, it's been done in December. This week we have lost the warm showers when it's 40 degrees out in the morning. I'd just love it if they could do the maintenance work in November or March or February when the pool is still not at maximum use. If we could have any kind of locker room closure not at the coldest time of the year, that's my one big question.

Chair McDougall: Jan, thank you for speaking. I'm going to now go to Commission members to ask questions. Through the process of that, questions that were asked during Jan's questions and comments might come up. Otherwise, I'll encourage her to find a way to work with staff and Tim to get those. I'd like to start with questions from anybody up here. Anne.

Commissioner Cribbs: Thank you. I see there will be diving offered. Is that new? We used to have diving, and we haven't had diving, so we're going to have diving again.

Ms. Douglas: That would be new for our programs. We haven't had it in the last few years. That's something that Palo Alto Swim and Sport is proposing to try in 2019.

Commissioner Cribbs: That's great that you're doing it. I was wondering about the insurance.

Tim Sheeper: Those are our target programs for 2019. That's what we'd like to do and introduce to the community. We're still working on that.

Commissioner Cribbs: For a long time, it's been a great part of the program. It'd be good if it could come back again.

Mr. Sheeper: There are wonderful diving boards, just refinished and redone. We want to put them into use other than just for open swimmers who come in on the weekends. We want to get programs involved.

Commissioner Cribbs: We've increased the swimming lessons and increased the people dropping in and increased the programs, which is great. The numbers look really good. What about reaching children for sure but adults as well who would like to learn to swim but can't afford the lessons? What kind of scholarship plan do we have? What do we do to make sure that we're taking care of everybody?

Ms. Douglas: The City does have a financial plan, a scholarship plan. If anybody's interested in that, they can contact me directly. There's an application form to fill out. We do work with Palo Alto Swim and Sport to make sure those scholarships are honored through their programs.

1 Commissioner Cribbs: Is it easy to find out?

2 Ms. Douglas: It is online. If you go to the Palo Alto website and then the Recreation
3 website, you'll find a tab that states financial aid.

4 Commissioner Cribbs: Is it mobile—able to do ...

5 Ms. Douglas: You would need to fill out a paper application and turn it in.

6 Commissioner Cribbs: No, no. I was wondering if the access was mobile, because some
7 of the population may not have a computer but would have a cell phone.

8 Ms. Douglas: If they come to any of our community centers, they can also pick up a form.

9 Commissioner Cribbs: I'm happy to see the contract going forward, happy to see the
10 modifications that were made. I appreciate everybody working together for the swimmers
11 in Palo Alto. I look forward to hearing more about it in the future. Thank you very much.

12 Ms. O'Kane: Tim Sheeper has secured a certain dollar amount of scholarships through the
13 Beyond Barriers program, which provides scholarships for youth in the community. He
14 has secured that funding. We really appreciate that to provide a deeper level of assistance
15 to the community.

16 Commissioner Cribbs: That's a really wonderful program. Is it specific to Palo Alto or for
17 all of your venues?

18 Mr. Sheeper: Beyond Barriers was started five or six years ago. It has grown. Beyond
19 Barriers is able to offer scholarship lessons in Menlo Park, specifically at Belle Haven
20 Pool. This year will be the first year at Rinconada Pool. We're pretty excited about that.
21 It's going to be a lot of lessons that we're able to give. People just come into the pool, and
22 there will be information about the scholarship and posters and flyers. They'll be able to
23 ask. It'll be on the website as well, like Stephanie mentioned. A lot of it will be people
24 coming in and asking about it. It's not a typical thing to come to a swimming pool and get
25 a scholarship for a swim lesson. It's quite unique, and we're really pleased that we've been
26 able to start this program six years ago and that it has expanded. It's been well funded by
27 the swimming community in Palo Alto, Menlo Park, and the Atherton area. It's mostly
28 funded by Masters swimmers. They're giving back to the community. I think they have a
29 limit of over \$20,000 this year, \$25,000 in scholarships. It's quite substantial.

30 Commissioner Cribbs: Are either of you in touch with the U.S. Swimming Foundation.
31 Their program is learn to swim, and they do have some resources and some publicity
32 resources. If you're not, I'm happy to make an introduction. Thank you.

33 Mr. Sheeper: Is that the make a splash?

Commissioner Cribbs: Yeah.

Mr. Sheeper: We've looked into that before, lovely program, wonderful. I think we've found a way to fast-track it and get the lessons right away. We could process and give lessons the same day a lot of the time with the system that we have in place and that we've refined over six years.

Commissioner Cribbs: Whatever works. It's so good to take advantage of all the resources out there because teenage and kid drowning is critical now, and adults as well. That's great. Thank you.

Ms. O'Kane: That program also provides scholarships for kids to become certified lifeguards. Kids are also learning a skill that they can use for employment.

Mr. Sheeper: It's a hurdle for a lot of youth, to become certified. It's anywhere from \$150 to \$300 for the certification through the Red Cross, depending on where you get the service. Beyond Barriers funds 75 percent of that cost whether we do the certification in Palo Alto or Menlo Park.

Commissioner Moss: I want to echo Anne's comments. I am so happy that the growth has been so successful. I'm also very happy that you were able to make an agreement to keep Rinconada Masters and keep the lap swimmers' schedule as close to what they've had in the past as possible. I don't want to see this stellar growth in lessons if it's going to impact those two very valuable stakeholder groups. You have about eight stakeholder groups, but they are two of those eight. I want to make sure everybody gets equal support. I really appreciate everything that you've done. I look forward to a great year this year. Thanks.

Vice Chair Greenfield: I want to echo the appreciation the whole Commission and the plurality of the whole community feels about the contract success that we've had and keeping Rinconada Masters. Thank you. I'm glad we were able to make progress on that. In looking at the survey and the usage comparisons, very positive and successful numbers. I observed that PASA and Palo Alto Masters weren't included in this. I understand that they're subcontractors, but we're missing a part of the story by not having data for those programs. I'm wondering if it'd be possible in the future and perhaps retroactively to get a similar survey to users from those subcontractors and to have comparison numbers available. I'm wondering if we've had this in the past.

Mr. Sheeper: We'll have to reach out to both PASA and the Rinconada Masters and have them send out the survey link to their memberships. We don't have access to their membership lists because they're private entities. We have flyers at the pool, so people can answer the survey. For 2019, we can send out or we can ...

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1 Vice Chair Greenfield: I understand you're providing qualitative and quantitative data on
2 the programs which you administer. That makes perfect sense. It'd be great to get those
3 numbers for the complete picture. The last time the pool discussion came before the
4 Commission, the only schedule we saw was January, and there were questions about lane
5 usage and comparisons of what exists now versus what's coming. I share the concerns we
6 heard from the speaker to understand the changes or the status quo that is going to be
7 maintained.

8 Mr. Sheeper: What we're trying to do is open the pool more and prevent closures and
9 provide more service to the community. We are moving in that direction with this schedule
10 we put out. We are hoping and planning to open every day at 6:00 a.m. and keep the pool
11 open until 4:00 p.m. without any closures. After PASA uses the pool, we plan to open the
12 pool for a few nights a week. Prior to operation, the pool had three openings and three
13 closures per day. It's difficult for the community to get a good handle on the schedule
14 without looking at the schedule, so it's not intuitive. It's also difficult to staff the schedule
15 because we have to find a workforce who will work in short blocks of time, 3 hours or 2
16 1/2 hours. There are a lot of individuals who need a full-day shift. We've moving in that
17 direction, and we hope at one point in time to keep the pool open from 6:00 a.m. until 8:00,
18 8:30, 9:00 p.m. if the demand is there. That's where we want to move. We put the January
19 schedule out because that was the request, and it seemed to cause a lot of concern that we're
20 all of a sudden going to change the schedule or shorten the schedule. I think that's the
21 assumption. Contrary to that, we want to open the pool a lot more. The concept is shared
22 usage as much of the time as possible rather than exclusive usage of the pool because it's
23 large, 14 lanes. We're moving in that direction. That was one of the big changes with the
24 Rinconada Masters. Their leadership team was able to see and align with our values on
25 that. There's going to be a shared usage that will take care of a lot of the concerns that
26 we've had in the past.

27 Vice Chair Greenfield: I do appreciate the desire to open the pool to more of the
28 community and increase usage as much as possible. I do remember commenting
29 previously that the mornings showed shared usage, which is a change from exclusive usage
30 from one group to another. My recommendation is that the staff continue to oversee the
31 schedule. A lot of the groups seem to be happy with the exclusive usage model. It seems
32 like there are benefits going either way. The shared usage model means there should be
33 availability for all. In the case of the speaker's question, it would suggest if there's shared
34 usage, there should be access during these hours that the speaker was concerned about.
35 Would that be the case or am I missing something?

36 Mr. Sheeper: There's going to be shared access at that time.

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1 Vice Chair Greenfield: Staff is happy with this schedule? How far out will you be posting
2 the schedule? Obviously, January is right around the corner, so we want to make sure that's
3 ...

4 Mr. Sheeper: The goal is to have two schedules a year, a summer and a non-summer
5 schedule. The non-summer schedule is 42 weeks. The summer schedule is a specific ten
6 weeks. That's our model of operation and has been for a dozen years in the pools that we've
7 operated.

8 Vice Chair Greenfield: The schedule that's posted for January is likely to continue until
9 June?

10 Mr. Sheeper: Correct, yes.

11 Vice Chair Greenfield: Thank you for that clarification.

12 Mr. Sheeper: The community gets used to it; the staff gets used to it.

13 Vice Chair Greenfield: Glad that the Rinconada Masters are included with the program
14 right now. I know this is a trial basis essentially. I would like to know what the
15 Commission can do to help increase the likelihood of success, whether it's Commissioner
16 Cribbs serving some sort of role as the Commission liaison to the pool program or what
17 we can do. That's a question for staff or for you, Tim.

18 Mr. Sheeper: Hopefully, we never get to the point where we're meeting with Ms. Cribbs.
19 We had a great discussion meeting a few weeks about. It was about alignment of values
20 and what our company values are. Once we're able to get both entities to see the values
21 and the importance of them, we're going to turn the corner. They've changed a little bit of
22 their leadership model, so we have a point of contact. It's going to help us work through
23 any challenges or any issues that may arise. I don't foresee any issues.

24 Ms. O'Kane: From staff's perspective, if you hear anything in the community, if you notice
25 something related to aquatics, just let staff know. I'm fairly confident that between Tim
26 and his great staff and our staff everything will run smoothly. We welcome any feedback
27 and comments that you hear from the community.

28 Commissioner Cribbs: It feels like, seems like all of the parties are well on their way to
29 making the agreements work. I don't think there's any need for me to be a liaison; although,
30 I appreciate your suggestion. Everybody is going to adhere to the contract. I suspect the
31 next time you come back it'll be great and will continue to be great. Everybody loves
32 swimming, and everybody wants to see the pool utilized and open and lifeguarded and safe
33 and have enough room for everybody. That's how I'm thinking at this point.

1 Commissioner Reckdahl: The speaker said one of the weekend days all the lanes are
2 dedicated for the Masters swimmers. You're saying that's not the case. It's going to be
3 split 50/50?

4 Mr. Sheeper: I'm trying to recall the schedule. We put it together, and it was proposed a
5 while ago. When the Rinconada Masters are in the pool right now, they'll be using half of
6 the pool. The other half of the pool will be open to the lap swim community. That will
7 allow us to provide the safety staff, the lifeguarding, for both the Masters and the lap
8 swimmers.

9 Commissioner Reckdahl: That's very good. That is a good strategy. I like the idea of
10 splitting it 50/50. If it's 100 percent Masters, the lap swimmers are kicked out of the pool.
11 I'd rather have them 50/50. That's more convenient for everybody. Stephanie, can we go
12 back a couple of slides to those numbers? Those are impressive. The resident drop-ins on
13 the second bullet are a big increase. Do we know why that occurred? Did we do better
14 marketing? Did people just fall in love with swimming?

15 Mr. Sheeper: We're opening the pool more.

16 Commissioner Reckdahl: It's longer hours.

17 Mr. Sheeper: There's more availability.

18 Commissioner Reckdahl: If you look at the numbers, we about doubled residents and
19 tripled or maybe a factor of four for nonresidents. Do you know why that is?

20 Mr. Sheeper: Your competition pool is used mainly by residents, lap swimmers and
21 Masters swimmers. Your play pool is used mostly by nonresidents.

22 Commissioner Reckdahl: Do we know where these nonresidents are coming from, Menlo
23 or EPA?

24 Mr. Sheeper: I would say they're not coming from Menlo. I don't know where they are
25 exactly coming from. My assumption is ...

26 Female: From San Francisco to San Jose.

27 Commissioner Reckdahl: Everywhere. The swim lessons went down. Did we offer less
28 swim lessons or we didn't get as much enrollment in swim lessons?

29 Mr. Sheeper: Those 354 kids in camps also get one swim lesson per day, so that's an
30 additional 1,800 swim lessons that were given. If you put that into the total, we're reaching
31 up to 11,000 lessons provided this past year. That's not shown in that, but it's within that
32 354 campers.

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1 Commissioner Reckdahl: You think the aquatics camps cannibalized some of the swim
2 lessons? Is that why ...

3 Mr. Sheeper: You could look at it that way or it embellished the swim lessons.

4 Commissioner Reckdahl: When we offered the swim lessons, did we have empty spots or
5 were they pretty well full?

6 Mr. Sheeper: In my opinion, the swim lessons will never fill. We just try to hire and staff
7 and train more instructors so that we can meet the demand.

8 Commissioner Reckdahl: This last year, you were happy with the offerings? Did we pare
9 back the offerings or did we find ...

10 Mr. Sheeper: We didn't pare back, no.

11 Commissioner Reckdahl: I'm just looking at the difference in the 42 and 32. Was that
12 unexpected that we would see that decrease?

13 Mr. Sheeper: There have been some changes in the community. These are just
14 assumptions, being a social scientist and an operator. There was a decline in swim schools
15 in general in the area. We had a decline of 10-15 percent in Menlo Park, our first decline
16 in a dozen years. There's been a decline in enrollment in schools. There are other factors
17 going on the community. That's one thing. Another thing is this was the first year where
18 the swim lessons were not subsidized by the City so the lessons went to market rate. One
19 of those three or a portion of all those three went into the numbers.

20 Commissioner Reckdahl: The speaker also mentioned that they had a price increase or
21 we'll have another price increase in January. How do our lap swim rates compare to other
22 cities? Are we higher, lower, the same?

23 Mr. Sheeper: We try to keep it—it's right in the same sweet spot. It doesn't really move.
24 I would like to talk to the speaker to see how it's raised 66 percent. I'm not sure if that's a
25 number that I remember her saying. We've changed the whole fee structure of how they
26 pay to come and use the facility. It really benefits frequent and consistent users because
27 they're paying a fixed monthly cost. The more times you use the pool, the lower the cost.

28 Commissioner Reckdahl: It could be apples and oranges if you're talking about paying per
29 swim as opposed to paying a monthly fee.

30 Mr. Sheeper: Right. There's still that fee to come in and use the pool. We're not changing
31 that; we haven't changed that.

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1 Commissioner Reckdahl: I would really encourage, Stephanie, the next time you come
2 back to have a comparison of our prices for lap swimming and swim lessons, etc., to some
3 other cities around. It'd be a nice sanity check for us.

4 Ms. Douglas: Definitely. We do have those numbers, and we can pass them on. I'll make
5 sure next year's report will have that included.

6 Commissioner Reckdahl: In the staff report, we looked at the survey responses, and 85
7 percent said they were satisfied or extremely satisfied. Is the glass 84-percent full or 16-
8 percent empty? Sixteen percent of people being unsatisfied seems kind of high to me. Do
9 we know why they were unsatisfied?

10 Mr. Sheeper: In which ...

11 Commissioner Reckdahl: This is swim lessons. Do we know why people were unsatisfied?

12 Mr. Sheeper: There are five categories they can go in.

13 Chair McDougall: Less than 16 percent are unsatisfied because there's a middle category.
14 All they did in the staff report was put the top two. There's satisfied and less satisfied and
15 then totally unsatisfied. This doesn't include the middle category that was satisfied.

16 Commissioner Reckdahl: This is extremely satisfied or satisfied.

17 Chair McDougall: If you look at the detail of the report, you'll find ...

18 Commissioner Reckdahl: There's a middle. That would make me feel happier that most
19 of those were neutral. Thank you.

20 Ms. Douglas: There are some comments in the report from the survey. Some of the
21 comments do speak about the water being too cold or the children not learning very specific
22 swim strokes and things of that nature. That may impact some of the survey results, that
23 feedback.

24 Commissioner Reckdahl: That's the kind of thing I'd want to know, that it's something
25 outside our control.

26 Chair McDougall: It is Palo Alto after all, number one. Number two, whatever the number
27 is, it is an important number to look at. If it's 3 percent unsatisfied, you still want to know
28 why the 3 percent. That's a good question. Commissioner McCauley.

29 Commissioner McCauley: Staying on the topic of the surveys. I thought there were a
30 pretty low number of actual survey respondents based on the number of people who are
31 using the pool. What's the method for collecting the surveys?

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1 Mr. Sheeper: It's a broadcast email that goes out with a link to the survey. That's sent out
2 several times. There are also surveys that can be filled out at the pool. What was it, 61
3 respondents?

4 Commissioner McCauley: It was something like that. I expected it to be thousands. I
5 appreciate that people are busy. I would just plant the seed of is there a way to in a
6 systematic way get additional feedback that's going to be helpful to you. I'm sure you're
7 already thinking about. You don't need to answer on the spot. I'm just suggesting that
8 maybe there's something you could do to augment or supplement the survey process at the
9 moment.

10 Mr. Sheeper: In all the years that we've been doing it, it's usually in that range. It's never
11 really come up into triple digits as far as people responding. When people are satisfied and
12 happy, they really don't let you know. It's usually the converse of that.

13 Commissioner McCauley: Understood. There are a couple of comments that seem to
14 repeat. I don't know that there's really a trend that you see as you look through those
15 comments, at least that I don't see, that stands out to me. Is there something that stands out
16 to you? From those survey responses, are there takeaways that you would say "these are
17 the top three things that we think we need to do"? For example, one of the things I saw
18 repeated a couple of times was the locker rooms need to be significantly upgraded. That's
19 obviously not on you; it's on the City. Are there other things? What are your top three
20 items from the survey responses that stand out to you as priorities?

21 Mr. Sheeper: My top one is always in the swim school. This is a constant challenge in any
22 swim school. It's about the consistency of the swim instructor. The end user wants to come
23 in and get that same swim instructor each and every lesson that they have. As a parent, I
24 want the same thing. On the other side of it, that's an extreme challenge for us, to give that
25 service because of all the changes in the workforce through the summer or through that
26 period of time with moving classes, illnesses within the workforce. That's the number one
27 thing that always gets me. The second thing is ease of registration. We're constantly
28 working on streamlining what it takes the end user to, first, engage with us, learn the
29 program and what we're offering, and then get them registered into a class. It's this really
30 complex puzzle that we're trying to simplify and make quick and easy for the end user.
31 We're constantly working on that. Those are the top two things.

32 Commissioner McCauley: On the revenue numbers, I think this is a question for Stephanie.
33 Can you give us a comparison of net impact to the City from when the City was running
34 the pool to now with Team Sheeper? This year we're going to have going to the City as of
35 October 31st \$6,422. I think it was the case when the City was running the pool that we
36 were in the red rather than being in the black at all. Maybe you can put a little color on
37 what that circumstances ...

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1 Ms. Douglas: You mean from a financial standpoint between Palo Alto Swim and Sport
2 versus when the City was doing it?

3 Commissioner McCauley: Right.

4 Ms. Douglas: I don't have exact figures. Since we're not paying labor costs, overhead,
5 really the only cost to the City is maintaining the pool. I don't have the exact figures, but
6 it is substantially less. There is significant savings for the City. Kristen, I don't know if
7 you have any other ...

8 Ms. O'Kane: We included that in our presentation to Council last Monday. I can try and
9 pull it up or forward the Commission ...

10 Mr. Sheeper: It was a savings of \$140,000 for the City of Palo Alto.

11 Chair McDougall: That's the number that I was going to use from that report.

12 Commissioner McCauley: That's helpful to know. It's probably always important when
13 you think about these reports to include the comparison for the City. Obviously, there's
14 lots of different considerations going into a public-private partnership like this one, but the
15 bottom-line cost is one of the things to have in mind and consider, particularly when it's
16 CSD's unanimous view that we have better service today than we did when we were trying
17 to operate it ourselves. On the note of potential improvements for this sort of report in the
18 future, I appreciate the checklist that's in the contract for what Tim's annual report should
19 look like. I also appreciate very much your doing the year-over-year comparison. We're
20 going to continue to compile more and more data. It's helpful in this report to see those
21 year-over-year comparisons and hopefully growth in programs year-over-year. Where
22 there isn't growth, we can quickly identify it and understand where there might be areas for
23 rethinking a program or perhaps rededicating resources towards an initiative that we think
24 is important. It would also be important to include, to the extent we have data that is
25 comparable, information about when the City operated the pool so that we have a complete
26 perspective. If you had numbers from 2015 or 2016 when the City was operating the pool,
27 we can see the continuum. Everyone here is telling us that things are much better than they
28 used to be, which is great, but it would be helpful and put everything in context to have
29 those numbers laid out. Everyone else has noted this, and congratulations again on the new
30 contract with the City. Congratulations as well on the favorable resolution of the issue
31 with Rinconada Masters. To be very candid, there's a little bit of dissonance between what
32 I've heard and the other Commission members have heard in the past two months about the
33 situation with the contract versus what we're hearing tonight, which is everything is going
34 really well. Chair McDougall touched on this at the October Parks and Recreation
35 Commission meeting. There's probably a lot of work to do in order to rebuild trust within
36 the Masters community. I hope you would continue to do that. I don't know if there's any
37 particular mechanism, but this goes to the speaker's comment as well. If there were a

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1 mechanism for regular feedback—I don't know if you have an advisory committee that
2 includes PASA and Rinconada Masters and a representative or two from the lap swim
3 community. That would be great. It would be hopefully a means by which you can both
4 promote communication on a very regular basis and also have something tangible to say
5 that you're working hard to rebuild that trust with these different constituencies. I don't
6 know if you have thoughts on that, but I'd be interested to hear your thoughts.

7 Mr. Sheeper: Those mechanisms are put into the agreement that we have with them. Just
8 to reiterate what I said earlier, it has been a realignment of the principles that we've laid
9 out and of our values. What we have been able to do is work together with the group so
10 that we can hit one of our number one company core values, which is safety. We have now
11 taken on the role as the safety provider when the Masters are in the pool, which was the
12 big challenge and the hurdle that we were unable to overcome. Moving forward, we have
13 a point of contact, a single point of contact, with the Rinconada Masters where we can
14 work through any issues that may arise as we work towards the long-term agreement.

15 Commissioner McCauley: I appreciate that you have appointed folks to help in the
16 communication realm when an issue arises. I guess what I'm suggesting is it would be
17 helpful if you were proactively meeting once a month or every other month with your
18 different constituencies so that it's not only issues that you always hear about or problems
19 and trying to put out fires but rather that there's hopefully good will generated through that
20 regular communication, folks feeling as though they're kept in the loop and people aren't
21 surprised by changes and adjustments that happen. If you already have that, that's great.
22 If not, then I would ...

23 Mr. Sheeper: One hundred percent agree, yes.

24 Commissioner LaMere: I appreciate all of the previous comments by Commissioners. I
25 just have a couple of questions. In regard to the open swim drop-in that's more for the
26 younger kids, is that impacted or has there been a problem with lines and people getting in
27 or does it seem—obviously, it seems like it's fairly high usage. Is that correct?

28 Mr. Sheeper: Yeah, it's very high usage. There's a challenge on some warm days in the
29 summer to get everybody into the pool that wants to get into the pool. We've worked
30 through wait lists. We've worked on putting as many guards in the swimming pool as
31 possible and still keep it safe.

32 Commissioner LaMere: I don't remember the fee structure as far as drop-in. Is there much
33 of a price difference between a resident and a nonresident user?

34 Mr. Sheeper: It's a \$1 difference.

1 Commissioner LaMere: In your calculations, you base things off family drop-in counting
2 as four visits. What's the range of a family pass? It could be anywhere from two or three
3 people up to six or seven? What's your limit?

4 Mr. Sheepen: Five.

5 Commissioner LaMere: The calculations for drop-in for July for the nonresidents is not
6 correct. The nonresident number should be higher in your July calculations.

7 Mr. Sheepen: There's a mistake?

8 Commissioner LaMere: You didn't multiply the family by four. It's a significant difference
9 in your report, just as a note. I would echo what Commissioner McCauley stated about
10 working with Masters and working with these other stakeholders, specifically Masters. I
11 feel optimistic where things are going and appreciate the efforts that you're making and
12 also appreciate the core value of safety. That's something where I do see the idea of shared
13 usage and how that can benefit a lot of different stakeholders, where it allows you to staff
14 it and allows you to have continuation with keeping the pool open. Really appreciate those
15 aims, those goals. Hopefully continue the improvements that we've seen in the pool.

16 Chair McDougall: I'm going to do something unusual. We did start this session a little
17 early. I got one card that was late. I'm going to allow Linda Fletcher to talk for two
18 minutes. Understand, Linda, this isn't a dialog. We won't be answering questions or
19 whatever.

20 Linda Fletcher: I just wanted to take a minute. Thank you so much for doing this. I'm
21 sorry I'm late. I've been going through this process since the beginning and recognize
22 everybody that's worked on this. Appreciate the effort that's gone into it. I just want to
23 make sure that we're checking in. I am a lap swimmer and have been a lap swimmer for
24 my entire life. There needs to be continued conversations about the scheduling because
25 sharing lanes—it sounds great adding hours, but those hours aren't necessarily times when
26 people are able to use the pool. A Masters program is a synchronized program; it's a
27 workout. A lap swimming program is completely different. There needs to be dialog. I
28 appreciate what you said. I agree wholeheartedly that stakeholders need to be in an open
29 conversation. One of the continued comments that's come up through this process has been
30 communication. One person has really helped with the pool, and that's Marla. She has
31 been an outstanding contact person that the lap swimmers have been able to go to. We tell
32 her things, and she is on it immediately. I just want to make sure that she's recognized
33 tonight. Really appreciate that. I'm hoping that the communication continues and the hard
34 work that has gone into this whole process pays off with us being able to continually use
35 this community gem. Thank you for your time. Thank you again for doing that.

Chair McDougall: Linda, thank you. I'd like to wrap up with some comments. It seems that as much as any Commission or division within the City we're dealing in what I have described before as a scarce and valuable resource and the allocation and protection of that scarce and valuable resource. I think we've come to learn that when you're doing that you can't make everybody happy. You can do your best to make sure you're using that resource appropriately, and that does involve trust that's been mentioned here. I think real progress has been made in that direction, and I thank you for that. In terms of the report, you've heard all sorts of comments about the granularity, including PASA, including Masters. I would encourage staff and Team Sheeper in making any kind of report or thinking about it to exercise their own curiosity. If you were sitting here or on the City Council, what questions would you ask as opposed to here's the form I'm supposed to fill out and I've filled it out. Of course, everybody has thanked Tim Sheeper for doing this. I'd like to make sure we thank Stephanie for her full participation in this. What's been missing is to thank the Rinconada Masters. They're not here, but they should be thanked for their part of the agreement that was come to and whatever accommodations they made. I'd like to also make sure we thank both Jazmin and Kristen. I think Kristen lost a couple of weeks of her life in working on this. It's important we recognize that City staff and management has worked really hard to make all this work. Good effort on team swim here that involves everybody. Thank you very much. Tim, if you'd like to make a last comment, you can or you can escape.

Mr. Sheeper: Can't top that. That was good.

3. Pickleball Update

Chair McDougall: Speaking of scarce and valuable resources, here's Adam Howard, who is one of our scarce and valuable resources.

Adam Howard: Good evening. Adam Howard, Senior Community Services Manager with the Community Services Department. I'm here to obtain some feedback from you about the preliminary design of designated pickleball space. As you are all aware at this point, the City of Palo Alto has seen an increase in the number of pickleball players and requests for pickleball space. The Palo Alto Pickleball Club, formerly Silicon Valley Pickleball Club, has been very active in Palo Alto. The club was using Mitchell Park tennis courts 5, 6, and 7 on a first-come-first-serve basis primarily on weekends but also during the week. At the time they were doing that, that wasn't supported by our Court Use Policy. As staff began to see the increase, we figured it was important to legitimize that play, so we created a new policy we brought to the Commission on August 29th. You all supported it, and it was approved by City Council on October 15th. In that time, we have also made some changes to the small paddleboard courts in Mitchell Park and made them designated pickleball courts, which were actually changes to the height of the net. That area is fenced in, so there's not a lot of changes we could make. The community seems pretty happy with

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1 it. The area in the top left was small paddleboard courts that are now designated pickleball
2 courts. They're not official size by some inches, but the net now is a proper height. The
3 pickleball community seems to be enjoying those. We have Mitchell Park tennis courts 1-
4 4; these are 5, 6, and 7. This space up here is the space we'll be talking about in terms of
5 new space. The change to the policy legitimized the pickleball space. It also provided
6 some designated pickleball time as well as tennis time on courts 5, 6, and 7. That's great
7 and has been working pretty well. However, we recognize that there is not enough
8 designated space. As Palo Alto Pickleball Club used that space, volunteers have to bring
9 out their own nets. They have to set up their own nets and tear them down when they're
10 done. They've purchased all of those nets. We feel it's time to put a little bit of resources
11 into this and allow the pickleball community to continue to grow in Palo Alto. When we
12 first made a recommendation, it was to turn Mitchell Park 5, 6, and 7 into designated
13 pickleball courts. We got a pretty big pushback on that primarily around the loss of three
14 lit tennis courts. Staff heard that and took that into consideration and came up with what
15 we think is a good combination of joint-use space, new space, and lit tennis courts. This
16 is our recommendation for dedicated pickleball courts. The proposal would be to turn court
17 5 into four designated pickleball courts, to leave 6 and 7 as multiuse courts, which would
18 be either two tennis courts or seven pickleball courts, and then bump out the area outside
19 court 5 and put two more designated pickleball courts. We hoped that space would be
20 more, but as we started to look at the dimensions, it just wasn't going to work. This would
21 result in eight designated pickleball courts in Mitchell Park, which includes the two
22 paddleboard courts, four of which would be lit, four designated tennis courts, and two
23 multiuse courts, which could be either two tennis courts or seven pickleball courts. What
24 we do like about the joint-use space is the high demand of these two sports don't necessarily
25 happen at the same time. Pickleball is in high demand during the day and in the mornings.
26 The high demand for tennis is in the evenings mostly because we don't have as many lit
27 courts. By using joint-use space, we feel like we've reached a good accommodation. If
28 pickleball continues to grow, we might not have enough designated space. This plan also
29 allows for growth if we need to do that. That's our proposal. It's important to suggest here
30 that this is all great, but it does need to be approved by Santa Clara Valley Water District.
31 We've talked with them. We know our measurements from the creek are okay, but
32 ultimately they have the final say with the permit. Although we think it's a great idea,
33 there's one sticking point that's out of our control. We don't think it'll be a problem, but I
34 do want to put that out there. I'll open it up for comment.

35 Chair McDougall: Before we go to the Commission for comment, we have two cards. The
36 first one is Andie Reed.

37 Andie Reed: Hi. My name is Andie Reed, and I live on Melville Avenue in Palo Alto.
38 Thank you for your service as Park and Rec Commissioners. A friend got me to try
39 pickleball a few years ago, and I actually got the ball over the net, which was a revelation.
40 I have never played ball sports before, but once I got started I never looked back. When I

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1 heard there were pickup pickleball games at Mitchell Park a couple of years ago, I ran over
2 there. It was an opportunity to walk on the court. Monica, Eric, Marie, and many others
3 would help us out by giving us pointers and then throw you into a game and see how it
4 goes. If you stuck around long enough, you got to learn how to set up the nets and tear
5 them down. A couple of years have gone by. Pickleball can be learned very quickly, at
6 least enough to have a good time. It's really hard to get good at, which makes it the perfect
7 sport. It's fun and challenging. As the sport has grown, we've continued to buy nets and
8 set them up and tear them down, which is quite an operation. I'm currently on injured
9 reserve, which means I can't play for a while, and I really miss the socializing, the physical
10 exercise, the challenge, and the pure fun. As I'm sure staff has determined—I appreciate
11 your hard work—the sport is already very popular and still growing. Weekday mornings,
12 we're there, as many as 20 or 30 players. On the weekends, it's many more. Monica has
13 even been teaching classes for the City of Palo Alto, so anyone can pop in and learn. It
14 would benefit the City of Palo Alto to provide permanent courts for our pickleball players.
15 Thank you for finding a way to share the courts and consider permanent courts for
16 pickleball. Thanks.

17 Chair McDougall: Thank you, Andie. Monica.

18 Monica Williams: Good evening, Chair McDougall and Commissioners. I'm Monica
19 Williams, President of the Palo Alto Pickleball Club. On behalf of the more than 400
20 members of the club—I'm sure you've heard from many of them because they couldn't
21 come tonight—we strongly encourage you to go ahead with Adam's proposal to install six
22 permanent pickleball courts at Mitchell Park. We appreciate all the hard work and staff
23 time that's gone into this project. Thank you very much.

24 Chair McDougall: Thank you. I would add, by the way, that Monica's correct. My inbox
25 is full. There were well over 20, 25 letters that were supportive of the proposal. To be fair,
26 there was one proposal that simply suggested we stripe and set up to share all the courts as
27 a different proposal. I'll entertain and encourage questions, comments. I think I'll start
28 with Commissioner LaMere this time.

29 Commissioner LaMere: Just a couple of quick questions, Adam. Appreciate all your hard
30 work with this. In regard to the paddleboard courts, what is the difference between the
31 paddleboard court and the pickleball? Is it the size of the net or ...

32 Mr. Howard: The height of the net is a difference, and the spacing that they currently have
33 isn't as wide as they would need to be an official court. We went with 6 inches between
34 the two and 6 inches to the fences. Ideally, you would be much further than that.

35 Commissioner LaMere: It's still usable for a paddleball court? I don't know how many
36 paddleball users we have.

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1 Mr. Howard: They would still be able to use it. Before we did this, I put signage out for a
2 month and a half, saying if these changes would impact your current use, let us know. No
3 one contacted us.

4 Commissioner LaMere: With putting a permanent space at Mitchell Park and doing new
5 construction, have we studied other parks? Is this something that, through the fact that the
6 pickleball players have been there, this is the best place for them? Is it the best place for
7 the City and the best use of all of our parks to do this new construction and to make these
8 courts permanent at Mitchell Park as opposed to another park?

9 Mr. Howard: Thank you for that because I should have clarified. We started at Mitchell
10 because they were there, but I really opened it to every park. There are some unique factors.
11 One, it is a very social game, and 100 people will show up to play. There are only so many
12 places that we have that could handle the parking for that. It is a little bit noisier than
13 tennis, so keeping it away from residents. I looked at all the parks. I looked at blank
14 spaces. I looked at other tennis courts. We just keep coming back to this as being the best
15 location for the City and for the pickleballers.

16 Commissioner LaMere: I did speak to someone who lives on my street, and he is a tennis
17 player. Previously, he had been very outspoken against the pickleball players. He likes to
18 play in the morning, and apparently he struck up a friendship with someone in the pickleball
19 community. They have figured out how to share the space and get along. I was very
20 heartened by that and thought I would share that with you and with the people here. If
21 people can communicate and talk and figure things out, hopefully we can figure out better
22 ways to use our facilities and to share all of our facilities so that everyone can use them.

23 Commissioner McCauley: To dovetail on Jeff's question just a little bit. I appreciate that
24 you did an audit of all the different parks and places where you might put in pickleball
25 courts. I also totally appreciate your point that this is a very social game and folks want to
26 be together. You want to have critical mass, so you wouldn't necessarily have a pickleball
27 court in every park or every place where you have tennis courts. That said, I think one of
28 our Comprehensive Plan goals is to make sure we have park resources and amenities
29 distributed throughout the park system, not only so that it is convenient for people but also
30 so that we reduce commute trips to different locations and things of that nature.
31 Appreciating that this is the right solution for the moment—I think you're probably right
32 that it is—I would definitely encourage you to continue thinking about other places. If it
33 is the case that you have to have so many pickleball courts in order to have any pickleball
34 courts, that would be self-defeating in a sense for the pickleball community. It would be
35 great if we had neighborhood pickleball communities instead of having just one at Mitchell
36 Park for example. I don't know if you have any thoughts on that.

37 Mr. Howard: I agree with you. I started those conversations because I had the same
38 thought process of should we be spreading our resources around. What I heard is that the

1 social aspect of this game is really important to the pickleball players. Two courts in a
2 park might not get used because ultimately it's a group gathering activity. Maybe it would
3 get used, but it wouldn't get used the way pickleball is designed to be used. That was the
4 feedback I received.

5 Ms. O'Kane: Could I add a little bit to that? There are other factors like noise. Pickleball
6 is a bit of a noisy sport compared to tennis. It requires different things than tennis courts.
7 To put it in a neighborhood park where there are houses around probably would be too
8 disruptive.

9 Commissioner McCauley: With respect to the timeline for converting some of the courts
10 to be dedicated to pickleball and conversion of courts 6 and 7 so that they have the ability
11 for mixed-use and then the expansion into that new area along the creek, what do you have
12 in mind? What is your expected timing?

13 Mr. Howard: We'd have to look into it a little further. The restriping and the designation
14 of court 5 and 5, 6, and 7 and all that work could be done really quickly because we were
15 waiting to resurface the courts to make sure we knew what we were doing. That could
16 happen in weeks, months maybe, because we'd have to schedule it. What we don't know
17 is whether whoever we bid this out to would rather do it all at once or do the three courts
18 separately. If they need to do it altogether, that pushes it out a little bit. I'm not going to
19 say years, six months or something of that nature. We don't know if someone's going to
20 need to bid that together or could do it separately. Our ideal situation would be to move
21 forward with court 5 and do the construction separately, but we don't know if that would
22 be a big hassle for the construction company. If that makes it greatly more expensive, we
23 wouldn't want to do that.

24 Commissioner McCauley: I presume that you already have the funding secured for all of
25 this work. Is that right?

26 Mr. Howard: We actually feel pretty strongly that this basic design could be absorbed into
27 the contract that we already have in place, through savings that we've already incurred and
28 because the other courts were already going to get done. This basic design, we do feel like
29 we would already have the funding. I say basic design because there is conversation with
30 the pickleball community that they'd love to see some bleachers or some storage. The
31 conversation has been that they're willing to fundraise to do those things so we wouldn't
32 necessarily be the one paying for it, but we still have to finalize the plans a little bit.

33 Commissioner Reckdahl: Can you move to the next page on the path forward, the next
34 steps? These all look reasonable. When you have stakeholders involved and create public
35 outreach, that could be real time sinks. You talked about talking with the construction
36 people and figuring out how long to schedule them. How much would those other tasks
37 slow down the process?

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1 Mr. Howard: Not much. Two is the finish—that's been done. It just wasn't at the time
2 that I had to turn it in. What we were looking for is in writing that we knew the setback
3 from the creek. Technically, 2 is already completed. One is an ongoing thing. Since we
4 changed the policy, I want to see how that's working. The finished design is pretty basic,
5 the idea of a social gathering spot, storage, what direction they actually want the courts to
6 face, which is more of a preference than anything else. Daren might be able to help me
7 with the Santa Clara Valley Water. I don't know how long that approval would take to get
8 from the District. The outreach would be more about informing what we've done. This
9 plan has come from the outreach we've already done. I don't know that we'd want to be
10 doing a lot more about getting input as much as communicating to the public what we've
11 decided on.

12 Commissioner Reckdahl: When I look at this list, I think there's no way we're doing to get
13 it done in six months. Is there anything that we can do speed up the process?

14 Daren Anderson: To our favor, we've had two recent projects in that same area. I say that
15 relative to the Water District permit requirements, both the Magical Bridge Playground and
16 the bridge replacement in the last three years. There was almost no process where we
17 needed to reach out to them. Wanting to make sure nothing popped up at the last moment,
18 we reached out to the District and they said we'd probably need this permit. It's not
19 guaranteed we need it, but I feel like it'll be a faster process than our normal golf course or
20 other permits that you're thinking about. I do not believe it'll be along those scales; I think
21 it'll go faster. One thing this is missing—unfortunately it adds to the list rather than taking
22 away—is we'll need a Park Improvement Ordinance. We'll have to have drawings to share.
23 The Attorney puts that together; we come back to the Parks and Recreation Commission.
24 They recommend that to Council, and Council adopts that PIO, Park Improvement
25 Ordinance. In that ordinance, it would not only have all the amendments we're making to
26 the courts themselves and that new area but also if we're going to do a little meeting area,
27 that would have to be drawn out and specified exactly what we're putting there since it'd
28 be a change in the use of the park. Typically, the PIO process, since we already have a
29 good deal of this already drawn up, the public process is fairly evolved. I'm thinking if we
30 get fortunate timing with the City Attorney's Office and they're available, we'll probably
31 get a three-month turn-around on that. Maybe six months to nine months on the fast end
32 is viable.

33 Commissioner Reckdahl: When we did the batting cages down at the Baylands, the
34 planning process from the time they submitted it to the Planning Division and had them
35 churn through it—they had some objections and they had to iterate on that—it took forever.

36 Mr. Anderson: That's true. We'll have to check with Planning to see if they foresee an
37 architectural or staff-level review from the ARB, the Architectural Review Board. That
38 one's sort of an unknown. We'll have to do a little more outreach; you're right. It's probably

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1 prudent—six to nine months is the fast route and potentially, as you know from prior
2 experience, it can go longer depending on where we get hung up. Both Adam and I and
3 Kristen are savvy now with enough experience that we can help shepherd it through a little
4 faster. At least, we'll give it our best effort.

5 Commissioner Reckdahl: The PIO, we have to vote on, and then it goes to Council. We
6 can't start construction until the second reading.

7 Mr. Anderson: Thirty days after the second reading.

8 Commissioner Reckdahl: Third days after the second reading.

9 Mr. Anderson: That's right.

10 Commissioner Reckdahl: From the time we see it to the time we can start construction is
11 probably three months.

12 Mr. Anderson: Kristen just pulled me aside to say, "Can we get to work on this soon?"
13 We understand that could be a logjam. I'll work with Adam to expedite that process.

14 Commissioner Reckdahl: In particular the stakeholder input, we should try to do as much
15 in parallel because we have a pretty good idea what it is. We certainly could talk to the
16 stakeholders tomorrow for that matter. We don't have to wait for these—the hoops don't
17 have to be a series.

18 Commissioner Reckdahl: That's correct.

19 Mr. Howard: That conversation has actually already started. I've sat down with the
20 pickleballers, and they've seen this plan. We've gone a good distance with that already.
21 We just have some final touches that we want to work out the details to, which we didn't
22 get into because we wanted to move one step at a time. That process can be finished
23 quickly.

24 Commissioner Reckdahl: I trust that you guys can do it, but I've been burned too many
25 times by a long schedule. The last time pickleball was here, there were some questions
26 about the safety on the paddleball courts, about the fence and the posts not being in the
27 optimal position. Are we going to do anything about that or are we going to say good
28 enough?

29 Mr. Howard: When we resurfaced, we relocated the poles. That's no longer an issue.
30 They're still closer to the fence than they'd like to be. By moving the poles, we've alleviated
31 some of that concern.

1 Commissioner Reckdahl: We don't have any plans on moving the fences at all or that's just
2 not ...

3 Mr. Howard: There are too many restrictions in the area that wouldn't allow us to do it.
4 There's electrical and something else that runs all along those areas.

5 Vice Chair Greenfield: I want to thank Adam and staff for all the hard work they've done
6 on this. I appreciate the reasonable compromise that you're proposing. It is very viable
7 and is the best choice that we can come up with. I also appreciate the comments and
8 questions from Commissioners LaMere and McCauley. Adam's had practice answering
9 these questions, having spent a lot of time with him in the Park and Facility Use Policy Ad
10 Hoc. We've asked these questions and many more. I want to reassure the Commission
11 that this has been well vetted. I do like the plan for just adding two courts. I know we
12 were trying to squeeze three in. I like the availability of increasing the green space that
13 will be surrounding the courts for a gathering place, potentially for tables or storage as has
14 been discussed. As we reach out to the Water District, I don't know if there's any discussion
15 about tree placement and species. That would be appropriate to discuss with them in that
16 strip, but it'd be nice to shade that. We'd probably want deciduous trees to limit the leaves
17 that go on the courts and into the creek area. It seems like that would be an opportunity. I
18 don't know if it's something that needs to be vetted with the Water District. As we dedicate
19 court 5, take it away from being a tennis court, we need to consider how to renumber the
20 courts to maintain some sanity. Maybe we have a "t" for tennis court and a "p" for
21 pickleball court and "m" for mixed-use court. It's something we should consider, and now
22 is probably the time to be moving on that. I know the pickleball community will be hoping
23 that the contractor will be okay with a two-step process so we can get court 5 converted as
24 quickly as possible. Keep up the great work.

25 Commissioner Moss: I want to echo some of the other Commissioners in saying that this
26 is a great opportunity. I was wondering more specifically what was wrong with the
27 Cubberley tennis courts. Was it because they are too close to the house? You could put
28 up a sound wall on two sides if that was necessary.

29 Mr. Howard: There's a couple of issues with Cubberley. One is it is much closer to the
30 residents, so the noise issue was a concern. I know it's a long way away, but the future of
31 Cubberley is still not perfectly clear. It's hard to push forward with changes and plans like
32 this without going through the Master Plan process, which is taking place. It felt like we
33 might be skipping around a little bit too much. The other issue is ultimately to give them
34 even the space that they have at Mitchell we'd have to provide four tennis courts there, only
35 leaving two, which is a lot less attractive to the tennis community. I think we'd be having
36 a bigger impact on the tennis community by moving them there. Plus the residents and the
37 future of Cubberley.

38 Commissioner Moss: There's plenty of parking.

1 Mr. Howard: That was one of the locations that could handle the parking.

2 Commissioner Moss: I thought the Cubberley Master Plan was not going to disturb the
3 fields. I assumed that the tennis courts were part of the fields. Is that true?

4 Ms. O'Kane: They're part of the outdoor recreation area. Pickleball is something that we've
5 been hearing through the master planning process, so there is a possibility for finding the
6 right space within the Master Plan. It's still being discussed, and it's something we have
7 heard.

8 Commissioner Moss: At the same time, looking at lighting some of those courts, you don't
9 want to do that until you know more about the Master Plan. It certainly would be nice to
10 light every single tennis court in the City. Someday I hope that'll happen.

11 Mr. Howard: Okay with me.

12 Commissioner Moss: This item number 4, approval by Valley Water District, I was also
13 looking—I go by there almost every day. There's room on the right if you move the path
14 over further to the right. You can't see it here. On the picture at the bottom of the last
15 page, there is a path on the right and some eucalyptus trees. You could conceivably put
16 those two courts to the right instead of to the left if there's an issue with the Water District,
17 if you can't come to an agreement. To the right of court 7, there's quite a bit of space there
18 if you move the path. There's nothing really there except for some eucalyptus trees. If
19 push came to shove and you couldn't get an agreement in a timely fashion with the Water
20 District, you might want to look at that to the right of court 7.

21 Mr. Howard: We can keep it in mind, but I don't think any of us have looked at that area.

22 Commissioner Moss: Let's just hope you can get an approval from the Water District
23 quickly. Going back to Jeff's comment about trees, I know that a problem with those three
24 courts, 5, 6, and 7, is the eucalyptus trees raining down a lot of stuff on the courts. If there's
25 any way that those trees could be pruned so that there's not so much stuff—I'd be very wary
26 about using trees to shade the new pickleball courts if they're going to rain down a lot of
27 leaves onto the court and cause maintenance issues.

28 Mr. Howard: I can tell you that those trees were recently cut back, but they are rapidly
29 growing. That is an ongoing challenge with where those trees are.

30 Commissioner Moss: The delay of six to nine months, I'm wondering if there's some way
31 that you could do a trial basis and take over court 5 now and just give it to them
32 permanently, while you're waiting for all of the approvals, to permanently stripe. Couldn't
33 you give it to them while you're waiting instead of waiting to do anything for nine months?

34 Mr. Anderson: That's a very good question. We can look into it.

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1 Commissioner Moss: The tennis community really appreciated 5, 6, and 7 because of the
2 lights. How much usage does the pickleballers use at night? If the tennis players had those
3 courts at night—I'm talking about 6 and 7—and the pickleballers didn't need it, really
4 there's no issue for the tennis players. Do the pickleballers play at night?

5 Mr. Howard: Some. It's kind of based on the weather. Basically if no one wants to play,
6 no one's out there. It's not like you'll see one sport and not the other. Giving them the
7 opportunity to play at night, especially when it's warmer, they will.

8 Commissioner Moss: I've never seen them out there at night, but maybe I don't go there
9 enough.

10 Ms. O'Kane: If we do have dedicated courts, it opens those courts up to the entire
11 community not just people who have nets and set up the nets on their own. It provides
12 more of an opportunity for people who are learning the sport or who want to explore it on
13 their own to just show up and start playing.

14 Commissioner Cribbs: I think we're making great progress. Adam, thank you very much.
15 Thanks to everybody on the ad hoc committee, the staff. Has it been 18 months or two
16 years since we've been doing this? For sure, the pickleball community and your leadership
17 and the tennis community as well. I love the story about the pickleball player and the tennis
18 player who are now talking about pickleball and tennis at the same time. That's really
19 encouraging. I am totally dismayed about the number of hours and days it's going to take
20 for us to get dedicated courts and reports back from people. Adam, is it possible that you
21 could—there have been a lot of months bandied around here—do an approximate schedule,
22 like three months for this and four months for this, and put it on that one, two, three, four
23 thing? That would help us to understand. It would also help all of the communities who
24 are interested to understand that we don't have a dedicated court tomorrow. If we could
25 hear that, that would be great. I would definitely encourage everybody to see if we can't
26 get court 5 to be dedicated right away and resurfaced. I think that's the court that has the
27 safety thing or am I—we talked about that a little bit.

28 Mr. Howard: I think the safety concerns were for what was the paddleball courts.

29 Commissioner Cribbs: This was something about the resurfacing. I'll find out.

30 Mr. Howard: There was a pretty big crack right down the middle of those paddleball courts
31 that was not very smooth. We're welcome to hearing if I'm wrong.

32 Commissioner Cribbs: If we could figure out that one court, that would be fabulous.
33 Congrats to everybody because it's a long time coming. We're making some progress.

Chair McDougall: The idea of getting 5 in their hands sooner rather than later is worth merit. Commissioner Cribbs' idea of having a schedule printed or published so that we control the expectations is worthwhile. The comment about naming the courts, with all the trouble we have with funding we should consider selling the naming rights and raise money that way. Relative to Cubberley, the group that I was in at the last Cubberley thing was actually quite excited about the idea of putting pickleball courts on the roofs of the buildings there. I know you'll take that into full consideration. This has been long to get to this point. I told you earlier I was going to show up and tell you I had a whole new idea; I just couldn't do that to you. This is great. The recognition that one of the things about pickleball is it's a gathering. I'm all keen on, whether it's water rafting or pickleball players, the idea of gathering is really positive and a real contribution to our City.

Commissioner McCauley: Forgive me. I need to depart. Happy holidays to everyone. For all of our friends at Grassroots Ecology, thank you for all the work that you do.

Commissioner McCauley left the meeting at approximately 8:37 p.m.

4. Presentation from Grassroots Ecology

Chair McDougall: Next on the agenda is Grassroots Ecology. I'm sorry that we're later than you might have expected on the agenda. Thank you for your patience.

Mr. Anderson: Chair McDougall, if I may introduce my colleagues, longstanding partners, wonderful to work with in Open Space for many, many years, Alex Von Feldt, the Grassroots Ecology Executive Director, and Jerry Hearn, the Board Vice President, and another colleague that I haven't met yet.

Alex Von Feldt: This is Kristen Williams; she's our Habitat Restoration Director. If you ask any technical questions, I'll be deferring to her. Thank you very much. What I was planning to do tonight is give you an overview of our relationship with the City of Palo Alto and what we've been doing with your open spaces and creeks and parks and all the different people we've been working with. Grassroots Ecology has been around for a while, but you might have known us under a different name. We were part of Acterra for quite a long time. About three years ago, we spun off and formed our own organization. Basically, all of our staff and all of our projects went with us to form the new organization. We have a new Board, of which Jerry was one of our founding members. You might know Jerry Hearn. He's been a longstanding member of the community and was part of Acterra's Board for a very long time. He knows a lot about these open spaces. Our mission is to involve and educate the public to restore local ecosystems. Our programs are lumped into several categories but are somewhat overlapping. Habitat restoration is mainly what we're known for. We also bring some of those techniques into the urban setting, and we call that urban ecology. We provide a lot of education in the field and in the classroom with a real focus on middle and high schools students. We also have our native plant nursery that

grows the plants for our projects as well as a few other partners like the Santa Clara Valley Water District, that you were referring to earlier. Our model is basically engaging the community to do all that. We do have about 27 staff, but the staff is mainly there for the technical expertise as well as the volunteer engagement. Most of the labor comes from our volunteers. Part of that model is that, when we're getting people into the community to help do something for your local environment not only are you meeting people and having fun, but you're learning a little bit of something about your open space, and hopefully you can bring some of those behaviors back into your own garden and into your own home. Finally, we can't do what we do without great partnerships. The partnership that we've had with the City of Palo Alto extends back to 1996. We've leveraged that to also get additional funding from other agencies such as the Coastal Conservancy, Santa Clara Valley Water District, and many family foundations that want to support environmental education. I've put up a map of our current sites because we often get that question. We've grown quite a bit over the years. Arastradero was our first open space site that we started to steward. We've now extended so that basically we go from Redwood City down to Los Gatos and from the Baylands up to Skyline. It's a combination of habitation restoration sites as well as some water quality monitoring sites along creeks and even some rain gardens and rain barrel systems that we've installed throughout. An important thing to note is our annual participation. You can see how many volunteers we work with a year. We are able to engage almost 13,000 people. As you can see, most of them are youth and young adults. Whenever people have to get community service hours, usually they're calling us. We also have a lot of partnerships with the Girl Scouts, the Boy Scouts, all sorts of AP environmental science, other community groups. We're very appreciative. I was going to go through the sites that we work in within the City of Palo Alto to explain some history and what we're doing. The first one is Enid Pearson Arastradero Preserve. We've been stewarding it since 1996. We engage about 1,000 people a year at 80 different events. That means more than one volunteer event a week we're running at Arastradero Preserve. It's a 620-acre preserve, so we can't cover all the ground. We prioritize what we do. From an ecological perspective, controlling the invasive species and introducing locally native species to improve biodiversity has been a key strategy of ours. We've been spending a lot of time restoring natural watershed functions. One of the project highlights is Mayfly Creek. That was part of the Bressler property that burned down in the fires of the '80s. When the City took over the land, there was a creek buried in a pipe. We worked with the City and Coastal Conservancy to open up the creek—it's called daylighting—and let it run free. Mayfly Creek is a tributary to Matadero Creek. It was able to recharge the groundwater up there and help with some of the downstream flows. We have another project we call berms and swales. That's doing the same thing as using some permaculture techniques to help slow down the water that was causing some erosion into the creek and sink it into the groundwater while also improving biodiversity. I just wanted to point out one of our afterschool programs, Arastradero Stewards. Local high school students, primarily from Paly but also Gunn, come almost every week and learn about local ecology as well as provide a community service element there. If you're familiar with Lynn Hori

[phonetic], she is the retired teacher from Paly. She's been working with us for years there. San Francisquito Creek is the border between Palo Alto and Menlo Park. It's a really important steelhead stream and is one of the few that has not been altered with concrete. It was also one that the community really engaged in. Some of Jerry's early days were helping with that. We continue to help restore the habitat along the creek by controlling invasives and planting trees, doing a lot of trash cleanup. One of the sites we work at is El Palo Alto Park, where the tree is. We have school children come and visit El Palo Alto. We also are partners to remove what's called Bonde weir, which is a fish passage barrier. We do some willow staking there. The San Francisquito Joint Powers Authority is doing their big project downstream, so we coordinate with them to help with debris removal in the creek and to mitigate downstream tree removal. We have been stewarding Foothills Park more recently compared to the other ones, since 2013. That is such a beautiful site I'm sure many of you have visited. Our strategy there is a little different. It's already pretty biodiverse, so it's really about controlling some of the areas where invasives have gotten a foothold and letting the native biodiversity restore itself. We call that passive restoration. One of the important aspects of this site, as you probably know, is the Friends of Foothills, a group that's been taking care of that park for years. When we first started the contract with the City, all of their maps and their projects were passed onto us, and we helped coordinate the volunteers. The Friends remained active in it. We tried to partner with them to bring the volunteer labor to take care of the areas that they were passionate about. There's also the area in the back called the 7.7-acre parcel. I think a working title for it is Buckeye Flats, but I understand that is not set in stone yet. Something about Doe's Meadow is another option. That's where our nursery is. We've been doing a little bit of maintenance on it over time, but we're stepping up some of our restoration work there. We also monitor water quality in all the creeks in Palo Alto. We do that with community volunteers. We actually have a few dedicated volunteers—you might call them streamkeepers—that basically monitor the same sites every month. It's really helpful to have that extra pair of eyes on the local creeks. We also get a lot of Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts that want to come and do. They have a badge for water quality, so this is an important element. We also have this other project, Greening Urban Watersheds. This project was funded almost entirely through a Santa Clara Valley Water District grant. In all the previous projects, the Arastradero Preserve, San Francisquito, Foothills Park, we augmented some of the City money with grants over the years from the Water District and Coastal Conservancy and various foundations, so that we're able to get 2X and oftentimes 3X the City's investment and value. A lot of government agencies really like that combination of public-private partnership as well as engaging volunteers. The Greening Urban Watershed project is installing rain barrels and rain gardens throughout the City of Palo Alto to provide demonstrations for people. In a storm event, rather than having all the water go straight into the storm drains and into our creeks without being cleaned, the idea is to get the rainwater into the ground so that it naturally cleans it before it gets to the creek. We have done a few of these and just last Saturday finished one at Bol Park. Our nursery has been there since 2003. We grow locally native species from seed collected in the watershed.

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We even grow some rare and endangered species as well. We primarily provide plants for our own projects and Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District and Santa Clara Valley Water District. Once a year, we do a joint plant sale with the California Native Plant Society at Hidden Villa, but that's mainly our one opportunity for people to buy our plants in a retail setting. For the most part, the nursery is more for growing plants. We do have some long-term volunteers, some of which have been there before 2003 when we were in a backyard. Those volunteers have helped us over the years to take care of these plants. If you'd like more information, we have a newsletter. You can sign up for it on our website. Every week we send out a list of all the volunteer opportunities, and they're typically five to ten. It's helpful so people can see what sort of sites you can volunteer at. If you're looking for community service hours, you can get those as well. We have a monthly newsletter that highlights our programs and some of our volunteers. With that, I'll take any questions you have.

Chair McDougall: We'll start at your end, Commissioner Cribbs.

Commissioner Cribbs: I don't have any questions. I enjoyed the presentation. It's great to know about all this. Thank you very much for everything you're doing.

Commissioner Moss: I want to thank your organization for all the decades of work that you've done. Two of my kids were your volunteers in the early 2000s and went on to careers in ecology and teaching. It's a fantastic organization, and I really appreciate your education aspects and the volunteer opportunities for kids. Friends of Foothills Park is very important for us. I want to make sure that your partnership with them continues to grow and you take full advantage of them to help you prioritize projects that you need. You have your own fundraising arm, but I want to make sure they can raise funds as well. I want to make sure they get some credit for some of the things that they work on with you or help you with. Anything you can do to strengthen that partnership would be really advantageous to both.

Ms. Von Feldt: I'm always pleased to hear about people that went into a field in ecology. I might ask Kristen, my colleague who works more closely with Friends of Foothills Park, to describe some of the things they've been doing recently.

Kristen Williams: We work with the Friends, and they're such a huge wealth of knowledge. We're really fortunate to have them as a resource. We do meet with them monthly. We have scheduled it so that we have volunteers come out on Sunday mornings, which is their normal day. We are able to do it every Sunday, but we try to meet with them before the workday every Sunday and talk about what we're going to work on, what they're going to work on. Often, we'll even work together. For example, a couple of weeks ago they had a patch of French broom that they wanted to get to. We brought our volunteers; they showed us the patch; and we all worked together. Definitely working together. At times, we've

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1 had harder times communicating, but recently it's been really strong and great. They have
2 so much knowledge that we're fortunate to get to work with them.

3 Vice Chair Greenfield: I want to thank your organization for all the dedication to our
4 community and the awesome volunteer engagement and the environmental stewardship
5 and education. You're a valued resource within our community, and we appreciate it.
6 Thank you to you and all of your staff. I've had a few opportunities to volunteer with your
7 group including working with some Gunn service days at Cooley Landing and the
8 Baylands. It's always been a great experience for everyone involved. With the opening of
9 the 7.7 acres or Buckeye Flats, I'm very happy that your nursery has been preserved. I
10 know that has been prioritized within all the discussions of the Foothills Park ad hoc and
11 the Commission itself. We value the restorative work you're able to do with the nursery
12 both in Palo Alto and in surrounding communities. As part of the opening of Buckeye
13 Flats—I'm not really fond of the name. I was proposing to call it Dunn Flats in honor of
14 the longest-serving Ranger at Foothills Park. I know you have some restoration plots, some
15 trial plots, in that area. I see this as a great education opportunity. I don't know if you've
16 worked with the Foothills Park summer camps, but it seems like a great opportunity to have
17 some sort of daytrip or a half-day session with Grassroots Ecology to educate the students
18 to the ongoing restoration attempts or trials and general nursery education. You're very
19 careful about management of pests and whatnot in the nursery area. If there's a way to
20 include these summer camps on an ongoing basis, that'd be a great feeder for your
21 organization and education for the community overall. If we can ever get anywhere with
22 the overall Buckeye Creek restoration project and reclaiming some riparian environment,
23 it's a rare and wonderful opportunity for our community. I'm sure you share that view.
24 That would be another way to include education even more dramatically as the process
25 goes over years to share with the summer camp groups and the community at large. Again,
26 I thank you for your contributions and look forward to our continued relationship.
27 Anything the Commission can do to help further your cause, please let us know.

28 Commissioner Reckdahl: Your group does such good work; we really do appreciate it.
29 Especially in tight budgets these days, we can't get by without volunteers, so we appreciate
30 that. Can you talk about the rain gardens? I've not been up to Bol Park to see the rain
31 garden. Are these just mini swales or is there a more complex design than that?

32 Ms. Von Feldt: We use the term rain gardens because they're not technically green
33 stormwater infrastructure, but they're pretty close to it. If you're going to get the permit for
34 a bioswale or things where you have to have the grate raised up a certain amount and certain
35 bioengineered material, most of our gardens have most of that. It depends on where they
36 are. Some are more naturalistic than others. The one at Gamble Garden has this huge
37 cistern that collects all the water from the roof. The overflow goes into this swale area so
38 that the overflow can recharge the groundwater. Gamble Garden can use the rainwater for
39 other things as well. At Bol Park, we just installed it Saturday. You can see how it works

1 there. It's right next to the native garden that the neighbors have done. It's taking some of
2 that water before it gets to the street and infiltrating it in there. There is a big grate in there,
3 but the grate has to be a little bit higher than the plants around it.

4 Commissioner Reckdahl: Are you taking runoff from that back unincorporated area or is
5 it just water that falls on the grass?

6 Ms. Von Feldt: It's basically between the garden and the road where it would puddle.
7 We're trying to help with that situation.

8 Commissioner Reckdahl: I'll take a look. Where in Hoover Park is the rain garden?

9 Ms. Williams: I know where it is, but I don't know how to describe it.

10 Ms. Von Feldt: There are bathrooms near it. We can go back to the picture. The one on
11 the right is Hoover garden.

12 Commissioner Reckdahl: I'll have to check that out. When you have a project, do you end
13 up with too many volunteers or not enough?

14 Ms. Von Feldt: We actually have too many volunteers, more than we have capacity to
15 deliver quality experiences for. Obviously, we have to have an appropriate ratio for safety
16 reasons and for the value. We like to have a 1:10 ratio. Typically, our workdays are about
17 two staff and 20 or so volunteers. We do actually have to turn a lot of groups away.

18 Commissioner Reckdahl: It's a good problem to have.

19 Ms. Von Feldt: At certain times of the year, like when students have to get their community
20 service hours in, December and May can get a little squirrely with people showing up.

21 Commissioner Reckdahl: Do you coordinate with any other nonprofits to help guide
22 volunteers over to them?

23 Ms. Von Feldt: We do a lot with other nonprofits, like joint things, especially Canopy.
24 They're in our building, so we do joint workdays especially in East Palo Alto and on the
25 Bay Trail. We just did one last week in conjunction with the opening of Friendship Bridge.
26 They are in the same boat with more volunteers than they have the capacity to deliver
27 workdays because of the required staffing. We're trying to get some things like having
28 corporate groups donate to help offset the cost so we can continue to offer volunteer days
29 for students and things like that.

30 Commissioner Reckdahl: That's interesting. If you talk about nonnatives at Byxbee, you
31 could spend your life up there. We have too much work to do and too many volunteers,
32 but the problem is we don't have enough staff between that.

1 Ms. Von Feldt: The problem is the cost associated with the staff and the tools to actually
2 deliver those workdays. That's the constrained resource.

3 Commissioner Reckdahl: I wish I had the answer.

4 Ms. Von Feldt: We keep cracking away at it.

5 Commissioner LaMere: Appreciate everything your organization does. It's new to me in
6 terms of learning what you guys do. Could you walk me through, just briefly, your process
7 of identifying projects? Is it mostly municipalities reaching out to you? Do you identify
8 projects and then some of the process of permitting or how you're able to do what you guys
9 do at the different parks and the different places? I was curious about other pain points;
10 you mentioned the staffing. What else ends up being something that stops you from doing
11 more or finishing some projects that you'd like to do?

12 Ms. Von Feldt: I'll take a crack at it, but then I'll ask my colleagues to pitch in. When it
13 comes to how you figure out where to work, we often get that question. There's a
14 philosophical discussion from an ecological perspective of where is the best place to work,
15 like where is the habitat most rich so that you can remove a few of the invasive species and
16 the native habitat comes back. There's also the community aspect. Since half our mission
17 is to engage people because we feel like that will lead to true behavior change, you also
18 want to have something that provides ecological benefit but is close to an engaged
19 volunteer base. The third part of that is resources. For a long time, we were really working
20 just in the City of Palo Alto, and we branched to Los Altos and Los Altos Hills. Those
21 three cities all have something in common, an ability to help fund some of these activities.
22 Over the last five years, we've really made a concerted effort to work in other communities
23 that don't have that ability, such as East Palo Alto and Redwood City, but then the onus is
24 really on us as the organization to get 100 percent of the funding. That's a constant effort
25 and requires some of our time, but we think it's important. There are some really nice parks
26 like Cooley Landing. Anything to add to that, especially from a habitat perspective? Pain
27 points. We were just talking about in the audience our vehicles are breaking down. We've
28 been looking for grants to help get vehicles. They're very hard to find. Another big one
29 that we've been dealing with for years is how do you retain high-quality staff in a very
30 expensive place like this when our salaries are just a fraction of what's around here.
31 Everybody has creative living experiences. They're mission driven, and they really love it,
32 but it's hard to stay here long-term unless you have somebody else supporting you.
33 Anything to add?

34 Jerry Hearn: If I can just add a few things regarding the history of this. Originally, the
35 Watershed Council and Arastradero were things planned by a bunch of people and then
36 brought to the City to ask for support. As you've said, it's the municipalities, the cities, the
37 Midpen, who are coming to us because we have a proven record. As part of our strategic
38 outreach as we're looking at our DEI stuff, we are trying to move into some other areas that

1 don't have the same kind of support, primarily in East Palo Alto. That proves to be
2 challenging in terms of paying for it. Yet, that's where it's needed, and there are a lot of
3 requests out there. As a board member who raises money for that, it hasn't proved lately
4 to be that easy to raise money for those things. Almost all the staff are out in the field, so
5 the high cost of insurance is another thing. About 10 percent of our budget goes to
6 insurance, but that's something you have to have.

7 Commissioner LaMere: Thank you for all the work you guys do. It's very much
8 appreciated.

9 Ms. Von Feldt: Thank you all for supporting this work over the years. Palo Alto was really
10 the leader in this. A lot of times when we're talking to other people in other cities, they'll
11 say, "How does Palo Alto do it? Why are they doing this?" It's helpful to cite your support
12 over the years. Staff's great to work with too.

13 Chair McDougall: It's always nice to have Daren's best friends attend the meeting. Thank
14 you very much for being here, for answering the questions, and for everything you do. We
15 all appreciate it and want to know, as people asked, what else we can do to help.

16 **5. Baylands Comprehensive Conservation Plan Update**

17 Chair McDougall: Our last major attraction for the evening is an update on the Baylands
18 Comprehensive Plan with Mr. Anderson.

19 Mr. Anderson: Good evening. Daren Anderson, Community Services Department. As
20 you noted, I am here to talk about the Baylands Conservation Plan, specifically to get your
21 feedback on the Byxbee concept plan. That'll be the focus of tonight's presentation, to get
22 your feedback, if we got it right, what are we missing, here are your thoughts. I'll also
23 touch on the former ITT/Emily Renzel Wetlands area. This one you had weighed in on.
24 We made the adjustments, and your staff report should reflect the feedback from both you
25 and the community. I want to make sure we got that right, so I'll walk through the
26 highlights of that and then briefly cover the next steps. Let me walk through the highlights
27 of the Renzel Wetlands plan. Some of the chief or key things were we have two new trail
28 sections. The first is the North Trail. It's towards the top of the screen. The Freshwater
29 Pond Trail in that section. I'm going to pause at that point to talk about one key part. There
30 are a number of other features, but one unique one is this area was limited to just pedestrians
31 and maintenance vehicles. The consultant had added on this end and the other end a
32 maintenance gate with the idea that that would stop bicycles from coming through and/or
33 dogs. That is not my understanding or my belief. Gates don't stop bikes. Anywhere
34 pedestrians can get through, bikes can get through. The gate seems superfluous to me and
35 a hindrance. I put that out for Commission feedback. Frankly, it could be easily achieved
36 by a sign. You'll get the same efficacy in terms of control that you'd get with a gate because
37 it's not going to stop bikes and it certainly wouldn't stop someone from walking with their

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dog. Putting a sign that says "pedestrians only" is what the stakeholders and, if I understand correctly, the Commission advocated for. We'd only have access to the backside of that freshwater pond and again pedestrian access only. Rather than a gate, I put it to you to weigh in if you think signage would do it. In addition to the two signs, we've also got the restored hydrology, which is a big environmental component of this. Dendritic channels would be enhanced. We have very limited ones. On the map, though it's a little hard to see, you can see there are existing ones. We would enhance it by adding new ones where the tidal flow could come further into the area and essentially restore the habitat by itself. You'll see one of the recommendations is to enhance those areas around the dendritic channels. Another element of the restoration is the remnant marsh connection. Currently, this little area here is isolated entirely from hydrologic connection; though, it was once historically a tidal salt marsh. It hasn't been for many, many years. This concept that we talked about before was connecting it through the Renzel Wetlands and into the flood basin. During our outreach to the community, our stakeholders, there was some interesting feedback on that. I hadn't heard it from anyone else. There was concern that perhaps there'd be too much salinity moving into this isolated area and that perhaps some wildlife might be impacted negatively from that. In talking to the consultant more, their thought was it's already very high salinity and it would only be beneficial to have tidal water flow through. It's still a good point, and the consultant advised that before you could move forward, there would have to be extensive study to see if there'd be any impacts from connecting that area to tidal influence. A couple of other features in this are we've got interpretive signage. There would be three interpretive signs and three park benches, all right next to the interpretive signs. That would be on the Pond Trail, the ITT Trail, and the North Trail. There'd be a dog waste station. I think that covers the highlights of the ITT/Renzel Wetlands plan. Chair, if you'd like me to continue to the Byxbee portion or if you'd like to comment and take questions or comments on this part?

Chair McDougall: It would be useful to stop and do questions just on this part. I'll start with Commissioner LaMere.

Commissioner LaMere: Daren, I appreciate all the hard work you've put toward this. I agree with you about the gate being superfluous. If someone's on a bike and wanted to go there, they would go there. I also like what's been drawn in terms of the trail system and being able to connect all the way from one side to the other. I do appreciate that. I do not have any questions for you.

Commissioner Reckdahl: I agree about the gate. Signage is sufficient. I am not thrilled about the fact that we have a flow through this as opposed to making it tidal. In the long run, I really would like to see flow come in and then go back out that same way. If we had a trench or something at the top right, that would allow the tidal water to come in. Instead of flowing through this and going out, it would go up and back with the tide. That would be much more natural and might be less maintenance in the long run.

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1 Mr. Anderson: That would be ideal, and it may be possible. Like most of this, this is very
2 conceptual. As we dig deeper, we flesh out more things like that. There might be even
3 ideas our consultant hasn't thought of yet to maximize hydrologic flow. Maybe even a
4 pump to move more water in, for all I know. More analysis is necessary. The main
5 principle we wanted to make sure we got by him is there's habitat here that's not being
6 maximized, and it can be if we get a better tidal connection.

7 Vice Chair Greenfield: Thank you, Daren, for all of your work and all of the work with
8 the stakeholder group. Echoing the comments of the other Commissioners, it's great to see
9 the loop access trail. Just to confirm, the North Trail does connect to roughly the northwest
10 corner of Byxbee Park.

11 Mr. Anderson: That's correct.

12 Vice Chair Greenfield: That's great. As far as the gate goes, I don't have strong feelings,
13 but it seems like we should be able to remove it.

14 Commissioner Moss: I'm wondering if instead of a gate, that stretch of big rocks that you
15 have right now that keeps bikes out, maybe we could put those rocks so that maintenance
16 vehicles could go over it but bikes not. It might be more effective than gates. I'd like to
17 have something to discourage bikes and dogs, people commuting through there, rather than
18 having it wide open and a sign. If that's a possibility, I'd like you to look at that.

19 Mr. Anderson: I might be able to address some of that. One of the challenges we have is
20 anything we put to block or limit bike access makes it very unfriendly for ADA access for
21 pedestrians, which is rough. Even where I've got gates, where we tried to configure it to
22 limit access that we didn't want, they're really intended to stop vehicle access. Motorcycles
23 can get through the same ADA access that pedestrians can. It happens all the time or had
24 in the past when I worked at the Baylands. It's a real challenge to find that solution. We
25 haven't found it yet, nor have I visited a place that had it and was still accessible to
26 pedestrians.

27 Commissioner Moss: The only example that I know of is at the end of San Antonio Road
28 at Terminal Road, where the bathroom is. There's a gate there. In order to get around the
29 gate, you have to go through this maze. In some places, there's even a step up. There's a
30 piece of wood at the end of Alpine Road when you go up to Windy Hill. All of these things
31 discourage ADA. I'm not sure if you have to make the entire thing ADA. I just don't know
32 what to suggest. I thought we were going to have some kind of an ADA-accessible
33 overlook, a place where you could go up and look around, where you didn't have to go on
34 that path but you could get a good look at either of those two endpoints of that road. That
35 way, they don't necessarily have to go all the way. They could still get a nice view and
36 also be close enough to the lake and to the outside of the marsh. It's something to think
37 about.

1 Mr. Anderson: I should point out there is one overlook. I didn't call it out specifically. It's
2 right up at the top near the North Trail.

3 Commissioner Moss: That would be good. I'd like to see an additional one somewhere
4 near the pond, maybe on the 101 side but closer to the bathroom and closer to the marsh so
5 you get it looking both directions. I agree with Commissioner Reckdahl about the
6 enhanced channel to get inflow and outflow. That would be great. It's fantastic if we can
7 also include that remnant marsh. I hadn't even thought about that. That would be a super
8 idea. There was general agreement that the building should go away. I wish it were closer
9 to 101 or somehow to preserve it. Having it in the very center of the marsh is not the best
10 place. I would want to make sure there is terrific signage, not just in the middle but perhaps
11 next to 101, next to the bathroom at the bottom of the picture, discussing in-depth the
12 historical significance of the building and more importantly the bouncing of the signal off
13 the marsh and all that kind of stuff. I would love to see some of the antennas left up, maybe
14 not as high as they are today, but some symbol of the history. That's a critical part of this
15 marsh.

16 Mr. Anderson: We discussed that at the Commission meeting when we went in-depth on
17 the ITT, and it didn't have support. We got almost unanimous support from the
18 Commissioners that were in attendance that night to remove all the antennas. Most of the
19 stakeholders felt the same way. Their concern for the antennas was largely the impacts as
20 roosting for birds of prey. That was their argument for getting rid of it. By and large, it's
21 the marsh or wetland that has the historical significance, less so the antennas was some of
22 the feedback we got on that topic.

23 Commissioner Moss: I understand. There is one antenna that's lower, that has the 1921
24 on it, if we could keep that one. To have none, I don't know.

25 Commissioner Cribbs: Thank you, Daren. This is great. I appreciate the comments from
26 the stakeholders. Everybody was pretty thoughtful about it. It seems like everything is
27 moving in the right direction. Could you clarify for me how many vehicles go down the
28 pedestrian path on a daily basis or a weekly basis?

29 Mr. Anderson: Perhaps historically is the better one to look at. Commissioner Cribbs, are
30 we talking about the fresh ...

31 Commissioner Cribbs: Wherever we're talking about the gate and the signage and
32 maintenance vehicles going down that.

33 Mr. Anderson: Specifically, we're talking about around the freshwater pond. In the past,
34 I would say it was exceedingly rare. Maybe it'll increase now that they've got it built. Their
35 intent is to prevent certain areas from growing in with cattails, which would mean you'd
36 bring up a backhoe and scoop out. You'd only do that once the plant material had grown

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1 4-5 feet. It would be a year kind of thing. Aside from other inspections, I would think it's
2 fairly infrequent, maybe—I can't say for sure because it's not my team doing it. The
3 Rangers will not be regularly driving that. It would be very atypical for Open Space staff
4 to do that. It'd be the Public Works' team who is managing that as a release of treated
5 water. I can ask more specifically, and when I come back have a better answer.

6 Commissioner Cribbs: I'd just be interested to see if that's the right way for them to go or
7 if there's another way they could go.

8 Mr. Anderson: They'll have to at some point. We'll certainly have them take, as much as
9 possible, the route where it's not a trail, the area closest to 101 where we're asking people
10 not to walk. I would guess it would be relatively infrequent.

11 Commissioner Cribbs: It was disconcerting to see that big old whatever it was, machinery,
12 out there doing what it's supposed to be doing.

13 Mr. Anderson: It is. Hopefully we will not have that for a very long time.

14 Commissioner Cribbs: On your list of when things are going to happen and when meetings
15 are going to be held, is it possible for the second part of the list to put some approximate
16 times?

17 Mr. Anderson: Approximate times for ...

18 Commissioner Cribbs: Not times of day, but when things are going to happen. Fill out
19 that list.

20 Mr. Anderson: Sure. Let me double check, Commissioner Cribbs. Do you mean in terms
21 of some of the work happening or next meetings?

22 Commissioner Cribbs: Some of the work happening, the next meeting, the stakeholder
23 meetings. If you know at this point, that would be great to fill that out.

24 Chair McDougall: Before we go on, we do have one visitor, who's not paying attention. I
25 know everybody knows who he is. He may have interest in this part or some other part.
26 He may wish to comment. I'm going to give him the opportunity now or later. If you want
27 to comment on this part, you could feel free or you could wait until later.

28 Elliott Wright: I'll jump in a little bit later.

29 Chair McDougall: When I look at the map that we have here, Daren, there's a "p" for
30 parking down at the bottom. At the moment, there's also a space that you could put as
31 many cars where you're putting that "p" right at the very top of the freshwater pond, where
32 the access road now is. I don't know if we want to designate that as parking and properly

1 mark it so that you don't have whatever. I would suggest that we do that. This implies that
2 I could walk along the berm, along the freshwater, and cross over and get onto the path that
3 goes all the way around. Right?

4 Mr. Anderson: Yes.

5 Chair McDougall: That means that the bridge would be updated beyond what it is now?

6 Mr. Anderson: That's correct.

7 Chair McDougall: That's a lot of fun to walk across that bridge today. I like the fact that
8 you tease me by telling me you're going to put signage in. I like the idea of the open trench.
9 I know we've had presentations that worried about how much dog access there was relative
10 to how close you're getting to the marshland that we're trying to rehabilitate and create as
11 an interesting habitat. I don't think I need an answer now. If there's an effort to say "we
12 know there are lots of parks that are not dog parks but have lots of off-leash dogs in it," at
13 least discouraging people would be worthwhile. I'm in the group that believes the antennas
14 should come down for ecological purposes. As Commissioner Moss was speaking, it
15 occurred to me that there are portions of this, like the redline that goes directly to the
16 existing building and that is relatively straight, where you could take one of those poles
17 and lay it down and label it and describe it there. It doesn't have to be standing in order to
18 be part of the history of the place. You could actually maintain it.

19 Commissioner Moss: With a picture on a sign.

20 Chair McDougall: I mean describe it in a way that says "here's what this pole was and
21 here's where it came from" and with a note that says "it's not still standing because we don't
22 want raptors to be sitting on it and eating our" ...

23 Mr. Anderson: That's a great idea.

24 Chair McDougall: Other than that, thank you. Next.

25 Commissioner Moss: Regarding the raptors, in every shopping mall they put things on the
26 top of places to discourage birds from landing. If there was a chance to keep one of the
27 poles, maybe that 1921 antenna, and have some kind of barrier to keep the raptors off, that
28 would be preferable than having no antennas up. That's my personal comment. I didn't
29 have my glasses on and, when I looked at the bottom left-hand corner where it has the black
30 dot, I thought that was a restroom. It's really parking. I was wondering do we need to have
31 a restroom like we have at the end of Terminal Road. Do we need a restroom either there
32 or over at the end of the road at the top of the pond? It's a long way from there to the single
33 restroom in the entire Baylands at Byxbee Park. Do we need a bathroom?

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1 Mr. Anderson: I hadn't heard that from any other stakeholders nor in the time I've worked
2 with the City have I heard anyone request one for that area. The requests are always to
3 enhance the ones we have. We have three, one at the Sailing Station, a portable restroom,
4 one at the duck pond, a portable one, and one at Byxbee that's a permanent structure, and
5 one inside the Nature Center. It hasn't been a request there in the past. It really depends
6 on what kind of use. Aside from hiking through, there's not a lot of sit and stay in this
7 particular design, like a picnic area. We could monitor it and see, but my initial reaction
8 is I probably wouldn't recommend adding one now, at least in my perspective.

9 Commissioner Reckdahl: One possibility would be on East Bayshore, on the southside of
10 Matadero Creek at the Service Center. If you did it on that side of the creek, you could tie
11 into the sewage and water from the Service Center. It would be a lot cheaper. If it was
12 right on that trail, there's a lot of bike traffic that would probably use it. If it was right by
13 Matadero Creek, it would be a two-for. You'd get the people that would be on that end of
14 the wetlands and the traffic going through. If down the road we can get the Matadero Creek
15 underpass to be pedestrian, that would be a third stream of people.

16 Mr. Anderson: The consultant used the feedback from the Commission and the
17 stakeholders to create a conceptual design for Byxbee Park, which includes two options for
18 the parking lot. The plans were reviewed by the stakeholder group at the November 29th
19 community meeting. We've circulated that to a wider stakeholder advisory group via email.
20 I'm going to walk you through some of the key design features. There are proposed
21 vegetation management zones throughout Byxbee. They've got four. There's the coastal
22 scrub, which is the upper part or lighter green. There's the tidal marsh area, the remnant
23 marsh piece, especially once we connect that hydrologically to have more saltwater flowing
24 through. Currently, it already has pickleweed, an indicator that it's pretty heavy in terms
25 of salt content. We've got the coastal prairie in what I call the Phase 2C area, which is this
26 darker green area. Some of that's predicated on the cap. Byxbee, a former landfill, has a
27 clay cap with 2 feet of soil placed on it, largely on this lighter green area. Because of that,
28 they're recommending a certain habitat type for that. The darker green has a different kind
29 of cap, which is 5 feet of engineered soil. It can accommodate different vegetation types
30 because of that depth. The remnant marsh for the tidal one, and another one for the areas
31 on the trail. Some other key features. The consultants looped in some of the trails to create
32 loops to aid walkers, hikers, and bikers. We increased the number of benches. There are
33 21 existing benches on the perimeter and the top of Byxbee Park. They proposed adding
34 11 benches, eight of which would be like the ones you see elsewhere in the preserve with
35 a back and three without backs. One of the benefits is you'll have views going both ways,
36 which in certain areas would be really beneficial. Another one that we brought up in the
37 stakeholder meeting is something I'm seeing on top of Byxbee. The backed benches are
38 covered with guano. It's a good sign in that we've got bird life up there and a bad sign in
39 that it makes it less welcoming for people. There are already 21 benches around Byxbee;
40 you can imagine the rest of the 2,000-acre preserve. We have almost 100 more. Right

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now, I have just one Ranger in the Baylands. I'm working on filling that up. They don't get around to cleaning that on a regular basis. The idea of trying a backless bench at least in a couple places might make sense. In the past when I worked as a Ranger at the Baylands, a lot of people would say, "We need backs. We do not want a bunch of flat ones." Historically that had been the art bench that was placed around the perimeter of Byxbee. When it was first put in as an art park, they put in this ironing-board-shaped bench. This is trying something new. We could see how it goes and go with three backless benches. They added two interpretive signs. There are already five in the park, and only two of them were installed. The other three had to be redesigned, and we should be getting those signs tomorrow. They'll be installed before the end of the calendar year. This would be two additional ones that would come into the preserve. They recommended expanding the vegetative islands, which were very well received from our stakeholders and even our regular park visitors who haven't really weighed in. As the Rangers talk to people coming to the park, they love that. Expanding that makes a lot of sense. At one point, we proposed a shade structure. You will not see it on the design in front of you because it was not cared for by the stakeholder group, which was the same group that proposed it. Over time, apparently they changed their mind. There wasn't a single person who thought that would be appropriate. They wanted it out and recommended wind protection in lieu of shade. We've got ideas in this revised concept that allow for that. The two parking lot layouts. Here are some examples of those plant communities. That's very crude in terms of what you'll see at Byxbee right away. That's not what it'll look like right away. It gives you an idea of some of the plants that fall into those community groups. Here are two concepts, the first of which we call Concept 1. This one allows for 61 parking stalls. The existing parking at Byxbee allows for 20. There's a little overflow area that allows for nine, so a total of 29. We dramatically expand it in both these scenarios. It was almost unanimous in terms of Concept 1 and Concept 2 for our stakeholders to prefer the second concept. One, it's a little more parking. Mainly it was the ease of use, having that roundabout access. One of the Rangers present at the meeting talked about how historically we've had issues with vehicles backing up and hitting things, either bollards or other cars. This makes it a lot easier for users to come in and out. Another bit of feedback we got during that stakeholder meeting is "this looks great, we unanimously support Concept 2, but one thing you're missing is a spot for longer vehicles like a school bus." The consultants and staff agreed that that made good sense. They said they could incorporate it into this design. I'll take every bit of feedback you've got. That'll be one of the elements they also incorporate. We reached out to the community on November 29th. The parking lot was a real clear one. There was a suggestion to leave—some of the comments from our stakeholder group veered back to the Renzel Wetland, so I'll echo something Commissioner Moss mentioned. One stakeholder said it'd be great to leave some of the antenna poles. In fact, they were suggesting that it could be nesting habitat for snowy egrets and the like. Unfortunately, when I talked to the consultant, if you put it for snowy egrets, it'll also be used for those birds of prey and maybe exclusively by them. They countered with there might be a better location for that. In fact, we recently had a heronry by the duck pond. We had three or

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four different kinds of birds nesting in that area. If we were going to add ones, in their estimation that made the better site. In fact, the habitat around there would be better for them too. Some stakeholders wanted additional seating to what was originally proposed. This area between Byxbee and the Renzel Wetlands is an area where we started with a couple of park benches. They said, "This is a major wildlife corridor, and we would like to limit the amount of prolonged activity in the area. If possible, we'd like you to remove those benches, move them elsewhere in the park, and beef up the vegetation in here, hiding places for these animals that are using it as a corridor." You'll see that reflected on this design, where you've got enhanced planting throughout this area here. Also, there was a request for stairs for exercise, something we discussed during the interim plan for Byxbee so many years ago. Unfortunately, the same answer was it's very difficult to maintain them because of the settlement issue. As a former landfill, you can have a 6-foot drop in some areas. It seems to move around, and it doesn't seem to stop over decades. It's very frustrating. When I reached out to the Public Works staff to make sure, their answer was we could not do it safely. Another bit of feedback was another element from the interim plan, if possible to pile extra soil in certain sections of the preserve that would allow ground squirrels and burrowing owls to thrive. We identified three locations. There are regulatory agencies that govern former landfills, and there are certain rules we must abide by. One is they won't allow burrowing animals on that, so ground squirrels are a no-no. We thought if we got enough soil, they wouldn't hit the clay cap, and we'd protect it, but we have not gotten approval from that regulatory agency. When I talk to the stakeholders, they always want to keep pushing. It's absolutely right, and it belongs on this plan. Eventually, with the right influence and maybe the right person in that regulatory agency, we'll get approval and move forward with this and maybe encourage our owl habitat.

Commissioner Reckdahl: Are they worried about the squirrels actually going through the cap or are they worried about them drilling holes that cause erosion and eventually the erosion goes through the cap?

Mr. Anderson: That's exactly right. In the areas where we add soil, some ground squirrels can in theory go very deep. That's possible but unlikely if you build it right. More likely is the problem of causing leachate. I think that is one of the predominant concerns of the regulatory agency.

Commissioner Reckdahl: That's harder to argue against.

Mr. Anderson: I don't think it's insurmountable. We added vegetation islands around the seating areas for shade. Put a mound of earth, and plant it with some native vegetation, and you've got an attractive place to sit that hopefully will shield some of the wind coming through. Again, we added some shrubs on that ecological corridor between Byxbee and the Renzel Wetlands and removed the seating area in that area. We added wayfinding maps to the plan. It's such a big area and not a lot of features that the stakeholders felt it would

1 be beneficial to have more of those wayfinding signs. It's "you are here" maps. That
2 concludes my presentation. I'm available for questions.

3 Commissioner Cribbs: The addition of a place for buses is great. How are the individual
4 stalls for cars marked? When I was out there—I don't remember how long ago it was, but
5 the last six months or something—it just felt like cars parked wherever they wanted to park.

6 Mr. Anderson: That's an excellent question, one that frustrated some of our users to no end
7 and our Rangers. They park wherever they want because it's not striped. It wasn't striped
8 intentionally because our stakeholders when we redid the parking lot did not want stripes.
9 It felt too urban to them. On a bad day, you get somebody that puts it just wrong, and you
10 lose parking.

11 Commissioner Cribbs: Does the consultant have some wonderful idea about how we could
12 do it in keeping with the environmental tone of the park?

13 Mr. Anderson: I think it's the right colors. I would stripe it; that's my recommendation. I
14 think that'll be transportation's recommendation when we reach out to them. You won't
15 see it reflected necessarily on this design or a comment.

16 Commissioner Cribbs: It's the little things.

17 Mr. Anderson: We could certainly pitch it. I feel like you would maximize the spot by
18 putting in identifiable stall markers. As a Ranger, I put the little concrete—forgive me, I
19 don't know the term. I thought that would help, but it did not encourage people to park in
20 straight lines and match up perfect there. I know that's not the solution. I think it would
21 be putting down some sort of marker to show exactly where to park. Maybe with the color,
22 we don't want a glowing white.

23 Commissioner Cribbs: Green? Rust?

24 Mr. Anderson: Yeah, I think so, a muted gray maybe. A Baylands gray that we use
25 elsewhere might be feasible. That'd be my recommendation.

26 Chair McDougall: You're not going to go into the sloping construction in the Baylands
27 itself tonight, are you?

28 Mr. Anderson: The settlement?

29 Chair McDougall: Right.

30 Mr. Anderson: No, I wasn't planning on it.

1 Chair McDougall: Elliott, do you have any comments you'd like to make on what you've
2 heard tonight?

3 Mr. Wright: Thank you, Don. For me, just hearing everything and playing a part in the
4 29th and reading up has been very informative. My name is Elliott Wright. I'm ED of
5 Environmental Volunteers. We've had a couple of great volunteer teams on Byxbee as
6 well as Grassroots Ecology doing some habitat restoration. We look forward to doing more
7 to support our parks. One of the thoughts I had while you were speaking was we're down
8 to one Ranger at the Baylands. It's clear to me how essential that person is to the
9 management of this 2,500-acre preserve. If there's anything that we can do to help with
10 that through our team or through providing a welcoming experience for the public, that
11 would be wonderful. Of course, I see a lot of cars turning right when they get to the end
12 of the "T," like 90 percent. That parking lot that you just described is absolutely full to the
13 brim. If folks turned left and headed to the 300 parking sites to the left, not only could they
14 begin their walk on a nice padded, dirt, beautiful trail, but they have access to bathrooms
15 and fun welcoming people at the EcoCenter. In addition to that, you could pick up a
16 sandbag if you needed to. Thanks so much, Don. That's all I had.

17 Chair McDougall: Thank you.

18 Commissioner Moss: I have one big concern. When I look at this picture, there are so
19 many paths. I'm worried that there's not enough open space. This is supposed to be natural
20 open space. I'm most concerned about burrowing owls because they need a certain amount
21 of open space, especially away from dogs. There are so many paths and so many benches
22 and so many places to congregate and so many circular routes that you're never going to
23 get another burrowing owl. I know that Shani Kleinhaus has made this argument several
24 times with the Emily Renzel Wetlands. I'm worried that you're going to have a similar
25 situation here. I love the surrounding ones, the circular ones that go around. Maybe the
26 one that goes to the very top, that comes from the lower left up to the right to the very top.
27 The rest of them, get rid of half or more. On those that remain, you have your benches.
28 I'm a little bit worried about that. The burrowing owls are most successful near Permanente
29 Creek near Google. There's a huge hill there. The other place that they're most successful
30 is on the south side of Shoreline near the Shoreline overflow parking lot. That whole area
31 behind there is where they are. They're not near paths. They're certainly not near dogs.

32 Mr. Anderson: Can I address that one before you move on if you don't mind?

33 Commissioner Moss: Yes.

34 Mr. Anderson: Excuse me. I forgot to mention that in anticipation of that feedback—I've
35 heard that too for many years, the will of a lot of stakeholders not to bifurcate habitat too
36 much. In lieu of that, we said two of these areas, this area and this one here, would be
37 maintenance only. It would not be an open trail. However, every trail you see on there is

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1 a maintenance trail. We couldn't take anything out. You could label it "not a trail" if you
2 want. Everything on there is necessary for the Public Works team to service the leachate
3 wells that are part of having a former landfill. They'll need those areas. We haven't had
4 any superfluous trails; these are all dual-purpose maintenance roads. We certainly can and
5 have proposed at least in these two right here to label them as not a trail. It doesn't mean
6 people won't sometimes use them, but maybe it limits it.

7 Commissioner Moss: Concentrate the benches in areas that we want people to focus on,
8 like the perimeter, and maybe one at the top of the hill and not everywhere. I think that's
9 important. As far as seniors, if there are a few benches in strategic places, that's great.
10 They don't need a bench every 100 feet. Your comment about the burrowing owl and the
11 ground squirrels and putting mounds of dirt. You should be able to put a concrete cap over
12 certain areas of the hill that you could put dirt on top so that when the ground squirrels go
13 down 5 feet and reach the concrete cap, they won't go any further down, but they'll go out.
14 If the cap is in such a way that it's sloped down, then any water or leaching won't go through
15 the cap but will go down the hill somewhere else. The leaching may be less. If there's
16 some way we could find out how other people have done it, I would do anything we can to
17 encourage the ground squirrels and the burrowing owls.

18 Vice Chair Greenfield: Daren, I want to thank you for all the thoughtful work you've
19 spearheaded with staff and the stakeholder group in arriving at the plan that's in front of us.
20 I definitely agree with Concept 2, the roundabout parking idea. It seems like a no-brainer
21 in adding the bus parking. It's certainly necessary and straightforward. Thank you for the
22 continued push for the burrowing areas. I know you appreciate the need for that. It sounds
23 like if push comes to shove, we'll get there one of these days. Other than that, I have no
24 specific comments. Great stuff.

25 Commissioner Reckdahl: I am pro squirrel, so anything we can do—except in my
26 backyard. In Byxbee, I love the squirrels. Anything we can do to get more ground squirrel
27 area is going to be helpful for the habitat and helpful for the owls. I think it's a good thing.
28 When Byxbee was first laid out, they had trails going by every leachate pump, so there
29 were twice as many trails. Deirdre just hated that, so we worked. They had to work very
30 hard to minimize these trails. They're stretching it because sometimes they have to move
31 off the trail. They'll park the truck and walk out there 20 or 30 feet or so. They really have
32 stretched just to get to this point. I think I mentioned this to Daren. Sunnyvale has a
33 Byxbee-type park that, I think, is ten years older. They recently put in stairs. It'll be
34 interesting to see. Looking at the settling we have at Byxbee, I don't see how we can have
35 stairs right now. We'll find out if the stairs break down in Sunnyvale. If it works in
36 Sunnyvale, then maybe ten years from now we can start thinking about stairs at Byxbee.
37 When I go up there, I get disoriented. It's just a flat moonscape. Having a group meeting
38 area helps it, gives one landmark. It would be nice to have more landmarks in there. Could

1 you have a big rock pile or big wood pile that would double as habitat and landmark? That
2 would at least give you something to put on the map and something to guide yourself.

3 Mr. Anderson: Would something like additional foraging islands help? It's not
4 humongous.

5 Commissioner Reckdahl: I would want something vertical so you could see it from a ways
6 away. That would give you a reference point. Anything that would get a little elevation
7 and have some type of habitat might be a good double duty.

8 Commissioner LaMere: With the loops, I see you have mileage listed. Is that something
9 you'd normally do at the start of different trails or in the parking lot? Would you put a
10 legend so people would know distances of the different trails?

11 Mr. Anderson: Not typically. We accomplish it in two ways, one is on our trail maps. It'll
12 show markers and the distance between the two so you can piece together your own route.
13 Sometimes we have 6x6 redwood posts that say x number of miles to the Nature Center
14 and x number to Byxbee. One concept the consultant was pitching for those loops was
15 perhaps color coding something on the park bench itself. I'm not quite sure how that's
16 going to work yet. They're just kicking around ideas. It may be only reflected in the map,
17 but we might find something more creative and interesting.

18 Commissioner LaMere: As far as parking goes, I've not driven my car out there. I've run
19 out there and been on a bike. The parking is quite impacted.

20 Mr. Anderson: Every day in the mornings and in the afternoons and all day on weekends.

21 Commissioner LaMere: Will they make places for bike racks and so forth? Is that in the
22 plans?

23 Mr. Anderson: I don't know if it's on this plan. I think we have one small one existing,
24 and it needs to be expanded.

25 Chair McDougall: If it's all about exercise with the stairs, you could make an incremental
26 path that is relatively steep. One already exists, as you know, from the parking lot. It's a
27 user-made path to get the exercise running up. I'm in favor of segment distances, so you
28 can figure out how to go 20 miles or 1 mile. There's a limited number of loops, and they're
29 not short enough to identify the loops. Let's make sure we make a big point of bike racks
30 right from the start. Your interaction and involvement with the stakeholder group and the
31 quality of that interaction is really impressive. Thank you for that. If there are no other
32 questions, we can go on to one of the final items on the agenda.

33 Mr. Anderson: Chair McDougall, I had one other comment. I forgot to mention that the
34 existing habitat islands are irrigated in a very unique way. We put in-ground tanks and

bring recycled water up by truck to fill those up, which was great when we had one or two or three small ones. To properly vegetate Byxbee, that will not suffice. What I propose and what you'll see reflected in the action plan is that we do a recycled water line from the back side of the treatment plant to the top of Byxbee. That's the only way we're going to viably establish healthy native vegetation. I just want you to know that's part of the plan too.

Chair McDougall: That was a great addition. Thank you.

6. Other Ad Hoc Committee and Liaison Updates

Chair McDougall: Item 6 would be Other Ad Hoc Committee and Liaison Updates. Commissioner LaMere, do you have anything you want to add? Commissioner Reckdahl?

Commissioner Reckdahl: David will want to say a few words about two things that we went to this week.

Commissioner Moss: This past week has been a busy week for biking in the Baylands. We had a completion ceremony for the bike path that goes from the Baylands Athletic Center to East Palo Alto across the Friendship Bridge. The Friendship Bridge has been doubled in length with this San Francisquito Creek flood control project completion. This is Phase I. It's a monumental achievement. It's about nine years' worth of work. Our part of it is really that it goes through the Baylands. It'll continue through the Baylands to the north, and that's Phase II. Phase II will include some of the bridges upstream from San Francisquito Creek. The part that involves us is the part that is adjacent to the marshes. It turns out that the marsh just north of San Francisquito Creek has the highest population of Ridgway rails in the whole South Bay area. It's very important that we play our role to make sure bike accessibility is enhanced but we also protect the marsh. Yesterday, they kicked off the 101 bike bridge project over Lefkowitz underpass. Google paid a significant amount of the project. We've talked about that at length in this Commission. That kickoff is a big deal. That will take several years to complete.

Chair McDougall: Commissioner Cribbs, do you have anything?

Commissioner Cribbs: Only the pickleball moving forward for our ad hoc meeting a couple of weeks ago. That was all good. There was to be a conversation with Peter Jensen about the grass in our new dog park that is not doing well. They're trying to achieve some sort of solution. He was ill, so that didn't happen. Ryan and I were going to go to that and listen to potential solutions. I guess they knew that was going to happen because of the trees, but it's happening more quickly than it should be happening. Something to watch. I had one final question; I don't know if it's appropriate now. I wondered how we were doing with the new vendor with our park maintenance and the trash in the parks on the weekends.

1 Chair McDougall: That was also a question that Commissioner McCauley kept asking.
2 Why don't we make sure that isn't agendaized but asked for in the staff report for the next
3 meeting?

4 Commissioner Cribbs: Thank you. However, we need to do it would be great.

5 Vice Chair Greenfield: The bike bridge ceremony was well attended by the Parks and Rec
6 Commission with four Commissioners there. That was great. The Lefkowitz family was
7 present at the ceremony. I'm wondering if the Lefkowitz name will be maintained with the
8 new bike bridge. The underpass is going away. I wonder if Council or staff has any
9 recommendations.

10 Ms. O'Kane: I don't know the answer, but I can find out tomorrow.

11 Vice Chair Greenfield: On the park dedication front, the ad hoc met. We're working to
12 research public benefit park-like spaces to understand where they exist and how to better
13 publicize these spaces for use within the community. We haven't made much progress on
14 dedication. Staff has communicated the staff resources issues in various departments,
15 which is one of the inhibiting factors, but we continue to consider how to proceed
16 productively. On the turf management front, I've been out at the Cubberley turf field
17 refereeing some soccer games. The seasonal lights, which Palo Alto Soccer Club has in
18 place for practicing, look great. It's another win-win on the win-win project, where the
19 positioning is not obtrusive. The full track is now accessible for joggers. The Palo Alto
20 Soccer Club is happy with it as well. On community gardens, we're still waiting for the
21 green light as this ripples through various departments. I understand that we have legal
22 approval, and it's now in planning. It's not clear if it will need to go to the Council, but
23 we're continuing to push forward in opening a new community garden. A few months
24 back, I talked about updates to the rules and regulations for the community gardens. It's
25 become more complex than initially perceived. There are individualized plans or variances
26 being worked out for each garden. I think we'll have a general set of guidelines and specific
27 variances as appropriate for the various gardens. That's something we can look forward to
28 sometime next year. In the discussion of pickleball, I meant to say we don't want to have
29 deciduous trees nearby; we want to have evergreen trees.

30 Chair McDougall: It's interesting that you said it's become more complex. Isn't that the
31 line they attach to everything we get involved in? If there aren't any other updates on ad
32 hocs ...

33 Commissioner Moss: One more thing. Can you give an update on the Cubberley Master
34 Plan? When was the last meeting that we had?

35 Ms. O'Kane: The last meeting was November 1st. The next meeting is Thursday,
36 January 24th or 23rd. It'll be at 7:00 p.m. again at Cubberley. A little bit more time

1 between the two meetings this time to give the consultant an opportunity to process and
2 digest everything that we've heard from the community and put something together that's
3 substantive. The final meeting will be in May.

4 Commissioner Moss: Can we have the offsite planned earlier than last year?

5 Chair McDougall: I was going to go to agenda items next. On the Cubberley thing, I really
6 like the progress and the structure that the consultant is using. It's another case of getting
7 strong community engagement. That's been really effective.

8 Commissioner Reckdahl: Congratulations goes out to Commissioners Cribbs, Moss, and
9 Greenfield, who have been reappointed. They will be with us for a while.

10 Chair McDougall: Thank you for doing that. It never occurred to me that anything had
11 changed.

12 **VI. TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR JANUARY 22, 2019 MEETING**

13 Chair McDougall: In terms of tentative agenda items, I would like to suggest that relative
14 to a retreat we should have a discussion of the topics and the planning at the next meeting.
15 Kristen, maybe you and Commissioner Greenfield and I could get together as the executive
16 and come back with some proposed dates and proposed content and proposed approaches.
17 The idea that we should hold it sooner rather than later is useful. We still have outstanding
18 a meeting with the Council representatives or Mayor and Vice Mayor. We should try and
19 plan that. We had our guest speaker, Monique, on the original agenda for tonight to talk
20 about the Palo Alto Dialog report. I'd like to make sure that we're not just talking about
21 parks all the time, but we're also talking about Community Services activities. I'd like to
22 see that. Are there any other suggestions for topics for the next meeting?

23 Vice Chair Greenfield: CIP.

24 Chair McDougall: An update on the CIP and the analysis and discussions the ad hoc has
25 had would be useful.

26 Ms. O'Kane: That's planned for January. It was supposed to be tonight, but it got bumped.
27 We may have something on pickleball in January. If possible, we would have the PIO.

28 Chair McDougall: That would be really nice if we could move that fast.

29 Commissioner Cribbs: That would be really nice if we could move that along. In the same
30 vein, I would like to see once a quarter for the next year some sort of quick report on how
31 the aquatics situation is doing and how the communication is going. It doesn't have to be
32 a long staff report, but just a quick mention.

APPROVED

1 Ms. O'Kane: Sure. With respect to the retreat, maybe Natalie could poll everyone on
2 potential dates to get that on the calendar. The only downside to that is we don't have our
3 Council liaison assigned yet. We can't factor in that person's schedule, but we should start
4 scheduling that anyway.

5 Vice Chair Greenfield: I'd like to suggest that we make the trek up to Foothills Park for
6 the next retreat. We haven't done that since I've been on the Commission.

7 Chair McDougall: Any other comments, questions? Jeff, you and I will meet with Kristen
8 to come up with the full agenda. I think we've got some good input relative to the agenda.
9 If that's it, I would like to ask if there are any other comments, announcements from staff.

10 **VII. COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

11 Ms. O'Kane: I have one. We've produced our calendar again. This serves two functions.
12 It's our annual report. The end of the calendar shows what we've accomplished this past
13 year as a department. It also highlights everything that our department provides to the
14 community. The calendar lists our special events, theatre productions, important Enjoy!
15 catalog registration dates. This is our third year producing this. I love it, so I hope you all
16 do to. In the age where people use electronic calendars, I hope you all still find it useful.

17 Chair McDougall: If we give these away, can we get more?

18 Ms. O'Kane: You can. There are more here if you'd like to take more now.

19 Commissioner Moss: We're famous. The San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge
20 has a quarterly newsletter, and we're on page 11 where they talk about the Baylands
21 Conservation Committee. It's written by Emily Renzel and talks about Byxbee Park and
22 the Renzel Wetlands. There are six other cities that are represented in that view.

23 **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

24 Meeting adjourned on motion by Commissioner Cribbs and second by Commissioner Moss
25 at 10:16 p.m.