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**MINUTES
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
SEPTEMBER 24, 2019
CITY HALL
250 Hamilton Avenue
Palo Alto, California**

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

Commissioners Absent: David Moss

Others Present: Council Member Cormack

Staff Present: Daren Anderson, Natalie Khwaja

I. ROLL CALL

II. AGENDA CHANGES, REQUESTS, and DELETIONS

Chair McDougall: Are there any Agenda Changes, Requests, Deletions from the published agenda? One thing I will do with the agenda is—there's a couple of items on here that are maybe 60 minutes, both the amendment to the park and the open space regulations. I will try and manage those to be 25 or 30 minutes and, once again, see if we can approach between 9:30 and 10:00 for an agenda. If there are no changes other than my timing suggestion, I'd like to start with Oral Communications on subjects not on the agenda.

III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Chair McDougall: The first speaker would be Liz Gardner. You'll have three minutes.

Liz Gardner: I have a thumb drive. I don't know if we can put that in to illustrate what's going on. Good evening. My name is Liz Gardner, and I'm a volunteer Board Member for the Palo Alto Little League. We're here tonight to ask the Commission for permission to slightly alter the El Camino Real baseball infield line. Every year for the past three years, the National Little League has been shortening the date of birth when players age out of Little League. This has caused a larger number of players to be caught in an in-



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1 between stage of baseball. Thankfully, there's a level called 50/70 or even a slightly
2 higher level called 54/80 that has been created. Currently, Palo Alto baseball fields do
3 not accommodate this necessarily larger playing field for these in-between players. One
4 park does have the flexibility to do so, and that's El Camino Park. The way it's currently
5 configured with 10 feet of grass baseline, players have to play on the grass. It prohibits
6 ...

7 Chair McDougall: See if they can get the presentation up. Everybody's distracted by
8 everybody running around and looking at the screens. If you wait one minute, we'll
9 either do it or not do it. While we're waiting, I should explain that I appreciate that you
10 have come to ask, but this is not an agenda item. In fact, we can't logically even respond
11 to you in terms of nodding our head or saying "good idea." We can register this. It's
12 possible that during the staff report staff could comment on it. There's nothing we can do
13 tonight. We can take it to a committee. We can bring it back to the Commission, if that's
14 appropriate, or there can be action on it. We very much appreciate you're here raising an
15 important issue, but please don't expect that we're going to raise our hands when you're
16 done or something.

17 Ms. Gardner: Absolutely. No issue there. We just want to bring this to your attention.

18 Chair McDougall: The conclusion is we can't make it work, so I'll let you go ahead. You
19 can hold it up there if you like.

20 Ms. Gardner: I have a couple of photos that we can illustrate the baseline where the grass
21 is. The El Camino Park, the way it's currently configured with 10 feet of grass right
22 along the baseline, we're unable to host other cities for this in-between league. We're
23 having to go outside the City to do our games, which is great. We want to build those
24 partnerships and relationships with other leagues, but we would like to in the spring host
25 our own 50/70 and 54/80. At this time, we can't. We're very happy to have, as I said, this
26 partnership with our City Parks Department and are ready to help in whatever way
27 possible to make our young players' dreams to play this greatest American pastime
28 continue for them.

29 Chair McDougall: Thank you very much. We do have active subcommittees on this.
30 We have your email address here. If the subcommittee would like more explanation, we
31 know how to reach out to you.

32 Ms. Gardner: How would it be an agendized item in the future?

33 Chair McDougall: From the fact that you've presented this, our ad hoc can review it, and
34 they'll propose it as an agenda item. We can move forward with considering what you're
35 talking about. Thank you for that.

1 Ms. Gardner: Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

2 Chair McDougall: While you're still there, we can ask a clarifying question.

3 Vice Chair Greenfield: I wanted to ask real quickly to clarify. The request is to increase
4 the size of the dirt infield in order to accommodate the desired playing field sizes?

5 Ms. Gardner: There's a second parent volunteer coach here that has more of the logistics
6 in explaining that.

7 Craig Unagisella [phonetic]: The picture shows it very clearly now. By the way, my
8 name is Craig Unagisella. I've been a Little League coach for over 10 years. I've also
9 coached Babe Ruth. My two sons went through Little League and graduated from it. I'm
10 retired now and continue as a volunteer coach. As you can see from the aerial view, it's
11 supposed to be a circular grass infield. As you can see, it's basically three straight lines.
12 The dirt around first base and third base is long enough for 54/80; although, the City
13 won't allow us to put the base anchors in. What's in contention now is second base. As
14 you can see, it catty-corners behind the pitcher's mound. Our proposal would be to
15 continue the straight lines on the two sides and to cut that corner so the total outfield
16 grass, I guess you would say, would be rectangular instead of three-sided as it is now. It's
17 about 10 more feet of grass right where the cursor is. We've asked Mark Mavario
18 [phonetic] to do this, and he's refused. The three reasons he gave us was maintenance,
19 irrigation, and playability, which I'd like to address right now. Maintenance, I believe,
20 would be easier because the lawnmowers would cut two straight lines instead of trying to
21 do a circular, which is not possible right now. Irrigation, if you blow that up, you see that
22 area right where the edge of the dirt is. That area is not getting covered by the one
23 sprinkler that's supposed to be irrigating that area. I have another picture. Her picture
24 shows it's brown now. My picture is about two weeks old, from the end of the summer.
25 It's pretty much brown, so the water's not getting there. As far as playability goes, the
26 outer edge of the grass, no one plays there. The outfielders are well past that. The
27 infielders, the ball is coming from in front of them. That edge, it doesn't matter whether
28 it's circular, linear, or any shape. For instance, the Palo Alto High School field, the outer
29 edge is rectangular. If it's good enough for high school, it's good enough for recreational
30 baseball.

31 Chair McDougall: Thank you. We have one more question. Did we get your name?

32 Mr. Unagisella: Craig Unagisella.

33 Commissioner Reckdahl: My son played 50/70 down at the Baylands on the skinned
34 field. You can't use that?

1 Mr. Unagisella: Right now, we don't use that. It's being retrofitted, and the backstop is
2 like 10 feet behind home plate. It's really not good for any kind of Little League baseball.

3 Chair McDougall: With that, I'll say thank you to both of you. Another non-agenda
4 item. Shani Kleinhaus.

5 Shani Kleinhaus: Good evening. Shani Kleinhaus with the Santa Clara Valley Audubon
6 Society. Last week, there was an article, a paper published in *Science* magazine. That is
7 a respected magazine. It showed that almost 3 billion birds have disappeared in the past
8 50 years. That is birds that are not getting replenished. They're gone. There are 3 billion
9 fewer breeding birds in North America today as opposed to 50 years ago. Even common,
10 very beloved species are disappearing. Landscapes are losing their ability to support
11 birds. There are some things we can do about it. Birds are the most studied creatures
12 because there are so many in cities and science and always has been. People are out
13 there; they see them. Some of the questions I get asked by Palo Alto residents is "what
14 happened to our song birds, where did they go." People notice. They notice that they're
15 gone. They notice they don't hear them in the morning. The birds that come in winter to
16 their yards, there are fewer and fewer of them. They put the seeds out, and the birds that
17 come are smaller flocks. I can put it to a lot of different reasons to why they're
18 disappearing. There are a lot of reasons. The increasing number of crows is one.
19 Migration hazards is another. Buildings and collision is yet another one. One of the
20 things that came out really strongly in a symposium that the Native Plant Society had this
21 last weekend is that they're losing their food resources. There was a massive die-off in
22 Alaska year after year in the past five years because the birds are starving. They just
23 don't find enough food either for themselves or for their nestlings and their young. We're
24 losing them. We lost a quarter of all the birds of North America in 50 years. What can
25 we do about it in Palo Alto? We can't save them all the way to Alaska where they go
26 breeding. We're limited in what we can do, but there are things we can do. Most of the
27 insects, the lepidopterans that have caterpillars, are the most important food source for
28 chicks, for the baby nestlings. Those have a very specific relationship with native plants.
29 They don't just eat anything. They use specific native plants partially because the plants
30 have a lot of protection from being eaten. Those specific species of insects have learned
31 to overcome those, either metabolically by having certain enzymes or behaviorally. What
32 we need to do is provide bugs essentially. How do we do that? In every project that you
33 look at, try to see where can we put some native plants, where can we put trees. How are
34 we going to do that? There is more and more available in nurseries. If we're planting a
35 native plant garden in a City park, it doesn't have to be locally collected seeds. You can
36 be a little more flexible. There are ways to do it. We should be doing it. We should
37 rebuild Palo Alto as a native plant city where the trees that we plant and the trees that we
38 recommend to residents to plant. There is plenty of really beautiful, drought-tolerant,
39 local and California-native species. We really need to start focusing on that because
40 we're losing the most beautiful thing on earth, our birds. They're rock stars. They dress

up; they sing; they're just lovely. We don't want to lose them, so please in every project you see, see how can we increase native plants to 80 percent, put only native trees. I can provide you with lists of trees, if needed. Thank you.

Chair McDougall: Thank you. Not often we have people come before us and say, "We want more bugs." I'd like to also mention—this should maybe go at the end—we did attend with Daren an ice cream social. We did get people coming and talking to us about various things. Based on that, we received an awful lot of letters about the Eleanor Pardee dog park and the Eleanor Pardee bathrooms as well. I have not counted them up one way or the other. I think it's worth noting that we did get citizen engagement through that event, and we do have citizen engagement input that we should follow up on later. If there are no other speakers, we'll go to the Department Report.

IV. DEPARTMENT REPORT

Daren Anderson: Good evening. Daren Anderson, Community Services Department. I've got really good news. The Birch Street property, 3350 Birch Street, I'm pleased to let you know the sale of that property across from Boulware Park is complete, and the City now has the title. That is going to be our newest piece of parkland. The next step is to dedicate the property as parkland. We'll begin drafting the ordinance very soon. Peter Jensen, my colleague from Public Works, is planning a community meeting on October 17 for what the community would like to see on that parcel of land. Meeting details will come soon. I'll be sure to alert the Commission. Just a reminder, the Black and White Ball is scheduled for Friday, October 4, 7:00 p.m. to midnight. Tickets are still available as I understand it. We had some lighting issues at Stanford/Palo Alto Park. The work is scheduled for October 16 to fix that. The Cubberley track and field project, Peter Jensen's managed this one and did a really great job. The field turned out beautifully and is now complete. Unfortunately, there's an issue with the track. That's going to be delayed and not ready to open until October 10. It's a matter of the asphalt that is the base of the track needs more time to cure, a little longer than we were anticipating. We had scheduled play for October 7 because the project was supposed to be complete by that time. We'll work with the contractor to figure out ways to get them across that track that's not done and onto the field to play. We had also planned a ribbon-cutting for October 4. That'll be deferred. We'll have a new date for that in the near future. Again, when we have that, we'll notify you. Pickleball over at Mitchell Park is on track to be completed by November 15. I had a question at one of the last meetings and perhaps via email afterward from Commissioner Moss relating to signs and banners that he had seen and noticed in many of our parks plastered along the fences. He asked, "Are people paying for those? Are they supposed to be there?" I double checked with Recreation. The banners are not allowed on park fences. The groups that put them up are asked to remove them. This year, according to Adam, we've had excessive amounts of leagues and groups coming and putting them up without asking. Adam said he'd talk

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to the Rec staff and make sure we take them down on a more regular basis. However, the City of Palo Alto does have three locations where banners may be posted for a fee. That's in front of Cubberley, in front of Lucie Stern Community Center, and an overpass on Embarcadero Road. It's \$30 for nonprofits and \$60 for profit groups for one week to hang those banners in those three locations. El Camino Park synthetic turf, we've had an issue with the infield at this park. It's a frustrating one. The park is only 3 1/2 years old, and the infield has started to breakdown and mold together, melt. When we contacted the manufacturer, they came out right away. They did laboratory tests and determined that they had specified the wrong product for our climate. It wasn't properly UV rated, and so it's failing. At their own expense, they're going to remove it all and replace it with the appropriate infield, which has got that correct UV rating. That work will be done October 14-25. That's a two-week period; however, we anticipate they'll probably get it done in one week. We'll need to block that amount of time off for them to get the work done. Also during that time, that closure will have some unrelated field damage repaired, little seams along the synthetic turf that need to be repaired. The JMZ update. Unfortunately, the zoo is two months behind schedule. The building is on schedule, but we're going to need a little extra time to get the zoo sorted out. We need six months minimum for a commissioning period after the project is complete before we can open. This is to ship, quarantine, introduce, and train animals and grow the grasses and other plants. With this delay of the project, we had been looking at the summer of 2020 to open. Now the opening will be the first week of October 2020. The Junior Museum received a grant recently for \$250,000 for the California dinosaur garden. This is going to be an exhibit. The Friends of the JMZ have committed to raise \$300,000 to complete funding for this permanent exhibition, which will open in the spring and summer of 2022. An update on the Byxbee Park pathways. Byxbee Park is a former landfill, and it will subside. It has always done so and will continue to do so. As it subsides, we have to add fill. The soil needs to be replaced on the top so the water grades off appropriately, so you don't have standing water, which contributes to leachate problems. They recently did a very large area, added the soil back in. In doing so, they buried a number of trails. Those have all been rebuilt withstanding one little section of 200 feet that is yet to be done, which will be done at the end of next week. The rest of the trails were inspected and are in really good shape. It begs the question—I know the Commissioners have asked me many times, "What's the next filling process? How often is this going to happen? Does it have to be so much area?" This last one was 20 acres or so of a 130-acre parcel. Public Works informed me there will be no more filling for this year. Next spring, we'll be filling approximately 5 acres that have subsided. We'll be looking at about 5 acres. I asked them not to exceed that amount, and they think they can do that, which will minimize the impact to the rest of the preserve users. Ramos Park CIP, this is both the improvement to Ramos Park and the restroom CIP that we hope to do there. Public Works' Peter Jensen is helping set up a meeting in late November for that. I know we had talked about doing that earlier, but staff has a lot of projects running concurrently, and some of them are getting pushed out a little bit. The 101 Ped/Bike Bridge project is

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going out to bid on October 2. It goes to Council in November for award of contract. They plan to begin construction in the fall of this year, 2019. The construction window is approximately 18 months, and they hope to complete it by approximately March 2020. I had a question at the last meeting about the dawn redwood at the Post Office. I have confirmed with the Urban Forest team that irrigation has been added to help sustain that dawn redwood. Sea level rise, an ongoing topic for us. Public Works will be bringing, when I meet with the Chair to set our agenda, if this fits, the horizontal levee project to the Commission in October for discussion. That concludes staff's presentation.

Chair McDougall: Thank you, Daren. I'd like to see if there are any questions. Jeff.

Vice Chair Greenfield: Thank you, Daren. The Cubberley field is ready. The track is not. Did you say that the field would be able to be used before the track is completed or not?

Mr. Anderson: That's the part we're working out. Thank you for that question. It's difficult. Peter, who's managing it, said he's going to have conversations with the contractor to see if there are some ways strategically to work on the track that we can get in. They'll do it in gradually passes. They add some and wait for that to cure. They add some more, and maybe strategically we can work to get the players on.

Vice Chair Greenfield: Potentially the field could be used for games on weekends and for practices in the evenings before the track is done?

Mr. Anderson: Yes, when we have scheduled play, which is October 7.

Vice Chair Greenfield: There's a tournament next weekend that one of the soccer organizations was interested in getting on the field for it. It sounds like it wouldn't be able to happen. Is that a possibility or is that too soon?

Mr. Anderson: I would say that's a remote possibility. We can certainly discuss it more. I'm glad to communicate after the fact if there's different things we hear from the contractor that might allow it. We're a little apprehensive about people getting onto the field, playing, and then have the field closed while we're working on the track. It's also an active construction site, and we haven't signed off on the whole project yet.

Vice Chair Greenfield: I appreciate that we need to be conservative in our approach and make sure we don't take any steps backwards.

Chair McDougall: Any other questions? Anne.

Commissioner Cribbs: I too was at the ice cream social. We're pretty lucky to have all the services in Palo Alto. Fire was there, Utilities was there, and then Canopy and others. It just was a really nice atmosphere. Hats off to the Midtown Neighbors Association and

also to you, Daren, for the snake and all the education. It was pretty remarkable. Thank you very, very much. I notice that there's a lot of geese at Greer Park on all the fields. Is that pretty usual this time of year?

Mr. Anderson: It is, yeah. Unfortunately, they can cause issues. It used to be the same problem at the golf course perpetually and some of the urban parks like Greer. They're especially close to the Baylands, and it is common. There's not a lot we can do. Sometimes we try to flush them off a little bit, especially if we know games are starting, with the irrigation. You turn it on, and it moves them on a little bit. It's just part of the Bay Area. We have a lot of resident Canada geese.

Chair McDougall: Are there any other questions? Council Member Cormack, do you have any questions? I'd like to make a couple of comments. Number one, congratulations on adding the parkland. Thank you for answering the signs and banners question. I'm sure Commissioner Moss will appreciate that. Thank you for your response and efforts relative to the continuing disturbances on Byxbee. That's great. I think you said 18 months for the bike bridge and, therefore, it'll be done in March 2020. That would be March 2021, right?

Mr. Anderson: I'll double check that with Public Works. My apologies.

Chair McDougall: I don't want to show up here next month and say, "What the hell's going on here? You said March 2020."

Mr. Anderson: Yes, '21 is correct. Sorry about that.

Chair McDougall: Let's move on to the next item, which would be approval of the Minutes.

V. BUSINESS

1. Approval of Draft Minutes from the August 27, 2019 Parks and Recreation Commission meeting.

Approval of the draft August 27, 2019 Minutes was moved by Commissioner Reckdahl and seconded by Commissioner McCauley. Passed 5-0, Greenfield abstaining, Moss absent

2. Amendment to the Park Improvement Ordinance for the Rinconada Park Improvement Project

Chair McDougall: I'd like to invite Peter Jensen to speak to us about the amendment of the Park Improvement Ordinance for Rinconada Park. Welcome Peter. Nice to see you again.

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1 Peter Jensen: Nice to see you. Commissioners, Peter Jensen, Landscape Architect for
2 the City of Palo Alto. Chair, I'd like to ask if it's possible to have oral communications
3 before from the public on the topic.

4 Chair McDougall: I would suggest that we let you speak, then we have oral
5 communications. Is Karen here? Karen, are you eager to speak before he speaks or are
6 you willing to wait?

7 Karen Fitzpatrick: (inaudible) to do it now if that works for everyone.

8 Chair McDougall: That's fine with us unless you think that what he's going to say will
9 inform your comments.

10 Ms. Fitzpatrick: I don't think (inaudible) change (inaudible).

11 Chair McDougall: Thank you, Peter.

12 Ms. Fitzpatrick: My name is Karen Fitzpatrick. I have been a resident of Palo Alto for
13 36 years. I have been involved with Girl Scouts in Palo Alto for more than 26 years, and
14 I've been the volunteer Scout House Manager for more than 20 years, volunteer as
15 opposed to a paid position. Girl Scouting in Palo Alto is a very traditional organization.
16 The Girl Scout House, Lou Henry Hoover Program Center, was begun in 1924 with
17 monetary donations, material donations, and labor and has been a working program
18 center for Girl Scouts since 1926. Several adult members from Girl Scouts in Palo Alto
19 were part of the participating community discussion group that Peter Jensen began more
20 than two years ago. At those presentations, we were excited to see that part of the plan
21 was a potential fire circle for Girl Scouting next to Lou Henry Hoover Program Center.
22 We've always relied on the Boy Scout fire center for any of our outdoor singing activities
23 or programs and always had to make advance reservations in order to use their facility.
24 Sometimes, the calendar did not allow for us to be able to use it. Having our own outside
25 area for programs would be a dream come true for everybody in Palo Alto in Girl
26 Scouting. We're committed to this project. It is a dream that we have had for many,
27 many years, and we are willing to help with funding. We can contribute one half of the
28 cost up to \$15,000 from Girl Scouting in Palo Alto and hope that that allows the fire
29 circle to be included in the plans. We thank you for your consideration.

30 Chair McDougall: Thank you. Shani, I believe I have a card from you as well. Would
31 you like to speak now?

32 Ms. Kleinhaus: (inaudible)

33 Chair McDougall: Peter.

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Mr. Jensen: Commissioners, I'm going to go through a quick presentation, talk about the Girl Scout fire ring area, fire pit area, locate where that's going to be, the idea behind it, and how it was included in the plan. We've looked at a presentation before about the Rinconada Improvement Plan. It's getting very close for the construction documents to be complete, and we'd like to go out to bid on that project sometime next month. We are hoping to coincide that work with the JMZ so the park and the JMZ will be completed around the same time.. The original plan did not include the Girl Scout fire pit area, but the Rinconada Long Range Plan, which we worked on a few years ago and adopted, does show the fire pit element. It's been in the Plan for a long time. Unfortunately, because of restraints with funding, we were not able to add it to the current project. The Girl Scouts did reach out to me and expressed that they would like to have a fire pit in there. Of course, we are working down at that end of the park. You can see our improvement area there. Most of the improvements are in that area with the playground, the renovation of the existing picnic area, a new picnic area, the new configuration of the main pathway. Basically, everything in that space is going to be renovated, especially since the parking lot and the front of the Girl Scout House, the Hoover House, is also being renovated. With that, the Girl Scouts did at first, when we spoke, talk about a contribution of \$5,000, which I thought was very generous. Tonight, I hear it's a little bit more, which helps because we're trying to make the dollars stretch as far as possible. We can add it into the plan package and have a good chance of building it and giving us space for the Girl Scouts just like the Boy Scouts to have their own fire pit area. That fire pit area would be over here where this 13 is. We can look at a picture. Looking along Hopkins, here's the side of the Hoover House. In this area right here, which is pretty much an area for planting, you can see the one tree, which would stay, but it's not really overly used. It is within the park parcel for Rinconada. The idea would be to use that unused area and develop it into the fire pit area. That would mean an aspect of the current plan would be to rebuild this screen fence that is there. This would increase that screen fence down and then toward the Girl Scout House at this corner and then back to this corner here. You would have a defined, secured area in that space. The existing tree, like I said, would remain. That's sitting here. The Girl Scout area, the fire pit as you see here with surrounding benches, decomposed granite paving, and then some enhanced planting around the back. This provides that space. It's not overly complex or as extravagant as the Boy Scout area is, but it does provide that gathering space that they're looking for with that fire element. We really aren't allowed to burn wood any longer because of the air, so this would be a gas-operated fire pit, which works out very nicely because the gas meter sits very close to here. Not very difficult to get that utility to the fire pit. The cost for the entire thing that we've started to look at was in the \$25,000 range, and that looked at demoing the area there and clearing it out, building the fence, installing the fire pit and the gas line. Of course, the gas itself and the shutoff are some of the expensive parts of the design or the project. With that, we would like to include the fire pit area in the Park Improvement Ordinance and include it in the bid package and build a fire pit for the Girl Scouts.

Chair McDougall: Shani, is this card something that you want to speak to?

Ms. Kleinhaus: Thank you. This park is frequented by birders. There are bluebirds nesting there and other birds that are really beautiful. My hope is that we'll provide food for them by planting a lot of native plants. It was nice to see that it includes a pollinator garden and native plantings. I would encourage the City to do similar to some of the Google urban habitats, which is 80 percent native plants. Thank you.

Chair McDougall: Thank you. Are there any questions from Commission members?

Commissioner Reckdahl: I have a question about the fire pit. Would this be exclusively used by the Girl Scouts or could other groups sign up for that?

Mr. Jensen: That is not something that we have finalized yet. It is a City building and facility. If the community expressed enough interest in using it, we would set up a program for them to have access to it. It's mostly used for and by the Girl Scouts.

Commissioner Reckdahl: I would imagine it'd be mostly Girl Scouts. We might have something like we do for soccer fields, for example? They would call up Adam and say, "I want to rent a fire pit" and see if it's open.

Mr. Jensen: Right. Because we have another facility that's a little bit larger with the Boy Scout facility that already is rented out, I don't see a lot more use from the outside, besides the Girl Scouts, using that space.

Chair McDougall: Are there other questions?

Vice Chair Greenfield: Peter, could you clarify what the fence material is around the fire pit area?

Mr. Jensen: The fence material would be almost identical to the fencing material that's out there now. We're going to match the aesthetic of the existing fence, which is—you can start to see it over here. Currently, there's a screen or wooden fence with an alternating wood slat that screens the picnic area. That fence line would be extended down and then return to the building here. In this location would be a set of double gates to access the inside of it.

Vice Chair Greenfield: It's a wood fence that blocks view into it.

Commissioner Reckdahl: Can you clarify where the bathroom would be? We're thinking about possibly putting a bathroom in now or in the future nearby?

Mr. Jensen: It would be close by. Here's the picnic area that would be between—the fire pit would be over here, the picnic area. The bathroom sits where the two pathways come

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1 together. It is fairly close proximity into that thing. The fence also plays a role in the
2 restroom because we're looking at running it along the back of the restroom. The facade
3 or the rear of it remains aesthetically what it is now. The fence, even though you're going
4 to see a roofline up there, is in that space.

5 Commissioner Reckdahl: Can you go back to the slide that had the fire pit? On this one
6 ...

7 Mr. Jensen: It'd be over here more, sitting in this section. The back of it would be along
8 that fence line, which is here.

9 Vice Chair Greenfield: There is a bathroom in the Girl Scout House, isn't there?

10 Mr. Jensen: There is a restroom facility in the Girl Scout House. It's used for the Girl
11 Scouts.

12 Commissioner Cribbs: Very enthusiastic about having the fire pit. Thank you very much
13 for incorporating it. As a Girl Scout and a Girl Scout leader and a Brownie leader, we
14 would have loved to have a fire pit. Thanks to the Girl Scouts for offering to absorb
15 some of the expenses. Thank you.

16 Chair McDougall: Council Member Cormack, do you have any comments or questions?

17 Council Member Cormack: Thank you. It's always wonderful to see public-private
18 participation happening in advance. I don't know if staff has reflected on the use of
19 natural gas. As we think about our REACH Codes, other communities are making
20 decisions about fire pits and backyard barbecues. It's something for staff to contemplate,
21 how this fits with some of our other goals. I want to be sure I understand from a
22 budgetary perspective the line in the discussion. It would be a bid alternate item. If the
23 bid came in at, say, \$15,000 over the engineer's estimate, it would go forward. If it came
24 in above that, it would not. Is that a correct interpretation of what you have here or is it
25 more complicated?

26 Mr. Jensen: This afternoon when the contribution was in the \$5,000 range, that was the
27 feeling towards it. Staff would have to have some conversations about it now. With the
28 added donation by the Girl Scouts, I think it would be a bid item, not a bid alternate item
29 in the plan.

30 Council Member Cormack: Sounds like an auction. When this comes to Council, would
31 you envision it being on consent or as an action item?

32 Mr. Jensen: The Park Improvement Ordinance will come to the Council sometime very
33 soon, in a month or so. Usually it's on the Consent Calendar, but it's up to the Council if
34 they want to have further discussion about it.

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1 Chair McDougall: I was surprised by what you just said. Because there's a larger
2 contribution, you wouldn't ask for it as an option. We can understand that it's all of a
3 sudden costing \$35,000, not \$15,000 or something?

4 Mr. Jensen: I'm pretty comfortable with the cost estimate we put together. Usually when
5 we put estimates together, they're on the high side. The contribution and the remaining
6 amount, we have the remaining amount for that item to be put into the bid.

7 Chair McDougall: It can't be wood; it has to be gas. Is the Boy Scouts' fire pit in anyway
8 grandfathered in so that it can be wood?

9 Mr. Jensen: I cannot answer that question. It's been there for a long time. No one really
10 questions how it's used.

11 Chair McDougall: It would be hypocritical of us as the Parks and Recreation
12 Commission and saying, "Why don't we burn more wood?" I'm even a little uneasy
13 about the Girl Scouts trying to look after nature and learn about nature and whatever, and
14 why don't we just burn gas. I know it's not an awful lot, and it's probably not going to
15 change the world. I can't not ask was that considered. Was it considered by the Girl
16 Scouts that they'd be better off planting native plants to celebrate or put a native plant in
17 the middle as their gathering point?

18 Mr. Jensen: I haven't had that discussion with them, so I couldn't say. I know the fire pit
19 from the Long Range Plan was supported by the general community as an element back
20 there.

21 Chair McDougall: The general community has supported a lot of things previously that
22 maybe they'd think twice about today. I'm going to start on the left with Jeff and see if
23 anybody would like to comment before we vote. This is an action item, so we do need a
24 motion. As you speak, think about what the motion might be and what your position on
25 it would be.

26 Commissioner LaMere: What's the lifespan and maintenance and potential pitfalls? Will
27 there be other costs that arise from this?

28 Mr. Jensen: The fire pit should survive—I should have added that into the presentation.
29 It's prefabricated and not overly expensive, but it should be able to survive outside for 15-
30 20 years, I would say. The gas has some nuance to it because you have to turn it on and
31 off. The valve for it will be in a locked box to maintain safety. The area right now is
32 being maintained as a planting area. A majority of it will stay some planting. We'll have
33 to discuss more with the Girl Scouts how they would like it to be maintained, but I would
34 imagine that our parks maintenance staff would be responsible for removing debris from
35 the DG, leaves and things of that nature. It will have some costs, of course. It's an added

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1 element. It will need maintenance over time, but those things are, compared to the
2 facilities we have around the City, very minimal. We tried to design it to be simple and
3 easy to maintain and to add a new one when the time comes for that.

4 Commissioner LaMere: What are the costs associated with running a gas fire pit or how
5 much gas is used? I'm not as familiar with gas fire pits.

6 Mr. Jensen: I couldn't tell you the cost of it or the amount of gas used. I know it uses a
7 very little amount. For a gas fire pit for residential use, I've seen like \$5 a month or
8 something like that. It's a small amount. I can't see it running for hours and hours and
9 hours at a time. That controls it as well.

10 Commissioner McCauley: Peter, thank you. You've put a lot of work into the Rinconada
11 plan. Well done. To the Girl Scouts, thank you as well. This is a great idea and a great
12 addition. I appreciate what Chairman McDougall is noting about additional potential
13 pollution from a gas fixture, but in this instance it would probably be used so little that
14 it's not going to be a significant addition on that front. This looks great. Congratulations.
15 I presume that you're going to be memorializing with the Girl Scouts some plan around
16 usage, maintenance (crosstalk).

17 Mr. Jensen: Yes, we'll definitely get into that and build some type of use agreement or an
18 understanding of how it needs to be used and how it's going to be maintained. That
19 would be a step that we will start to discuss after this.

20 Commissioner Reckdahl: What would be the capacity? How many girls could we get
21 around here? Is it like 20?

22 Mr. Jensen: I think we measured it out to get somewhere between 40 and 50, depending
23 upon the size of human beings sitting there. Girl Scouts are a little bit smaller, so they
24 can get a few more in there. That's the size I discussed with the Girl Scouts, the size of
25 groups that would want to use the space.

26 Commissioner Reckdahl: I want to make sure they're in the loop and we size it correctly.
27 If it's too small and kids are standing around, that detracts from the experience. I concur
28 with the other Commissioners. This will be a great addition. It will add some fossil fuel,
29 but I don't think we're burning it 24 hours a day. It's just going to be here and there.
30 We'll swallow hard and say yes.

31 Vice Chair Greenfield: Thank you, Peter, for all the work on this. My wife's been a Girl
32 Scout leader, and my two daughters were Girl Scouts. One had regular meetings at the
33 Hoover Girl Scout House, so I'm fairly familiar with it. I think I've been to the Boy Scout
34 fire pit once, and I think that was an event for a nonprofit and not the Girl Scouts. Maybe
35 once or twice my daughters made it over there, but not often. I do appreciate the need for

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1 it. It's great that it's not going to be wood-burning. I concur with the others that in a
2 perfect world we wouldn't be burning gas either, but we can swallow it a bit on this one.
3 I'll be supporting this.

4 Chair McDougall: Do I have a motion? Do we need to discuss—Peter, would you like to
5 tell us what the motion might need to be?

6 Mr. Jensen: The motion would be to add the language about the fire pit to the Park
7 Improvement Ordinance.

8 Chair McDougall: It doesn't need to be anything fancier than that?

9 Mr. Jensen: No, I don't think so.

10 Chair McDougall: Can I have a motion?

11 **MOTION:**

12 Vice Chair Greenfield: I'll move that we add the fire pit to the Park Improvement
13 Ordinance.

14 Chair McDougall: Do I have a second?

15 Commissioner Cribbs: Second.

16 Chair McDougall: All in favor. I would like to go on record as abstaining. With that, it
17 passes.

18 **Motion passes 5-0, McDougall abstaining, Moss absent**

19 Chair McDougall: We need to explore in terms of equity and in terms of our concern for
20 the environment what are the regulations and what is the situation with the Boy Scouts'
21 fire pit. I'm sitting here worried about burning a little gas. I agree with everybody that
22 it's a little gas, not a big deal. It's more the hypocrisy than the gas. We're allowing the
23 Boy Scouts a totally different set of rules. That doesn't seem like equality, and it doesn't
24 seem appropriate at all. I'd like to hear back what the Boy Scout fire pit situation is.

25 Mr. Jensen: We'll have further conversations with staff about that and bring back the
26 answer to that at the next meeting.

27 Chair McDougall: Thank you very much. Thanks for being here, Peter.

3. Park and Open Space Regulations Update

Chair McDougall: We can move on to the Parks and Open Space Regulations Update. Once again, this is an action item. We will be asking for a motion and a vote.

Mr. Anderson: Good evening. Daren Anderson again, Community Services, here tonight with an action item seeking a recommendation from the Commission that Council adopt the proposed amendments to the Park and Open Space Regulations. The Commission discussed the draft amendments to these Regulations at the August 27 meeting. During that meeting, there were a few comments and suggestions both from the Commission and the general public that resulted in changes to these updates. One of the changes was adding the Table of Contents, which you can see here in the slide. This was a suggestion from one of the members of the community, who went home that night, typed it up, and sent it to me. It was really thoughtful. I would like to acknowledge Jeff Conrad for that. It was very thoughtful. This was in response to Chair McDougall's suggestion that we organize this in such a way that it's easy to search it and find what you'd like. I should also note this is consistent with how the City's Municipal Code is organized. You can press on one of the things from the Table of Contents, and it takes you right to your bookmarked area. Another Commission suggestion was to amend R1-16(I). This regulation prohibits animals from being on the deck of the pool. The suggestion was to allow service animals at the pool. We checked both with pool staff and the City Attorney's Office, who said, "Yes, you have to allow service animals there." This regulation has been edited to allow those service animals as defined by State and Federal law. That same community member that I mentioned before had also suggested changing R1-21(A). This is the regulation that restricts commercial photography and filming. Essentially, what he wanted to add was a definition and description of what commercial meant, so it was clear to users coming to film or photograph in the park. That was added. I ran all these past the ad hoc committee, and they supported all these changes. Again, I'd like to conclude this with thanking the ad hoc committee and Mr. Conrad for their generous support.

Chair McDougall: We do have one card that was just handed on this subject. Herb Borock, if you'd like to comment.

Herb Borock: Thank you, Chair McDougall. Good evening. I just had one question about the dog exercise areas. I recall around the time the Peers Park dog exercise area was being considered that there was discussion about the design of the fencing around the parks including the height of the fencing. I thought that had been included in the regulations. Perhaps staff can refresh my memory about that. I think one of the concerns was that the fence between the exercise area and the public part of the park would be 5 feet high. There was discussion of that. Since I don't have it in writing in front of me, I'm just doing this from memory. Thank you.

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1 Chair McDougall: Thank you. I don't think it's usually appropriate to respond to a
2 citizen question. I'm going to ask the citizen's question. Coming from me, maybe we can
3 clarify that.

4 Mr. Anderson: Thank you for the question. That's correct. We had discussions about
5 fencing. We've got one dog park. This is Hoover Park where the fence was for some
6 reason before my time put in at 3 feet. It's proven to be a problem for the users. They've
7 requested change. We are actually implementing that change now. We're posting
8 signage for raising that fence soon. It wasn't added to the regulations but rather to our
9 internal practices. As we add dog parks or renovate ones, we ensure that the fencing's at
10 that 5-foot height. There may be areas, for example if we added one that was right next
11 to a train track, where you might want that above 5 feet. In fact, that's what we have with
12 the existing boundary of Peers Park. Rather than putting it in the Code to say 5 or at least
13 5, it just ends up in the staff practice to continue with 5 feet as a best management
14 practice.

15 Chair McDougall: I think it's difficult to codify every best practice. Personally, I would
16 suggest that we not do that but recognize the question that Mr. Borock brought up. Are
17 there any other specific questions to Daren?

18 Commissioner Reckdahl: I'm looking on page 5, R1-10(A). It isn't clear to me. Are
19 tables and stages allowed without a permit? If I want to go down and put a table up on
20 Lytton Plaza, can I do that or do I have to get a permit for that? (A) talks about for
21 permitted events, and it has a bunch of limitations on tables, but it doesn't say if I don't
22 have a permit, what applies to me. What constraints do I have?

23 Mr. Anderson: For portable tables and barbecues and chairs, you do need a permit. The
24 rationale behind this was absent this law—it used to be in places like Rinconada, which
25 were very popular for barbecuing, had multiple portable tables. They'd bring in their
26 portable barbecues, and they'd exhaust and overwhelm the existing resources, like trash,
27 recycling, compost as well as the restrooms. The park would be overrun. That law was
28 put into place to curb people from exceeding the capacity. If we haven't provided a
29 picnic table, they don't want you to bring your own unless you have a permit.

30 Commissioner Reckdahl: In any park, I can't bring a table or a chair or a stage?

31 Mr. Anderson: You can bring a chair. I'm sorry. The stage and the table would be the
32 ones that would require a permit.

33 Commissioner Reckdahl: Do we say that in here?

34 Mr. Anderson: Yeah. It's a different section, not in the Lytton Plaza one. I'd have to do
35 some searching to dig up exactly where it's at.

1 Commissioner Reckdahl: Somewhere in here it says you can't bring tables or stages?

2 Mr. Anderson: It's that or in the Municipal Code. I'm sorry I don't have it right in front
3 of me. If you give me a few minutes, I could find it.

4 Commissioner Reckdahl: We can take this offline. A reasonable edit would be on (A)
5 say "tables require a permit" and then you can go on and say "for permitted uses, these
6 are the restrictions." The same with (G), say "uses of stages require permits."

7 Vice Chair Greenfield: If that's already covered somewhere, we don't necessarily want to
8 be redundant, especially if it's in this document somewhere.

9 Commissioner Reckdahl: If it's in this document, then I'm fine. If it's in another
10 document, then just for clarity. That's one of the problems. People want to use the parks,
11 and they look at something. Part of the cleanup was to make it logical. When I was
12 looking through here, it wasn't obvious to me what was allowed without a permit and
13 what required a permit.

14 Mr. Anderson: Commissioner Reckdahl, can you reiterate what you would like there?
15 You'd be able to bring a table without a permit. Is that what you were saying?

16 Commissioner Reckdahl: No, no. I'm not trying to change the rules. I'm just trying to
17 clarify. Just to make it clear in (A) that the use of a table requires a permit. On (G) ...

18 Chair McDougall: What number, what R?

19 Commissioner Reckdahl: R1-10(A).

20 Chair McDougall: R1-10(G) is stages require a permit.

21 Commissioner Reckdahl: Unless there's another spot in here.

22 Mr. Anderson: I don't believe stages are called out in any other spot for permits. It's just
23 the tables and portable barbecues.

24 Vice Chair Greenfield: I have searched through this document for table, and I don't see
25 anything that would cover it. Is this something that you would perceive as a problem that
26 we need to address, to be more clear?

27 Mr. Anderson: It hasn't been an issue, not that I'm aware of.

28 Vice Chair Greenfield: If we were to change the wording of this and approve it via
29 action, would it have to go through the legal department before it goes to Council? Are
30 there any repercussions of that?

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1 Mr. Anderson: Just to make sure we didn't set up something to be in conflict, it probably
2 would require some additional review. If that's the will of the Commission, I'm glad to
3 bring it back at the next Commission meeting.

4 Commissioner Reckdahl: I'm not sure if it's that important. If it would be trivial to add
5 it, it does add some clarity, but I don't want to make work for you.

6 Vice Chair Greenfield: You're suggesting if we were to add it, we wouldn't be able to
7 vote on it tonight as an action or you would not recommend going forward as an action?

8 Mr. Anderson: Can you tell me exactly what we'd change? I can get a feel if I think
9 there's going to be a conflict with something else and need some more time to review it.

10 Vice Chair Greenfield: I'll defer to my esteemed colleague.

11 Commissioner Reckdahl: This is page 5, R1-10(A). That one is talking about tables in
12 those three parks. My confusion in reading that—it wasn't obvious what restrictions
13 there were, if any, on tables if I didn't have a permit. What I would propose is start that
14 bullet with "the use of a table requires a permit." Likewise (G), I would start by saying,
15 "the use of a stage requires a permit." I'd just add those two sentences at the beginning of
16 those bullets.

17 Vice Chair Greenfield: I would also suggest that this section only applies to these plazas.
18 It doesn't apply to parks overall, so I don't think that's accomplishing what you're looking
19 for.

20 Commissioner Reckdahl: Ideally, you would have that in a different section that applied
21 to all parks.

22 Chair McDougall: I'm going to suggest that we step back from this particular point and
23 see if there are other points that would cause us to go further with this. Ryan, your light's
24 on. Would you care to speak?

25 Commissioner McCauley: I was wondering if you could take a moment . We received
26 some correspondence on the community garden edit, which I think everyone is now
27 familiar. The most significant edit to the Rules and Regs is to remove a fairly lengthy
28 recitation of community garden rules in favor of placing that within the contract that each
29 gardener signs when they lease a plot from the City. That would mean that that contract
30 and language around it would become an administrative decision as what those terms
31 should look like, of course in consultation with the Commission. From my perspective,
32 that's the most significant edit to this document. Daren, maybe you could provide a little
33 bit of context on why we're doing that and what the thinking is.

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1 Mr. Anderson: This is, just for point of reference, R1-40, community gardens. You can
2 see the 2 1/2 pages of line strikeouts where it was a lot of administrative "this is how the
3 garden is operated" type of arrangements that only apply to licensed gardeners. We
4 thought it was more appropriate that that live in a separate document, which we're
5 creating and which will come to the Commission next month, called the Community
6 Garden Guidelines. One of the edits you can see down at the bottom of what remains in
7 the regulation under community gardens is the Director may promulgate guidelines for
8 the registration and use of the community gardens. Those are the guidelines that you'll
9 review. That'll have parameters around the administration of the garden itself. The ones
10 that remain apply really broadly, not just to licensed gardeners but the general public.
11 That's what we've kept in R1-40 (A)-(E).

12 Commissioner McCauley: Thank you, Daren. I know you've spent a lot of time trying to
13 bring this document to where it's at today. It's an excellent job. Well done.

14 Commissioner Cribbs: On the tennis, R1-11, on the times, I can't tell from the knockout
15 whether you're going to use capital AM and PM or little AM and PM. Just take a look at
16 it.

17 Mr. Anderson: I think we changed it to capital.

18 Commissioner Cribbs: I think you probably did. It just isn't clear on here.

19 Chair McDougall: Council Member Cormack, do you have any questions?

20 Council Member Cormack: Out of curiosity, R1-6(B), it looks like we ask for the home
21 address of some guests in (B) but not in (C). I just wonder why we do that and if we
22 retain that information. I can imagine a scenario under which the Ranger is double
23 checking perhaps an ID. Just wondering why we need a home address. I certainly
24 understand why we might need to know if someone is a Palo Alto resident. If someone
25 isn't, I'm just wondering what the rationale might have been. This might be before your
26 time.

27 Mr. Anderson: Forgive me. I'm not quite sure. I don't believe we retain those
28 documents. I'm not sure why the difference.

29 Chair McDougall: If there are no other comments or questions, I'll go back to Keith.
30 Keith, are you satisfied that we can go ahead with this or do you think we have a tables
31 and stages issue?

32 Commissioner Reckdahl: We're looking at the Municipal Code right now. I don't think
33 this is a must have. This is a "nice to have." If it's going to be more work for Daren, then

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1 I would hold my suggestion. If it's something he can add and we can still vote on it
2 without conflict, then I would think it's an improvement.

3 Mr. Anderson: My response to that one is that particular one pertains only to those three
4 plazas. If we want it broader, it belongs in a different spot. For the table, I can tell you it
5 already exists. The stage, I don't believe so. I don't believe that is in there. I'd have to
6 find it and search more thoroughly through the Municipal Code.

7 Commissioner Reckdahl: What would be your preference, Daren?

8 Mr. Anderson: Either way is fine. I'm glad to come back next month with this and make
9 some additional changes or we can catch them in the next revision. It hasn't been a
10 challenge for staff.

11 Commissioner Reckdahl: I don't want to put it to next month, so I'm pulling my
12 suggestion.

13 Chair McDougall: I'd like to explore why is it necessary to come back next month? Why
14 can't we have a motion that says "with these two changes" to the extent they don't require
15 you to come back or something? It doesn't seem to me adding the two things that he's
16 suggesting would negate the fact that we've made a motion. All we want to do is add a
17 couple of bullets. I wouldn't think that would require you coming back.

18 Mr. Anderson: I think it's fine to edit that one if you want it to just apply to those three.
19 Is that what you're saying or you want it elsewhere in the document?

20 Chair McDougall: I'm asking. I'm saying it just applies to those three. Is that sufficient
21 or do we need to make a note saying in 2024 when we're redoing this again, maybe that
22 ought to be looked at. In the meantime, hope nobody wants to put a stage somewhere
23 that ...

24 Commissioner Reckdahl: I can see people wanting to play their guitar and setting up
25 their own stage down on Lytton Plaza. It's quite plausible that someone would do that. If
26 we don't want it there, we can add that sentence.

27 Chair McDougall: I tend to think it's a risk. It's a very small risk, but it's a risk. I would
28 think we could pass a motion that would be worded such that this is our recommendation
29 to change unless it causes—we might get advice from Council Member Cormack on how
30 we might want to write something like that.

31 Vice Chair Greenfield: If we're just concerned about the three plazas in this item, it
32 seems to be implicit that a permit is required for these. Suggesting that if someone has a
33 permit, then these are the guidelines. If you don't have a permit ...

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1 Commissioner Reckdahl: The table is more clear because it says with a permit. The
2 stage one just talks about stages. If you're a guitar player who wants to stand on a stage
3 and play for money, then right now it doesn't seem to prevent that.

4 Chair McDougall: I'm going to ask for a motion that forwards and approves this as is
5 without any modification. Daren, do you have suggestions of exactly how the motion
6 should be worded? Is it just simply accept the Park and Open Space Regulations?

7 Mr. Anderson: As titled in the staff report, the recommendation.

8 Chair McDougall: Do these have to go to Council now or anything like that? Do we
9 need to put ...

10 Mr. Anderson: They do go to Council.

11 Chair McDougall: We could add "and are forwarded to Council as submitted."

12 Mr. Anderson: You would recommend as proposed.

13 Chair McDougall: We accept them and approve that staff forward these to Council as
14 they were submitted to us. Can I have a motion to that effect without worrying about
15 wording it because I think it's understood?

16 **MOTION:**

17 Commissioner McCauley: I move that we approve the amendment of the Park and Open
18 Space Regulations as submitted to us in the staff report.

19 Chair McDougall: Do I have a second?

20 Vice Chair Greenfield: I'll second that.

21 Chair McDougall: All in favor? Any opposed? Anybody abstain? Daren, thank you. I
22 was remiss in the earlier comments for not saying thank you relative to the indexing.
23 That was really well done. In fact, I would like to suggest that a thank you letter go from
24 the Commission to Citizen Conrad thanking him for his support and participation and
25 assistance. If you and I could collaborate on that, something that came from staff and
26 Commission recognizing the effort and consideration would be really important.

27 **Motion carried 6-0, Moss absent**

28 **4. Foothills Park Access Pilot**

29 Chair McDougall: The next item is the Foothills Park Access Pilot. I will once again
30 question whether people would like to comment. I'm actually giving this choice, whether

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1 you'd like to comment before the presentation. This will not be a staff presentation. It
2 will actually be a Commission presentation. Whether you'd like to hear the presentation
3 first. Since Mr. Borock is standing right there, waving his hands and would like to
4 comment first, welcome.

5 Mr. Borock: Thank you, Chair McDougall. Park uses and regulations are part of the
6 Palo Alto Municipal Code. In addition, staff has promulgated regulations that implement
7 what is in the Municipal Code. The changes suggested in this agenda item are not
8 allowed by the Municipal Code. If you're going to suggest any changes, you need to use
9 your role as an advisory body to the City Council to recommend change to the Municipal
10 Code. The agenda item should indicate that, just as you had a Park Improvement
11 Ordinance indicated on the agenda earlier for a fire pit proposed at the Girl Scout House.
12 I believe that the extent that people in the community who want Foothills Park to be more
13 the open spaces areas managed and owned by the Mid-Peninsula Regional Open Space
14 District, perhaps the solution is to find a way where the Open Space District can acquire
15 Foothills Park. Since their purpose is limited to open space, they don't have the
16 competing uses that the City does for spending its budget on personnel for other reasons.
17 They could provide the adequate staffing that we used to have at Foothills Park to
18 manage the uses at that time, which were the residents and their invited guests. My
19 recollection is that the number of staffing at Foothills Park and having staff at the gate at
20 all times changed at the time June Fleming became City Manager. June Fleming at the
21 time of her appointment was a resident of Los Altos Hills. According to the Code, she
22 eventually purchased a house and lived in Palo Alto. She was among the second group of
23 houses or subdivision along Page Mill Road. The one that's closest to the park, you can
24 actually walk along and enter one of the gates to service roads in Foothills Park. To get
25 to there from the subdivision that was directly below it, where Mrs. Fleming lived, you
26 would have to go out onto Page Mill Road, then back to the beginning of the main street
27 of that upper subdivision and walk all the way, which would be inconvenient. People
28 where Mrs. Fleming lived could only get to Foothills Park in a practical way by driving a
29 car and getting to the gate where they would be stopped. Whereas, they wouldn't be
30 stopped if they walked in along the other road and entered the no service people to see
31 who's going in through that gate. What you have to consider regardless of how little or
32 how much this should be a pilot study, calling something a pilot study does not change
33 the fact that it violates the Municipal Code. It's the Municipal Code that would have to
34 be changed if you want to be making any changes to the regulations that are described in
35 the Municipal Code. Thank you.

36 Chair McDougall: Thank you, Herb. I will take the comments, and I'll take them in the
37 order that I have them piled here, which may not be the order that they were handed to
38 me. Tracy, Tracy Sherman.

39 Tracy Sherman: Good evening.

1 Chair McDougall: I'm going to set a timer but not a buzzer. We generally try and keep
2 presentations to 3 minutes. I see that there's four of you, so ...

3 Ms. Sherman: Actually only one. I'm going to speak on behalf of the group.

4 Chair McDougall: They're going to cheer?

5 Ms. Sherman: Yes. If I'm like 30 seconds over ...

6 Chair McDougall: That's fine.

7 Ms. Sherman: My name is Tracy Sherman. I'm a Portola Valley resident, and I'm here
8 with neighbors and community members. We know tonight's meeting is about a pilot
9 project to open Foothills Park to a limited number of non-Palo Alto residents but still
10 conditionally more visitors to the park. I along with a number of my neighbors, including
11 myself and Linda-Drey Nightingale, Co-Chairs for Emergency Preparedness for Los
12 Trancos Woods; Tom Bleier, Emergency Preparedness Chair for Vista Verde; Bill Tagg
13 former CERPP, nationally known as CERT, Operations Chair and former Emergency
14 Preparedness Chair for Vista Verde; and Steve Friedman, Los Trancos Woods Incident
15 Commander and former CERPP District Leader. We represent one of the communities
16 bordering the west of Foothills Park, on the border between Santa Clara County and San
17 Mateo County. The Los Trancos Woods/Vista Verde community has approximately 300
18 homes. Just below us is Blue Oaks development, and below that the backside of Portola
19 Valley Ranch, another 200-plus homes. There are also many neighborhoods that border
20 Foothills Park on other sides. We think it fair to say that most people in all these
21 neighborhoods are extremely concerned about fire safety, especially due to changing
22 weather patterns. To our mind, the question of opening the park to more people begs
23 broader questions that would be of import even if the park was not going to change
24 current policy. Along the western side of Foothills Park, there are large swaths of
25 chaparral in which there are no fire breaks, just continuous, contiguous vegetation.
26 Woodside Fire Protection District has recently been doing innovative work at Teague Hill
27 with grant funding to start clearing the park of an overload of fuel. This on the heels of
28 two fires, one a lightning strike and the other a man-made fire. We know there is an
29 enormous amount of fuel in Foothills Park, including along the trail system within the
30 park. There is a great deal of innovation taking place these days with regards to forest
31 management, prescribed burns, working in concert with Cal Fire, large landscape fuel
32 reduction projects—Woodside Fire Protection District is doing this kind of project
33 currently at Teague Hill as is the Redwood City Fire Department in their community—
34 and mastication including remote masticators for difficult terrain. The Mid-Peninsula
35 Regional Open Space District Governing Board recently added an objective to its
36 strategic plan, "work with fire agencies and surrounding communities to strengthen the
37 prevention of, preparation for, and response to wildland fire." Our question to you is are
38 these projects that Foothills Park is considering or would consider. Another question.

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On extreme weather days, would Foothills Park consider closing the park like they do in the East Bay and more recently in Woodside/Portola Valley with the closing of Windy Hill Preserve, Huddart Park, and Wunderlich Park on days with potential to move into red flag conditions. Los Trancos Road, which borders Foothills Park, is the main evacuation route out for our communities and the main route in for first responders. If Los Trancos Road is cut off due to fire, we have a single-lane alternative down Alpine Road, which is absolutely not a desirable evacuation situation. All it would take is one car to stall, and everyone else would be blocked from getting out. Think Oakland Hills Fire. Therefore, Foothills Park's fire management plan, how and when it will be implemented as well as potential plans for fuel load reduction in the park is of critical importance to many. Thank you for your consideration. I have copies of this presentation. I also have copies of two recent articles from *The Almanac*. The first one about a fire district awarded grant for wildfire prevention work. This is the Teague Hill project. As well as Woodside/Portola Valley in the same fire risk as Paradise. I made copies for everybody.

Chair McDougall: If you'd give them to Natalie. I'd like to thank you and your associates for coming and for a well-thought-out and articulate presentation. Thank you very much. We like it when our neighbors are willing to show up and discuss what's going on in Palo Alto. Thank you very much for that. Stay where you are, and I'll ask if anybody here has any questions while you're standing there. We can follow up with you. Thank you. The next card I have would be Shani.

Ms. Kleinhaus: Good evening again. Shani Kleinhaus, and I speak as a resident now, not for any organization. Foothills should be looked at as a museum for our community. It should not be looked at as something that is common good. It's a museum because that is where we still have wildlife. We're always told they'll go somewhere else when we increase the number of people, when we increase the number of activities. They don't have a lot of places to go anymore. We need to be very careful. I thought a lot about how can you bring more people that will actually respect it the same way as residents respect their own homes. I had an idea, and I don't know if I can share it with you. It's not in your materials. There was a question about our gardens, can nonresidents garden in our community gardens, do they need to go through some kind of training. For that park, we need training for people, the same as Stanford has for Jasper Ridge. If somebody wants to go to Jasper Ridge and bring other people with them, they go through a training program. That training program allows them to be a certified docent, and then they can come in. We need something like that. It's expensive to bring people in. There's a lot of different impacts that people have on the environment and on the resources that we need. We don't have enough Rangers as is. We need more Rangers anyway, whether we open any additional land to people. Forming a docent program will connect people. Palo Alto residents can choose to take it or not. Other people should take training. They don't just go there to use that resource in a way that is not compatible

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1 with the beauty and its tranquility and the wildlife that lives there. I'm thinking about the
2 comments that people brought about fire. I think fire pits should go away. They're right
3 that the park should close on high risk days because they're at risk. Having more and
4 more people, especially on high risk days, is an existing risk. I attended a presentation by
5 Mid-Pen yesterday about how they're going to manage the land, and it's thousands of
6 thousands of acres that they'll have to remove a lot of the plant material from. The more
7 we bring people in, the more plant material we have to move out, the more we have to
8 impact the environment. It's not only the bathrooms that are going to get more use. It's
9 everything. We know a lot of birds will not nest within 300 feet from a trail. Not
10 because the trail is there but because it's being used. They see the people; they don't
11 come there. We have a system that is working. It's beautiful. I go there a lot. During
12 the week, there's people there that are not residents, and it's okay with me, but we need to
13 be watchful. It's how we do something. I agree with Herb that you can't do a pilot
14 project without having to go through the whole entire Code system. It does need to be
15 done. Please look at the education and stewardship together and not just open by ticket
16 or something like that. Thank you.

17 Chair McDougall: Thank you. Leland Levy.

18 Leland Levy: Thank you. As a long-term resident of Palo Alto, I want to tell you how
19 impressed I am with the work of the Commission, of the committee, and the Park and
20 Recreation Department in putting this pilot program together. It is a test program, and I
21 think it's a very positive thing that it is not permanent. It goes for a year. It is data-based.
22 It does not change the allowed usage capacity of Foothill Park. It keeps in place
23 regulations that have been there a long time, but it allows residents from throughout the
24 community to make use of a park that we have kept to ourselves for a long period of time
25 when, as far as I know, no other community on the Peninsula has done the same thing
26 with their open space areas. We have long had a 1,000-person daily maximum usage of
27 Foothill Park, and that will stay in place. You as a Commission should take it upon
28 yourselves to carefully monitor what's being done because we want to be careful of the
29 ecology of the area, we want to maintain the environment, we want to be careful of the
30 fire dangers. You should keep track of the usage. You should not look upon this as a
31 permanent test but as a program that may lead to something very worthwhile. With that,
32 I hope that you will approve this test and then monitor it with the care that it deserves.
33 Thank you.

34 Chair McDougall: Thank you. LaDoris Cordell.

35 LaDoris Cordell: Good evening, members of the Commission, and thank you for your
36 time. First, I do echo the remarks made by Leland Levy. I'm a longtime resident of Palo
37 Alto, and when I served on the City Council from 2004 to 2008, I raised the issue of
38 lifting restrictions on entry to the park. Nothing came of it then, but more than a decade

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1 later the issue has not and will not go away. It is time to open the park. The pilot
2 proposal is a thoughtful first step in doing so. I believe there is no justification for
3 restricting entry to Foothills Park. It is my understanding that the origin of the restriction
4 was a response to Los Altos when the city refused to share in the purchase of the land.
5 Palo Alto got miffed and closed the park to Los Altos. That restriction morphed into
6 an all-out ban on outsiders. It was not for any environmental reasons. I urge you to
7 adopt the pilot program, which has been thoughtfully written. I also note that, as an
8 aside, Palo Alto business owners who pay City taxes but who do not live in the City are
9 barred from the park. I believe this is unfair, and I actually question the legality of
10 barring those who actually pay taxes in the City and who own businesses here. I close by
11 saying, first, you have a look at—I've produced some documentation as well—previous
12 years of attendance at the park that confirm that there is no justification for the kind of
13 restriction we have. Enough of the elitism and the exclusionism. Let's bring the park
14 into the 21st century. Let's open the entry gates to those who desire to visit it under the
15 guidance of this pilot project. I ask these Commission members to please know it's time
16 to tear down the entry barrier. Thank you.

17 Chair McDougall: Thank you very much. I would like to do one things. One, I'd like to
18 thank all of the speakers tonight for a very reasoned set of presentations, very thoughtful
19 input, well-articulated. When we have former Mayors and former Council Members visit
20 us, we need to make sure we're listening. When we have our neighbors from Portola
21 Valley coming and talking about safety and so on, we need to listen. Thank you. I'd like
22 to add to the speakers. Jeff Paulsen, who is a grandson of the Lees and was a Ranger at
23 one point in Foothills Park, has written—all of the Commissioners would have received
24 this from Natalie—to regret that he's not here but to add his voice for opening the park
25 because of the importance of the history, as both LaDoris and Lee have mentioned. We
26 don't have a staff presentation. We do have an ad hoc committee presentation. Ryan,
27 would you like to introduce the topic?

28 Commissioner McCauley: Thank you, Don. Thank you, as well, to all the speakers.
29 Your thoughts and comments are much appreciated. The last time we spoke about this in
30 July, I think I opened by saying Foothills Park is a special place. I'll say it again. I'll
31 probably say it a dozen times that Foothills Park is a special place. The Commission, the
32 committee members definitely, and the public more importantly all recognize that. It's a
33 place that we want to share as reasonably as possible because it's a special place, but also
34 we want to ensure that the character of that special place isn't negatively impacted. That's
35 what this pilot proposal attempts to do. As everyone knows, the committee and staff, led
36 by Daren but there's many others that I'll mention in a moment, have tailored this
37 recommendation to study the prospect for allowing for broader public access with
38 controls and very deliberate ways of studying this in order to ensure that the park retains
39 its special character. We've tried to take in the public comments that we heard in July as
40 well as the comments from Commission members, and that's what's reflected in the pilot

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proposal before you tonight. Because there were a couple of comments along these lines, this is just a discussion item this evening. The plan would be, pending the upcoming discussion amongst the Commission, to return at a future meeting with an actual action item that proposes some amendments to the Municipal Code that would allow for this sort of pilot program that would then go to the City Council for discussion and eventual action. Before I hand it off to Jeff LaMere, who's going to give an overview of the pilot program, I wanted to thank Kristen, our Director of Community Services, Daren. By the way, Daren, I was impressed by your Department Report. There's a lot going on. You've spent many, many hours trying to corral this particular topic and come up with a sensible proposal with us. It's much appreciated given everything that's on your plate. Daren's team, Lam Do who's our Superintendent of Parks; Kathleen Jones, the Supervising Ranger; Greg Betts, the former CSD Director, Kurt Dunn, former Supervising Ranger at Foothills Park; Gordon Bailey; Lester Hendry; other former Supervising Rangers at Foothills Park, and John Aiken and his team at the JMZ; and many others who have provided input to this particular pilot proposal. With that ...

Commissioner LaMere: Thank you, Ryan. Again, thanks to Daren and everyone who helped out and provided comment. We've received a lot of public comment. There were a lot of current and past Rangers interviewed. There were a lot of people that we spoke to about this. There was a lot of time and thought put into this pilot proposal. I'm just going to go through briefly each of these points and make a brief comment. Ryan will follow up providing some comment on some data that we have. To reiterate what Ryan has said and what others have spoken about, we understand how unique and how special this place is. We also think that, based on looking at the historical data, based on speaking with the rangers and other people, there's also an opportunity to share our amazing resource in a responsible manner with a few more people. That's something that this pilot proposal will attempt to do. The first point is the fact that it's a one-year program. It's a temporary program. This is not a permanent program. It's something that, if implemented, will allow study. It's a limited number of adjustable passes for nonresidents, meaning that we can adjust based on if we think it's going to be a busy day. Historically, if Mother's Day has been busy, maybe there will not be nonresident passes available for that day, as an example. We also want to make it a point to have broader availability for school field trips. We think that the real core of getting school-aged children out to the park, the educational value of the environment is of great importance to us. We think that can really help out different communities, not just those students at Palo Alto, but to really push what is important to us. In the interest of simplicity, one thing we were looking at with this pilot program was not to engage City staff, to reduce the time that they would need to spend on something like this. We want to use the new online reservation portal that will be available this fall. This is a portal that would be used as anybody would make a reservation, as people sign up for different things through the City. People could log onto this. We also believe that people have technological accessibility whether it's through their smartphones or a computer. We want to make it

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accessible, and we want to make it simple also for staff to help out people who are seeking the passes. We'll have an opportunity to collect data so we understand how many people are going into the park. That's extremely important, as was mentioned by a previous speaker. Ryan will drill down a little bit deeper on the data. As we collect this data, it's going to help us understand what are the impacts on the park that this proposal has resulted in. As we mentioned before about the field trips, we do want to formalize a school field trip program, which is not presently anticipated by the Municipal Code. Again, codifying these existing practices will provide clarity for those involved. That would be one more point of this pilot proposal. There's also some potential to recover expenses associated with the existing cost of staffing the entry gate. The entry gate is currently staffed on weekends, so there's already a cost involved in that, and there is potential for discussion if we charge a certain amount for passes. That money could be recouped and provided towards the existing expenses of the park. We'll continue to prioritize resident access. There are no changes to the current resident access proposed in this. Any current resident would have the same rights to go visit the park, and that's very important that that is understood. We're not limiting what already exists. Again, the proposal that we're making is very limited in scope but will provide us with information about how the park is being used and will help us develop proposals and hopefully something to push forward in the future. With that, I'll turn it over to Ryan and let him drill down more on this data and speak a little bit more about this.

Commissioner McCauley: Thanks, Jeff. I'm going to try to be efficient because I know that there's a lot of charts included in this relatively short PowerPoint presentation. These numbers could be a little bit hard to read. For the members of the public, my apologies that these numbers might be difficult to see. I have a couple of copies in case any Commission members would like to have a slightly better view of what's on the screen. Let me be as brief as I possibly can be in talking about the numbers. As Jeff mentioned, the number of passes anticipated by this pilot would be adjusted on a daily basis or a weekly basis by staff to match the historical trends and the data with an upper cap of 50 passes on any given day. At our July meeting, Daren presented a number of numbers for the past decade with trend lines and monthly averages. Happy to recirculate those materials if anyone would like to see them. As a quick recap, the top line numbers from that presentation were that in the past couple of decades, we've had a very stable rate of usage, around 150,000 visitors per year. Looking back over the park's more than 50-year history, that level of visitation is actually fairly low. In the first decade after the park's dedication, through the 1960s and '70s, the visitation count was regularly in the upper two and three hundred thousand. We're historically low compared to what the park saw when it opened. Turning your attention to the slide that's on the screen now, I want to quickly provide an overview of this to try and hopefully orient you to the type of data that we have available to us and how we can use that data, I hope, to tailor the best policy with this pilot. On the far left-hand side, you'll see visitation broken out by month. This is all for the year 2017. Not surprisingly, the months of May, June, and July have

1 elevated rates of visitation. It then tapers off in the fall. It drops to its lowest level over
2 the winter months and then picks up at a gradual basis in the spring until you hit summer
3 again when you're at your peak. No surprise the summer months are the most popular.
4 The staff has been doing this for a long while. For 2017, they recorded that they actually
5 turned away over 3,700 nonresidents who came to the park. Folks came to the park on a
6 weekend and were hoping to visit, but they were turned away because they're not
7 residents. That number equates to—as you'll see reflected in the monthly numbers, it's
8 anywhere between 220 to more than 500 people per month that were turned away in
9 2017. That number has been inching up over the years. In the past five years, I believe
10 the average was something like 2,800. You see that in more recent years, we are turning
11 away more people than we were five years ago, for example. If you go to the far right-
12 hand side, you see a breakdown by day of the week. Again not surprisingly, Saturday
13 and Sunday are more popular. They amount to about 50 percent of the total visitation in
14 the park. The other days of the week make up the other 50 percent.

15 Commissioner Reckdahl: The nonresidents, is that the number of people in the car or the
16 number of cars in the fourth column? Nonresident turn-aways, is that the number of cars
17 that were turned away or the number of nonresidents?

18 Commissioner McCauley: That's a question for Daren.

19 Mr. Anderson: I believe it's the number of nonresidents.

20 Commissioner Reckdahl: It's manned on weekends. Weekdays, do we count the cars?
21 Do we have a ...

22 Mr. Anderson: Yes. We've got an electronic counter.

23 Commissioner Reckdahl: We just multiple by ...

24 Mr. Anderson: 2.7.

25 Vice Chair Greenfield: The turn-away number, is that based on cars times 2.7 or actual
26 people?

27 Mr. Anderson: The turn-away number, I think they're counting those people. They're
28 there in the booth, so they're getting a real count.

29 Commissioner McCauley: Keith, a good point is that these total numbers reflect both the
30 visitors counted by the car multiplier during the week as well as perhaps at 7:00 in the
31 morning before the Ranger opens up the Ranger Station on a Saturday morning. In
32 addition to that, it also counts everyone. The Ranger in the booth is counting as they go
33 through. It's a combination of all three of those sources. All that we're trying to
34 demonstrate and hopefully make this slightly more visually appealing or intuitive is the

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number of visitors are reflected in the blue part of the bars. If we were to have 1,000 people per day, it would be the green bar. You would have 30,000 people approximately per month. You can see what the current level of visitation is. One slight clarification I want to make is that it's not actually a 1,000-person per day limit. It's 1,000 persons at any one time in the park. That's the cap. Conceivably, you could have 2,000 people visit the park and not actually hit that 1,000-person at any time cap. In all events, we thought it was a benchmark to demonstrate what that would look like. This is something that would be close to the level of visitation in the 1970s when we had 370,000 people visiting the park for several years. If you were at that level, you'd be where the top of the green bar is. This one demonstrates essentially the red bar difference, which would be if you added 20 percent over the current visitation for 2017, where you would be relative to 1,000 people per day. In this one, if you added 70 percent. I'm going to break this down slightly more to month. Those monthly numbers are made up of daily numbers. This is a somewhat helpful example just looking at January 2017. January is typically a low month for the park. January 1st, though, is typically a pretty popular day in the park. It's New Year's Day. A lot of people have New Year's resolutions that they're trying to keep on that first day, and they make it out to Foothills Park. On that day, we have 300 cars in 2017 and 750 visitors who are registered by the Ranger staff as they enter. That would be a day, for example, where we would probably have fewer passes available. Potentially significantly fewer, perhaps there's only 10 or 20 passes available on New Year's Day. If you look at the other days, you'll see that the car counts can actually be quite interesting. There are several weekends here. If you look at January 8, 2017, there were only 53 cars that entered the park that day and 133 visitors. I have fairly high confidence in the numbers for weekends, by the way, because it's actually for the most part recorded by a Ranger who's standing there at the booth. That's not to suggest that I don't have confidence in the other numbers, but as anyone who works with lots of data sets will know—I know that several of you do this more than I do—there are always blips in the data. If we look down to Thursday, January 26, 2017, there were 356 people who visited the park based on our automatic counter. That number seems high to me frankly. I'm surprised that there were 200 cars that entered the park that day. However, it's certainly possible. It's also possible that there were deer that passed by the photo eye that counts the vehicles or something like that. There's a number of different things that could be happening. The great thing is that we have so much data. We have 20 years of very reliable data, and we have more data beyond that. Those blips start to become not meaningful. You have so much information that you're able to make decisions based on this data set in its entirety or in its more complete nature. Here are a number of additional ways of thinking about this. The red bars reflect if you were to have 1,000 people visit the park on a day. The blue bars reflect the actual visitation during the month of January. We then did the same thing for June 2010 and November 2014. June and November tend to be higher usage months where we see more visitors to the park, as you'd expect. Again, here's the graphical charting of what those levels are versus 1,000

1 people in the park per day. The same for November. Here's November with the
2 additional 25 percent people visiting the park.

3 Commissioner Reckdahl: What was that on Tuesday, the 11th?

4 Chair McDougall: Veterans Day. I suspect that there was a special event or something.

5 Commissioner McCauley: Exactly. There are days where we could be coming close to
6 having 1,000 people in the park, but the purpose of the pilot is to give staff the flexibility
7 to adjust and prevent a circumstance where that would happen.

8 Commissioner Reckdahl: How would staff go about doing that? Would it be 50 for most
9 days, and then just on holidays we would lower it down, or would you be modifying it?
10 For example, if you go back and look on Tuesdays and say Tuesdays are higher, so we're
11 only going to have 45 that day or vice versa. How often would they adjust that 50?

12 Commissioner McCauley: Two things to keep in mind. One is that part of the purpose of
13 the pilot is to experiment a bit. In the first instance, Daren would likely experiment on
14 the conservative side. I'll let Daren speak to his thoughts on that. Essentially, ensure that
15 we don't have a huge crowd of people who are enjoying the park. That's thought number
16 one, to experiment a bit. That's also true as we get to this next slide about options for
17 further discussion, how we experiment within this set of 50 passes we might have. To
18 look at days of the week would be meaningful. It would also be meaningful, though,
19 probably for Daren and his staff at the beginning of the month to look at the trends for the
20 next couple of months and say, "Here's where we think we need to adjust and have a
21 smaller pool of passes available on some weekends, some days, etc." This last slide,
22 there are a number of areas where it would be helpful for the committee to receive some
23 more feedback from the Commission. One of which is on the topic of fees. Daren's
24 team, Kathleen Jones, got together with the Ranger staff and came up with a calculation
25 of the cost to staff the booth over the weekends. It's a fairly significant cost from my
26 perspective. It costs the City about \$89,000 in staffing time to have the entry gate
27 manned just on the weekends. One thing to consider is do we want to try and recoup
28 some costs that would be associated with that staffing. For me personally, I'm torn on
29 this issue. I totally appreciate the point of trying to recoup some of the fees. By the same
30 token, I don't want to create an additional barrier to entry for folks. That would lead me
31 to think that perhaps we should not charge a fee. Maybe there's a hybrid of sorts, and this
32 would be something appropriate for a pilot, to have a phase where we don't have a fee
33 perhaps for the first half of the pilot, and for the second half of the pilot to have a fee that
34 might be charged. Your input on fees would be helpful. The second point would be what
35 do we do about weekdays. The committee had in mind that it would make sense to try
36 and collect as much data as we could on weekdays. We should encourage people to go
37 online and make a reservation, grab one of these passes for weekdays as well as
38 weekends, recognizing that many people will not do that. All the more information that

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we can get would be helpful. When people go through the online reservation portal, they'll probably be answering two or three, four questions about the reason they're going to the park and whatnot just for our data collection purposes so we can understand how the park is being used and hopefully collect that helpful data. Fees and weekdays are two big areas where we would definitely like the Commission's input. Discussion about further prioritization for students and volunteers. The committee definitely wants to prioritize access for those groups. There's a couple of ways that we thought about it. One is to provide a fee waiver in the event that there is a fee charged. We would provide essentially an access code to those groups when they go online to make a reservation. The second would be to set aside a certain number of passes only for students and volunteers. Any other alternatives and ideas that you have. With that, I'm going to stop speaking because you'll all appreciate me not coughing. Thank you again for your indulgence. Daren, very sincerely thank you for all of your assistance.

Chair McDougall: There are three members of the ad hoc. Jeff was the other ad hoc member. In normal procedure, we should allow him to speak first.

Vice Chair Greenfield: I want to thank the ad hoc members who worked so hard on this along with lots of contributions from staff. Daren, kudos especially as always. I'd like to thank the public speakers for their thoughtful comments. I'm interested in hearing from staff at some point what our policy is regarding closing Foothills Park on fire danger days, especially understanding that the neighboring open space areas like Windy Hill and Huddart and Wunderlich are already instituting a similar policy. It seems like we want to make sure we're consistent with them. I appreciate this is a complex issue, and it's been a longstanding issue in the community. I'm particularly interested in hearing from the other Commissioners your thoughts on this. I look at it with three different areas of focus. One is the clarity of scope of what we're proposing. Two is the simplicity, and three is focusing on minimizing impacts. On the scope, are our priorities correct? Is it clear what problem we're trying to solve? Is it clear that the proposal addresses the priority issues? Simplicity. Is our plan simple to communicate? Is it simple to understand? Is it simple to implement? Regarding minimizing impacts, this includes staff time, cost to the City, impacts to the current user experience, and the impacts to the natural environment. That's really what feedback I'm interested in hearing on top of the specific points that Ryan has highlighted. Thank you.

Chair McDougall: I'll start with Keith, if you don't mind being first.

Commissioner Reckdahl: Overall, this is a good idea. Like most people, I have some reservations. We heard a lot of speakers last month that were very concerned both from a wildlife standpoint and also losing the charm of Foothills Park. How are we going to be monitoring the condition of the park to ensure that this is not affecting the park?

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1 Mr. Anderson: What we've started with now is starting to track some baselines. That's
2 the most reasonable. A lot of them can be a little arbitrary, so we're hoping to find ways
3 to make them less so. For example, photographs are often helpful. There's only so much
4 we can track and the amount of Ranger time we can dedicate to this. We thought perhaps
5 taking random photos of the same shot of the valley in front of the Interpretive Center to
6 see how many deer are out there, for example. We'd track incidents of vandalism and
7 other things that require staff time, cut-off trails, that kind of thing. We have a rough
8 idea, but we're going to track it more closely now, and then we'd have some baseline data
9 that we'd continue to track during the pilot. The amount of time we spend cleaning
10 restrooms, reports of restrooms not being tidy, things like that.

11 Commissioner Reckdahl: What about erosion on some of the trails, especially on the
12 steep hills?

13 Mr. Anderson: I think our Rangers have a good understanding. A lot of those are not
14 necessarily visitor driven; some of them are environmentally driven as you remember
15 with the big storms. Some of it can be, and certainly shortcuts contribute to erosion.
16 We've got some problem areas in the park that we do track. Certainly, that's one of the
17 things we pay attention to. Eyeballs on the creek to see if people are down in the creek
18 and any impacts there.

19 Commissioner Reckdahl: Are there any areas that you're concerned about? For example,
20 let's say we double the number of people at Foothills Park. What would be your biggest
21 concern quality-wise from the park?

22 Mr. Anderson: The parking would be a challenge. The first-come-first-serve picnic area
23 could be impacted if we doubled a number. That's one of the things I like about this
24 pilot, the ability to perhaps have some control over those by adjusting the number of
25 passes we give out so that doesn't happen. Those are some of my worry areas, impacts to
26 wildlife, of course. Those are probably the biggest ones.

27 Commissioner Reckdahl: For example, looking at the deer, is there some way—Shani
28 mentioned the birds. Is there any way that you can quantify the bird population? Is that
29 just too hard to do?

30 Mr. Anderson: One of the better ways that we could reasonably implement something
31 like that is to do more of the bio blitzes and citizen science where you go out and have
32 members of the public help track things and record. Those are most valuable when you
33 have a lot of them consecutively over a long period of time. On the shorter scale, some
34 of those might be a little less valuable. They're not really indicative of everything you've
35 got. You've got to have it over a lengthy period of time, but that might be one way to
36 help with that.

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1 Commissioner Reckdahl: We're talking about Ravenswood or Palo Alto Unified. Do we
2 have a count of how many students are in Ravenswood and a count of how many
3 nonresidents are in Palo Alto schools?

4 Mr. Anderson: I don't have the number of nonresidents in the Palo Alto schools. I
5 understand it's fairly low from anecdotal conversations with PAUSD staff, but I don't
6 have a number. The ad hoc might have had a conversation with Ravenswood to
7 understand the number, but I don't know.

8 Commissioner McCauley: I don't have the number off the top of my head. We did some
9 calculations, though, around the number of students in Ravenswood and the number of
10 students in PAUSD who are not residents of Palo Alto. Those calculations were
11 primarily related to an iteration of a pilot that we've now stepped away from, which was
12 essentially just giving access to all PAUSD students and all Ravenswood students
13 without having any daily cap. Under this pilot proposal, you would have essentially 125
14 or 135—I can't remember the exact number—additional visitors per day based on a cap
15 of 50 passes. The question would then be do we want to set aside 10 of those passes only
16 for students and 10 of those passes only for volunteers perhaps.

17 Commissioner Reckdahl: I thought that was a good idea to separate those. Some of the
18 logistics of how to get these passes. We had talked about online reservations. Do we
19 have that up and running? Do you know?

20 Mr. Anderson: We have an existing online system that's in the process of being replaced
21 right now with a newer, more robust system. It'll be activated December of this year.
22 We've inquired if something like what we're looking at in this pilot might be feasible, and
23 they've said yes.

24 Commissioner Reckdahl: So we'd start in December. How would we work that? Would
25 it be you could make it 24 hours in advance or could you make it a week in advance?
26 One of the concerns I have is twofold. If I have to wait until the last minute to make my
27 reservation and don't know if I'm going to get one of those spots, then I can't make my
28 plans. If you allowed people to make them a month ahead of time and I decide I want to
29 go, now it's all blocked up for the next month. Both of those are bad situations. What
30 would be our policy? Would we be able to take reservations ahead of time or would we
31 not?

32 Mr. Anderson: Yes, it would be ahead of time. The fine tuning of exactly when and how
33 much in advance is yet to be determined. I think we'd discuss it with the ad hoc and
34 come with a proposal to the Commission.

1 Commissioner Reckdahl: Would there be a limit to the number of passes one person
2 could have? For example, could someone sign up and take a pass every day for the next
3 month?

4 Mr. Anderson: I don't know that that's been discussed with the ad hoc yet. Another
5 detail to work one.

6 Commissioner Reckdahl: If this is a scarce resource, what happens is people will hoard
7 scarce resources and try to sell them in a secondary market. I would be concerned that
8 there might be shenanigans going on. The reason I was asking about how many students
9 we have is I like the idea of setting aside some of the passes for students and some of the
10 passes for volunteers. What is the right proportion? If we have a lot of students in
11 Ravenswood that might be interested in it, I don't know if ten would be enough. I would
12 want to look at those numbers to say what would be a reasonable allocation for the
13 Ravenswood and PAUSD students. Fees. The online reservations, we could charge fees
14 if we wanted?

15 Mr. Anderson: That's correct.

16 Commissioner Reckdahl: I'm not sure about fees. I understand your comments and
17 appreciate them. I'm not sure of the right answer. I would probably be inclined to charge
18 fees. For example, if you go to Huddart Park right now, it's a \$6 parking. I would think
19 that'd be reasonable for us to at least charge that much just to be an equal fit. I think
20 that's all my questions for now.

21 Commissioner Cribbs: Just a few comments. Before I start, I think there are a little bit
22 less than 4,000 children in Ravenswood School District. I think that's the number that's
23 current. First of all, I'm really glad to see this and see that we're discussing this. We've
24 been talking about it off and on for a long time. I've been a resident of Palo Alto for a
25 long time, and it comes and it goes and it comes and it goes. I really congratulate the ad
26 hoc and the staff and the community because this is a really thoughtful discussion, a
27 really cautious and careful and data-driven discussion. That's really important. I
28 appreciate the neighbors from Portola Valley and the comments about closing Foothill
29 Park and other places for high fire danger and everything. That was really great and
30 something that I necessarily wouldn't have thought out. I'd like to go back to the reason
31 that this came up, about the fairness and the justice of this. We in Palo Alto have to
32 figure out a way that Foothill Park is not closed to people. I know that you can walk in
33 now and all of that, but it just doesn't feel right to me to live in a community that has a
34 park that is closed in some sense. I'm excited to see this move forward. There's a lot of
35 questions and a lot of details that we're going to have to answer and staff is going to have
36 to figure out the answer. It's really the right thing to do. Certainly think about kids who
37 don't have the opportunity to get out to Foothill Park. How are we going to ask them to
38 take care of the environment in the future and care about it if they don't have a chance to

1 see it? That's going to be a really important thing. Thank you all very much for the work
2 that you've done on this. It'll be really interesting to track this through the year, and
3 hopefully we get to do that and see how it works out. Jeff, I'm not sure that I addressed
4 any of your questions. The scope is okay right now. It's pretty thoughtful. It'll be a good
5 test. Thanks very much.

6 Chair McDougall: Jeff, do you want to answer your own questions?

7 Vice Chair Greenfield: No, I don't have anything specific to add. They stand on their
8 own. The questions are key to making sure we're on the right track for proposing an
9 effective pilot program.

10 Chair McDougall: I would like to comment on a number of things, I hope in the context
11 of Jeff's questions. I would add my thank you again to people that have spoken, the effort
12 of the ad hoc, particularly Ryan. He's championed the fact that we're having this
13 discussion. We're having a reasoned discussion, and I applaud everybody for that. The
14 question of how this goes next, we can take this to Council with a recommendation that
15 they simply change the Municipal Code or we can go to Council and ask that we have a
16 joint discussion session. There needs to be a consideration of what the right next step is
17 so that we continue this. In the context of that, particularly relative to impact and
18 simplicity, as Jeff mentioned, I would suggest, number one, that we just accept that it is
19 1,000 a day instead of saying it's 1,000 at any one time or whatever. If we say it's 1,000 a
20 day, then that minimizes the impact. It's easier to keep track of. We don't need to worry
21 about how many went in and how many went out. We can just say it's 1,000 a day. All
22 of those charts basically say we're 25 percent of 1,000 a day right now. We're a long way
23 away from filling 1,000 a day let alone 1,000 at any one time. In the conversation, we
24 make sure it's clear on that. Anything we do should include a comment about not just
25 closing the park on fire hazard but other safety issues. A well-reasoned approach to
26 safety should be included. Fees are good; we should embrace fees. I'm not sure how you
27 would go through the phases that you're talking about. My phase would be fees right up
28 front. The idea that, like Environmental Volunteers does for schools that can't afford it, if
29 you put on your reservation system "I'd like to apply for a scholarship to get into the
30 park," I doubt people who could afford to pay wouldn't say, "I can get away with not
31 paying just by doing this." That would be part of our testing. If we simply allowed
32 people who apply for a waiver online and gave it automatically, would everybody claim
33 the waiver or not? I would say do that. In terms of prioritizing, you've had some clear
34 conversations about, if it's 1,000 a day, then let's make sure that after we get to 600, 700,
35 800, or whatever, we maintain the prioritization for Palo Alto citizens. That may be in
36 here, but I'm not sure that I saw that in the concept. In terms of collecting data, this is
37 going to be a really interesting thing relative to—you don't have to have all the data. You
38 just have to have some good samples. I think Daren talked about this before or maybe
39 Kathleen mentioned. If we just start counting the rolls of toilet paper now and we

1 eventually know that we're using 25 times the amount of toilet paper or something, there
2 must be some indicators, not hard facts but good leading indicators, not just trailing
3 indicators, that we could look at. The idea of having bio blitzes, they're not perfect. To
4 Shani's point earlier, you don't necessarily need to count the deer and the bird. Maybe
5 you just need to count the insects, and maybe you don't need to count all the insects. You
6 just need to count particular insects. If you're not keeping track of that, then you can't
7 sustain the birds or whatever. Maybe we can do some focused bio blitz stuff. We
8 certainly know a few people who are really good at insect bio blitzes. I would consider
9 that. How quickly shortcuts get—visitor-created paths, at Point Lobos in particular, were
10 the biggest effort, the biggest cost when it came time to say, "We've never had fences.
11 Time to put up fences." I was going to save this for later, but I'll say it now. We need to
12 look at this as is this a park or is this a reserve and what kind of park do we want it to be.
13 For example, when I look at this and I think about passes, do I want to apply for a pass to
14 go for a hike or do I want to apply for a pass to use a fire pit? Maybe we need to be a
15 little more granular in our thinking. You can have 12 fire pit passes every day. Keith's
16 point of if you allow those to be booked a year ahead of time, the first thing I'm going to
17 do is book a whole year's worth of fire pits or something like that. There are State parks
18 that have passes. There are other regional parks that have passes that have you pay for it.
19 There's got to be an awful lot of learning out there that we don't have to start from a blank
20 sheet of paper. We can figure out what do they do. Point Lobos does not have passes at
21 this point. They're considering passes. Most other State parks have restrictions. The
22 first thing they did was say, "Let's go find out what everybody else is doing." There's
23 some research that we could do from there. I hear Keith's question, but all of that is
24 absolutely manageable. The reservation logistics, there's got to be a way to do that.
25 Making it simple, even my suggestion of complicating it by saying, "I need to know
26 whether you want a fire pit pass or whatever." By the way, if you want to talk about if
27 it's a reserve or reserve-like versus park, maybe in the process of this we should eliminate
28 the fire pits. Back to are we being hypocritical here, do we believe in nature but we want
29 people in nature but we want them to have fires. We need to think about can people have
30 picnics without cooking hotdogs. Maybe I'm making this take longer, but we should
31 think about that. Shani shook her head when I said bio blitzes. I also think there's a
32 possibility that we could go to somebody like Audubon and actually give them a contract
33 to do some measurement. That wouldn't hurt. When we talk about Ravenswood, I'm not
34 sure we need to necessarily talk about the whole Ravenswood School District as opposed
35 to what grades are we talking about. Is it just one through six or is it all grades? I truly
36 believe in the online reservation. If the one that we're putting in place as the City doesn't
37 work, there are so many commercial online reservation systems that could be used. It's
38 just not worrying about it. The bottom line for me, this absolutely should go forward. I
39 totally believe in opening the park, and I share concerns about nature. I also have
40 concerns about people, and being in nature is good for people. We should not limit the
41 opportunity for people to experience nature and enjoy nature and learn about nature.
42 Shani's idea that if we could get decent volunteers or whatever to talk, to staff the center,

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that should all be part of this if we can do it. Bottom line, I totally support the idea that we should open this. Ryan, thank you. I'll give a chance for anybody to make any additional comments, but otherwise, I want to thank you again for all good comments.

Vice Chair Greenfield: Ravenswood School District is K-8. They do not have a high school. We've talked about barbecues in Foothills Park and some of the hillside picnic areas. Maybe we should move forward with considering which barbecues should be removed from some picnic areas. Maybe we scale back and only include them in Orchard Glen and Oak Grove. Maybe there's another site. Some of the more remote sites that have the barbecues seem like a problem waiting to happen. Just one question to ask the Commission is I haven't heard any specific input regarding weekdays. Should the pilot pass program be extended to weekdays or not? Do you have any thoughts on that?

Commissioner McCauley: The committee's thinking was we should collect as much information as we can. To the extent we can get people to obtain one of these passes online for a weekday, let's try and collect that information and know who's visiting the park, when they're visiting, etc. We recognize that there may not be a lot of adherence to that sort of policy. Maybe it's not a meaningful data point for that reason. It really is an open question for us.

Council Member Cormack: If everyone has concluded their comments, I want to be sure I go at the very end.

Chair McDougall: I'm not going to say what I was going to say.

Council Member Cormack: I want to echo former Council Member Cordell's statement that this is a thoughtful first step to bring one of our parks into the 21st century. Earlier this year when we were setting up the study session, the question that I asked when this particular subject was brought up is what is the problem we're trying to solve. If I turn to page 2 and think about all of the data that the subcommittee has provided, I have to say I'm shocked. I would not have known, and I certainly wouldn't have expected that we turn away thousands of people every year from the park. To me, that's the problem we're trying to solve. What this pilot does is Part 1 addresses that. If we go back even earlier in the year to the Mayor's State of the City speech, one of the things he spoke about was being a good neighbor. This is utterly and completely consistent with that. The second part with respect to students, Ms. Kleinhaus and I were down at the County earlier today providing input on the Stanford University General Use Permit to the Supervisors. I was struck by the comments of another person, whose name I did not catch, who described the fact that people evolved in the natural environment. We evolved, our neurological systems evolved not in an environment like this but in a natural one. I think about the book *Last Child in the Woods*, and I think it's absolutely appropriate for us to make this special place more broadly available to students. Doing that through school field trips is exactly the right way to start and test. I'm not going to weigh in on the fees. People can

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1 have a variety of ways of thinking about that. I anticipate the committee will keep
2 working on that and thinking about it. All of us have to be mindful about where the staff
3 has operational control and where we sitting on the dais design programs. As I listened
4 to some of the conversation, I'd be mindful of the level of detail. We want to be sure,
5 especially if it's a pilot, to not prescribe it so carefully that staff can't adjust, especially if
6 there are different days, etc. Just as people were thinking about all the details, I'm going
7 to go back and provide one. The Library has you reserve a room a few days in advance,
8 three or four or five days in advance. There's a limit on how many you can do in a week.
9 That's all utterly manageable. I remember a Consent Calendar item not too long ago. I
10 had posed a question or two about this new reservation system. It sounds fantastic. It's
11 going to give us a lot of capabilities. I'll close with the sincere thanks to staff who has
12 spent an extraordinary amount of time researching not just the history but the data and
13 thinking so carefully about how this might affect the space and people's experience there.
14 I want to sincerely thank the ad hoc subcommittee who is tackling something that has
15 been a difficult topic for many years and has done so thoughtfully.

16 Chair McDougall: Thank you.

17 Council Member Cormack This is really just personal. For many years, I sat where
18 former Council Member Cordell is when she was up here. Now, I want you to know that
19 every Thursday night I think of you because I remember when you left, you said to the
20 names of the people, "May you never darken my door again." Every Thursday night
21 when my packet arrives, I think of you. I just want you to know that. Someone else's
22 door is being darkened, and I always thank you and certainly former Mayor Levy for
23 your service as I'm more aware of what it entails.

24 Chair McDougall: Thank you. I can't thank enough the reasoned conversation that we've
25 had. If there is nothing else, I'll give Ryan a chance to close, if you want. I think we
26 need to explore the next step. The committee needs to work with staff to figure out how
27 we move this forward. I personally think there is momentum to continue the
28 conversation. I would like the ad hoc to come back to the next Commission meeting
29 rather than putting it off. I'd like to encourage that.

30 Commissioner McCauley: Thanks everyone. Appreciate the input.

31 Chair McDougall: Thank you very much. I'd like to move on to the next item on the
32 agenda.

33 **5. Other Ad Hoc Committee and Liaison Updates**

34 Chair McDougall: The next item is Other Ad Hoc and Liaison Updates. I have not
35 seen—probably my mistake—the ad hoc input. I'll give anybody a chance to ask
36 questions on the ad hoc input or add to the ad hoc input.

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Commissioner Reckdahl: I came in late today because we had a North Ventura meeting over at the Library. Last month, it came up again, naturalization of that stream. Does Peter have any bandwidth to give us a presentation on naturalizing that stream by Fry's and Boulware Park?

Mr. Anderson: We can certainly discuss it. It might be a little broader than just Peter. It would no doubt involve Planning and other departments as well. We could certainly talk to him about it.

Commissioner Reckdahl: The Santa Clara Valley Water District does have money to help with that kind of thing. Especially Boulware Park with that concrete channel going through it, if we could have a slope down into the stream, that could be a plus.

Council Member Cormack: We have authorized a contract on consent—I believe it was last week—about \$93,000 to a consultant who is going to study three options there. That work is underway.

Commissioner Reckdahl: For naturalizing by Boulware Park?

Council Member Cormack: Naturalizing was one option. Yes, they're looking at what is possible there.

Commissioner Reckdahl: That's very good. I had not heard that. Thank you.

Chair McDougall: I would like to take the opportunity to thank Anne for showing up at the ice cream social. It made the three or four hours that we were there much better. I'd really like to thank the snake. The snake provided all of the good work. It was well done. I have met with Council Member Cormack for a brief discussion of fundraising and some efforts there. I've also talked to Daren about some other approaches to fundraising. I promised to meet with you this week, and I've failed. I'll make sure I set a meeting for next week because I do have a pretty good spreadsheet and input to work from. If there's nothing else from that, I would like to discuss not just the agenda, but the schedule for the October, November, and December meetings.

VI. TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR OCTOBER 22, 2019 MEETING

Chair McDougall: The October meeting is clearly okay on the 22nd of October. That wouldn't change. We sent out a note saying could we look at November 12, which is three weeks later, not four weeks later. We could make it the 12th or the 19th. I was recommending the 10th of December on the basis of the 17th is that week prior to Christmas when people get caught up in all sorts of other events. Working back from the 10th. Do I have any comments, inputs on those?

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Commissioner Reckdahl: The 10th and 19th would be good combinations or 10th or 12th. For November, I'm happy with 12 or 19, and December 10 is okay.

Chair McDougall: Can we agree on December 10th? Anybody have any objection? We're having December 10th. 12th or 19th? I prefer the 12th, but I'm flexible. Of November.

Commissioner McCauley: Either is fine with me.

Commissioner LaMere: 12th is great.

Commissioner Reckdahl: I'm okay with either of them.

Vice Chair Greenfield: Mild preference for the 19th, but I could go either way.

Commissioner Cribbs: I may be traveling, but I don't know yet.

Chair McDougall: When would you know?

Commissioner Cribbs: Two weeks. Go ahead and do it.

Chair McDougall: Why don't we say 12th or 19th, and we'll give you ten days, two weeks to figure that out. We'll nail it down later.

Vice Chair Greenfield: Are we clear that we're not going to be meeting on the 26th of November?

Chair McDougall: Yes.

Mr. Anderson: I just wanted to point out for our October meeting, this room's not available. Instead we'll be at the Downtown Library.

Council Member Cormack: I will not be in attendance at this October meeting because I will be here for the Stanford General Use Permit evening.

Chair McDougall: Does anybody have any pressing topics that we should put on the agenda for the October meeting?

Commissioner LaMere: Don, one note. I will not be available on November 19th.

Commissioner Cribbs: Is there time to get a Cubberley update or am I just not aware of what's going on right now?

Mr. Anderson: That's a great question. I had to ask Department Head O'Kane, and she wasn't available to provide me with the latest and greatest. It'll certainly be in the

1 Department Report at the October meeting. If you want something sooner, perhaps we
2 can arrange ...

3 Commissioner Cribbs: No, no. It's okay. There was a part in the *Weekly* yesterday that I
4 had no knowledge of, and I thought it'd be good to know.

5 Vice Chair Greenfield: We'll have community gardens next month, I believe.

6 Mr. Anderson: If possible, the horizontal levee update from Public Works.

7 Chair McDougall: Based on the safe park conversation, I would suggest that we consider
8 an update on the 10.5 acres. Whether that comes through the ad hoc or whatever, that
9 needs to be considered. That's four or five items that would probably more than fill up a
10 meeting. We need to sort that out.

11 **VII. COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

12 Commissioner Cribbs: Carole MacPherson will be retiring at the end of the year.
13 Rinconada Masters would like to have a party for her. I think it would be very well
14 attended because there are so many people from so many years. They're looking now at
15 the Elks Club on December 10th. They would like very much to extend an invitation to
16 all the Commissioners. Consider yourselves invited. I offered to work with Kristen or
17 somebody in the Clerk's Office or Daren or anybody who can help with a proclamation. I
18 can do the information and the form, and then if you all would bless it, that would be
19 great to do something in her honor.

20 Chair McDougall: Did you say December 10?

21 Commissioner Cribbs: I said December 10. No, I didn't. I said December 8. Sorry, I
22 looked at the wrong notes. Sunday the 8th.

23 Chair McDougall: I assume that all comments and announcements have been made.

24 **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

25 Meeting adjourned on motion by Commissioner Reckdahl and second by Commissioner
26 McCauley at 9:42 p.m.