



CITY COUNCIL AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY MINUTES

Regular Meeting
Tuesday, April 2, 2002
7:30 p.m.
Menlo Park Council Chamber
801 Laurel Street, Menlo Park

CLOSED SESSION – Held at 7:00 p.m. in the Administration Conference Room located on the first floor at City Hall, 701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park.

ADJOURN TO CLOSED SESSION

1. Closed Session pursuant to Government Code Section §54956.8 regarding property negotiations for: 507 Hamilton, APN 055-341-080; Rear of 507 Hamilton, APN 055-341-020; 511 Hamilton, APN 055-341-090; 525 Hamilton, 055-341-120; 547 Hamilton, APN 055-341-160; vacant lot, APN 055-341-190; vacant lot, APN 055-341-200

Negotiating Parties: David Boesch, City Manager/Executive Director, Bill McClure, City Attorney, and Don de la Pena, Housing and Redevelopment Director.

RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION – 7:45 p.m.

REPORT ON AFOREMENTIONED CLOSED SESSION – No reportable action.

ROLL CALL - Mayor Schmidt called the meeting to order at 7:50 p.m. Mayor Pro Tem Kinney, Councilmembers Borak, Collacchi and Jellins were present. Staff present included City Manager Boesch, Assistant City Manager Seymour, City Attorney McClure, City Clerk Ramos and other department heads.

Mayor Schmidt opened the meeting in memory of Jon Davidson, a resident who passed away from a bike collision accident.

A. PRESENTATIONS AND PROCLAMATIONS

1. A Proclamation to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Nativity of the Holy Virgin Russian Orthodox Church.

Mayor Schmidt read the proclamation and presented it to Nick Korens, who expressed thanks on behalf of the church.

Mayor Schmidt introduced the City's new Public Works Director, Kent Steffens.

B. ANNOUNCEMENTS, APPOINTMENTS AND REPORTS

1. There is one vacancy on the Transportation Commission and three vacancies on the Planning Commission (the deadline for applications is April 16, 2002).

Mayor Schmidt announced the current vacancies and their application deadlines.

2. Appointments to the Housing and Library Commission (one seat each).

Councilmember Jellins nominated Elza Keet to the Housing Commission. There were no other nominations.

By a unanimous vote, Elza Keet was appointed to the Housing Commission.

Councilmember Jellins nominated Patricia Watkins, Councilmember Kinney nominated James Tedrow and Councilmember Borak nominated Helen Cheng to the Library Commission.

Mayor Schmidt called for the vote.

There was one vote for Ms. Watkins, two votes for Mr. Tedrow, and two votes for Ms. Cheng. Mayor Schmidt called for a second vote to break the tie of Mr. Tedrow and Ms. Cheng.

Helen Cheng was appointed to the Library Commission with a 3-2 vote.

Councilmember Jellins noted Mr. Tedrow's long-standing service to the City through the Friends of the Library.

3. Councilmember Reports: Schmidt, Kinney, Borak, Collacchi, Jellins

Mayor Schmidt reported on a conference he attended about sustainability and security. He also reported on his meeting with some of the City's Commission/Committee chairpersons to discuss items of interest. He noted that there was a consensus of the Chairpersons to encourage Council members to attend more meetings.

Councilmember Borak commented about the presentations of Tom Richmond and Jerry Brown at this conference on sustainability.

Councilmember Kinney commented about the presentation of Enrique Penalosa of Bogota, Colombia, who was instrumental in creating parks in that city.

C. PUBLIC COMMENT #1

Timothy Goode, Friends of the Library, said that the Friends of the Library received an invitation from the Humanities Council of California to participate in a reading program. The program entails reading the book entitled "Grapes of Wrath" by John Steinbeck to honor him on his 100th anniversary. Mr. Goode invited the Council to take a lead and promote the program to the cities of East Palo Alto and Palo Alto and other organizations and join them in this effort. Mr. Goode also informed the Council that the libraries of Stanford, Palo Alto, East Palo Alto and Menlo Park were in the process of developing a reading program to be funded by grant monies which has been postponed to accommodate the California library program.

Mayor Schmidt commented he would like to discuss this further with the City Manager.

Andy Coe, Menlo Park, invited the Council and staff to attend Community Day on Sunday, April 7, 2002 at Stanford University.

D. CONSENT CALENDAR

Mayor Schmidt read the consent calendar items. Councilmember Collacchi pulled item #3.

M/S Kinney/Jellins to approve consent calendar items 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 as presented. Motion passed 5-0.

1. Approval of audited bills for period 38 ending March 15, 2002 and for pay period 6 ending March 9, 2002.
2. Award of contract for the construction of the Belle Haven School Recreational Facilities Project to Elite Landscaping, Inc. in the amount of \$1,040,671.94; and, authorization of a budget of \$1,270,000 for construction, contingencies, testing, engineering, inspection and administration.
4. Rejection of the bid of Consortium Consolidate Corporation for being non-responsive; Award of contract to J.J.R. Construction for the 2002 Sidewalk Repair Project in the amount of \$179,287.50; and, Authorization of a budget of \$304,290 for construction, contingencies, engineering, testing and construction administration.
5. Authorization for the City Manager to execute a professional services agreement with Peninsula Library System for an Interim Director of Library Services for the City of Menlo Park in an amount not to exceed \$43,725.
6. Approval of Minutes for the City Council meetings of March 5, 2002 and March 12, 2002.

PULLED ITEM

3. Reject all bids for the Construction of the El Camino Real Adaptive Traffic Signal Coordination Project.

Staff responded to questions regarding status and timeline.

M/S Collacchi/Schmidt to approve this item as presented. Motion passed 5-0.

E. PUBLIC HEARING - None

F. REGULAR BUSINESS

1. Adopt a Resolution renaming West O'Connor Street to Walnut Street.

Don Johnson, Building Official, presented the staff report.

Judy Rocchio, Menlo Park, provided background and clarified that Sandra Drake of 101 West O'Connor did not sign the petition because she liked the name O'Connor. Ms. Rocchio also spoke on behalf of Anita Mosley stating that because Menlo Park is a tree City that it would be appropriate to rename the street to a tree name. Ms. Rocchio noted that the neighborhood plans to ask the Arbor Society to donate some Walnut trees and the residents would plant them on this street.

M/S Kinney/Jellins to adopt the resolution as presented. Motion passed 5-0.

2. Authorization to proceed with the refined concept for the Ivy Drive Neighborhood Plaza and adoption of a Resolution appropriating \$50,000 from the Redevelopment Agency 2000 Bond Proceeds for additional consultant services and contingencies for the Ivy Drive entryway, plaza and endpoint improvements and approval of a revised total budget for design, permit fees, administration and contingencies in the amount of \$410,000.

Art Morimoto presented the staff report and responded to questions regarding parking, planting of trees, and the school's drop off and pick up areas.

Bob Cronin, Bicycle Commissioner, commented about a bicycle route on Ivy Road and another one to Bayfront Park via Chilco Street and a path alongside Bayfront Expressway.

Mayor Schmidt concurred with Mr. Cronin and encouraged staff to facilitate the suggested bike routes.

M/S Kinney/Borak to approve the authorization and the resolution as presented. Motion passed 5-0.

3. Letter to Santa Clara County regarding the proposed Open Space and Field Research Zoning District for Stanford University.

Arlinda Heineck, Chief Planner, presented the staff report and responded to questions regarding timing and the concept of clustering under the County's Community Plan and the Hillside Zoning District.

M/S Kinney/Schmidt to send the proposed letter. Motion passed 5-0.

4. Discussion of Stanford's proposed improvements to Sand Hill Road and Santa Cruz Avenue and related issues.

Mayor Schmidt noted he received a few emails on this subject including one from Stephen Fioretti suggesting that it is time to consider expanding Sand Hill Road so that it can be used more efficiently as a thoroughfare.

David Boesch, City Manager, provided background and an overview about the proposal and clarified tonight's purpose. He stated that no decisions are anticipated tonight unless the Council wants to direct staff. He laid out possible options for the Council to consider such as leaving the matter at status quo; continuing further discussion with Stanford University; or deciding that certain issues warrant further studies to be undertaken by staff. Staff is open to receiving Council direction to facilitate the understanding of the community about the current traffic situation or the potential improvements.

Jamal Rahimi, Transportation Manager, used overhead slides for his report highlighting an area map, historical traffic volumes and peak-hour traffic at the intersection of Sand Hill Road and Santa Cruz Avenue, and the proposed intersection design. He responded to questions regarding the gaps in traffic counts, the methodology used in collecting the data, and described the current improvement proposal for the intersection.

Larry Horton, Stanford University, provided some background about the differences that existed between Menlo Park and Stanford on the previous proposition from Stanford to improve Sand Hill Road. He summarized the completed developments and improvements around Stanford and in Palo Alto since that time. He explained the nature of Stanford's offer of \$10.6 million to Menlo Park to pay for the road improvements in Menlo Park and his observations of this debate. He noted that Stanford's offer would remain open until December 31, 2007. He said that Stanford does not agree with some of the points, comments and conclusions in the staff report regarding the proposed intersection design relating to truck routes, the benefits it will provide to the residents in the area, and the commute traffic to Stanford Medical Center. He announced that Stanford's traffic and civil engineer consultants are present tonight to answer any questions. He responded to questions about the basis for the \$10.6 million offer.

Art Lee, Menlo Park, expressed concern about the time that has lapsed and the studies that have been conducted about the widening of Sand Hill Road and the improvements at the intersection of Santa Cruz and Sand Hill. He noted that the bridge is not safe for bicyclists and pedestrians. He wanted a clarification of Stanford's proposal.

Mayor Schmidt provided a clarification about Stanford's proposal for the road improvements.

Milton Borg, Menlo Park, commented that the traffic congestion at the subject location has been a problem for a long time and urged the Council to resolve it. He suggested working it out with Stanford or putting it on the ballot for the voters to decide.

Mary Gilles, Menlo Park, thanked the Mayor for revisiting this subject and Councilmember Jellins for questioning the statistics in the staff report. She expressed support for managed growth and progress and encouraged the Council to work on solutions to the unsafe road conditions that currently exist in the subject area.

Mark Louie, Menlo Park, expressed safety concerns for bicyclists on the bridge and commented about the cut-through traffic and motorists diverting to residential streets. He suggested managing the traffic and keeping an open mind in the dialogue. He thanked Councilmember Collacchi for talking with him and other residents about the matter.

Tamara Suden, Menlo Park, wrote a letter that was read by Mary Gilles in her absence, supporting the widening of Sand Hill Road in order to alleviate congestion and divert traffic from residential streets onto this arterial. She referenced a study by Dowling Associates in December 2000, which concluded that congestion in this arterial would be reduced if Sand Hill Road were widened.

Ken Durey, Menlo Park, expressed his disappointment because he hoped that an aggressive schedule for solving the traffic on Sand Hill Road had been developed and that a reasonable target date had been set. He felt that a majority of the Council showed a lack of urgency to resolve this matter. He thanked Councilmember Jellins for his efforts to continue to find a solution.

Carl Baier, Menlo Park, supported the widening of Sand Hill Road. He disagreed with the data in the staff report, which concluded that there is no diversion in traffic. He suggested that staff look at more recent trends and data on which to base its conclusion. He urged the Council to find common ground to make progress.

Frank Catz, Menlo Park, questioned the Council's reluctance to support the widening of Sand Hill Road and requested the Council to put the matter before the voters.

Debbie Hall, Menlo Park, commented about the cost benefits to widen Sand Hill Road and urged the Council to move forward with it. She noted that failing to improve Sand Hill Road and the intersection at Santa Cruz makes Menlo Park a road block to collaborative solutions to area problems.

Reginald Rice, Menlo Park, commented that the Council has continued to reject improving traffic in the City, citing El Camino and Sand Hill as major traffic areas. He noted that parking was the primary item of the Transportation Commission to submit to the Council for its review, but unfortunately parking was not listed as one

of its project priorities. He hoped that the Council would find a common ground with Stanford University to resolve this matter.

Gail Sredanovik, Menlo Park, commented about some of the myths surrounding this problem including the bottleneck at the Stanford Shopping Center, cut off at Sharon Heights, ambulances using Sand Hill Road to get to the hospital emergency entrance. She commented about the increased traffic in all parts of Menlo Park.

Herb Borock, Palo Alto, suggested considering a grade separation for the proposed intersection because of the continued level of growth and development in the area.

Robert Cronin, Menlo Park, expressed concern about long-term impacts to the proposed improvements from continued growth and traffic congestion.

Mayor Schmidt declared a recess at 10:20 p.m. and reconvened the meeting at 10:35 p.m. He asked the pleasure of the Council.

Councilmember Jellins suggested asking Stanford's engineers who are present to provide some technical information.

Councilmember Collacchi noted that public comments have been received and it is time for the Council to discuss the matter with staff.

City Manager Boesch said that Jamal Rahimi, Transportation Manager, could respond to the questions tonight and if there are questions he cannot respond to, staff will bring those back to Council at a subsequent meeting.

Councilmember Jellins asked Jerry Walters, Stanford's Traffic Engineer consultant, to comment on any technical issues regarding the proposed improvements.

Jerry Walters, Traffic Engineer, Stanford University, commented that he disagreed with staff's conclusion about the operation of the intersection with regard to trucks and with respect to the degree of traffic diversion or relief to west Menlo Park.

Questions and discussion ensued regarding comparing this proposal with the existing configuration at Page Mill and Junipero Serra Boulevard, the drawing scale of the proposed intersection to support pedestrians and bicyclists, and environmental review and its impact to the timeline.

Councilmember Kinney addressed some of the myths regarding peak time load, diversion of traffic, and the bottleneck at the two-lane bridge as addressed in the staff report and requested clarification about some of its points. He stated that although staff believes that the proposed improvements would solve the problem for the next ten years, what about after that time. He felt that it would not solve the overall continuing problem of development on the Stanford campus with the limited roads connecting it to the community. He clarified that the possibility of tying the proposed improvements to the Alma Street connection to Sand Hill and El Camino Real was removed from further discussion by the City of Palo Alto and is not a decision of this Council. He made additional comments addressing bridge traffic accommodation, traffic volumes at the intersection of Santa Cruz and Sand Hill Road during the afternoon peak hour, and the cap to Stanford's financial offer to Menlo Park to cover costs for the proposed improvements.

Councilmember Kinney suggested directing Councilmember Borak, Councilmember Collacchi and a staff representative to meet with Stanford University to discuss the engineering issues, long range traffic projections, trip definitions, costs, and plans for a new bridge, and to bring this item back in sixty days.

Mayor Schmidt commented about Menlo Park's traffic from Stanford's continued development. He explained that he decided to bring this matter back in order to discuss and clarify the myths and the reality of the situation. He said that there are some uncertainties including the cap on Stanford's financial participation, which he felt would not cover the actual costs and therefore would not support doing anything. He said he would want some protection from unexpected escalation of the cost for the proposed improvements. He also noted some parts of Stanford's proposal that would be unacceptable to him including the scale of the proposed intersection going from five to eight lanes at each approach with no bike lanes. He would like to see staff come up with a design for the subject intersection that would address Menlo Park's interests. He would also like staff to review the Alpine

and Junipero Serra Boulevard intersection for improvements. He supported Councilmember Kinney's suggestion to discuss this matter further with Stanford University.

Councilmember Collacchi confirmed and summarized the following main points:

- ✓ The proposed intersection needs to permit left hand turns during the same phase of a traffic signal in order to reduce congestion.
- ✓ The proposed intersection will not allow large trucks or buses to simultaneously turn from both lanes.
- ✓ Stanford argues that if the trucks use only the outer left turn pocket and it is done correctly, that there would be no overlapping of the movements. Under this assumption, there could be simultaneous lefts but there would be a question of safety, or if it is doable.
- ✓ The proposed intersection could be tweaked to allow simultaneous left turns by pulling back the median and crosswalks and widening Sand Hill Road on the far side of the intersection towards I-280 on the County's side.

City Attorney McClure commented that the City needs to ensure that the proposed intersection is designed in a way that is safe, conforms with Caltrans and accepted engineering standards, or that there is a good acceptable engineering rationale for designing it the way it is.

Mayor Schmidt commented about the other related aspects in this issue including a connection with Alma (as mentioned in the emails he received from residents) and the County of San Mateo's part in the design and cost of the proposed improvements.

Mayor Schmidt expressed he would not support the proposed improvements to the intersection of Santa Cruz and Sand Hill Road because they are not safe and they impinge on a series of parallel parking spaces on Santa Cruz Avenue which are part of an agreement between the property owners and the County about providing on-street parking.

Councilmember Collacchi commented about the reported data and the extent to which the regional patterns that come into the major arterials of this community do not intrude on the local streets. He noted that during the peak hour the local trips on the local roads are chased off of the arterials. He felt that the current expectation that the City would be able to change this pattern was greatly oversold in the community. He said that based on the data, it appears that in some of the key streets studied, traffic was either stable or declining over the last five to eight years. He said that even when the method does not seem to make sense, but the data shows that it works, he would continue supporting the data.

Councilmember Borak commented that this is an old issue and there is too much traffic in Menlo Park. As traffic increases the delay for the level of service also increases. She is concerned that any increased bandwidth that would occur at the subject intersection will be taken up by all the other arterials in the community. She is not convinced that the proposed improvements will make a difference long term because of the continued development on Stanford land and the growth in the community. She said that the proposed improvements would put more cars on Sand Hill Road that could result in increasing the delay and reducing the level of service. She does not believe Stanford's long-term land use plans will benefit Menlo Park. She agrees with Mayor Schmidt regarding the issues with the intersection in terms of design tightness and the cap for Stanford's financial offer. She feels that there should be more discussion about the design of the intersection to be fitting to Menlo Park's concerns. She would support meeting with Stanford to discuss the matter further and to include in the discussion about the Alma Street connection, the pedestrian/bicycle interface at the Alma and El Camino intersection, the trail alignments and other issues that San Mateo County might have about its role in this project.

Councilmember Jellins summarized what the City has learned then and now and said that the evidence shows that widening Sand Hill Road would benefit Menlo Park. He does not think that the traffic data in the report is dependable because the years reported had been influenced by partial closures and construction traffic and management programs conducted by the City. The data also shows that traffic has increased on Sand Hill Road in the last three or four years and that traffic on Middle Avenue, Santa Cruz Avenue and Valparaiso Avenue has decreased. He does not agree with the latter. The City's land use and circulation study shows that widening Sand Hill Road will reduce traffic on streets in Menlo Park by up to fifteen percent. He also noted that the study shows that without the Sand Hill Road widening, the heaviest impact of future Menlo Park development would occur on its own residential streets. He supports the efforts of Councilmembers Collacchi and Borak to work out a resolution with Stanford.

Discussion ensued regarding scheduling the discussion with Stanford and potential impacts to current workloads and project priorities.

There was consensus for Councilmembers Collacchi and Borak to work with City Manager Boesch in terms of scheduling the discussion with Stanford and staff without jeopardizing other project schedules.

5. Consideration of legislative items listed in the League of California Cities Bulletin(s), or items referred to in Written Communications or Information Items, including decisions to support or oppose any such legislative, communication or information item.

City Manager Boesch reported that AB 680 is anticipated to be heard between mid April and mid May and noted that a report will come back for Council discussion.

G. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

1. Memorandum from the City Manager regarding current Planning Division priorities.

City Manager Boesch noted that the only change is a slight delay in the residential review project to enable staff to bring back a cogent packet for Council's review.

H. INFORMATION ITEMS - None

I. PUBLIC COMMENT #2 – None

J. ADJOURNMENT – 12:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan A. Ramos, City Clerk