



CITY COUNCIL AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY MINUTES

Regular Meeting
Tuesday, June 11, 2002
7:30 p.m.
Menlo Park Council Chamber
801 Laurel Street, Menlo Park

6:00 p.m. STUDY SESSION – Held in the Administration Conference Room located on the first floor at City Hall, 701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park.

1. “Discover Menlo Park” – A Proposal and Related Request for Credit Against the Recreation-In-Lieu Fee amount paid by Menlo Square.

City Manager Boesch presented the staff report. Tim Kelly, developer of the Menlo Square project, summarized the two-part proposal which includes a rebate of fees paid to the City and the creation of a walking tour of Menlo Park. Council asked questions and expressed some reluctance to proceed with the proposal. After discussion, the Council directed staff to agendize the request for an upcoming regular meeting.

REGULAR MEETING – Held in the Council Chambers at 801 Laurel Street.

ROLL CALL – Mayor Schmidt called the meeting to order at 7:40 p.m. Mayor Pro Tem Kinney and Councilmembers Collacchi and Jellins were present. Councilmember Borak arrived at 8:30 p.m. Staff present included City Manager Boesch, Assistant City Manager Seymour, City Attorney McClure, City Clerk Ramos and other department heads.

A. PRESENTATIONS AND PROCLAMATIONS - None

B. APPOINTMENTS AND REPORTS

1. Arts Commission appointment (one vacancy).

M/S Collacchi/Kinney to nominate Ryan Belcher for appointment to serve on the Arts Commission. Motion passed by acclamation. Councilmember Borak was not present at this time.

Discussion ensued about the interview process by the Arts Commission and the Council appointment process.

2. Housing Commission (one vacancy) and the Community Mediation Service (one vacancy) with an application deadline of July 2, 2002 – Mayor Schmidt announced these vacancies.
3. Councilmember Reports: Schmidt, Kinney, Borak, Collacchi, Jellins.

Mayor Pro Tem Kinney reported on his meeting with Assemblyman Simitian regarding the El Camino Real tree beautification project.

Mayor Schmidt commented about the Samtrans transportation service cutbacks.

C. PUBLIC COMMENT #1

Harry Harrison, Menlo Park, commented about his letters to the editor regarding Santa Cruz Avenue street improvements.

Irene Searles, Menlo Park, noted that there are many residents that would like to retain many of the traffic calming measures on Santa Cruz Avenue. She noted a reduction in traffic speed and improved safety since its implementation.

Councilmember Jellins reported about the Santa Cruz Avenue street improvement project meeting this afternoon to review striping and other features. He said that a report would be available for the public at the end of the week.

Mickie Winkler, Menlo Park, questioned the mandate for the Cambridge bike/pedestrian undercrossing project and would oppose any further design work on this project.

Staff clarified that the Cambridge/Willow bike/pedestrian undercrossing project is scheduled before the Council on July 16, 2002.

D. CONSENT CALENDAR

Mayor Schmidt read the consent calendar items below. Councilmember Jellins pulled item D2.

M/S Collacchi/Kinney to approve consent items 1, 3 and 4 as presented. Motion passed 4-0, with Councilmember Borak absent at this time.

1. Approval of audited bills for period 49 ending May 31, 2002.
3. Approval of an agreement in the amount of \$38,500 with Hohbach-Lewin, Inc. to provide design services for the Willow Place Bicycle and Pedestrian Bridge Replacement Project; and approve a total project design budget of \$58,500 including staff time and contingencies.
4. City Council (1) approval of an agreement, in the amount of \$166,700 with ELS Architecture and Urban Design to provide architectural services for the Burgess Pool and gymnasium renovation, and (2) adoption of a Resolution authorizing a budget of \$230,000 for architectural services (including contingency), miscellaneous professional services, and staff administration and appropriating \$230,000 from the Measure "T" Bond proceeds.

Pulled item

2. City Council approval of (1) authorization of the City Manager to enter into an agreement in the amount of \$55,000 with Callander Associates Landscape Architecture, Inc. to conduct the Bay Trail Feasibility Study and (2) the allocation of \$13,000 from the current Measure "A" Account to fund the project.

Staff provided a status update.

M/S Jellins/Kinney to approve item D2 as presented. Motion passed, 4-0 with Councilmember Borak absent at this time.

E. PUBLIC HEARING - None

F. REGULAR BUSINESS

1. Authorization to proceed with Construction Drawings for the Menlo Children's Center.

Art Morimoto, Engineer, presented the staff report and introduced Don Dommer, Architect, for additional presentation.

Questions and discussion ensued regarding landscaping, interior lighting, play space, fencing, elevations, green building costs, siding materials, light monitors, and compatibility with other city facilities.

Lee Duboc, Park and Recreation Commission Chair, provided background about the master plan review process and the proposed costs of \$2.9M for the facility at that time. She expressed concern about the

high cost of the proposal, noting that there are other city facilities that need improvement. She encouraged the Council to reevaluate and identify the childcare needs of the community.

Staff provided clarification and identified the factors for the increase in costs from \$2.9M to \$6.7M.

Councilmember Borak arrived at 8:30 p.m.

Vincent Bressler, Menlo Park, expressed dismay about the project costs. He said that the people who attended the meetings were mostly parents and teachers. He said that the public should be more involved and people are not happy about the process. He noted that other City facilities are in disrepair and also need attention.

Joanne Goldberg, Menlo Park, commented about the flawed process and the lack of public notification. She said that the original project in the Master Plan is more modest and less costly. She referred to the Council study session held in March when a proposal was presented by the Parks and Recreation Commission to save money so that the remainder of the funds could be used towards upgrading and improving other city facilities. She urged the Council to look at the big picture and allocate the funds efficiently to serve the most people with the greatest needs.

Nancy Travers, Menlo Park, noted that the cost increases are valid as identified by staff. She reiterated the need for a childcare facility and urged the Council to approve the proposal.

Irene Searles, Menlo Park, recalled that during the Measure T campaign it was made clear that part of the funds was to build a childcare center and reminded the Council about the public support it received. She said that the new facility would provide space in the recreation center for other uses. She urged Council's approval.

Amy Cheun, Menlo Park, commented that the proposed funding of \$6.7M was clear to her during the Measure T campaign and noted that an adequate process took place.

Wayne Thompson, Menlo Park, said that the \$6.7M amount is the same amount that was reported at Council's previous meeting. He noted that the proposed funding for this facility was passed by the voters in November and questioned why it is being challenged. He urged the Council to approve the proposal.

Don Brawner, Menlo Park, questioned that a 14,000 square foot children's center was not specified in the Measure T fact sheet. He noted that his previous request for a list of the questions used for the telephone survey has not been received. He questioned why the project has a negative declaration finding when there are impacts such as traffic, parking and growth. He said that the project does not have adequate buy-in from the community.

Harry Harrison, Menlo Park, asked about the gunnery range at the proposed site. He questioned the roof design with the gable ends and a "hog valley" at the center, noting it would raise maintenance issues. He expressed concern about the kitchen appliances being accessible to children. He pointed out the excessive corners in the design, making it more costly to build.

Mayor Schmidt clarified that the gunnery range will be demolished.

Architect Dommer addressed the maintenance issues related to the hog configuration. Staff responded to questions regarding the administrative offices in the current recreation center and traffic issues.

Councilmember Jellins commented that he supports childcare services but would want to ensure building a good facility at the right cost. He suggested continuing to look at the costs while proceeding with the design phase.

City Manager Boesch suggested that if the Council desires, staff could present a breakdown of the proposed costs.

Mayor Pro Tem Kinney provided some background about the need for childcare facilities. He commented that the proposed amount of \$6.7M has been known for some time; and, as clarified tonight by staff, the original amount of \$2.9M was not all-inclusive. He is surprised about some of the comments raised tonight. He noted that the need to improve the childcare facilities has been in the forefront for some time even before the master plan was completed, traffic has been studied to mitigate impacts, and other interior decorating items can be adjusted in order to save money at a later time.

M/S Kinney/Collacchi to authorize staff to proceed with the construction drawings for the Menlo Children's Center.

Councilmember Collacchi said that the proposed cost of \$6.7M was advertised accurately by the City and by the Measure T committee in its brochures. He recalled that the results of the survey showed the childcare center as the most favorable for the Measure T funds. He believed that the project has substantial community support.

Councilmember Jellins suggested circulating the cost breakdown to Council and posting it on the City's website for the public. He suggested that the Council could provide its comments in writing so it can be placed on the agenda for further review. Furthermore, he asked that any public questions or concerns could be directed to staff or the Council.

City Manager Boesch clarified the process for the next steps. He suggested that if there are serious concerns about the architecture, size, etc. to address them sooner than later. He clarified that if this item is approved tonight, staff will proceed based on the project as it is presented tonight.

Councilmember Collacchi clarified that an approval tonight does not include allocating the funds. He suggested that further examination and determination of costs could take place during the bidding process.

Staff provided information on timelines and costs required to obtain construction drawings. Staff further clarified about the building square footage under the master plan and the green building concept and costs.

City Attorney McClure responded to questions regarding the bidding process and clarified that any additional input from the Council or the public regarding the construction should be addressed before proceeding with the construction drawings.

Discussion ensued regarding timelines and process for the construction drawings.

Councilmember Borak expressed support for the proposed project. She noted that the increase in costs for construction has been included in the discussions and it has public support. She reiterated the survey results supporting a child care center.

Councilmember Jellins said he would support the project because he supports childcare, nevertheless, he welcomed additional input from the public and Council on whatever changes may be useful.

Mayor Schmidt said that he is puzzled by the suggested approach to authorize contract work while continuing to solicit public input about the project. He feels this would raise an expectation from the public that the project has not been defined. However, he said that he would support the idea of getting a clarification of the cost increase in the construction element of the project from \$2.9M to \$4.0M and the total project cost of \$6.7M.

Councilmember Jellins reiterated the intent of the Council to build the best childcare center for the community and to review the costs to ensure efficiency. He said that although the Council is committed to moving forward with the construction drawings, he reiterated that public input would be welcomed.

Councilmember Collacchi confirmed that staff would bring back information that will help explain any discrepancies in costs. He clarified that the vote tonight would approve the \$4M construction cost of the project.

Motion passed 5-0.

2. 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 – None.

G. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

1. E-mail request received from Councilmember Jellins on June 5, 2002, to revisit an active recreation use question relative to Bayfront Park.

Councilmember Jellins provided background about his request and expressed concern about finding ways to fund the landfill maintenance costs of the park.

Assistant City Manager Seymour reported on the findings of the analysis and noted two apparent issues. The fiscal issue of the cost of the closed landfill and impact to the General Fund and the community's desire for recreational uses. She said that if Council directs staff to look at these issues in parallel rather than sequentially, Community Services staff will not be able to begin the public process to receive input from the community until September because of the busy summer months in recreation. She suggested that with Council permission, staff can plan to begin the community outreach efforts in September, conduct further research and come back to the Council in November.

Discussion ensued about the process, costs and recreational uses.

Lee Duboc, Park and Recreation Commission, provided a summary of the process dating back to the master plan up to the Measure T campaign. She said that the need for more playfields is evident and if the City does not build more, the money used to renovate and maintain its current playfields would be wasted. She learned that many of the user groups were not notified about this item and submitted a list of user groups that should be notified. She noted that the East Palo Alto golf program and a golf range would be commendable to support.

Steve Allen, AYSO, expressed concern that the shortage of playfields would result in the existing fields being used to maximum capacity and would bring about maintenance issues. He urged the Council to consider Bayfront Park for playfields. He said that AYSO would help financially and in other ways to develop new playfields. He responded to Councilmember Jellins' question that the location at Bayfront Park would not be a problem for AYSO.

Maria Flattery, Menlo-Atherton High School representative, commented about the difficulty in finding playfields for the school's varsity teams. She suggested considering artificial turf to mitigate drainage and maintenance issues.

Tom Harrison, Menlo Park, reiterated his request to re-examine Bayfront Park for playfields. He feels that playfields in Bayfront Park would maintain its open space look with green grass. He noted that the anticipated purchase of the salt ponds in that area would open an opportunity to develop a site for nature studies. He encouraged the Council to plan and re-examine Bayfront Park with these ideas in mind and use part of the funds derived from these uses to offset the costs. He reiterated the idea of developing a committee or assign the Parks and Recreation Commission to study potential uses.

Israel Navarette, Menlo Park, expressed support for playfields in Bayfront Park and asked Council to reconsider it.

Mayor Schmidt asked the pleasure of the Council.

M/S Jellins/Kinney to direct staff tonight to begin work on the process to explore the use for playfields in Bayfront Park.

Mayor Pro Tem Kinney requested an outline of the process after the completion of the financial study.

Assistant City Manager Seymour said that she does not have enough information at this time to outline the process of exploring which funding alternatives and recreational uses to pursue. She said that the public input process is scheduled in September and a Council review of the Parks and Recreation Commission recommendations in November. She noted that there would be an opportunity at that time to give staff further direction.

Councilmember Collacchi said he would not support the motion because there is a significant difference between open space and playfields. He said that although the Council did not rule out recreational uses at its previous discussion, he is concerned that this matter is being considered without the proponents for open space and is concerned it might create a false expectation. He believes that open spaces should be preserved as open spaces. He would support the process of acquiring new non-open space sites. He recommended deferring this item to the Council's annual priority project setting session in January but not doing any other work on it before then. He said that if the Council changes its position on the use for Bayfront Park that it should be a public hearing and he is not sure whether the Environmental Quality or the Parks and Recreation Commissions should be the focal point for work with staff on the status of Bayfront Park.

Councilmember Borak said that she would support a driving range that would not detract from the open space designation. She also sees opportunities for some playfields. She is concerned that Bayfront Park's location might become cumbersome for playfield users. She suggested amending the motion to ask the public interest groups to put together an ad hoc committee and return to the Council with ideas and recommendations.

Councilmember Jellins said he would support the idea of an ad hoc committee to develop ideas and present recommendations to the Parks and Recreation Commission. He suggested that this process could take place in parallel with the other processes. He said he would also support involving the Environmental Quality Commission.

Mayor Schmidt commented about completing the cost recovery study first and depending on the outcome of that study, proceeding with the analysis for other recreational uses. He said he would not support the motion.

Councilmember Jellins asked Councilmember Borak to clarify her amendment.

Councilmember Borak clarified that she was suggesting that the City could invite public interest groups for their input and recommendations to Council in conjunction with the timeframe for the financial study process by Brown Vence so that it would not be City staff driving the process.

Councilmember Jellins concurred with Councilmember Borak's suggestion about involving public interest groups for input and said it is important for City staff to do a comparative analysis of other kinds of uses, determine costs and impacts and provide that information to Council. Based on this understanding, he accepted the amendment.

Mayor Schmidt asked clarification if the comment by Councilmember Borak is an amendment or suggestion.

Councilmember Borak clarified that it is for the purpose of obtaining and providing additional information as part of the process.

Motion failed 2-3, with Councilmembers Borak and Collacchi and Mayor Schmidt dissenting.

M/S Collacchi/Kinney moved to bring it back in January during the Council's project priority setting session.

Councilmember Jellins proposed an amendment to bring it back in January or sooner if the public demands it.

The amendment was rejected.

Motion passed 4-1, with Councilmember Jellins dissenting.

H. INFORMATION ITEMS - None

I. PUBLIC COMMENT #2

Joanne Goldberg, Menlo Park, expressed concern about postponing the Council meeting for the pedestrian/bicycle undercrossing item to July 16, noting that the Linfield neighborhood expected it to be on next week's Council agenda.

Mayor Schmidt assured her that the agenda item was not moved to avoid public scrutiny.

City Manager Boesch explained the reasons for the change in Council meeting date.

J. ADJOURNMENT - 10:40 p.m.

Susan A. Ramos, CMC, City Clerk
Approved by City Council on July 23, 2002