



CITY COUNCIL AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY MINUTES

Special Meeting

Wednesday, June 19, 2002

7:00 p.m.

Menlo Park Council Chamber
801 Laurel Street, Menlo Park

A. ROLL CALL - Mayor Schmidt called the special meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. Mayor Pro Tem Kinney, Councilmembers Collacchi, Borak and Jellins were present. Also present were Assistant City Manager Seymour, Assistant City Attorney Dan Siegel, City Clerk Ramos and other department heads.

B. PUBLIC COMMENT

Toni Stein, Menlo Park, expressed concern about the closure of Park Theater in Menlo Park.

Patience Young, Menlo Park, expressed support for the theater and arts and urged Council to do what it can to keep the theater.

Winter Dellenbach, Palo Alto, expressed concern about the closure of Park Theater and submitted written comments to the City Clerk.

C. REGULAR BUSINESS:

1. Approval of a traffic striping and signage plan for a six month trial installation of traffic calming measures on Santa Cruz Avenue, from University Drive to North Lemon Avenue, including the location of crosswalks, curb extensions, median islands, and parking restrictions.

Audrey Seymour, Assistant City Manager, provided a summary of the project's history and review process and announced that binders containing reports and notices regarding this item are available for public review in the back of the Chambers.

Kent Steffens, Public Works Director, gave an overhead presentation on:

- Summary of changes approved on May 28, 2002
- Trial period schedule
- Crosswalk at St. Raymond's Church
- Remaining curb extensions
- Typical traffic striping and signage details
- Recommended lane widths
- Meetings with Fire District and Police Department
- Proposed parking restrictions and alternatives
- Shared bike route/parking lane
- Striping plans

Staff responded to Council questions regarding wheelchair ramps at curb extensions, Fire District concerns regarding curb extensions at Johnson, bike lane width and parking restrictions

at the curb ramp on Arbor, reflectors and tree planters on the medians, pedestrians and bicyclists in areas without sidewalks, striping for bike lanes and parking, parking restrictions, lost parking spaces at crosswalks, crosswalks at San Mateo and Rosefield Way, median and bike lane widths, parking at May Brown Way, left turn pockets, and lane delineations.

Mayor Schmidt declared a recess at 9:15 p.m. and reconvened the meeting at 9:25 p.m.

Fr. Michaels, St. Raymond's Church, Menlo Park, expressed thanks for removing the crosswalk in front of the church. He noted some safety concerns in front of the Presbyterian Church and Arbor Road because of the medians and a crosswalk at those locations.

Bill Bull, Menlo Park, criticized the plan and said that a lot of money has been wasted because of it. He expressed parking concerns near his residence and suggested removing the islands and restoring the three lanes on Santa Cruz Avenue.

Norman Berger, Menlo Park, criticized the plan for safety reasons and poor planning and inadequate process. He suggested using police enforcement to calm traffic.

James Harvey, Menlo Park, expressed concerns about the cost of the project which has resulted in a dangerous situation, the turning radius, the narrow lanes, and median islands which narrow the street lanes. He said the Council should reject the six month trial period, remove the obstacles, restore the striping to 12' traffic lanes, and prioritize the installation of sidewalks before the start of school.

Bob Creamer, Menlo Park, reiterated the safety issues around the medians and commented about the unnecessary crosswalks. He is disappointed that the project continues to move forward even with public opposition.

Chaz Bourne, Menlo Park, said that the project is an incomplete work in progress and has not been given enough time for its intended results. He said that he supports the project.

Patti Fry, Menlo Park, expressed thanks for the improved noise, slower traffic and the removal of the curb extensions. She said that she supports the median island on San Mateo and continues to be concerned about the speed on Santa Cruz Avenue. She questioned the six-month trial period and suggested imposing parking restrictions for certain hours in places where there are no sidewalks and where bicyclists and pedestrians have to share a lane. She said that installing an "It's the law" sign will help alert motorists to stop for pedestrians at the median island on San Mateo. She is concerned about the lack of sidewalks and parking restrictions on the northside of Santa Cruz between Arbor and Johnson. She suggested finding ways to slow down traffic on Santa Cruz at San Mateo because it is difficult to turn onto Santa Cruz from San Mateo which then causes congestion on San Mateo. She suggested involving the public in the planning process for the next steps.

Jesus Monroy, Menlo Park, did not speak.

Ryan Limaye, Menlo Park, said that the obstacles make the street less safe. He thanked staff about tonight's meeting notice and suggested sending similar notices to the residents during the trial period. He suggested eliminating the Hillview crosswalk and median in front of his driveway because it is difficult for a sports utility vehicle to turn left from the driveway without causing an unsafe situation. He noted that the locations of the driveways in the drawings submitted tonight are inaccurate. He suggested eliminating this crosswalk or moving it up to the east side of Hobart or the other way. He said he would support a three-month trial period.

Debbie Verity, Menlo Park, commented about the unsafe crossing on Santa Cruz Avenue and although the islands provide a safe harbor, the size could be reduced. She said that crosswalks do not make motorists stop for pedestrians and urged some police enforcement. She observed that motorists are using the bike lanes as traffic lanes and suggested getting the striping plan in place as soon as possible.

Stephanie Evans, Menlo Park, did not speak.

Harry Harrison, Menlo Park, said that Santa Cruz Avenue needs sidewalks. He said that the six month trial period is too long and said delaying the process will cause animosity. He urged the Council to install sidewalks and remove the obstacles.

Robert Cronin, Menlo Park, commented that the Santa Cruz improvement project evolved from concerns expressed by residents. He is appalled at the lack of courtesy and civility expressed by some members of the public. He explained that there is no such thing as a shared bike and parking lane.

James Clendenin, Menlo Park, expressed concern about increasing noise and unsafe conditions on Santa Cruz Avenue. He opposed the curb extensions because of safety concerns. He generally supports staff's recommendation and would like the improvements to help reduce traffic speed and make it safer to cross.

Dan Finlay, Menlo Park, said that he hopes that Council has received the petition from the residents on May Brown Avenue since he did not receive any response. He commented about safety concerns from the crosswalk and median island on May Brown Avenue. He said that installing a stop sign at San Mateo would increase safety, reduce noise and cost less.

Pat Finlay, Menlo Park, expressed thanks to Councilmember Jellins for responding to his letter and suggested removing the median island at May Brown Avenue.

Roland and Regina Koontz, Menlo Park, commended the City for the repavement project but opposed the obstacles for safety reasons. He questioned whether the plans were reviewed with the Fire District. He suggested removing all the obstacles and restriping the lanes as they were.

Horace Nash, Menlo Park, noted that Santa Cruz Avenue carries a burden because it is an arterial street. He suggested that the City and the community learn from what it is experiencing from the Santa Cruz project and consider the comments from the users after a period of time has lapsed for the project to prove itself. He believes that the City has attempted to promptly address some of the concerns and asked the residents to persevere on the experiment. He suggested putting a parking and shared bike lane on the southside of Santa Cruz Avenue between Hobart and Windsor and eliminating the left turn pocket that leads to San Mateo northbound.

Pat White, Menlo Park, said the plan is flawed and is upset that in spite of a petition signed by hundreds of residents opposing the plan, some members of Council continue to listen to a small group of traffic calming people. He referred to an article quoting Councilmember Borak and challenged her to ask for reconsideration of the plan tonight. He feels the community deserves better representation and staff.

Becky Galvez, Menlo Park, read some statistics about child injuries. She likes the idea of photographing speeders and questioned why the street was not split in half. She is concerned that parking space on the north side will move people to the south side. She does not feel the medians are a refuge for pedestrians and suggested posting signs at crosswalks to alert

motorists about pedestrians. She would like to see a survey to find out how many crosswalks are used by pedestrians. She urged the Council to make a decision tonight and not prolong the issue much longer.

Judy Morley, Menlo Park, said she has always had problems with Santa Cruz Avenue and how unsafe it is to cross. She noted that many of the people who oppose the project do not live on that street. She reiterated that the residents want the street to be safe. She suggested a median at Lemon and would like to see a 25 mph speed and sidewalks. She hopes that the striping plan will help motorists drive safely. She supports the trial period and urged the community to persevere and not give up on the plan

Greg Baker, Menlo Park, said he does not want to see a wide expanse of asphalt and would like a balance. He asked that the City stay the course and meet the objectives that it has.

Staff responded to questions about speed limit reduction, accident statistics, traffic enforcement, sidewalks, the six-month trial period, a stop sign on San Mateo, and public notification and meetings.

Mayor Pro Tem Kinney supported staff's recommendations tonight and stressed that once striping and signage are in, the project could be better evaluated for its effectiveness. He concurred with the six-month trial period for the reasons stated by staff including impact from school related activities. He is concerned about the impacts to residents with restricted parking and suggested minimizing the restrictions to peak times. He suggested keeping the bike lanes at 5 feet and questioned the crosswalks at Hillview, Windsor and May Brown. He likes the idea of putting tape down instead of paint during the trial period for crosswalks. He said he would move approval of staff's recommendation subject to further design modification.

First Motion

M/S Kinney/Schmidt to approve staff's recommendation as stated in the staff report.

Mayor Schmidt expressed concern about the full time parking restriction and questioned what purpose it would serve at night and what would those residents who are impacted do about their visitors or contractors.

Mayor Schmidt commented that the project's objectives were good and it slowed traffic but at the expense of causing some inconvenience for motorists who use the street. He does not feel the project was successful for pedestrians and the City has addressed that by removing the curb extensions. He said that sidewalks should be considered and that the proposed parking restrictions are unreasonable for impacted residents. He feels that at this point, some of the beneficial effects of the plan have been removed and if additional benefits continue to be removed, there may be no point in continuing the project. He's unsure about the purpose of the trial period, noting that traffic speed has already increased since the removal of the curb extensions. He is concerned about the vagaries of the parking situation and felt that the only way to reduce traffic on Santa Cruz is to implement some changes to the street configuration.

Assistant City Attorney Siegel clarified that the motion on the floor is to approve staff's recommendation as presented tonight.

Further clarification and discussion ensued regarding conditions for the motion.

Amended Motion:

Mayor Pro Tem Kinney stated that the motion is to accept staff's recommendation in the staff report with the following exceptions:

- **Remove crosswalks and center medians at Hillview, May Brown and Windsor**
- **Maintain the five foot bike lane at San Mateo Drive**
- **Hold a six month trial period to begin in September**
- **Maintain parking restrictions that currently exist or solicit input from impacted residents for a modification to the parking restrictions.**

Councilmember Collacchi commented about bike lanes and shared parking. Discussion ensued.

Robert Cronin Bicycle Commission, clarified that it was important to the Commission that the plan include bike lanes from downtown to Hillview that met the five-foot width standard.

Addendum to the Motion:

Mayor Pro Tem Kinney included in the motion keeping the designated parking areas as shared parking and bike lanes.

Assistant City Attorney Siegel restated the motion as follows: To approve staff's recommendation as stated in the staff report and include the following amendments: To remove the crosswalks and median islands at Hillview, May Brown and Windsor, establish a five foot bike lane on the north side of Santa Cruz Avenue; maintain a shared bike lane with parking on those areas on the south side of Santa Cruz Avenue that have allowed parking, and eliminate the proposed parking restrictions on the south side.

Councilmember Borak asked for clarification about the restricted parking on a small section of the north side of Santa Cruz Avenue between Cotton and Rosefield.

Discussion ensued.

Mayor Pro Tem Kinney replied that the north side area of Santa Cruz Avenue between Cotton and Rosefield would be restricted parking and it would not have room for a bike lane because it narrows down to 4.3 feet.

Mayor Schmidt expressed concern about space for pedestrians in the 4.3 feet lane in that part of the north side Santa Cruz Avenue while there are no sidewalks. He commented that the more the plan gets modified the less effective it is in terms of slowing traffic. He feels that the six-month trial period is too long for bicyclists.

Assistant City Attorney Siegel noted that the motion has been restated vastly from the original motion and will need to be seconded.

Mayor Schmidt stated he would not second the motion with the amendments.

The amended motion died for lack of a second.

Councilmember Collacchi expressed concern that there is no agreement with the Council to move forward with a project that would benefit the community. He said that based on the comments expressed from the community, the process failed to obtain an ultimate consensus. He said that under the circumstances and even with the design flaw, staff did a great job in responding to the concerns quickly. He feels that the project is at a point where it cannot be fixed to resolve all of the issues. In response to Mayor Pro Tem Kinney, he believes it is a worthwhile project and could be salvageable if a consensus is reached regarding location and number of crosswalks and bike lanes.

Councilmember Borak commented that after reviewing the tapes of the previous meetings, it was clear that the project started with good goals, but questioned how it went wrong. She provided some background of how the issue and project evolved. She noted that one good outcome of the project was the repavement with quiet asphalt which has reduced traffic noise. She presented a slide of what she believed may have contributed to a major flaw of the project regarding the cut through on curb extensions, from the consultant's presentation at a previous meeting. She questioned whether the project is worth pursuing in its current state. She recollected that the April 24, 2002 meeting went past midnight and may have contributed to poor conclusions and decisions being made. She noted that another area that may have contributed to the project's failure was the long period of time that lapsed from the first meeting to implementation, which may have led to an inadequate public outreach process. She is disappointed with the negative comments that have been expressed about the Council, noting that the Council had its best intentions for this project from its inception. She expressed concern that this situation has divided a lot of people in the community. She said she could not support the project with many of its elements removed.

Mayor Schmidt noted that there are two areas in the residential portion of Santa Cruz Avenue---the area closer to downtown with churches, a park and more pedestrian activity and the area in the middle part of Santa Cruz towards the schools.

New Motion

Mayor Schmidt made a motion based on this configuration, to retain the elements that are currently in place that announce the presence of the users in that area and remove all of measures in the center of the road, since this is where majority of the complaints come from, to retain the elements in the neighborhood of Arbor, Johnson and University Avenue that eliminate the parking prohibitions and problems of sub standard bike lanes, and to retain all of the elements from Hillview west and Arbor east, and in between those two areas, and to restore the status quo of wide curb lanes and center turn lanes.

Councilmember Jellins thought Mayor Schmidt's comments might be a good idea. He commented that the design itself is flawed and the efforts to correct it have brought about more public distrust. He felt that the project did not have adequate representation and perhaps the process moved too fast. He suggested removing all of the measures and asking staff to start over by conducting a further study of the street and the design elements and providing recommendations to Council to make Santa Cruz Avenue safer for bicyclists and pedestrians.

Mayor Pro Tem Kinney reminded the Council that the current state of the project is incomplete. He noted that the project has some good elements and is hopeful that a consensus can be reached on those elements. He does not feel that there is a need to send it back to staff and start over.

Seconded the motion with a correction

Mayor Pro Tem Kinney seconded Mayor Schmidt's motion with a correction to the number of crosswalks from nine to seven.

Mayor Schmidt clarified the motion to include the bike lane on the north side of Santa Cruz to be continuous with a shared bike and parking lane area on the south side, just as it used to be.

After additional requests from staff, the following clarification of the motion was made:

Clarifications added to the motion:

- **Approve staff recommendations for Lemon, Elder, and Olive**
- **Approve staff recommendations for Arbor, Johnson and University Avenue**

- **Institute a continuous bike lane through the length of Santa Cruz Avenue in the project area on the north side and a combined parking and bike lane on the south side like as it was before the installation of the measures**
- **Put a crosswalk at San Mateo without medians**
- **Approve a crosswalk on North Lemon**
- **Approve a crosswalk at St. Raymond's Church**

Councilmember Jellins asked for clarification regarding the trial period process and timeline.

Mayor Schmidt suggested that the trial period would run for six months and re-evaluated in January by the Bicycle and Transportation Commission for a recommendation to the Council. He said he would support staff's recommendation for 10'6" lane widths.

Staff clarified that the trial period will include an approximate period of two months for the public input process to take place during the six-month period.

Councilmember Jellins read a note from Ms. Galvez that at Cotton and Santa Cruz Avenue there was a crosswalk prior to the resurfacing of the roadway and clarified if the motion would include restoring that crosswalk with dual turn lanes without a median island. Mayor Schmidt said yes.

Councilmember Jellins said he is skeptical about the median island at Olive and the curb extensions at Johnson and Arbor but would support it. He reiterated his concerns about the flawed design and process, nevertheless would want to deliver a project that would promote safety for the users of Santa Cruz Avenue. He is comfortable that most of the offensive characteristics of the design have been removed, particularly the medians between Arbor and Hillview and all curb extensions with the exception of two. He said that the turn pockets at Lemon and Elder are an improvement but that he is not keen about the concept for a median at Lemon. He said he would support the motion with these caveats and with the understanding that the matter would be revisited in January 2003.

Assistant City Manager Seymour clarified that the motion would include retaining staff's recommendation for bike lanes on the north side of Santa Cruz Avenue with crosswalks as recommended and the two crosswalks as recommended without medians. Mayor Schmidt said yes.

Further clarifications added to the motion:

- **Implement the trial period for six months and evaluate in January 2003**
- **Restore the crosswalk with dual turn lanes without a median at Cotton and Santa Cruz Avenue**

The motion with the correction by Mayor Pro Tem Kinney and with all of the aforementioned clarifications by Mayor Schmidt was passed 4-1, with Councilmember Collacchi dissenting.

D. ADJOURNMENT – 12:20 p.m.

Susan A. Ramos, City Clerk
Adopted by City Council on July 30, 2002