



# CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, May 6, 2003 6:30 p.m.  
City of Menlo Park - Burgess Recreation Center  
Room 112 located at 700 Alma Street, Menlo Park

**A. ROLL CALL** - Jellins, Duboc, Collacchi, Kinney, Winkler, Fry, Halleck, Bims, Fergusson, Pagee, Sinnott, and Soffer; David Boesch, City Manager; William McClure, City Attorney; Audrey Seymour, Assistant City Manager; Silvia Ponte, City Clerk; and other City staff were present

**B. PUBLIC COMMENT**

**C. CLOSED SESSION**

1. Pursuant to Government Code Section §54956.9 Conference with Legal Counsel to consider Pending Litigation - Allied Arts Neighbors, et al versus City of Menlo Park Case Number CIV430714.

**RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION**

**REPORT ON AFOREMENTIONED CLOSED SESSION**

**D. CITY COUNCIL AND COMMISSION BUSINESS**

1. Discussion regarding the process, roles and communication.

At 7:40 p.m. Mayor Jellins, the Council Members, and all the Planning Commissioners initiated a dialogue on roles, communication and goals. Mayor Pro Tem Duboc offered to write down some of the ideas expressed, and such notes are attached to this document.

Two members of the public expressed their views on the relationship between the Council and the Planning Commission hoping that it becomes more harmonious. Mayor Jellins then started the open forum by welcoming comments from the Commissioners and addressing various general issues.

**E. ADJOURNMENT** – Mayor Jellins adjourned the Joint Study Session at 9:35 p.m.

**Respectfully submitted,**

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**Silvia M. Ponte, City Clerk**

Approved at the City Council of Menlo Park on May 20, 2003.

## Flipchart Notes from the Joint Study Session on 05/06/03

### Planning Commissioner's role in Planning:

- More structural method to work with other communities – other Planning Commissions;
- Be more pro-active; not reactive;
- Highlight certain issues in minutes for Council's attention;
- Keep the reactive role (that is the mandate);

### Possible Planning Roles:

- Housing Element;
- The General Plan;
- Belle Haven/Redevelopment and Land Use;
- Creek JPA;
- Look at how other cities (Planning Commissions) work;
- Burlingame: Study one meeting, make decision at the next one;

### Visioning:

- Use Planning Commission sensibilities to the community;
- Dealing with regional issues;
- Dealing with sections of our City: El Camino; downtown; neighborhoods; Fire District;
- Use what is produced (move past the political process);
- Articulate the issues:
  - streamline processes
  - need the staff and need support of Council to make this possible
- Annual Commission Evaluation;

### Communication Between City Council and Planning Commission:

- Have two Commissioners report to Council when split votes – have Council ask this, in most cases;
- Commission would like feedback from Council when Commission decisions are reversed.
- Commission wants a “better” way to communicate – written? verbal?
- During written communication during regular Council meetings.
- Sharing of information; Council benefits from Planning Commission experience;
- Council should give the Planning Commission a “mandate”; Council should learn if projects are possible, i.e. staff time.
- Have an “appointed” Commission spokesperson (Mayor's idea);
- Difficult to do this (Chairperson Fry); many differing viewpoints;
- Thus, highlighting of minutes;
- Have Planning Commissioners present during interviews of prospective new Commissioners;
- Ask Planning Commissioners about staff and all that entails;
- Planning Commission involved in Priority/Goal-Setting (this was different this year because of budget situation) – Commissions do this in January;
- Planning Commission should support Council but also give diverging thoughts, ideas, views, etc.

### How to Define Policy?

- Act as individuals;
- Divide up as sub-committees when dealing with Planning issues;

- Council “delegates” to the Planning Commission (that is the role as the elected representatives);
- Planning Commission appointments match the City Council rotation better?

Recruitment of Commissioners with specific expertise.

- Or train Commissioners with certain skills;
- Got to League of California Cities. Seminars.
- How to run meetings, CEQA, etc.
- Mentoring of new Commissioners;
- Try to get at least one architect on the Commission;
- Go to former Commissioners for history, and when a Commissioner doesn't have enough information (this will be a good way to find out additional information);

Action Items:

- Prepare Memo on topics discussed.
- Replace nameplates.
- Have Commissioners be on certain Regional Boards.
- Possible Commissioners interacting with other communities' commissions – East Palo Alto?
- Need protocols in place – staff will get back to both bodies on this;
- Work together;