



**CITY COUNCIL  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY  
MINUTES**

Tuesday, September 18, 2007

7:00 p.m.

701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, CA 94025  
Menlo Park City Council Chambers

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**7:00 p.m. REGULAR MEETING (Menlo Park City Council Chambers)**

**ROLL CALL** – Fergusson, Cohen, Boyle, Cline, Robinson

**Staff present** – City Manager Glen Rojas, Acting City Attorney Dan Siegel, and City Clerk Vonderlinden. Other City staff was present in the audience.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**A. VACANCIES, APPOINTMENTS AND COMMISSION REPORTS**

1. The following Advisory Bodies will have vacancies for seats that expire September 2007, with one exception. The new terms will serve until September 2011. The application deadline for submittal of applications to the City Clerk's Office is Wednesday, September 26, 2007 by 5:30 p.m.

- The Environmental Quality Commission (three seats - one term expires August 2008 and two terms expire September 2011)
- The Library Commission (one seat)
- The Housing Commission (two seats)
- The Parks and Recreation Commission (one seat)
- The Transportation Commission (two seats)

2. Commission members and Chamber of Commerce reports. None.

**B. PRESENTATIONS AND PROCLAMATIONS - None**

**C. PUBLIC COMMENT #1 - None.**

**D. CONSENT CALENDAR**

1. Authorization for the extension of a referral bonus program for critical staffing positions that occur on a citywide basis, as determined by the City Manager. (Staff Report #07-162)

2. Approval of the minutes for the City Council meeting of July 31, 2007. (attachment)

**M/S Boyle/Cline to approve the Consent Calendar as submitted. Motion carries 5-0-0.**

**E. PUBLIC HEARING - None**

**F. REGULAR BUSINESS**

1. Consideration of a comment letter on the Draft Program Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) for the Central Valley to Bay Area Segment of the California High Speed Rail Project. (Staff Report #07-158)

Kent Steffens, Public Works Director, provided a brief overview on the High Speed Rail Project. He said that the City has been following progress on this project for awhile and it became of particular interest to Menlo Park because of the various impacts to the City. He said that if High Speed Rail was to come through the City boundaries, there is a concern of how this would happen. Mr. Steffens said that the Council in 2004 made comments on the issue and sent a letter specifying its concerns.

He added that currently the project is a State project that is unfunded and ultimately a project of this size would require voter approval.

Chip Taylor, Transportation Manager, said that in reviewing the Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) staff made comments about the impacts to Menlo Park. He outlined the seven items the City included in the letter which were: freight traffic, funding, electrification, noise and vibration mitigation, alternatives, grade separation and other environmental impacts. Mr. Taylor noted that on the electrification item staff will need to amend the wording so that it becomes clear that this line can be integrated with the Caltrain line.

Vice Mayor Cohen asked Mr. Steffens if grade separations will come to fruition. Mr. Steffens said that there is the potential of it happening if the voters approve it. Vice Mayor Cohen also asked if residents can communicate directly with the authorities that will make the decision. Staff said that body is the High Speed Rail Authority. Council Member Robinson asked if the Project Level EIR will be completed before the voters will be asked to make a decision. Mr. Steffens commented that the Project Level EIR will not be completed before the item might be placed on a ballot.

Council Member Robinson asked staff to reiterate and include the same comments that were included in 2004 letter. Council Member Cline inquired about the City's recourse if some of the concerns listed are not addressed. Mr. Steffens said that staff doesn't know at this point if the comment letter will have an impact, but it is staff's recommendation to not miss this opportunity to comment on the matter and weigh in. Mayor Fergusson found the previous letters and resolution included with the staff report useful. She asked if and when the Council would adopt a resolution on this topic versus just sending a letter. City Manager Rojas added that it is Council's prerogative to approve a resolution and while this is a more formal document it is unclear if it would be viewed differently than the letter being sent.

#### Public Comment

Margaret Fruth said that Council should mention the need to consider grade separations. She asked Council to specify what it does not support and ask that ridership be considered.

Council Member Robinson said that one problem with raising the tracks is that it could split the downtown. In general, he does not think freight is the number one issue. Mayor Fergusson opined that this letter is a technical document and so she would like staff to identify places where the Council can take a position. Regarding project alternatives, she would like the 280 route and undergrounding listed as possibilities. Additionally, the Mayor would like to have the fact that this impact neighborhoods listed as a consequence. Mayor Fergusson further commented that the train would change the character of the cities it passes through.

Vice Mayor Cohen echoed the concerns posed by the Mayor, as well as the speaker and Mr. Engel's points sent via an email. He is looking for a vision about transportation and what it means to the people of Menlo Park. Council Member Boyle agreed with comments made by the Mayor, but he wanted to remind the public that tonight is not the time to take a position "for" or "against" High Speed Rail. Council Member Boyle said that he is going to ask for agreement from a colleague to possibly have a Study Session on the issue of grade separations. He said that the letter covers most of his issues but he would like to prioritize the bullet points. On the comment about freight, he would like to have it be more explicit. In his opinion the letter should state that the Program EIR should at least address possible impacts of grade separations. Council Member Cline agreed with all the additions and he would like more residents' feedback.

Council Member Robinson said there is no information on the pros and cons of the project. He would like to have ridership data. He stated that there are a lot of people with opinions and models and maybe this can become part of the speakers' series. Mayor Fergusson asked that the idea of a resolution be considered. Council Member Boyle thinks the letter will be sufficient and that a resolution might not be needed. **Council direction was to have the revised letter come back next week on the Consent Calendar.** The Mayor suggested the City Manager distribute the letter to City Managers in neighboring cities in San Mateo County and include Palo Alto. Mayor Fergusson asked about including comments from the public and staff thought that would not be appropriate at this time.

2. Consideration of state and federal legislative items, including decisions to support or oppose any such legislation, and items listed under Written Communication or Information Item.

City Manager Rojas spoke about Constitutional Amendment Eight which pertains to eminent domain reform and the attempt to protect small businesses and homes. Mr. Rojas said the amendment failed.

**G. WRITTEN COMMUNICATION** - None

**H. INFORMATION ITEMS** - None

**I. COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS**

Council Member Cline shared a draft of the El Camino Real Downtown newsletter. He said this will be mailed to every mailbox in the city in two to three weeks as part of Phase I. Council Member Boyle said it would be a tri-fold style document and a web based newsletter with web response capability will also be available. Council Member Cline referred to a presentation he attended on the Grand Boulevard at SamTrans and it covered housing and transit issues. Council Member Boyle said he attended as the alternate and he opined that there were a lot of interesting facts and education on development issues. He believes this presentation should be included in the speakers' series to help people understand the challenges and considerations that need to be made in a process of this magnitude.

Council Member Robinson shared that Lisa Friedman, who is local and has been dealing with the realities of smart growth for various communities, could also be a potential speaker. Council Member Robinson said that he met with Cynthia D'Agosta from the San Francisquito Creek JPA and the funding is not in the federal budget for the Corps of Engineers project. He said that there are phone calls and lobbying efforts being made to remedy this situation. Council Member Robinson explained this will be an item of discussion at the next JPA meeting.

Council Member Boyle said last Friday he met with Council Member Cline and other City staff on the creation of a Finance Committee. In two weeks Ms. Augustine will bring back a staff report.

Mayor Fergusson reported on attending the Northern California Water Tour and she saw first hand how all the water systems are interconnected. Mayor Fergusson reported on meeting with City staff and three Planning Commissioners regarding 64 Willow Road. She thought it was an excellent meeting and the Planning Commission will hold an information session on the matter. Mayor Fergusson announced that tomorrow morning there will be a welcome breakfast at the Left Bank for the new City Manager. The meeting has been appropriately noticed so Council and Commissioners can attend.

Council Member Robinson asked if the Park Theater item will be on next week's agenda. Mr. Rojas said that staff has not received a formal written proposal and so an alternative date is October 2.

**J. PUBLIC COMMENT #2** (Limited to 30 minutes)

Margaret Fruth said she received an invitation for the breakfast but she did not remember that there was a cost to attend the event.

Mayor Fergusson said the cost is for those who wish to have breakfast but the meeting portion is free. She added the event is being organized by private parties.

**K. ADJOURNMENT** - The meeting adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Silvia M. Vonderlinden, Certified Municipal Clerk  
Approved at the Council Meeting of October 23, 3007.