



**SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**

**Date:** 3/21/2018  
**Time:** 7:00 p.m.  
**City Council Chambers**  
**701 Laurel St., Menlo Park, CA 94025**

**6:15 p.m. Closed Session (City Hall - “Sharon Heights” Conference Room, 2nd Floor)**

Mayor Ohtaki called the closed session to order at 6:20 p.m.

Councilmembers Carlton, Keith, Mueller, and Ohtaki were present. Cline was absent.

Mayor Ohtaki opened the public comment for the members of the public.

- Pamela Jones spoke about the district elections (Attachment).

**CL1.** Closed session conference with legal counsel on anticipated litigation pursuant to Government Code §54956.9(d)(2) – one case

Attendees: City Manager Alex McIntyre, City Attorney Bill McClure, Assistant City Attorney Cara Silver, Interim City Clerk Clay Curtin

**7:00 p.m. Regular Session (City Council Chambers)**

**A. Call to Order**

Mayor Ohtaki called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

**B. Roll Call**

Present: Carlton, Cline, Keith, Mueller, Ohtaki

Absent: None

Staff: City Manager Alex McIntyre, City Attorney Bill McClure, Deputy City Clerk Jelena Harada

Mayor Ohtaki led the pledge of allegiance.

Mayor Ohtaki stated that there was no report from the closed session.

**C. Public Comment**

- Steve Van Pelt spoke about the quality of the meeting video recordings.

**D. Regular Business**

**D1.** Consideration of the Advisory Districting Committee’s recommendation on adoption of a five-district

map and six-district map (with an at-large elected mayor) and related election sequencing (Staff Report #18-056-CC)

Assistant City Attorney Cara Silver made a presentation. Max Heim, member of the Advisory Districting Committee, presented the committee's recommendation.

Mayor Ohtaki opened the public hearing.

Public Comment:

- Helen Grieco, California Common Cause, spoke in favor of districting.
- Julie Shanson spoke in support of the five-district option.
- Pamela Jones spoke in support of the five-district option.
- Michael Cohen spoke about election sequencing and importance of staggered councilmember terms.
- Fran Dehn, Menlo Park Chamber of Commerce, spoke about the five-district option and map selection (Attachment).
- Rob Silano spoke in support of the six-district map.

**ACTION:** Motion and second (Carlton/Cline) to close the Public Hearing. By acclamation, Mayor Ohtaki closed the public hearing.

**ACTION:** Motion and second (Carlton/Cline) to adopt a five-district map and election sequencing, as recommended by the Advisory Districting Committee. The motion passed unanimously.

## E. Adjournment

Mayor Ohtaki adjourned the meeting at 8:35 p.m.

Jelena Harada, Deputy City Clerk

These minutes were approved at the City Council meeting of April 24, 2018.

March 21, 2018

Mayor Ohtaki, Vice Mayor Mueller, Councilmembers Cline, Keith and Carlton,

Thank-you for your commitment to participatory governance which resulted in the Advisory Districting Committee (ADC). The Council's efforts and guidance were met with 29 applicants, demonstrating a high level of community engagement. The ADC's end product was the result of the members becoming experts on the communities of interest in Menlo Park as well as many other considerations.

I believe that the six-district/mayor elected at-large solution should be removed from your discussion. This option would dilute the vote of District 1 and maintains an at-large (mayor) member of the council. This would not completely satisfy the demand letter to move from at-large elections. Additionally, the ADC "voted unanimously to issue an advisory opinion recommending a five-district solution over a six" (Staff report #. 18-056-CC).

It is clear that the district election sequencing is designed to allow two council members to run for a third term. I recognize that when choosing to run for public office, people have both altruistic and personal reasons to serve the community. Given that Menlo Park is changing how it votes, at this time it is appropriate to consider the significant issues within each district as a higher priority than who wants to run for another term.

Districts 1(Belle Haven) and 5 (Mueller and Carlton) are excluded from this discussion. When comparing Districts 2, 3 and 4, we must ask "What current and future issues have the greatest impact on the residents of Menlo Park?" For example, traffic on Willow Road, Bay Road and Middlefield Road affects District 2. Traffic on Willow, Middlefield, El Camino Real and Ravenswood affects District 3. District 4 is affected by the traffic on Santa Cruz. Both Districts 3 & 4 are affected by portions of the Downtown Specific Plan. District 3 includes rail crossing and main library considerations.

These are just a few examples of what must be considered in the sequencing of district-based elections. Sequencing should not be based on insuring that two council members are eligible to run for a third term in the 2018 elections. If truly committed to the best interests of the city, an interested candidate can always run in 2020. Given the number of critical issues facing our city, it is appropriate to open the door for new people on the council. No one council member can be an expert on all issues facing the city. District elections and new candidates allows for experts to bring their more specialized knowledge to the dais. It is this information that allows a more inclusive and robust discussion. The shared solutions will have taken into consideration a broader range of residents' concerns.

This recommendation in no way intended to diminish your years of dedication to the council and the City of Menlo Park. You are commended for taking time away from your families and employment to make decisions in the best interest of the City of Menlo Park.

Thank-you! Thank-you!

Respectfully, Pam D. Jones



## Mayor Ohtaki and Council Members

We appreciate the opportunity to provide input on the Advisory Districting Committee's recommendations on District Elections: adoption of a five-district map or six-district map (with an at-large elected mayor) and related election sequencing. Council's decision to evaluate and then move toward a "By-District" election system for Menlo Park was first publicly introduced less than six months ago (4 October 2017). The formation and work of the Advisory Districting Committee was by necessity condensed, resulting in eight meetings over the course of nine weeks. We would like to acknowledge and thank the nine committee members for their work.

We have followed the process closely, attended all Advisory Districting Committee (ADC) Meetings, provided input through Public Comment and submitted a 5-District configuration (Map #5-019) for consideration. This map was designed to give maximum representation in key areas of the City.

Moving forward, our comments on your decision process at this Council Meeting are as follows.

### Number of Districts

#### **\*5-Districts: The Chamber supports a Five-District map.**

We urge you, as Council, to adopt Five-Districts over Six-Districts since it MINIMIZES TRANSITION over the next three election cycles:

- 2018 Election: an interim By-District solution to avoid threatened litigation
- 2020 Election: Charter Process, if adopted by voters in 2018, will change districting
- 2022 Election: 2020 Census will necessitate new district boundaries based on population shifts

#### **\*Six-Districts: A Six-District/Elected Mayor solution has the following deficiencies:**

- Litigation: it trades threatened litigation (Shenkman) for potential litigation.  
Reference: "increasing the number of members of a legislative body may require a ballot measure" as cited in City Attorney Staff Reports #17-234-CC; #17-259-CC; #18-003-ADC .
- Fragmentation: it is inconsistent with Menlo Park's population/city size  
With the exception of Redwood City (population 85,000), no other San Mateo County city, with a population greater than 6,000, has more than 5 Council members. Even the Board of Supervisors is capped at five members.
- Scope: this action is too significant, too soon, and without analysis of benefits (if any)
- Lacks Support: Advisory Districting Committee (ADC) also recommends against 6-Districts
- Lacks Perspective: 2018 is a transition state, not an end-state; order change responsibly

### Map Selection

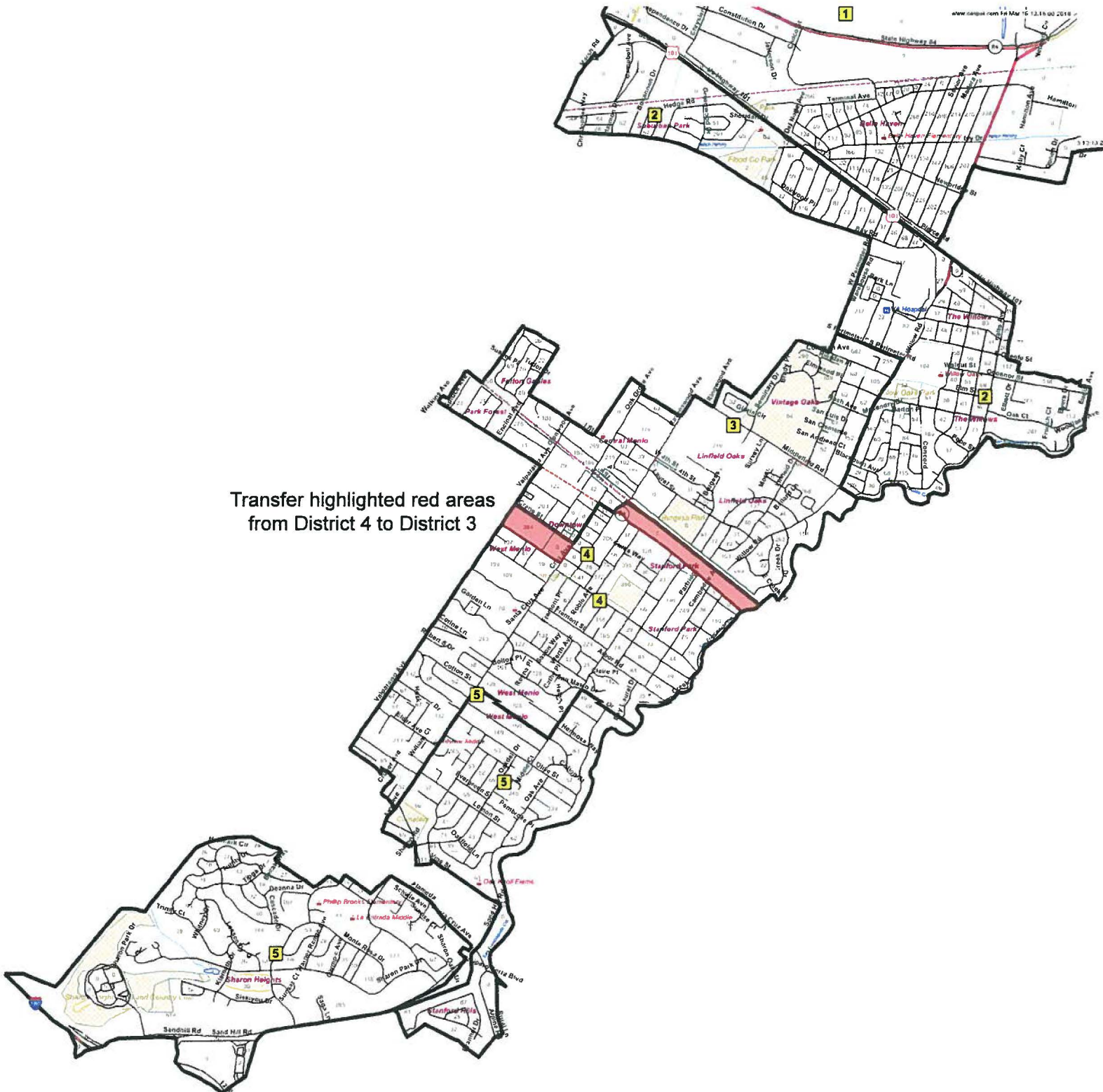
Although there are attributes of each map recommended by the ADC, Map #5-007a is the preferred alternative of the two. We do however recommend the following changes to #5-007a for Districts 3 & 4:

- El Camino Real: Bifurcate El Camino Real, between San Francisquito Creek and Ravenswood Avenue, allocating the east side to District 3, and the west side to District 4.  
All future rail changes will be borne by District 3, such as grade separations, bike/pedestrian crossings, a potential construction shoefly, and any other resulting implications from High-Speed Rail. This boundary is a "zero" population area and will not create statistical change.
- Downtown: Extend District 3 downtown border from Crane to University Avenue to reflect a more equitable distribution, splitting along the main arterial.

For those of us who attended all of the ADC meetings, if we learned anything from this process, it is that there is no perfect map – nor a perfect process. We trust that any future modifications in districting will include maximum representation in key civic areas as a critical element.

Submitted: Chamber of Commerce

# Map 5-007a Edit



Transfer highlighted red areas  
from District 4 to District 3

# Menlo Park 2017-2018 Districting Project

# 5-019

