



REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Date: 8/13/2024
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Locations: Teleconference and
City Council Chambers
751 Laurel St., Menlo Park, CA 94025

Regular Session

A. Call To Order

Mayor Taylor called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

B. Roll Call

Present: Combs (Remote – Brown Act), Doerr, Nash, Taylor
Absent: Wolosin
Staff: City Manager Justin I. C. Murphy, City Attorney Nira Doherty, Assistant to the City Manager/City Clerk Judi A. Herren

C. Closed Session

C1. Conference with legal counsel – anticipated litigation
(Paragraph (2) of subdivision (d) of Gov. Code § 54956.9)
Significant exposure to litigation: One case

D. Adjournment to Closed Session

E. Call To Order

Mayor Taylor re-called the meeting to order at 6:48 p.m.

F. Roll Call

Present: Combs (Remote – Brown Act), Doerr, Nash, Taylor
Absent: Wolosin
Staff: City Manager Justin I. C. Murphy, City Attorney Nira Doherty, Assistant to the City Manager/City Clerk Judi A. Herren

G. Report from Closed Sessions

No reportable actions.

H. Agenda Review

The City Council pulled item L3.

I. Public Comment

- Greg Goodwin spoke on concerns relating to scheduling meetings with individual City Councilmembers regarding the naming of the Belle Haven Community Campus.
- Kenneth Harris with donated time from Rhona Harris spoke in support of highlighting and advertising the name Onetta Harris Community Center.
- Chester Palesoo Sr. spoke in support of naming reconsideration of the Belle Haven Community Campus to Onetta Harris Community Center.
- Gail Wilkerson spoke in support of memorializing Onetta Harris and on concerns related to Willow Road changes violating Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 and 2021.
- Chester Prince spoke in support of memorializing Onetta Harris at the Belle Haven Community Campus.
- Aileen Lattmann spoke on concerns on the RV (recreational vehicle) parking at Campbell Avenue and Scott Drive and in support of signage and striping and future City Council items to discuss action to mitigate the dangers.

J. Presentations and Proclamations

J1. Presentation: Annual Finance and Audit Commission report out (Attachment)

Finance and Audit Commission Chair Matt Normington made the presentation (Attachment).

J2. Presentation: Annual Library Commission report out (Attachment)

Library Commission Chair Carol Orton made the presentation (Attachment).

K. Advisory Body Vacancies and Appointments

K1. Consider applicants and make appointments to fill vacancies on various advisory bodies (Staff Report #24-133-CC)

Assistant to the City Manager/City Clerk Judi Herren made the presentation (Attachment).

- Kim Crockett spoke on their application to the Library Commission.

The City Council discussed AI/technology used in applications.

The City Council made appointments to fill vacancies.

Housing Commission:

- Hadrien Trempont – term expiring April 30, 2025

Library Commission:

- Kim Crockett – term expiring April 30, 2026

Parks and Recreation Commission:

- Kevin Dawkins – term expiring April 30, 2027
- Dawn Emms – term expiring April 30, 2025

- Justin Van Buren – term expiring April 30, 2026

L. Consent Calendar

- L1. Accept the City Council meeting minutes for July 9, 2024 (Attachment)
- L2. Receive and file the investment portfolio reports for June 30 (Staff Report #24-132-CC)
- L3. Adopt a resolution approving the fiscal year 2024-25 investment policy for the City and the Successor Agency (Staff Report #24-134-CC)

- Jaden Wong spoke in support adding Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) to the policy.
- John McKenna spoke in support of adding ESG policy.

The City Council discussed the inclusion of ESG language in the policy for future investments.

The City Council directed staff to return the policy to City Council with draft ESG language and to identify possible impacts from including ESG in the policy.

- L4. Repeal and replace City Council policies and procedures and approve updates to the City Council Procedures Manual (Staff Report #24-135-CC)

ACTION: Motion and second (Nash/ Doerr), to approve the consent calendar, except L3., 4-0-1 (Wolosin absent).

M. Study Session

- M1. Community Funding Program (Staff Report #24-136-CC)

Assistant to the City Manager/City Clerk Judi Herren made the presentation (Attachment).

- Lynne Bramlett spoke in support of reviewing the program and designating the Finance and Audit Commission (FAC) to review.
- Juanita Croft spoke in support of the program, the Belle Haven Community Development Fund and providing more outreach to residents about available resources and programs.

The City Council received clarification the staff's recommendations to the subcommittee and staff resources and time.

The City Council discussed recipient non-profit service provider advertising, setting a minimum and maximum grant amount, ensuring that the grant funds are being used within the city and how they support the city, smaller grants to smaller organizations, cancelling the program, replacing program with community investing through seed grants, reducing the number of grants given each year and impacts to recipient organizations budgets.

The City Council directed staff to postpone the program until spring 2025, notify the organizations of the delay and receive feedback for improvements to the program from those organizations.

The City Council took a recess at 9:12 p.m.

The City Council reconvened at 9:28 p.m.

M2. Update on City-hosted community events and observances (Staff Report #24-137-CC)

Library and Community Services Director Library Sean Reinhart, Library and Community Services Manager Natalya Jones and Senior Program Assistant Jen Mosso made the presentation (Attachment).

- Jenny Michel spoke in support of moving away from city hosted religious events.

The City Council received clarification on event sponsorship tiers, sponsor selection criteria, and holiday lighting options.

The City Council discussed efficiencies or cancellation/cuts of events, impacts to the health of trees from decorative lights, and community events that encourage residents to shop locally.

The City Council directed staff to consider staff time when evaluating event sponsorships, proceed with the calendar of proposed community events, prioritize Menlo Park residents, resume a lead role at the egg hunt event, proceed with the light up the season event with trees that are lit for the duration of the holiday season, and protect the health of trees.

N. Informational Items

N1. City Council agenda topics: August – September 2024 (Staff Report #24-139-CC)

N2. Short-term rental compliance update (Staff Report #24-131-CC)

N3. Progress report on implementing the 2030 Climate Action Plan (Staff Report #24-138-CC)

- Jaden Wong spoke in support of sustainability efforts.

The City Council discussed the progress report.

O. City Manager Report

None.

P. City Councilmember Reports

City Councilmember Doerr reported out that Sharon Park does not appear to have been dedicated as a public park or purchased by the City (or County) as a park. Because of this, Government Code §38440 et seq. would govern. Therefore, Sharon Park could only be abandoned or converted to a different use following a special election or an exchange of a minor portion of the park for the same sized, contiguous land adjacent to the park.

Q. Adjournment

Mayor Taylor adjourned the meeting at 10:41 p.m.

Assistant to the City Manager/ City Clerk Judi Herren

These minutes were approved at the City Council meeting August 27, 2024.

Finance and Audit Commission

ANNUAL UPDATE – AUGUST 2024

MATT NORMINGTON, FINANCE AND AUDIT COMMISSION CHAIR



Agenda

FAC role and priorities

Review of FAC activities and plans

City Council guidance

Finance and Audit Commission

Support the City Council in delivery of timely, clear and comprehensive reporting of the City's fiscal status to the community at large

Commissioners

- Colin Albright (*new*)
- Lynne Bramlett – Vice Chair
- Jayanta Dey
- Jackson Garton (*new*)
- Jeff Leroux
- Matt Normington – Chair
- Carol Wong

FAC Work Plan Goals

1. Conduct annual review of the City's investment policy
2. Review the scope and process of the audit with the City's auditor
3. Review quarterly performance of the City's investment portfolio
4. Review the annual independent auditor's report
5. Review the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR)
6. Review of the City's pension and post-employment obligations
7. Identify potential financial benchmarks
8. Identify potential alternative revenue sources
9. OpenGov transparency portal improvements and community training
10. Encourage and facilitate robust public comment and participation at Commission meetings
11. Foster a public meeting environment that is inclusive to of all members of the diverse Menlo Park community
12. Support the filling of openings on the Commission and the effective onboarding of new Commissioners
13. Research opportunities to pay down successor agency debt

FAC Activities: 2023-24

Updated the FAC work plan

Met with the City's investment advisor to understand the portfolio, strategy and investment policy

Reviewed grant funding opportunities with the City's grant writer and recommended quarterly updates to the Commission

Met with the City's new auditor to understand the audit scope, process, focus areas and results

Reviewed the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) with City staff and auditor

Formed subcommittees to focus on specific work plan goals

- Alternative revenue sources
- Financial benchmarks
- OpenGov transparency portal
- Successor agency debt

Shared subcommittee findings and recommendations with the Commission and staff, including:

- OpenGov portal improvement suggestions
- Successor agency background research

Looking forward: FAC Plans

Quarterly review of the City's investment portfolio performance and grant funding; conduct annual review of the investment policy, audit results and ACFR

Continue subcommittee focus areas

Facilitate the onboarding of new commissioners

- Two new commissioners appointed in April

Support timely, clear and comprehensive financial reporting to foster transparency and diligent stewardship of the City's finances

City Council guidance

Is there any feedback or direction you would like to provide the FAC?



THANK YOU



ANNUAL LIBRARY COMMISSION REPORT-OUT 2023-2024

Carol Orton, Chairperson, Library Commission





LIBRARY COMMISSION WORK PLAN 2023-24 GOALS



1. Provide a public forum for discourse about City libraries
2. Support preparations for the Belle Haven Community Campus
3. Review library procedures and policies
4. Advise on library-related emergency preparedness
5. Review emerging trends in library services
6. Ensure equitable access to library services
7. Provide onboarding to new commission members
8. Update the LCS department strategic plan
9. Review the LCS budget proposal
10. Advise on potential synergies with other City departments.





GOAL 1: PROVIDE A PUBLIC FORUM

- As requested by the City Council, the Library Commission heard feedback from hundreds of commenters at multiple meetings of the Library Commission and several joint meetings with the Parks and Recreation Commission relating to the naming of the Belle Haven Community Campus

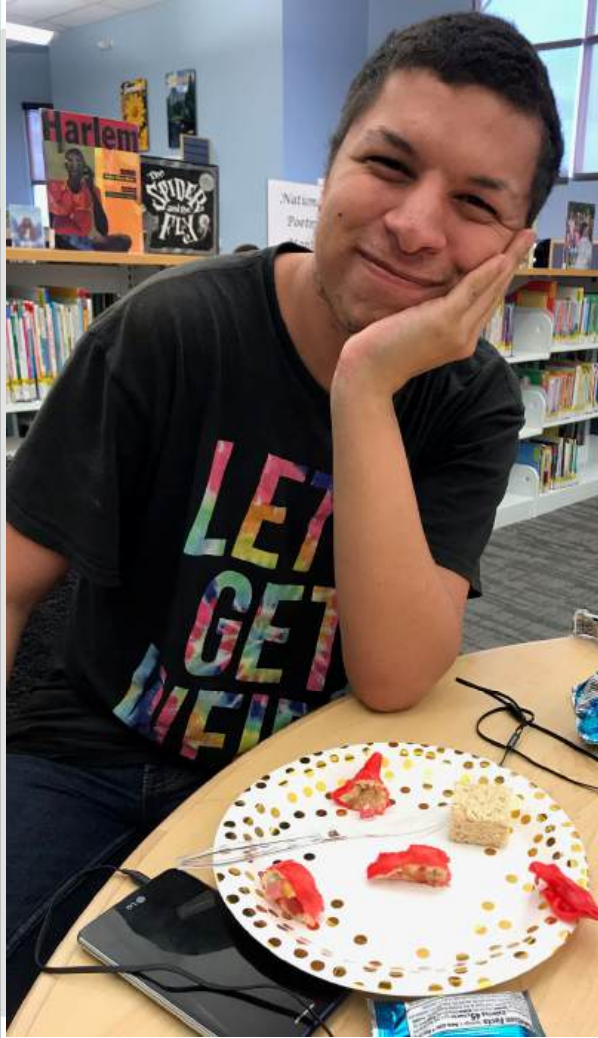




GOAL 2: SUPPORT OPENING OF THE BELLE HAVEN COMMUNITY CAMPUS



- Reviewed, advised and/or recommended programming and policies for the new multigenerational facility at 100 Terminal Avenue
- Jointly with the PRC the LC offered recommendations on the naming of the facility
- The LC continues to monitor operations at the BHCC:
 - Community response to the new library has been overwhelmingly positive
 - Feedback from users is being collected and reviewed; note that many users seem to be new to using a public library
 - Additional library programs and services are under development and tentatively scheduled for implementation during summer/fall 2024





SUMMARY OF ADDITIONAL COMMISSION AREAS OF FOCUS IN 2023-24



- Updated LC work plan
- Selected new Chair and Vice Chair
- Departmental policies reviewed:
 - Bulletin board policy
 - Exhibits and displays policy
 - Library computer and internet use policy
 - Library meeting room use policy
 - Library use guidelines
 - Local author collection policy
 - User account privacy policy
- Recommended the Library and Community Services department strategic plan 2024-26
- Received City-run child care program updates
- Provided a monthly forum for public transparency and input related to library services in Menlo Park





ONGOING COMMISSION TASKS FOR 2023-24



- Onboarding new Commissioners
 - Current Chair (Carol Orton) and Vice Chair (Jennifer Wise) have served for just over one year (since May 15, 2023)
 - Remaining 4 Commissioners have all been appointed within the last few months – one more vacancy to be filled
- Collaboration and Coordination with the PRC
 - Next joint meeting scheduled for December 2024
 - We anticipate coordinating and collaborating with the PRC as needed to address ongoing operation of the Belle Haven Community Campus







MOVING FORWARD 2024-25



- Library Commission is developing the 2024-25 work plan
- Vision for the “Library of the Future”
- 2024-25 work plan is set to be presented to City Council Sept. 24
- Library Commission members look forward to continuing to support vibrant and relevant community centers for Menlo Park residents
- Any feedback or guidance from the City Council on how the Library Commission should focus its efforts would be appreciated
- Thank you for your support!



THANK YOU



CONSIDER APPLICANTS AND MAKE APPOINTMENTS TO FILL VACANCIES ON VARIOUS ADVISORY BODIES

Judi Herren, Assistant to the City Manager/ City Clerk





OVERVIEW

Advisory body	Vacancies	No. of applications	Term length
Housing Commission (HC)	1	4	April 30, 2025
Library Commission (LC)	1	4	April 30, 2026
Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC)	3	8	April 30, 2025 April 30, 2026 April 30, 2027



OVERVIEW

- Recruitment period
 - July 1 – Aug. 2
 - Five (5) vacancies, 10 applicants and 16 applications received



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

To consider

Voting methods	Roll call vote by commonly used first name.
Tie votes	Results in another round of voting between the applicants who tied
Order of appointments	By number of applicants (PRC, LC then HC), alphabetically, or other City Council preference
Assigning term lengths	Separate votes for each vacancy by term length or city clerk random selection
Option to reopen recruitment	Direct staff to extend the recruitment period



THANK YOU



COMMUNITY FUNDING PROGRAM

Judi Herren, Assistant to the City Manager/ City Clerk



BACKGROUND

- Enacted in 1996
- Eligibility of programs
- Application review



TIMELINE

- August/September: marketing begins
- October: applications due
- November: City Council subcommittee meeting(s)
- January 2025: City Council allocates funding
- July 31, 2025: annual reports due from award recipients



PROGRAM CONSIDERATIONS

- Consider adjustments to guidelines:
 - defined areas of verified community need
 - impact of funding in nonprofit agency budget
 - overall program funding amount
 - application review procedure
 - term of grant/expenditure timeline
 - specifications for annual reporting



THANK YOU



UPDATE ON CITY-HOSTED EVENTS

City Council, August 13, 2024



STUDY SESSION FOCUS

Larger-scale recurring annual events

- Citywide audience
- Widely-celebrated holidays
- Civic observances
- Local traditions

The City also organizes numerous smaller-scale events and programs; not a focus of this study session





RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends that City Council provide direction regarding events in the coming year. Policy considerations include:

- Schedule of events planned in fiscal year 2024-25
- Cost in city resources and City staff time to produce community events
- The City's role in hosting events based on holidays of religious origin
- The role of community partners in hosting events
- Any other feedback or direction related to community events.



SCHEDULE OF EVENTS IN 2024-25 (PROPOSED)

Date (tentative)	Community event	Proposed location/s
Jul.10 – Aug. 14 (9 total)	Summer concert series	Fremont Park / Kelly Park
Oct. 26	Halloween parade & carnival	Santa Cruz Ave. / Fremont Park
Nov. TBD	Seasonal lights installation	Fremont Park / Kelly Park
Dec. 6	Light up the Season	Fremont Park
Dec. 14	Photos with Santa	Belle Haven Community Campus
Feb. 10	Black Liberation Month Celebration	Belle Haven Community Campus
Apr. 19	Spring Fest / Egg Hunt	Burgess Park
May TBD	Youth Poetry Voices	City Council Chambers
Jun. 17	Juneteenth celebration	Belle Haven Community Campus
Jul. 4	4 th of July parade & festival	Burgess Park

SUMMER / FALL EVENTS

- Juneteenth celebration
 - Co-led with Belle Haven community organizations
 - Local vendors, entertainment, activities, food
- 4th of July parade and festival
 - People parade at Burgess Park; family swim at City pools
 - Entertainment, activities, food
- Summer concert series
 - Local bands selected through open submission process
- Halloween parade and carnival
 - People parade down Santa Cruz Ave. to Fremont Park
 - Merchant trick-or-treat.



YEAR END EVENTS

- Light up the season
 - Ring in the holiday season and “shop local” initiatives
 - Entertainment, winter lights, hot cocoa
 - Direction sought: whether to continue to wrap trees or to instead pursue a “Winter Walk of Lights” with ground level lighted features.
- Photos with Santa
 - Family-friendly photo opportunities, light breakfast
 - Proposed at BHCC in 2024, then alternate locations
 - Direction sought: whether to proceed with the Photos with Santa event as described above, on Saturday, Dec. 14.



SPRING EVENTS

- Black Liberation Month celebration
 - Day of education, cultural remembrance and celebration
 - Youth poster exhibition
- Youth Poetry Voices
 - Showcases Menlo Park youth literacy
 - Poetry reading at City Council; commemorative booklet
- Egg Hunt and spring festival
 - “Treasure hunt” for eggs, spring festival, photos with bunny
 - Direction sought: whether to proceed with a City-organized Egg Hunt event as described above, on Sunday, Apr. 19, 2025.





Photo courtesy of Robb Most / InMenlo



EVENT SPONSORSHIPS AND PARTNERSHIPS

- On March 27, the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) recommended updates to the event sponsorship policy
- Draft policy is available at the hyperlink in Attachment D (PRC staff report #PRC-2024-007)
- Sets criteria for evaluating potential event sponsors
- Roles and responsibilities, cost sharing, staff and financial support, and desired goals and outcomes for community events
- Staff is preparing to bring the recommended event sponsorship policy update to City Council for action on consent Aug. 27.



COST SUMMARY – FY 2023-24

Date (2023-24)	Community event	Cost (not incl. staff)	Est. staff time*	Est. attendance
Jul.12 – Aug. 18	Summer concert series	\$45,800	Medium	2,250
Oct. 28	Halloween parade & carnival	\$12,000	Very high	1,200
November	Seasonal lights installation	\$70,900	Low	NA
Dec. 1	Light up the Season	\$15,400	Very high	1,100
Dec. 16	Photos with Santa	\$8,800	High	200
Feb. 10	Black Liberation Month Celebration	\$10,700	High	250
Mar. 30**	Egg Hunt (Menlo Fire hosted)	\$0	Low	1,200
Apr. 6	Spring Fest (City hosted)	\$11,900	Very high	750
May 21	Youth Poetry Voices	\$2,600	Low	50
Jun. 15	Juneteenth celebration	\$16,600	Very high	300
Jul. 4	4 th of July parade & festival	\$36,600	Very high	1,500
	Total FY 2023-24	\$231,300		

* Staff time/effort to plan/execute events is estimated as follows: Low = 1-40 total hours staff time. Medium = 41-80 hours. High = 81-120. Very high = 120+ hours.

** Egg Hunt 2024 (shown above) was organized by Menlo Fire. Egg Hunt 2023 was organized by the City of Menlo Park: total approx. cost \$7500; attendees 2,000; est. staff time Very High.



DIRECTION REQUESTED

Staff seeks City Council direction regarding the following specific events:

1. Light Up the Season: Whether to continue to wrap trees or instead pursue a “Winter Walk of Lights” with ground level lighted features.
2. Photos with Santa: Whether to proceed with the Photos with Santa event as described, on Saturday, Dec. 14.
3. Egg Hunt and spring festival. Whether to proceed with a City-organized Egg Hunt event as described, on Sunday, Apr. 19, 2025.
4. Event sponsorship policy. Feedback and/or confirmation about proposed policy update (see hyperlinked PRC report in Attachment D).



THANK YOU