

Special Meeting
June 16, 2010

The City Council of the City of Palo Alto, Foothill-De Anza Community College Board, and the Palo Alto Unified School District Board met on this date in the Council Chambers at 6:04 p.m.

Present: Burt, Espinosa, Holman, Klein, Price, Scharff, Schmid arrived at 6:15 p.m., Shepherd, Yeh arrived at 6:43 p.m.

Foothill-De Anza Community College:
Barram, Bechtel, Casas-Frier arrived at 6:09 p.m., Swenson

PAUSD:
Baten-Caswell, Klausner, Mitchell, Tom, Townsend

STUDY SESSION

Joint Meeting with the Palo Alto City Council, Foothill-De Anza College Board of Trustees, and Palo Alto School District (PAUSD) Board Regarding Foothill-De Anza Interest in Purchasing City Property within Cubberley Campus.

Mayor Burt stated Foothill-De Anza College has been exploring opportunities to expand their satellite services within the area. This meeting is to gather information and hear concerns regarding Cubberley Community Center. He emphasized that we are here to listen to everyone's concerns, and we are not here to make any decisions regarding this site. He stated that first we will hear from the City who will provide an overview of the City's involvement with Cubberley and other related issues. Next, PAUSD will give an overview of the needs and concerns that they have. Finally, Foothill-De Anza College will provide information on their views and concerns.

City Manager, James Keene, gave a brief chronology and shared issues from the City's perspective related to Cubberley.

PAUSD Superintendent, Kevin Skelly, in his presentation acknowledged their close working relationship with the City. He went over the pressing community issue over space in the district in relationship to growth statistics. He gave an overview of current Bond Measures.

Foothill-De Anza Community College Chancellor, Linda M. Thor, presented the vision for Foothill College and the Middlefield Cubberley campus.

Mayor Burt thanked everyone for their presentations. He noted this gave everyone a good foundation for discussion and questions.

Foothill-De Anza Community College Trustee, Betsy Bechtel, encouraged everyone to look collaboratively at what can best be done for the community.

Council Member Klein asked Chancellor Thor if any schematics had been developed as to how to use the eight acres.

Ms. Thor stated when the college district had made their original proposal in 2008, the general schematic had been presented for the use of the land. She noted, since that time, they cannot build the entire 100,000 square feet at one time. This involved a phasing in.

Council Member Klein stated the previous schematics, from two years prior, would now under go revisions.

Ms. Thor agreed this was the case.

PAUSD Board Member, Dana Tom, asked questions regarding Ms. Thor's presentation. He noted she had spoken about expanding partnerships. He asked if there were any examples of such partnerships between the School District and the community college district.

Ms. Thor noted Foothill College already has a middle college making it possible for students in high school to attend college campus classes. There were also dual enrollment courses offered by the college on the high school site. Both of these accelerate the college completion for students.

Mr. Tom observed that Foothill-De Anza and PAUSD were coping with uncertainty, but the types of uncertainty between the two were vastly different. He gave examples of this. He noted the challenge was over making a long-term decision in this process.

Council Member Schmid noted the line drawn on the campus map lent to 60-70 percent of the classroom space landing within the City's eight acres. Two additional parcels including green spaces, fields, pavilions, gyms, theaters and other public use facilities took up the remaining space. He asked if there was enough useable space for smaller classrooms beyond these spaces.

Deputy City Manager, Steve Emslie, stated Foothill's initial request from two year's prior included some high-level analysis by the City on how to relocate and accommodate all the potential users. The general finding was that it was possible to accommodate all the users, but it would require additional construction on the leased portions, or non-City parcels.

Council Member Schmid stated Foothill was currently using the Pavilion, the gym and the administration building as active sites for the school. He asked if they would continue to use these areas in that way if they had the additional eight acres.

Ms. Thor stated all the activity would occur within the eight acres.

Council Member Schmid asked if this would include parking.

Foothill-De Anza Community College Executive Director, Facilities, Charles Allen, stated in the near term they would be able to accommodate all parking needs within the eight acres. However, he noted enrollment numbers and growth beyond 10-15 years meant there would be pressures for additional parking.

Council Member Schmid asked if the campus would overflow into the green space or stadium space, without the eight acres, if their enrollment numbers reached the levels suggested for the year 2025.

Mr. Skelly was not fully prepared to answer the question. He stated it would be difficult to remain within those boundaries with the projected growth.

Foothill-De Anza Community College Trustee, Laura Casas Frier, went over the aspects of the Bond funds. She noted they could be used for top rate, smart classrooms and a wonderful facility in order to educate the up and coming population.

Council Member Holman asked for some specifics regarding the Bond Measures, its' uses and restrictions.

Mr. Allen stated the Bond funds were identified for the provision of an off-site capacity for the Foothill-De Anza Community College District. This was the primary use for the facilities. This did not preclude an arrangement for various joint uses.

PAUSD Board Member, Barb Mitchell, noted they all shared an interest in keeping Foothill-De Anza nearby. She wished for further understanding of the Comprehensive Plan estimates for land use needs for community services, recreation and public schools based on the projected growth. She stressed considering long-term needs versus short-term values. She also wondered what services the City and the School District would provide at Cubberley over the long run. After securing the community service priorities, she asked whether they expected to have surplus public land in Palo Alto to assign as a permanent site for other regional nonprofits. Assuming that Cubberley will be needed for future Palo Alto school sites, she asked if any other large parcels have been identified to replace the recreation and community services functions that reside there currently.

Mayor Burt stated Ms. Mitchell's items would become part of their extensive followup list.

Council Member Price stated Cubberley had been identified as a possible site for an alternative high school. She asked if the School District could comment on this or get back to them on the early findings regarding these discussions.

Mr. Skelly stated information on this was available on the district website.

Council Member Price asked in the Bond language what constraints existed regarding the potential funding mechanisms. She understood the Cubberley site was now used extensively by nonprofits and a variety of community users. Early on, she stated a survey was planned regarding the square footage currently being utilized by these groups. She noted it would be helpful in their continued discussions to have a clear appreciation of this usage and some alternative concepts.

Ms. Thor spoke to the lease or purchase issues. The current request was to purchase the eight acres. It was her understanding that a long-term lease was a possibility, but long-term leasing did not extend out 25 years. Minimally, it was the life of a building, at about 49 years, although more typically long-term leases extended out 99 years.

PAUSD Board Member, Melissa Baten Caswell, asked about program vision for the enhanced campus. She asked if this would be different than what is there today.

Foothill College President, Judy Miner, stated a dual set of needs existed, the refurbishing of the facilities for existing programs, as well as emerging technologies.

Ms. Caswell asked if the hours that students would use the campus would be all day long, evenings, weekends, or other.

Ms. Miner noted her belief was the time would be expanded. They were looking at the numbers of students not increasing dramatically, but the number of units they took would increase and fill out the programs in more of a full-time fashion.

Ms. Caswell asked if the college students and the adult learners would be on campus at the same time as the high school students.

Ms. Miner stated she absolutely saw the high school students and the college and adult learners on campus at the same time, somewhat like the middle college model.

Ms. Caswell noted many of the proposed ideas were interesting, but it was hard for her to evaluate them presently. They were not fleshed out in such a way that she could truly see the impacts on Palo Alto. She stressed the number one priority was to make sure there was space and capacity for excellent programs for the K-12 students.

Council Member Scharff stated there was a great opportunity for further discussion. He noted that maintenance has increased and was not sustainable for the City. He stressed they needed a solution for this issue with a collaborative effort. He asked how it was possible to preserve the opportunity to have a third high school, and possibly a third middle school. He asked if there would be space for arts and community groups on campus.

Mr. Keene stated there were ways to look at reuse of space.

Council Member Scharff noted there were possible collaborative solutions that would meet everyone's goals. He stressed flexibility was needed. He was pleased to hear the discussion over lease possibilities.

City Attorney, Gary Baum, stressed the City had a Charter provision that would limit a lease to 50 years.

Foothill-De Anza Community College Trustee, Joan Barram, agreed they wanted to come to a congenial agreement. She spoke to the many ways to do high school and college activities together.

Council Member Shepherd agreed it was good everyone was working together. She stressed everyone's shared interest in public education and city services. She asked what obligation the City had towards helping to relocate the tenants if the Cubberley scenario moved forward.

Mr. Keene stated his preference was to add this question to the ongoing question list. He noted there were many ways these obligations could be defined.

Council Member Shepherd asked for clarification on the noticing option. She asked if the School District had the same noticing option for the 27 acres when they wished to reactive it into a school.

Mr. Keene presumed this to be correct.

Council Member Shepherd wanted to see the Trustees from Foothill-De Anza and the PAUSD work through their difficulties.

Council Member Yeh stated he had many questions including what legalities came into play with regard to locking in usages which extend far into the future. He stressed the importance of crafting a plan which was fiscally sustainable.

PAUSD Board Member, Camille Townsend, noted the schools were moving in the right direction with the various Bond Measures. She agreed flexibility was essential in moving forward. She noted the varying timelines. She asked if it was true that Foothill-De Anza had 14 years in which to commit their funds, but wished to do it sooner.

Mr. Allen stated it was not 14 years. The Bond program was structured in a way that its capital portion was intended for execution in six to seven years. Elements of the bond funding were related to long-term scheduled maintenance and refresh programs.

Ms. Townsend asked where they were along this timeline.

Mr. Allen stated they were in year four.

Ms. Townsend stated Foothill-De Anza was not prevented from purchasing land in other facilities. They were actually looking at other facilities in addition to the one being discussed.

Ms. Thor stated they had looked at additional options and had issued a request for qualifications for a real estate consultant to aide in this process.

Ms. Townsend noted they were maintaining a certain amount of flexibility. She stressed the importance of this in all their discussions. She asked for clarification of what it looked like for these shared spaces with regard to what types of students would be using them at differing times.

Ms. Miner stated the vast majority of programming right now was in the evening. They anticipated a longer school day for the students with the increased programming drawing in full-time students.

Ms. Townsend asked what measures were being taken to address the concerns over maximum usage of the site which at times meant mixing adult students with the younger students.

Ms. Miner stated they could have discussions about scheduling for each population and which could coexist.

Vice Mayor Espinosa noted three items for future discussion: 1) parking concerns regarding under-parking which would lead to spillover into the neighborhoods, 2) the possibilities for fitting a school to a smaller and/or shared site, and 3) discussion of how the Cubberley scenario fits into the City's current backlog of infrastructure projects.

PAUSD Board President, Barbara Klausner, stated the School Board Members were of one mind and voice over their concerns for planning for the future of the students. She stressed the Board's continuing hope to be good stewards for the future of all students. She asked what was being pictured on the campus for the long-term uses for PAUSD and high school students.

Ms. Miner stated there was a wide range of programming from basic skills on up. She noted what would fit in the future for the majority of the PAUSD students was the general education program which met their first two-year requirements. She stressed the heightened science emphasis, planned for the coming years, was a very positive addition to the continuing synergy between Foothill and the PAUSD students.

Ms. Klausner asked if some of these programs would include high school students.

Ms. Miner saw the high school students as being able to take classes scheduled in some of their rooms, and she felt there were many additional possibilities to include high school students. There would also be distance learning opportunities.

Ms. Klausner asked how the City might continue to accommodate the community uses of the proposed spaces. She asked if the discussions regarding the eight-acre parcel included any public spaces, or would it all be classrooms and lab space.

Ms. Miner stated they would need to look into some larger gathering spaces because they did not intend to use the gym or pavilion in the non-City parcel. They wanted this flexible space for their own gatherings. Looking forward, they also needed to think about open and green spaces. They did not intend to build on every inch of the parcel.

Ms. Klausner asked what the City's plan was if Foothill leased or purchased the eight acres, and how this would effect things if PAUSD also wanted to use the space, as well as what became of the current community classes. She also asked for a timeline with regard to the phasing of construction for the project considered.

Ms. Allen stated the initial needs were in the 50,000 square foot range to start things out. Planning for this initial 50,000 square feet would have to keep in mind the future needs and growth.

Foothill-De Anza Community College President Board of Trustees, Bruce Swenson, stated their goal for the current meeting was not to make end-decisions but to see whether there was enough commonality of interest for the future possibilities and vision. He gave an overview of the many issues brought forth during these current discussions, all of which would be considered in moving forward.

Mayor Burt spoke to the efficient uses of available space, including building a story up rather than out. He asked if Foothill-De Anza would retain their current uses and services at the site if they decided to expand elsewhere.

Ms. Miner stated their hope was to maintain their presence in Palo Alto. The scope of what would remain behind was dependent on what happened at the new site.

Mayor Burt noted the re-emerging trend and increase in transfer students. He stressed the need to look at the long-term interests of the community.

Council Member Shepherd asked for further exploration on the eight acres in order to be able to make a decision on whether to foster the nonprofits and arts community, or whether they should develop the eight acres.

Mr. Tom stated the discussion thus far was helping everyone to understand the many different interests and possible solutions. He noted, however, it remained a very complicated issue.

Council Member Schmid was concerned over the number of PAUSD students in 2025 and the capacity for schools to accommodate these students.

Council Member Holman questioned what the City would do with funds from the sale of the eight acres.

Ms. Bechtel left the meeting at 8:12 p.m.

Ehud Krauss, 4173 El Camino Real, #26, stressed there have been issues with parking in the past and there will continue to be issues regarding parking in the future. He was in favor of two-level buildings and two-level parking structures.

Betsy Allyn, 4186 Willmar Drive, spoke about Terman Junior High School's history. She stressed the endangered nature of open space throughout the city including neighborhood centers and plazas. She spoke on overcrowding of the high school and Cubberley's role in community participation.

Charles Bangs, 3021 Bryant Street, commended the many groups who participated in the current meeting. He appreciated the support for cultural and other organizations currently residing at Cubberley.

Susan Bailey, 960 Guinda Street, shared her perspective noting she was a dancer who has taken advantage of the studios currently located at Cubberley. She stressed this incredible community resource.

Lisa O'Hearn-Keck, Palo Alto Prep School, 4000 Middlefield Road, spoke to the importance of the nonprofits at Cubberley as well as alternative schools.

Ken Horowitz, Homer Avenue, spoke about the students he teaches through the middle college classes. He envisioned enrollment will climb. He supported Foothill-De Anza Community College.

Rachel Samoff, 3527 South Court, noted she represented the Palo Alto Advisory Committee on Early Care and Education. She made a pitch

towards education which extends from preschool through adulthood, cradle to career.

Lisa Navarro, 1600 Villa Street, #316, Mountain View, spoke towards the importance of arts and dance in the community.

Zoe Bell, 4000 Middlefield Road, represented the Dance Visions at Cubberley and stressed its importance to the community.

Lessa Bouchard, 171 Bryant Street, Apt. 1, noted she was an Artist in Residence at Cubberley. She stressed the importance of this and other community arts programs.

Emily Tang, 3123 Alma Street, #B, spoke to the importance of planning for the future, without robbing from current programs in the community.

Peggy Huang, 3483 El Camino Real, spoke on the importance of the dance programs at Cubberley. She also stressed the importance of land values in the City.

Mary Buxton spoke to the importance of the Palo Alto Prep School.

Nani Venegas, P.O. Box 978, noted the importance of arts and dancing in the community.

Debra Holvick, 2197 E. Bayshore Road, agreed on the conservation of arts and dance in the community.

Brian Carilli, 2150 Columbia Street, stated the greenest move to make was to keep and renovate the buildings at Cubberley.

Judy Rattner, 1482 Kings Lane, noted the importance of the community being involved in this process. She agreed with several others speakers that Cubberley was an asset.

Laura Zweig, 365 Colorado Avenue, represented Dance Visions and spoke to the importance of Cubberley and the dance community.

Joan Plastiras, 967 Dennis Drive, spoke on community resources and education. She stressed the importance of expansion of the middle college programs and the alternative high school programs.

Herb Borock, P.O. Box 632, spoke to the history of the agreements between the School District and the City, along with the Utilities User Tax. He

discussed sustainability measures and the concerns over the cost of general operations for the City.

Lanie Wheeler, 362 Diablo Court, noted Cubberley was a wonderfully operated community. She stressed the importance of leadership in trying to come to a resolution of the issues surrounding Cubberley.

Jean Wilcox, 4005 Sutherland Drive, pointed out the areas of Cubberley and Greendale which could be combined to make room for a high school and middle school. She spoke to other sites in Palo Alto for elementary school expansion.

Haideh Tabrizi, 4000 Middlefield Road, noted she was the founder of Good Neighbor Montessori which has been located for nearly 20 years at Cubberley. She spoke to the importance of the center and its location.

Jack Morton asked everyone to look at what was left if they sold the Cubberley property and the domino effects of this decision.

Rob Lancefield, 189 Walter Hays Drive, stressed three things: 1) the importance of long-term planning, 2) two stories versus one-story buildings, and 3) the importance of collaboration.

Mayor Burt thanked everyone for their attendance at this important meeting regarding Cubberley.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.