



CITY COUNCIL SUMMARY MINUTES

Regular Meeting
April 8, 2024

The City Council of the City of Palo Alto met on this date in the Council Chambers and by virtual teleconference at 5:30 P.M.

Council Member Vicki Veenker virtual teleconference address: 3404 S. Ashwood Dr. Bloomington, IN 47401

Present In Person: Burt, Kou, Lauing, Tanaka

Present Remotely: Stone, Veenker

Absent: Lythcott-Haims

Call to Order

Mayor Stone called the meeting to order. The clerk called roll with six present.

Council Member Veenker stated she was out of state in Bloomington, Indiana. She was in a publicly accessible place and the agenda was posted more than 72 hour before the meeting.

Mayor Stone invoked the Just Cause provision of AB 2449. The justification was that he was in Tsuchiura, Japan on business of the City of Palo Alto. There were no adults in the room 18 or older.

Agenda Changes, Additions and Deletions

None.

Closed Session

1. CONFERENCE WITH CITY ATTORNEY-POTENTIAL LITIGATION
Subject: Claims pursuant to Public Contract Code 9204 related to construction of the Public Safety Building from general contractor Swinerton Builders, and its subcontractors [including Pacific Structures, Inc.; CCI Construction, Inc.; Walters & Wolf, WSA, Helix Construction Company; Broadway Mechanical; Sandis; Northern Services,

SUMMARY MINUTES

Inc.; Commercial Controls Corp; Blues Roofing; and Harrison Drywall]. Authority: Government Code Section 54956.9(d)(2)

2. PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT

Title: City Auditor

Authority: Cal. Gov. Code 54957(b)

MOTION: Council Member Kou moved, seconded by Council Member Burt to go into Closed Session.

MOTION PASSED: 6-0-1, Lythcott-Haims absent

Council went into Closed Session at 5:40 P.M.

Council returned from Closed Session at 8:39 P.M.

Vice Mayor Lauing announced no reportable action.

Special Orders of the Day

3. Interview Candidates for Vacancies on Boards and Commissions. CEQA Status – Not a project.

NO ACTION TAKEN

Council Member Burt asked Mr. Bhattacharya to share his thoughts about how planning and transportation relate and his views on it.

Vice Mayor Lauing wanted to know why Planning and Transportation appealed to Mr. Bhattacharya.

Council Member Kou wondered if Mr. Bhattacharya has seen anything that is lacking in the meetings when it comes to agenda items. She asked Mr. Hechtman when he is sitting at PTC representing the City if he spoke with the residents of the City.

Council Member Burt asked Mr. Hechtman to share the degree to which his point of view as an attorney and an advocate for developers drives his recommendations.

Council Member Tanaka questioned Mr. Hechtman who else on the Commission has his legal background.

Vice Mayor Lauing asked Mr. Hechtman what kind of decisions he thought the PTC should be making.

SUMMARY MINUTES

Council Member Burt discussed the limitations of the Stormwater Oversight Management Committee. He wanted Mr. Bennet's thoughts about whether the Committee should have a broader purview.

Vice Mayor Lauing wondered how much Mr. Bennet's investment overlaps with things that are directly relative to this commission seat.

Council Member Kou wanted to know Mr. Bennet's beliefs on what the City could do better with stormwater management.

Council Member Tanaka asked how Mr. Bennet would be able to spot or help throughout if there were issues going on with financing.

Council Member Burt asked for Mr. Mayer's thoughts on the question he asked Mr. Bennet. He described how the City has managed runoff water and asked Mr. Mayer's observation of the role of an oversight committee and outside perspectives.

Council Member Kou questioned Mr. Mayer if he thought it would be worth exploring expanding the purview for this commission and looking at ways to recharge the area.

Vice Mayor Lauing wanted to know if Ms. Pajjuri had a perspective on why delays happen.

Council Member Burt inquired about Ms. Pajjuri's thoughts on expanding the purview from merely financial oversight to making policy and program recommendations.

Council Member Kou asked how Ms. Pajjuri would apply her expertise gained in the corporate world to this commission.

Council Member Tanaka queried if Ms. Pajjuri was ever in a role where she had to manage a budget.

Council Member Kou inquired how Mr. Owes' background experience could help with this commission.

Council Member Burt was interested in Mr. Owes' thoughts on the purview of the Oversight Committee and whether it should extend beyond the financial review into recommendations on policies and programs.

Vice Mayor Lauing asked Mr. Owes' what he felt like he had accomplished in the time he had been on the Commission.

Planning and Transportation Commission:

SUMMARY MINUTES

1. Ashish Bhattacharya introduced himself and described some relevant personal experiences in his life. He discussed his goals and future plans. He discussed his views on why transportation was important because of safety concerns within the City and how transportation and planning are interrelated. He explained that he has friends on the Transportation committee and is aware of their agendas. He saw planning as one of the fundamental lynch pins of community development. It was his opinion they should make certain accommodations for the services workers coming into the City.
2. Barton Hechtman discussed his experience on the PTC for the past four years. He explained as he approached a meeting, he did not typically reach out to anyone. He felt it was his duty to be open to anyone that wants to talk to him and then disclose. He thought in his original application and interview he made clear that he believes in property rights. He developed an affinity for developers because he was interested in the process of development. He described previous jobs he held relevant to this position. He admitted that he may forcefully advocate his initial position in meetings but he was about building consensus. He stated there was no one else on the Commission that comes from a similar land use background at that time. He said use permits was an example of decision that could be made by the planning commission but could be appealed to the Council and gave other examples.

Stormwater Management Oversight Committee

1. Gregory Bennet introduced himself to the Council and described his relevant employment experience and his experience in restoring a historical property in Palo Alto. He was aware of the light recommending work of the Committee. He would welcome the opportunity to weigh in on other issues. He described situations he thought the Committee could successfully work with other commissions on. He offered that he had a professional understanding of water management. His water infrastructure investments he has been a part of had not bearing on the Bay Area and he was currently not invested in any water companies. Regarding stormwater management, what works for one situation may not work in another due to differing variables. He advised learning from the learned and then determine the best course of action. He opined the low-hanging fruit is implementing the current plan that has been in place as it had been done with great care and works very well. He thought there may be adjustments, additions or addendums that may one day have to be brought for another ballot measure in the future. He believed they were in a unique position to set an example for other Bay Area cities. He thought a lot of the delta he had seen in the plan versus actuals had to do with bid prices increasing since the original 2017 budget and making sure those were inline with inflations and other things would be number one and interpreting the budget versus actuals on some of the commodity and price fluctuations that happened over the pandemic were inline.
2. Kevin Mayer introduced himself and his experiences that were relevant to the position. As he was retired, he felt he could volunteer for a more structured commitment. He

SUMMARY MINUTES

thought the City's plan expressed how to move water away from where it is unwanted reasonably well and putting it into practice involves the oversight. Managing the prevention of water from becoming a problem was a lot more challenging. He did not think a commission would be able to do much about increased precipitation and it would be challenging to get a community as a whole to implement activities that would let the water absorb into the soil instead of running off into to streets, gutters and pipes. He believed the actions the City has taken makes a lot of sense and should be encouraged. He thought some of those activities were at a scale that did not balance with the whole City's issues about managing stormwater. He was interested in seeing what percentage of precipitation could be managed through some of the projects that are at a less than city-wide scale. He thought it would be worth exploring expanding the purview of the committee and looking for ways to recharge the area. He discussed his understanding of recharging.

3. Ambika Pajjuri introduced herself and provided a background. She discussed her employment history and her experience relevant to this position. She explained her perspective on the delays. She was not well-versed enough to answer the policies aspect but thought that the Commission should look at other avenues on what innovations could be done and she would be excited to work on those aspects. She would not be familiar with how that translates to funding any new programs. She described ways she would apply her corporate experience to this position. She described her purview as the product management leader.
4. Ron Owes introduced himself and provided his background experience relevant to the position. He explained why he can understand the projects that are being financed. He described his thoughts on some of the ways the role of the committee could be expanded. In his time on the Commission, he described how he had begun to understand its role and to appreciate the City staff.

Public Comment

1. Noel S. defined the word terror. He asked Council to think about Gaza as being in a constant state of terror with the full support of our tax dollars.
2. Yazan A. discussed President Biden using the word ceasefire because of seeing Israel kill seven foreign aid workers. He asked Council how they live with their silence after what they have seen, how much more it will take and why his life is worth less than the rest of the room.
3. Lori speaking on behalf of (7): Mika I., Tania B., Eric T., Rebecca S., Rick F., and Elinor T. shared some incidences of recent antisemitic and offensive behavior in Palo Alto. She described how this type of behavior was becoming normalized at City Council meetings and pro-ceasefire protests. She urged Council to enforce rules and ensure accountability by those who hold permits for events, urge police to follow up with the permit holder to

SUMMARY MINUTES

identify the protestors dressed as security guards and ensure their conduct was compliant with California regulations, ensure that events involving the problematic groups that sponsor and promote events are given extra scrutiny to guarantee they follow all rules, procedures and norms, make sure the police are in attendance at all such events to ensure safety and security for all and take action to try to bring the City together in healing.

4. Ella speaking on behalf of (7): Giora, Adele, Allyson R., Rotem, Estee, and Avner expressed disbelief of how the City turned on her and her family on October 7. She described antisemitism she and her family had experienced recently in Palo Alto. She stressed that students must be educated about the history and consequences of antisemitism.
5. Dr. D communicated a need to face the truth in the complicity of the US in the genocide that is occurring and expressed the need for a ceasefire statement for legal and moral absolution in order to heal as a community.

Council Member Questions, Comments and Announcements

None.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 10:02 P.M.