



# CITY COUNCIL SUMMARY MINUTES

Special Meeting  
January 29, 2024

The City Council of the City of Palo Alto met on this date in the Mitchell Park Community Center El Palo Alto Room and by virtual teleconference at 5:30 P.M.

Present In Person: Burt, Kou, Lauing, Lythcott-Haims, Stone, Tanaka, Veenker

Present Remotely:

Absent:

## Call to Order

Mayor Stone called the meeting to order.

### 1. Roll Call and Welcome from Mayor Stone

City Clerk Mahealani Ah Yun called roll and declared all were present.

Mayor Stone welcomed everyone. He noted there would be reflection on 2023's priorities, goals, and accomplishments, and then there would be a look at the work to be done in 2024. There would be dialogue with Council and community members, and then Council would discuss and set new goals and priorities for 2024. He announced there would be only one block of time for public comment, and items on and/or off the agenda could be addressed. He outlined how much time each speaker could possibly have depending on the number of speakers.

Facilitator Jeremy Dennis commented that he was employed by MRG and would facilitate the discussion on the Retreat. He provided Merriam-Webster's definition of facilitate. He outlined how the meeting would be conducted and how comments should be made.

Mayor Stone mentioned there was food available for those attending the meeting. He suggested the first break be 15 minutes and the second 5 minutes, which was acceptable to Council.

### 2. City Council Retreat: Discussion and Selection of 2024 City Council Priorities

City Manager Ed Shikada shared a slideshow reviewing 2023 Council Priorities. He presented slides outlining the status of the 2023 Council Priorities and Objectives. Subject to the direction received at this meeting, staff would return to Council next month for discussion of individual line items for 2024. The Retreat would be followed by one or more Council agenda items related to specific objectives. There had been an overall completion rate of approximately 50%

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of the 72 objectives for 2023; however, it was 72% for those completed or on track. If any were disappointed with the completion rate, he hoped all would be reassured that clear and aggressive goals had been set. The packet contained a report with more information related to individual line items. He elaborated on the status of completion, progress of being on-track or behind schedule, and on-hold or dropped rates for Economic Recovery and Transition, Climate Change and Natural Environment, Housing for Social and Economic Balance, and Community Health and Safety priorities and objectives. Staff had conducted an online survey for community responses, which were in the packet. Community members' email communications to Council were linked to the agenda. From the survey, staff identified themes most frequently cited as airplane noise, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, community building, crime and safety, electrification, flood control, housing, and affordable housing. He noted that it had been strictly a qualitative assessment, and all comments received were included in the packet.

## 2A. Discuss 2023 City Council Priorities & Objectives

Facilitator Jeremy Dennis asked Council if they had questions.

Council Member Burt thought there would be a more detailed update. He asked if there would be an opportunity to have a better understanding of items that there may be questions on.

City Manager Ed Shikada replied that staff had anticipated using the same process that was used last year with the high-level priorities selected by Council and then following with a detailed discussion of objectives. Much of the upcoming March 4 meeting would be dedicated to following up on these items. Staff wanted Council to decide at this meeting if the four priorities selected in 2023 would carry over to 2024. Staff was prepared to answer questions related to the 2023 objectives.

Council Member Kou had anticipated having a further discussion this evening, but she would wait until the March meeting. She inquired if the subset objectives would be brought back to Council on March 4.

City Manager Shikada expected staff to return to Council on March 4 with next steps for the objectives.

Council Member Lythcott-Haims explained why she did not consider Item 11 to be a completed task, which related to HSRAP funding and the item being referred to the Finance Committee in the Spring of 2024.

## 2B. Discuss Key Inputs for Priority Setting: Community and Councilmember Feedback

Facilitator Jeremy Dennis suggested focusing on community feedback since the conversation related to the objectives would take place at a later meeting.

Council Member Lythcott-Haims thanked the community for their participation in the process.

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Council Member Kou thanked the public for their comments and for being a partner in the process. One of the comments she read stated to do whatever could be done to preserve the beauty of the town, including relocating homeless, planting trees, keeping buildings low, and offering senior lunches to others in the area rather than just Asians. Another comment suggested there be senior nutrition to all, not just the Chinese. She expressed that the senior lunches offered by La Comida was for all nationalities and income levels. There had also been comments about academic excellence and greater rigor in Palo Alto Public Schools, and she did not think Council should reply to comments pertaining to PAUSD and that instead the comments could be shared with PAUSD. She hoped the City/School Liaison Committee or the City Manager's office would forward such comments to PAUSD. She appreciated the public bringing forward work-from-home policies, and she thought it was worth exploring. Another statement concerned a visit to City Hall and being unable to contact anyone through the kiosk in the lobby, and she thought there needed to be an improvement in being able to contact staff. There had been comments related to family-friendly activities, and she wanted to see the youth included. She agreed with remarks related to taking the Housing Commission and RHNA requirements to court. She felt a comment related to a curfew for San Carlos and Palo Alto Airport for nighttime quiet should be considered.

Council Member Burt thought it was positive that a lot of the priorities community members suggested were subsets of the main Council priorities. He wanted members of the community to appreciate that the priorities were high-level categories and that not all the initiatives focused on would be stated in the definition of a set priority. He did not think Council knew there would be a discussion in March to follow up on the objectives. He felt Council needed a better understanding of what would be on the horizon for upcoming agendas. He believed there needed to be a more complete list of what may not be on a schedule for an upcoming month and that there should be opportunities for updates to Council and some feedback loops.

Council Member Veenker appreciated the community feedback. She thought it was healthy to look at the issues and collectively hear from the different commissions and/or committees involved in an issue.

Facilitator Dennis noted that there could be a difference of opinion as it related to measuring success of a priority and that each Council member may have a different approach to measuring success.

Council Member Kou agreed that there should be tentative agendas.

Mayor Stone concurred that a tentative agenda and more frequent updates would be helpful and beneficial. He was glad to hear that Council would follow up on the objectives in March. He appreciated the survey and those who participated in it. He found the comments helpful. He thought there was overall alignment in the community related to the goals. He read a comment suggesting that librarians, teachers, and first responders be publicly thanked and featured in the Weekly.

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Council Member Tanaka found it interesting that the City Manager graded the priorities. He suggested the public and Council comment on the work done on the priorities and recommended that be done at the March meeting.

Mayor Stone furnished the ground rules for public comment.

## Public Comment

Talha B., speaking on behalf of Tuba S., Yasa B., Moiez B., Sana G., Omar G., Naureen S., Amir M., Hadi S., Humza S., Taha A., provided slides and shared some information related to deaths, children losing limbs, loss of homes, starvation, lack of medical attention and anesthesia for surgeries, orphans, disabled children, those witnessing death, and children raising children in Gaza. He quoted Dr. Martin Luther King – Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. He voiced why he believed there was an obligation to address the events. He urged that there be a ceasefire resolution and that it be passed.

Floyd N., a member of PASSC, spoke of climate change and asked for Council's help in advocating for the climate and to make it a top priority for 2024.

Jennifer L. spoke of health impacts to Palo Alto residents from toxins or hazards and asked that they be given attention and that Council explain objectives for any initiative and that Council oversee direction. She would email the rest of her comments.

Aram J. (Zoom) spoke of the N pass, and he would provide more information to Council. He was outraged that the public was not allowed to address the agenda items on priorities.

Darlene Y. thanked Council for their efforts on airplane noise and asked that they sustain the effort for airplane noise as part of the Community Health and Safety priority.

Dashiell L (Zoom) as an individual thanked the speaker who called for a ceasefire in Gaza. As the Conservation Coordinator for the Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter, he thanked Council for prioritizing climate change and the natural environment in 2023 and asked that it be a priority in 2024 with a focus on biodiversity. They were eager to see progress on climate impacts, bird-safe design, dark-sky policies, and the Tree Protection Ordinance and that there would be progress in maximizing nature-based adaption solutions along the shoreline.

Penny E. (Zoom) asked Council to focus on planning and funding for improvements to community service facilities, especially Cubberley, Public Works, and multimodal transportation in areas where the City was focusing on high-density housing development. She requested the fire truck be restored to the Mitchell Park Fire Station No. 4, the City's commitment to alternative transportation be invigorated on every front, and that decision-making be finalized regarding rail grade separation to capture available funding.

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Neha T (Zoom) requested support for the adoption of a light pollution control ordinance similar Cupertino's and that lighting systems and practices that conserve energy and prevent over-lighting be promoted. She hoped the City would do a study on light pollution.

Deborah S., Chairperson for Friends of Cubberley, implored Council to make Cubberley redevelopment a top priority for 2024 and to work with the school board and the community to move forward. She asked that the City take advantage of a possible land swap.

Ken H. echoed Ms. Deborah S's comments. He asked that something be done about Cubberley this year.

Cedric De la B. wanted Council to strive for a priority for right relation, which would include climate change. He thanked Council for their commitment to re-naturalize Matadero Creek, and he wanted it to continue. He wanted there to be further opportunities to restore channelized creeks. He supported dark skies, the phase out of pesticides and switching to integrated pest management, and quieter engines for airplanes.

Lynda H. encouraged Council to continue focusing in biodiversity in the natural environment in the 2024 priorities. She provided information from a study published by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in relation to birds. She asked that work continue regarding bird safety and reducing light pollution.

Jan H., on behalf of the Senior Nutrition Program in Palo Alto, asked Council to consider putting pressure on Avenidas to provide La Comida a location for nutrition services.

Shreya (Zoom), representing 350 Palo Alto, urged Council to put building electrification at the top of the priority list. She requested that the permitting process be streamlined and that there be additional incentives to electrify, such as group discounts.

Matt S. (Zoom) asked that the youths' voices be heard with regard to stopping the burning of fossil fuels and the loss of children's lives in war. He requested an end-of-flow date be set for Palo Alto Utilities and that there be a resolution for a ceasefire.

Deborahlise M. asked for a ceasefire resolution to protect the indigenous people of Palestine. She recommended reviewing the ICJ's preliminary ruling.

Adele G. did not support a ceasefire resolution. She wanted Council to focus on local priority setting.

Noel S. discussed his opposition to the Conference for the Victory of Israel – Settlement Brings Security: Returning to the Gaza Strip and Northern Samaria. He supported a ceasefire.

Hamilton H. (Zoom) asked that Council continue to prioritize flood mitigation for 2024, including Newell Bridge and San Francisquito Creek Reach 2, and that the Hamilton Avenue

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storm drain upgrade be added as a new project for 2024 and that it be included in the budget for adoption for June 2024.

Jessica K. explained why she considered Palestine to be a local issue. She asked that Council call for a ceasefire now.

Shani K., on behalf of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, thanked Council for prioritizing climate change and the natural environment in 2023 and asked that they continue to be priorities in 2024.

Sarith H. thanked Council for their efforts to keep Palo Alto unified and safe for all. She explained why she did not support a ceasefire, and she asked that Council not support one.

Natalie G. stated that the survey responses indicated that the priority was to build more housing, and she urged Council do more efficient governance, area plans, and housing for the community.

Reid K. indicated that permitting developing new housing would generate revenue, which would enable the other priorities to be accomplished, and that housing would support local business, schools, and taxes and would reduce the cost of living and pollution. He asked that new homes be built at increased levels of density throughout the city.

Amie A., Executive Director of Palo Alto Forward, spoke of housing increasing revenue to the City, and she hoped housing would be a key in accomplishing the other priorities.

Randy M-R. suggested converting empty office buildings to affordable housing. She quoted Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. – Hate begets hate. She requested that all look for forgiveness and understanding of each other.

Susan H. (Zoom) speaking on behalf of the Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter Plastic Pollution Prevention Team addressed the harmful effects of petroleum plastic solids, especially artificial turf. She urged Palo Alto to make a moratorium or ordinance banning the use of artificial turf, which she claimed would save money.

Nicole L. (Zoom), who was part of Saratoga High School Environment Action Club, thanked Council for progressing bird-safe building and dark-sky policies and hoped they would be furthered in 2024. She asked that artificial turf be added to the priorities, which she indicated was a contributor of water pollution.

Aiden C. (Zoom) was speaking as part of Saratoga High School's Environmental Action Club. She thanked Council for progressing bird-safe building and dark-sky policies and hoped the commitment would be continued throughout 2024. She discussed the toxicity of artificial turf.

Ceasefire N. (Zoom) listed names of lost loved ones. She spoke of tax dollars and asked that a ceasefire resolution be put on the docket now.

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Lori M. understood that swastikas had been found in Palo Alto. She requested antisemitism education be a priority.

[Council took a 15-minute break]

## **2C. Selection of 2024 Council Priorities & Discussion on Strategies to Achieve Priorities**

Facilitator Jeremy Dennis stated the discussion would start with the priority selection process and then the strategies to achieve priorities would be discussed. He noted that in the packet were three questions and the ad-hoc purpose statements. There was an opportunity for Council to have a discussion around the current four priorities – Economic Recovery Transition, Climate Change and Natural Environment Protection and Adaptation, Housing for Social and Economic Balance, and Community Health and Safety. He requested that Council decide if this was the correct mix of priorities moving forward. He asked Council if the four priorities should be moved forward and/or if there should be any amendments, changes, or alterations.

Council Member Kou liked the current priorities, and she had read that P&S and many of the community members recommended continuing them. She asked if setting priorities for two years was reasonable and achievable. She understood that the priority timeline had been set for three years.

City Manager Ed Shikada believed Council's protocols called for a maximum of three years. Staff was not concerned with setting priorities for two years.

Council Member Veenker wanted to continue with the current four priorities. For Economic Recovery and Transition, she suggested renaming it Economic Development and Transition because recent staff reports indicated there was largely a recovery from the pandemic.

Council Member Burt voiced that seemed right, but he wanted to consider it a little more.

Council Member Lythcott-Haims supported the name change.

Vice Mayor Lauing supported renaming that priority. He was very committed to the four priorities. He remarked that certain ones would last longer than three years, such as housing.

Mayor Stone was in alignment with Council members' comments. He was open to some modification of Economic Recovery and Transition. Economic Development seemed to be in line with what Council was striving to achieve. He suggested Community Health and Safety focus on youth wellbeing and mental health as a top concern. He agreed with the four priorities.

Facilitator Dennis pointed out that Mayor Stone suggested additional components to the Community Health and Safety item. He questioned if it would be appropriate to defer the details of that portion of the conversation to the March 4 meeting.

City Manager Shikada acknowledged that it could be deferred to that meeting. He queried if the title of the item should reflect a more specific focus.

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Facilitator Dennis asked Mayor Stone if he had a suggestion for a possible addition to the title that Council members could consider.

Mayor Stone envisioned wellness and/or health being in the title. Currently, he was not sure how to modify it.

Council Member Veenker agreed with Mayor Stone's suggestions as to what should be encompassed within it, as mental health was a priority. She liked health being the broader term, but she thought the lower priorities needed to express mental health more.

Council Member Lythcott-Haims was in favor of Community Health, Safety, and Wellness, as she thought wellness signaled a proactivity, which she explained.

Council Member Burt stated he probably agreed with that. He noted than when health was discussed and incorporated a year ago, mental health and other wellness-related aspects had been discussed. He was struggling with wellness being a subset of health and there being redundancy. He asked if setting priorities for two years meant that the priorities would be carried on for two years at a minimum.

Council Member Kou suggested it be left open for additional years and that there be flexibility for more time if a priority required it.

Council Member Veenker agreed and thought some priorities may need to be prioritized in future years.

Facilitator Dennis understood that there was agreement in continuing the four priorities per the P&S recommendation with the potential addition of Wellness at the end of the Community Health and Safety item.

Council Member Kou asked Mayor Stone what he hoped to add to Community Health and Safety.

Mayor Stone wanted to focus on youth wellbeing and mental health and how much the pandemic had impacted that, which he elaborated on. He discussed the taskforce and there being a one-hour rule, and he thought the City Manager needed hear a directive from Council to dedicate staffing time.

City Manager Shikada noted that having Full Council direction on the Youth Mental Health Wellbeing Taskforce was sufficient to justify having staff allocated to support it. He asked that it be included as part of the priorities to be approved at a more detailed level when staff returned with the objectives.

Council Member Kou asked if Community Health and Safety should emphasize youth mental health and if that would accomplish the Council directive to have the taskforce.

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City Manager Shikada answered that would send a clear message, so it was welcomed. He did not know if it was essential at that level. It could be included among the objectives that would be brought to Council in March.

Council Member Lythcott-Haims discussed swastikas, Muslim's being made to feel less than because of their faith, being called the N word, and people being mistreated because of their identify, and she wondered if a priority should address hate.

Council Member Veenker thought that was an excellent point, and she suggested the word belonging – Health, Safety and Belonging.

Council Member Lythcott-Haims appreciated that it could probably fit there if it was not its own priority, but she liked the idea of having no more than four priorities. She was in favor of Community Health, Safety, Wellness, and Belonging.

Mayor Stone appreciated Council Member Lythcott-Haims' idea. He was planning on addressing it as a subsection of Community Health and Safety. He supported the language being Community Health, Safety, Wellness, and Belonging.

Vice Mayor Lauing thought it was important, and he was comfortable with it being contained in the objectives under Safety and Wellness. He did not think the title needed to be adjusted beyond adding Wellness to it.

Council Member Burt concurred. He voiced that there was always temptation to turn a title into a description. The next discussion would be about what should fall under the categories. He thought Wellness was the more encompassing word for the title.

Facilitator Dennis asked if there was consensus around the title change and if it should include Wellness and/or Belonging.

Council Member Veenker explained why she supported the title being Community Health, Safety, and Belonging.

Council Member Lythcott-Haims commented that wellness was a component of health. She elaborated on why she supported Community Health, Safety, and Belonging.

Facilitator Dennis asked if anyone opposed using the word belonging instead of wellness.

Council Member Kou expressed that she was not opposed to it, but she wondered if it was necessary. She explained that the word belonging would indicate that people would belong to the community or belong overall, but people needed to want to belong as well, and she did not know how that would be measured. She thought belonging could fall under Community Health as a subset objective.

Vice Mayor Lauing was concerned that the word belonging may not communicate accurately and broadly to the community.

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Facilitator Dennis did not think there was consensus yet, but the point was well taken that there should be an addition related to wellness. He asked staff if the word needed to be defined at this meeting or if it could be extended to the next conversation.

City Manager Shikada thought Council's focus was on the message and how raising the priority would communicate its intent. He believed it was time well spent, although if there was not consensus, it was not worth wrestling over.

Council Member Veenker noted that a Sibling City's Town Hall she ran was Race and Belonging. She mentioned that a sense of belonging was different and specific. She was not sure that health captured it. She added that the number of hate crimes, etc., could be measured. She voiced that mental health was hard to measure but that there were ways to do it.

Council Member Lythcott-Haims agreed and added that public comments were often asking Council to pay attention to less tangible things that affect quality of life and the lived experience. She appreciated there may have been education around the meaning of belonging, but she thought the word was understood by younger community members. She supported the title being Community Health, Safety, and Belonging.

Facilitator Dennis suspected the conversation would be informed by the March 4 discussion to see how the subsections would refer back to the title. He considered there to be consensus around some additions, the primary one being Wellness. For the purposes of this meeting, he suggested the word Wellness. There seemed to be direction to staff to start thinking about how things would fit together. He asked if Council agreed.

Council Member Burt responded that typically a settlement would be reached.

Mayor Stone voiced that a strong argument was being made for Belonging, and he thought there was a meaningful distinction. He was hesitant to add too much additional language, but he thought Belonging should be included, and he also wanted Wellness included.

Facilitator Dennis commented there were three callings to include the word Belonging.

Council Member Burt was struggling between the value of each of the words and their meaning. He did not want it to be a list in which its impact would be lost. He considered belonging to be a psychological wellbeing need and wellness to be a broader set of psychological and physical health. He opposed including wellness if belonging was to be included but with an understanding that wellness would be a major part of the focus in community health. He wanted to keep it at three words with each having broad meaning.

Vice Mayor Lauing thought wellness covered more than belonging, and he wanted a title with impact, not a description. He did not want there to be four words.

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Council Member Veenker remarked the word Community could be taken out if there were to be only three words. She was in support of the title being Community Health, Safety, Wellness, and Belonging.

Facilitator Dennis suggested there be a motion, a second, and a vote.

**MOTION:** Mayor Stone moved, seconded by Council Member Veenker to modify Community Health and Safety to "Community Health, Safety, Wellness, and Belonging".

Mayor Stone understood the hesitancy to go beyond three words, but he thought all four words were important and that there would be focus on their own particular subsection that had increased need and attention.

Council Member Veenker thought the words had substantial meaning to each Council member, and she did not know that there should be a choice between them. What was to be done in the subsections would be the key.

**MOTION PASSED: 5-2, Lauing, Kou no**

Facilitator Dennis expressed there were no changes to two of the remaining three, but he thought there was consensus to change the title of Economic Development and Transition. He declared that there would be discussion on the strategies to help achieve the priorities.

Council Member Burt thought the priorities as a group should be voted on.

Council Member Tanaka, related to Climate Change and Natural Environment, stated the City could take action to control flooding, and he wanted to ensure there would not be flooding in the city.

Mayor Stone found Economic Development and Transition to be awkward language. He asked if there was interest in it reading just Economic Development, though there would be transitional elements to what would be done.

Council Member Burt agreed that the language did not flow well, but the City was still in a transitional economy.

Vice Mayor Lauing added that a lot of transition had to happen in regenerating merchant groups, etc. He thought Transition should be included in the language.

Facilitator Dennis asked if any Council members felt strongly that the word Transition should be removed.

Council Member Veenker thought there was an argument to remove the word because development was broad and inherently helped a transition, but she did not object to the word being included.

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Facilitator understood that consensus was to keep the word Transition, so it would be a part of the motion.

**MOTION:** Council Member Veenker moved, seconded by Council Member Lythcott-Haims to approve the 2024 Council Priorities as follows:

- Community Health, Safety, Wellness, & Belonging
- Economic Development & Transition
- Climate Change & Natural Environment – Protection & Adaption
- Housing for Social & Economic Balance

Council Member Veenker was glad to see consensus being developed.

Council Member Lythcott-Haims was also glad to see consensus being developed.

**MOTION PASSED: 7-0**

Council Member Kou asked if there would be referrals at this meeting.

Mayor Stone replied that the strategies would be addressed and was when he thought referrals would be appropriate.

Facilitator Dennis declared that the focus would now be on the resource needs as it related to supporting the priorities. He voiced that the Supplemental Memo in 2C included the items that would be discussed. The third page of the memo listed three questions that Council members were asked to review to help this part of the conversation. He presented a slide with the questions. He voiced that each question would be asked under the title of each priority area, starting with Community Health, Safety, Wellbeing, and Belonging, although answers may apply to all the priorities, and a Council member may make that point if desired. He asked how Council envisioned engagement in these areas, and if it was the ad hoc committees, what would assigning goals to each committee look like. He stated another way to think about it was how Council would engage and if that would be sufficient.

City Manager Ed Shikada suggested the discussion be related to the ad hocs and how they fit with the priorities being approved and getting the work done. He furnished a slide listing the six ad hoc committees that were established last year. There was a supplemental memo listing the purpose statements that could be used for each ad hoc committee, and a secondary question was which ad hoc committees would continue to act informally versus those subject to the Brown Act.

Chief Assistant City Attorney Caio Arellano added the purpose statements may need to be revisited depending on whether a committee would continue to be an ad hoc committee or if it would follow Brown Act procedures.

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Council Member Burt asked why this discussion was being had because ad hoc committees had limited scope and duration, although it was not precisely defined. He remarked that under State law a standing committee could not be exempted from Brown Act procedures just because it was called an ad hoc, so it had to be a more defined scope and for a more limited duration. He inquired if this year or following years any of these committees should be transitioned to be permanent Council committees or if some would be limited duration or if their scope would change. He commented that the Cubberley Committee was focused on facilitating the land acquisition, and once accomplished, there could be an entirely different purpose of a Cubberley-related ad hoc for the site plan, funding, etc. He added that some had relationships to existing standing committees. He understood there was an interest in having a deeper dive into some issues as public meetings were restricted by formality, scheduling, etc. He noted that the memo stated a committee would provide periodic updates during Council Member Questions, Comments, and Announcements and that there would be an oral year-end report, and he queried why it was so prescriptive, and he stated that would be less than what would be received from the ad hocs in most circumstances, as there would be periodic ad hoc report updates that would go along with agendized items. He understood that that statement was to say there should be a minimum reporting, but he did not believe it needed to say it had to be oral at year end. He preferred written reports along with an oral presentation. He referenced the language under Climate that related to the Three-Year Work Plan and noted that the committee would be supporting more than what was listed. He suggested the language be changed from "supporting" to "including."

Council Member Veenker did not think Cubberley should be a Brown Act committee. She recommended Legislative be in P&S. She noted that the committees could evolve into other narrow purposes in future years. She questioned when it would be appropriate for a committee to become a Brown Act committee. She questioned if the committee would still be considered an ad hoc if the language were changed from "supporting" to "including." She suggested the italicized language under Retail and Climate Action read The Committee will provide, at a minimum, periodic updates and a final oral report.

Chief Assistant City Attorney Arellano voiced that the purpose statements were written to comply with a subsidiary body of Council having to follow the procedures of Brown Act requirements. To adhere to those restrictions, there needed to be a limited or specific purpose and a limited period of work. The statement related to periodic reports was added because ad hoc committees were not open to the public, etc., and there was an interest in transparency into the committee's work. It would be fine to change it to say that a committee would, at a minimum, provide period updates, etc., during Council Member Questions, Comments, and Announcements or in connection with Agenda items within a committee's purpose and that an oral or written year-end report on its work would be provided no later than December 2024. With respect to replacing the language "following items" with "including items," there was a risk of moving beyond the concept of a specific task or purpose. He thought it was less defensible under the Brown Act to replace "following" with "including." Council could decide to follow Brown Act procedures for the Climate Ad Hoc.

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City Manager Shikada added that in addition to the legal issue there was a management-of-workload issue. He explained why it was important that Council continue to make assignments of topics taken up by the ad hoc and standing committees.

Council Member Veenker asked if not keeping it to specifics would run a Brown Act risk, not necessarily a foul.

Council Member Burt noted that Climate Action, for example, was narrowed for the purpose of the Three-Year Work Plan, so "including" would mean the major elements of the Three-Year Work Plan had been delineated but that there were other parts of the work plan.

Facilitator Dennis declared there was Council consensus that Cubberley was a classic ad hoc.

Council Member Veenker noted that the Cubberley Ad Hoc was focused on a land acquisition, and there could be a future ad hoc concerning the use of Cubberley, so she would support putting Cubberley Land Acquisition into the name for clarity.

Facilitator Dennis announced there were no objections from Council related Land Acquisition being in the name for Cubberley. He asked if Legislative should be in P&S.

Council Member Kou was in support of a Legislative Ad Hoc Committee because of the amount of legislation coming from Sacramento, unless there was to be a section of P&S dedicated to reviewing the legislation intently to determine impacts to the City.

Vice Mayor Lauing noted that reviewing legislation would be a significant shift from current P&S process. It would fit, but it was a question of expanding the time to do such.

Council Member Veenker had a concern, but she did not want to share privileged information.

Council Member Burt noted that Legislative was an ongoing function, and he did not understand what may be different from the scopes of last year, this year, or next year. He thought a Legislative Ad Hoc would be appropriate if there was a certain area that an ad hoc would focus on this year. He did not think a broad legislative category was appropriate. He suggested proposals for a subset of the legislative agenda that would have particular focus this year.

Council Member Veenker asked if Legislative had been in P&S historically.

City Manager Shikada confirmed that Legislative had historically been in P&S.

Mayor Stone thought a committee dedicated to legislative made a lot of sense due to the never-ending flow of legislation coming from Sacramento. However, given the constraints of the Brown Act and how broad legislation was, he did not think it could continue as an ad hoc. He thought it could work with more specificity, but he did not know what would be focused on. He was leaning towards sending it back to P&S short of anyone pointing out specific legislation to focus on.

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Facilitator Dennis asked if any were opposed.

Council Member Kou was not opposed, but she did not think local issues were being addressed by others. She wondered if there should be a Brown-Acted committee. She wanted more of an overview of proposed legislation.

Facilitator Dennis declared there was consensus with it going back to P&S. He asked if Council was comfortable with Stanford Ad Hoc.

Vice Mayor Lauing thought all the items could be on the docket for another two to three years.

Council Member Burt felt there should be a discussion about whether the Climate Committee should be permanent or if it should be a separate commission. He thought consideration should be given to which should be permanent committees and which standing committees.

Vice Mayor asked if legally decisions needed to be made now.

Chief Assistant City Attorney Arellano replied that the protocols and procedures contemplated that Council would revisit what ad hoc committees would do each year. If the committees needed to continue next year and their purposes needed revision, then it should be determined if the ad hocs would need to follow Brown Act procedures. For the present, he thought Stanford and Cubberley could be viewed as ad hoc committees not subject to the Brown Act. Staff was asking Council to decide if Retail and Climate should continue as informal ad hocs or whether to follow Brown Act procedures.

Council Member Kou saw Climate Action continuing as an ad hoc, but she recommended there be a name change, such as S/CAP Electrification Ad Hoc, so it would be narrowly focused. She thought the Retail Ad Hoc Committee should be Brown Acted because it involved many stakeholders.

Council Member Burt agreed with Council Member Kou's comments related to Climate Action, but he would prefer it be called Climate Protection and Electrification.

Council Member Veenker agreed with a name change for Climate Action, but she wanted to ensure that grid modernization could be addressed.

Facilitator Dennis reminded Council that the scope should be captured with name changes.

Council Member Burt pointed out that the Reliability and Resiliency Strategic Plan was not listed. He did not know if that should be listed or if adding "including" to the language would cover it.

City Manager Shikada expressed that it should be listed specifically as it was a major work effort.

# **SUMMARY MINUTES**

Facilitator Dennis noted that Council agreed on the name change for Climate Action and that there was consensus for Retail being Brown Acted and Stanford continuing to be an ad hoc. He inquired if Climate Protection Ad Hoc should be Brown Acted.

Council Member Veenker did not think long staff reports were needed but that there could be slideshows and oral Staff reports. She supported it being an ad hoc this year and Brown Acted next year.

Council Member Burt mentioned that there were monthly team meetings with appointed advisors. He felt there should be meeting notifications, in the same way as a Brown Acted meeting, to all on the list.

Public Works Director Brad Eggleston was comfortable with it being either an ad hoc or Brown Acted.

Council Member Kou supported it being Brown Acted, but she certainly wanted notification to go out.

Council Member Burt preferred to have public team meetings but not make all functions of the committee Brown Acted.

Council Member Kou wanted to ensure that the public would be notified of team meetings.

Facilitator Dennis asked if there was consensus that the Climate Protection Ad Hoc would not be Brown Acted but that there would be public notification of team meetings.

Council Member Veenker was in favor of the Climate Protection Ad Hoc not being Brown Acted but that the public be notified of team meetings for greater transparency to facilitate community support.

Facilitator Dennis noted that he saw consensus for the Climate Protection Ad Hoc Committee not being Brown Acted, but there would be public notification of team meetings. He declared that "including" would be in the description.

Council Member Kou asked who writes the year-end report.

City Manager Shikada replied that staff suggested an oral report.

Council Member Burt noted that in the previous year staff had an extensive report for the Three-Year Work Plan and a brief report from the committee itself. He added that some committees wanted to do a written report and an oral report to supplement the agenda item rather than be the agenda item.

# SUMMARY MINUTES

Facilitator Dennis confirmed that the word "minimum" would be used in the italicized portion. He stated that he had not heard any changes to Housing. He established that Retail would be Brown Acted and there would be no changes to the description. He noted that Stanford would remain an ad hoc. He asked if Cubberley would remain an ad hoc with the addition of "land acquisition."

Council Member Burt suggested using the phrase Cubberley Real Estate Transaction Committee.

Facilitator Dennis voiced that the Council was comfortable with that phrase.

[Council took a five-minute break]

Facilitator Dennis declared that the discussion would continue with Item 2C Strategies to Achieve Priorities in relation to the three questions in the supplemental. He stated it was also a good time to discuss referrals.

City Manager Ed Shikada noted that staff had a sense of the big strategies Council had in mind, which would help inform the objectives that would be drafted, although there would be another opportunity for discussion. For example, it was recognized that Affordable Housing needed additional funding. Related to general referrals, he mentioned that staff would come back with priority objectives and standing committee work plans, and there would be occasion for discussion on a regular Council agenda.

Vice Mayor Lauing stated this was about strategy of the big priorities and then strategies under those. He remarked that Affordable Housing, etc., needed massive funding, and he wanted to be realistic about what it would take to make that happen. He discussed the funds needed for climate change infrastructure and incentivizing people to move from gas. He discussed his concerns for needing more funding.

Council Member Veenker spoke of funding being a constraint and needing to be creative in solving it through partners, bonds, etc., and it should be decided what would be in the City's best interest.

Council Member Lythcott-Haims discussed BAHFA intending to have a bond on the ballot in nine Bay Area counties. She spoke of regional efforts and the community being brought into the conversation. She stated it needed to be determined where cheaper housing could exist, such as modular, etc. She hoped that not only the funding side would be considered but also the cost side.

Council Member Kou stated that voters should be aware that the BAHFA housing bond would be funded through property taxes. She thought there should be full divulgence of information no matter the path taken. She added that proposed legislation was important in informing voters.

# SUMMARY MINUTES

Facilitator Dennis asked if any of the priorities required more or a different type of community engagement.

Mayor Stone hoped the Youth Wellbeing and Mental Health Taskforce would be able to address policies and programming in time for the budget. He did not know if Number 6 under Natural Environment addressed dark-skies initiatives, which he wanted prioritized.

Council Member Burt supported the Youth Wellbeing and Mental Health Taskforce addressing policies and programming in time for the budget.

Council Member Kou supported prioritizing dark-skies initiatives.

Council Member Burt discussed climate protection initiatives being on an aggressive schedule, and he thought there should be clear updates to the community regarding costs, goals, etc.

Council Member Veenker agreed that there should be clear updates to the community and that the community needed to know the context of particular facts.

Facilitator Dennis understood that communication should include relevant information, not necessarily more communication.

Council Member Kou added that communication needed to build confidence and trust in the programs and their implementation and that there should be follow-up with the community. She explained why Council should be included in the communication to the neighborhoods after the town halls.

Council Member Lythcott-Haims agreed with Council Member Kou's comments. She spoke of there being evidence that the community could make behavioral changes related to climate actions, and she wanted to provide examples of changes in past behaviors. She suggested there be public service announcements.

Facilitator Dennis queried if current tools should be utilized in a different fashion and if the City should link being change agents and motivating people to what the City did around its programming.

Council Member Lythcott-Haims thought it needed to be determined how to roll out a set of community conversations related to the end goals.

Mayor Stone agreed with all that had been voiced. He believed a better job could be done in creating community ambassadors with those who had adopted the technology sharing their experience.

Council Member Burt mentioned that the City had a communications consultant. He voiced that Stanford was studying climate communication, and he suggested engaging with them. He commented that tasks were being turned over to technologists when behavioral economists and social psychologists were needed.

# SUMMARY MINUTES

Council Member Veenker indicated that attitudes affected behavior. She spoke of home electrification tours.

Facilitator Dennis asked if there were particular strategies as part of the priorities that had not been on the docket or discussed that could be effective in engagement.

Council Member Burt addressed broader education of the community and its leaders. In the 1990s the City brought in national visionaries who shared positive examples, which he thought was currently needed.

Council Member Kou proposed inviting a couple neighborhood association members to the meetings with the Retail Ad Hoc.

Facilitator Dennis inquired what other resources Council needed to achieve the vision for the priorities.

Vice Mayor Lauing discussed having had approved additional staff to execute on the priorities.

Council Member Kou suggested a referral to the Finance Committee for the FY2024 midyear review of the FY2025 budget for fire trucks that carry water and that they have enough staff. She asked the process for referrals.

City Manager Shikada stated there would typically be Council concurrence on any given referral, which would inform staff of the proposed objectives they would return with.

Council Member Burt suggested referrals to be reframed as evaluations, not conclusions. He did not know if all fire stations should have trucks with water. He thought a valid question was what was the reason for what existed and the range of alternatives. After that was answered, then budgetary decisions could be made.

Council Member Kou suggested they to explore, evaluate, and refer to the Finance Committee whether all or which fire stations should have water.

[Inaudible] agreed.

City Manager Shikada wanted input from the Fire Chief. Based on Council's direction, this would go to the Finance Committee to be on their work plan. Staff would bring an analysis of the operational and financial dimensions for consideration. He added that this was a fiscal year budget topic, not a midyear budget topic.

Council Member Veenker requested that Council Member Kou voice all her referrals instead of Council giving consensus (or not) one by one, which would allow better understanding of the totality of the referrals.

Mayor Stone queried if it was necessary to make all referrals at this meeting or if it could be done at the March 4 meeting.

# SUMMARY MINUTES

City Manager Shikada replied that the 2024 proposed list would be brought forward March 4, and he suspected additions and changes would be discussed, which may extend to a subsequent discussion if needed. If Council wanted the referrals on the list and it was not something staff was already tracking, it would be helpful to know at this meeting, rather than March 4, if there was interest. It did not need to be a motion as a referral, but it could be a general idea and whether there was consensus. The fire truck issue would be part of the list unless there was objection.

Council Member Kou stated another referral was for the Finance Committee to consider \$250K to \$300K for the Mitchell Park Place development buildout project, which would allow for community programs, with the intention of AbilityPath procuring the matching funds. There was a time frame to receive matching funds and reach out to the community.

Council Member Burt suggested it be a referral for the City to discuss and evaluate pursuing a matching grant, and the amount would be discussed at the Finance Committee. He explained why the City should be more deliberate in how it would provide seed funds for projects.

City Manager Shikada added that they had received at least two other requests from community partners for grants, and staff was evaluating how to bring that to Council for discussion. He thought this was one of potentially several opportunities Council would have, so the question may be where and how best to have that discussion.

Council Member Kou requested a referral to consider adding a Palo Alto biologist to staffing to work with the rangers, etc., to address climate change on the natural environment protection and adaptation; a referral for the Finance Committee to consider having professional staff to support the Historical Resources Board; a referral for a commercial dewatering ordinance or policy be put in place to address not wasting groundwater; and a referral for P&S to better define Council liaison roles, such as meeting attendance, and that there be consistent methods throughout all boards and commissions related to how liaisons would communicate with commissioners, such as through staff, direct communication, etc.

City Manager Shikada thought the Council liaison roles fit under the Procedures and Protocols Handbook, which would come back to Council in the next month and a half.

Assistant City Manager Cotton-Gains clarified that it would come to Council as one of the P&S referrals from last year. The Committee recommended Council consider it, which would be on February 5.

Council Member Kou withdrew her referral to P&S related to Council liaison roles.

Facilitator Dennis questioned if there were other areas Council wanted to be more engaged in as it related to the priority setting process or if anything different should be considered.

Council Member Burt stated he did not see a big expansion of the work plan in the coming year. He thought staff was trying to put items on a certain deadline, but he believed some things may

# SUMMARY MINUTES

go into 2025, which would be fine. He did not realize that Item qq on Packet Page 12 had not been started, and he thought it was important they have a strategic plan and then implement it. Under Flood Protection, he stated that the Newell Bridge was important, and he could not determine where the City was in the project and/or if there were problems. He did not know if a Hamilton Avenue storm drain would be beneficial, but he felt it was worth understanding whether it could help mitigate Palo Alto impacts, even if it did not help the whole corridor. He added that he was not looking to adopt these as referrals, but he wanted to bring the issues up in advance of March 5.

Mayor Stone believed, regarding advancing renter protection policies, there were some outstanding referrals that had not been captured in the Staff report, and he wanted to continue the momentum on the policies and maybe send it back to the Housing Committee to determine what additional protections might be offered.

Council Member Lythcott-Haims voiced that objectives and programs that were not yet in the desired categories of completion, etc., were due to staff vacancies. She asked what Council should do to encourage hiring, recruitment, etc. and she wanted there to be a discussion.

Facilitator Dennis asked if there were suggestions for resources for HR.

City Manager Shikada acknowledged that there was an ongoing review of the recruitment and hiring process, and staff expected to provide an update to Council in 45 days or so. He explained that recruiting and hiring in the current environment was a fishing expedition, not a shopping expedition. He noted that they could and should improve hiring process and the way people were brought on board. To a certain extent, there were issues beyond their control in their ability to hire specialists in the current market. He stated that they were seeking individuals with unique skills.

Facilitator Dennis shared that in the past many cities had been advocating for housing positions at the same time, which he stated was a difficult environment to operate in.

Council Member Burt provided a fishing analogy related to recruiting and hiring.

Facilitator Dennis asked what more Council needed to be engaged in the process.

Mayor Stone thought the Full Council needed a better sense of agendas moving forward and a bigger picture when dealing with a particular item and understanding where it would fit within a longer range plan or strategy to understand the impact of decisions in various programming.

Council Member Lythcott-Haims would love to have a conversation about how to compensate people in a high cost-of-living area in a way that would not increase the salary and pension liability.

City Manager Shikada noted that workforce housing and workforce housing support would continue to be a priority.

# SUMMARY MINUTES

Council Member Lythcott-Haims thought workforce housing and the ability to be housed for the workforce were different things.

City Manager Shikada had intended to reflect both in his description.

Council Member Burt added that career opportunities could be brought to people who had housing and wanted to stay in the area, which would also address equity and diversity goals.

Facilitator Dennis asked if Council had any comments related to time to achieve the priorities.

Council Member Lythcott-Haims was proud how Council had conducted itself in sticking to the timer and being respectful of the process. She applauded all in their efforts.

Mayor Stone reiterated Council Member Lythcott-Haims' comments. He thought a good time to get into the norms conversation would be next week during the policy and procedure handbook conversation. It was important to respect the time of each other and staff and to not have meetings go needlessly long into the night at all levels.

Council Member Veenker agreed.

Council Member Kou thanked Council Member Lythcott-Haims for her comments. She recognized that each person had a different style, tolerance, etc., and adjusting for and recognizing that was important.

2D. Discuss City Council Norms for 2024

2E. Retreat Debrief, Take Away and Next Steps

Facilitator Dennis declared that Council Norms would be moved to the next meeting. Council comments and thoughts from this meeting would come forward in the appropriate ways over the course of the next weeks and months. On March 4, there would be a meeting related to the objectives.

City Manager Shikada added that the standing committee work plans would come to Council as a follow-up.

Mayor Stone thanked all for attending. He enjoyed working with Council. He thought Council members worked very well together. He voiced that Council was fortunate to have professional staff supporting them and fortunate to have a supportive and collaborative community. He shared a compliment that Council had received from a gentleman during the break.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 P.M.