

PORTOLA VALLEY TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING NO. 1007, March 10, 2021

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Mayor Derwin called the Town Council's Special Teleconference-only meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Ms. Hanlon called the roll.

Present: Councilmembers Jeff Aalfs, John Richards, and Sarah Wernikoff; Vice Mayor Craig Hughes; Mayor Maryann Derwin.

Absent: None

Others: Senator Josh Becker
Helen Wolter, Assistant to Senator Becker
Jeremy Dennis, Town Manager
Cara Silver, Town Attorney
Howard Young, Public Works Director
Brandi de Garmeaux, Assistant to the Town Manager
Laura Russell, Planning & Building Director
Cindy Rodas, Finance Director
Sharon Hanlon, Town Clerk
Robert Seeley – CalWater Rep
Dawn Smithson – CalWater Rep
Ed Holland – Chair of Bicycle, Pedestrian & Traffic Safety Committee

Attendees:
Kristi Corley
Annelise Connell
Caroline Vertongen
Betsy Morgenthaler
G. Kohs
Gary Godfrey
Jean Isaacson
Kevin Welch
Mary Hufty
MJ Lee
Nan Shostak
Patty Dewes
Rita Comes
Rusty Day

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Kristi Corley said she was very interested in the traffic studies which might give more information about the impact of major projects going on in the Town and how they might affect Portola Road and Alpine Road. She said she was recently made aware of a study from 2017 that San Mateo County did on Alpine Road, near 280, and she will forward that study to the Council, as she thinks it is worth sharing. She said she hopes it can be added to the Project page for the Stanford Wedge and shared with all Commissioners and Committees. She said that studies done during the pandemic won't show true traffic numbers on those roads, but this 2017 report will show relevant information. She thanked the Town of Ladera for bringing it to her attention, and suggested the report may also be useful for wildfire and earthquake evacuation planning.

(1) WELCOME – California State Senator Josh Becker.

Mayor Derwin welcomed Josh Becker, who was elected to the California State Senate District 13 in November of 2020. She said the district stretches from South San Francisco to Sunnyvale and from Pacifica to Año Nuevo. She described the District as a rich slice of California, which includes the tiny farming village of Pescadero, the tech hubs of Palo Alto and Mountain View and the uber affluent enclave of Atherton, where 52.3 percent of the adult population has been vaccinated, and the vibrant working class community of color, East Palo Alto, where 14.6 percent of the adult population has been vaccinated. Mayor Derwin added that in Atherton there have been 186 reported cases of COVID, while in East Palo Alto there have been 4254 reported cases. She said Senator Becker brings fresh perspectives, experience, competencies and accomplishments very different from his predecessors. He has a joint MBA JD from Stanford, which knits together tech, innovation, public policy, education, climate change, and a passion for social justice. She said he understands the world of the “haves,” to which he belongs, and he also cares deeply and wants to uplift the lives of the “have nots.” She said she does not think the 13th District could have a more fitting representative than Senator Josh Becker. The Mayor also welcomed Helen Wolter, District Representative for Senator Becker.

Senator Becker thanked Mayor Derwin and the Council Members for the warm introduction and the invitation to speak.. He said he looks forward to tackling today’s issues, as well as tomorrow’s, with the Council and appreciates all they have done to tackle the economic and social crises brought on by the pandemic. He acknowledged the many excellent leaders on the Council and also the Town staff. He said he ran for the State Senate because he wanted to make a difference. He said he is a problem solver and loves tackling challenging issues, of which there are many right now. He said since taking office he has been working with his colleagues in the State Assembly, as well as at the county and local levels to address the enormous challenges brought on by the pandemic. He said he feels optimistic that we can start to see the light at the end of the tunnel with the vaccinations. He is excited at the prospect of things getting back to normal.

Senator Becker shared that he has lives nearby and spent most of his life in West Menlo Park, but did live for a summer on Alpine Road, which was a great time. He said he lived in Palo Alto for two years, and then moved back to Menlo Park, and now lives close to the Dutch Goose, adding that he loves our neighborhoods.

Senator Becker said he is very excited about the pro tempore of the Senate, Toni Atkins, who he feels has been terrific and who appointed him to six important committees, including the Energy and Utilities Committee, the Transportation Committee, Business Professionals and Economic Development, Government Organizations, and Joint Audit committees. He said that close to his heart is his role as Vice Chair of the Joint Committee on Combatting Climate Change. He said since the Senate is only 40 people, they each serve on a lot of committees and can also introduce bills in committees they’re not on. Monday he will present two bills in the Elections Committee, which creates policies to improve voting by mail, as well as one of his energy bills.

Senator Becker said he has carried forward his “Prioritize Climate Now” plan from his campaign to the Senate, which is focused on the metrics of what are the sources of carbon in the state and what to do with each one of them, including transportation, buildings, the electricity sector other major sources, such as concrete and cement. He said he is also asking what we are doing from an environmental justice perspective and encouraging private sector innovation, such as with the “Million Solar Roofs” program that was rolled out in 2017. He said he has a bill now to do the same with electric buildings. He said S.B. 68 is around electric-ready homes for those who want to upgrade their homes right now, as an example of things they are working on in the buildings sphere. On the electricity sector, he said we are at about 54 percent clean energy right now. He asked, how do we get to 100 percent? He said this is what his 24/7 Clean Energy bill is about. The goal is making sure utilities are procuring clean energy at all times of the day, and that we have clean energy even when the sun is not shining and the wind is not blowing. He said the goal of the bill is to get to 85 percent clean energy by 2030 and to 90 percent by 2035.

Senator Becker described another of his bills which encourages low income folks to buy used EVs and high mileage hybrids. Another bill addresses low carbon concrete. He said that eight percent of global

emissions are from concrete and cement, and that no one is addressing this issue in a systematic way. He said that this is an opportunity to lead here in California. Their bill focuses on that, both in the public sector as well as a low carbon fuel standard for concrete and cement used in the private sector as well.

In regard to education, Senator Becker said there is a bill they are working on with San Mateo Community College, who approached him wanting to take advantage of a surplus by waiving enrollment fees and provide greater flexibility to meet the students' full cost of attendance, including food, transportation, housing, mental health services and technology. He said they also have four criminal justice bills, which you will see as a focus, as well as economic opportunity and social mobility. He said thinking deeply about economic mobility, it starts with early childhood education, K-12 and access to higher education, but beyond that, what are some other things we can do? He said they have some ideas about that, so it's an area that his office will be involved with.

Senator Becker stated that his greatest focus since taking office has been the pandemic, helping the area recover, getting kids back to school. He commended the Town's schools, leaders, parents and volunteers and said they're doing a great job about getting the kids back in school. He shared that, as a parent of two students at Menlo Atherton High School, that they are also very anxious to get them back in high school. He has supported from early on getting teachers vaccinated and treating them as frontline workers. He said their County has stepped up and they are now at the point where any teacher that wants the vaccine has been offered a first dose, which he is sure makes them feel better about coming back. He said we also need the PPE and the spacing precautions and to create a sense of safety and security, for the kids and parents and teachers. Senator Becker said he did a big push around high school sports. His two kids play high school sports, so he was glad the Governor reacted positively to that. He said they got outdoor sports back and some additional ones as well.

The Senator said right now he is working with the school districts throughout the county as best he can to provide clarity as to what's happening or not happening in Sacramento and how he and his team can advocate locally as well. They did pass a bill for \$6.6 million for schools to encourage re-opening and combat learning loss. He said there is also about another \$16 billion coming to California schools from the bill that was just passed by the House of Representatives. He said they are searching out how that money is going to flow and how to make sure that the schools benefit from it, as there are many that need it.

Senator Becker said that they have also passed some significant resources for small businesses and advised anyone who has any questions about how to access that money, to contact his office or contact Helen. He said that applies to accessing subsidies and childcare and other areas such as license fee renewal waivers, as well.. He said he has recently attended a hearing about the Office of Wildfire Technology Research and Development from Senator Dodd, so that is something he they be pushing through as well.

Senator Becker stated that changes that we've had have given him hope, but last year was a hard year, with the pandemic, the wildfires, the smoke, the Orange Wednesday. He is optimistic we can use new technologies to combat wildfires, which we will have to do as we're looking at another dry year. The Senator said in conclusion that he is excited to emerge from the pandemic and is looking forward to working with all of you.

Councilmember Wernikoff thanked the Senator for the overview and his work with reopening. She asked about high school reopening and concerns she has heard about next year and efforts to get ahead of it. Senator Becker said he understands, and that it's a frequent topic in his own household. He said there are some things to do now and there is also a need for trust about the fall. Acclimation has to happen for teachers, parents, students, distancing, whether it's four feet, six feet, or otherwise. He suggested there is time before fall to work out some of these things. Some financial investments could be made, and guidance on specifics to increase the comfort level of teachers, parents and students. He said he is optimistic. One thing to look at is the minutes of instruction, to account for the Wednesdays and hybrid changes, restoring the expectation of being back full time, and he will be taking these things up with

colleagues. He said if the flow of vaccinations happens as expected in next few months, school will be really different situation, another reason for optimism.

Councilmember Aalfs thanked the Senator for coming to PCE meeting Monday morning to talk about bills 67 and 68 that he's put forward, which he supports and believes PCE will support once in final forms. He said he has questions too numerous to mention, but that he will address separately through the Senator or his staff.

Mayor Derwin invited comments from the public.

Betsy Morgenthaler thanked Senator Becker for his attendance and referred to the Mayor's opening remarks, contrasting Atherton and East Palo Alto and the unattractive disparity between them. She said the teachers were not prioritized by the top down, we are in a sad situation, and she wondered if there is something Senator Becker could do to rebalance. especially at schools, but also other frontline workers such as grocery stores.

Senator Becker said he has spent much time on this question, especially in recent weeks. He organized a press conference in Palo Alto recently to draw attention to this. He explained that a complex combination of factors are involved in equitably distributing the vaccine. He said he and some colleagues have written to the Governor asking to be able to prioritize vaccinations by census tract. The goal is to be able to focus doses, and to bring the vaccine to more remote areas or underserved areas of the county. He suggested the importance of trusted messengers in community, targeting and building trust, noting progress made in East Palo Alto and the Pacific Islander community via mobile clinics. He mentioned strategies, such as going door-to-door with the J&J vaccine, which has fewer refrigeration requirements. The Senator stressed the importance of getting Ravenswood back, which will help with getting the high school back. He again highlighted the layers involved in the process. He said he was on record back in December, advocating for getting the teachers vaccinated early, to help them feel more comfortable about re-opening.

Ms. Morgenthaler thanked him for his response and mentioned not wanting to blame communities like Atherton, which is a distraction to the problem.

Senator Becker responded that numbers get skewed based on the size of the community and he feels what is important is how to get this each community. He said a county may have a supply of the vaccine, but it's another matter to have a focused effort to reach the community with it. He said he has been in contact with Kathleen Kelly Janus, the Governor's philanthropy advisor, from our district, talking about going door-to-door to sign people up, and this is happening now. He said there is good momentum, but every day is urgent. He said he feels it's essential to focus on where the spread is and make sure the vaccines are prioritized there, too.

Mayor Derwin invited one more question from the public.

Rita Comes had heard that East Palo Alto may get the single vaccine to make it easier because it doesn't have to be refrigerated, and she is hoping that underserved communities will be able to get both vaccines so that they are 100 percent covered.

Senator Becker replied that there are no inferior vaccines and that all of the vaccines are a preventative for hospitalization and death, and no one community is only going to get only one kind of vaccine. He added that he received an email from Stanford regarding monoclonal antibodies, which has been the best tool for keeping people out of the hospitals. He said it's clear where there spread of the virus is, and volunteers can be sent to East Palo Alto, but what is needed from the County is refrigeration for the vaccines. That has been possible in some areas, but it will also be good to have the J&J vaccine to be able to go deeper into some of the underserved communities.

Mayor Derwin thanked Senator Becker for being gracious with his time with the Commission. She advised that Helen Wolter has offered to take any follow-up questions and can be emailed at Helen.Wolter@sen.ca.gov.

(2) PRESENTATION – CALWATER with Lessons Learned from the CZU Fire

Mayor Derwin said she had a meeting with CalWater in February, and they discussed the energy crisis in Texas, which also became a water crisis. This led to further discussions regarding unforeseen emergencies and disasters. Rob Seeley, who handles Regional Government Affairs, agreed to come to Portola Valley and share things they've learned last year from COVID, the CZU fires and other disasters, and improvements that have been made. She also welcomed Dawn Smithson, District Manager to the meeting.

Robert Seeley, CalWater Government Relations, shared a presentation on issues that they have dealt with over the past year in regarding the COVID as well as the wildfires to ensure safe, reliable, clean water on a day-to-day basis. His goal was to share what goes on behind the scenes at CalWater on regular basis, and then also share what private citizens can do should a bigger natural disaster occur, and how to be prepared personally.

Mr. Seeley presented background information on CalWater, the largest water distributor in the west and third largest in the United States, serving over two million people. He outlined the water districts across the state, Portola Valley being in the Bear Gulch District, and described how all of the districts work together, even though spread out. Mr. Seeley presented their emergency management plan, including communication and coordination between public and private entities. He described the National Response Framework, which includes: Prevent, Prepare, Respond, Recover.

Dawn Smithson presented the Emergency Operations Center Organization Chart, indicating all of the various entities involved in a disaster and how they fit into the organizational structure. While the first person on the scene of a disaster initially wears all of the hats, as others are brought in those hats are handed off. She said, while the chart looks complicated, the way to be able to carry it out in a real emergency, under pressure, is to practice, practice, practice. She said all management goes through annual training for a disaster, and community training also occurs. She described their Emergency Response Trailer Units which can house three teams of two individuals for a week while making system repairs. She shared a list of past occasions during which the EOC has been activated in the past four years. The management team, about 60 people, has been meeting almost every day during COVID.

Ms. Smithson highlighted a couple of major events and some of the lessons learned from them, beginning with the Erskine Fire, in which 14 of their 23 districts, 108 people in the company, responded to this fire. She shared that employees she sends to these fires generally come back different people and are changed. CalWater received the NAWC Living Water Award for their response to the Erskine Fire. She talked about the Oroville Spillway Incident, sharing that their CEO visited the fairgrounds where the evacuated people were located and delivered to them chocolates and movie tickets. From this event, they learned that they needed to have things automated. She talked about the Mendocino Complex Fire and how the fire was coming into their treatment plant, which had to keep running in order to supply water to fight the fire. She provided photos of the EOC headquarters showing their simple, yet functional system to keep everyone on the same page. She next spoke of the Woolsey Fire showing the importance of community coordination and relationship, such as when the tank trucks needed to be notified to go to a different zone to fill their trucks, to reserve the local supply for the fighters on the ground. Lastly, she spoke of the Camp Fire fire, the most destructive loss of life fire in the state's history. Many CalWater employees lost their homes in this fire. She said CalWater has a Critical Incident Response Management team which provides peer-to-peer counseling for employees to help them through such situations.

Ms. Smithson shared more lessons learned, including PSPS allows equipment to be running with generators and making sure there are engineers on hand to maintain and keep the generators operating.

Their goal is for customers to not even think about their water being off during an outage, because they, at CalWater, are thinking about it. They have learned to embed themselves into the Cal OES, so that if they need to help out in the state, they can do that. They also have an Emergency Action Guidebook, which gives step-by-step checklists for every kind of emergency and which is given to every employee and placed in every service vehicle.

Mr. Seeley then presented a number of things that the public can do in the event CalWater cannot provide continuous water during an emergency. Most important is to have water on hand, at least one gallon per person per day, with a two-week supply recommended, and there are situations where more than that is needed. He said don't ration water, but drink what you need, so as not to become a medical emergency. Minimize need for water by reducing activity and staying cool. Make sure your water supply stays fresh. He described ways to create your own bottled water, and knowing what to do if your water supply runs low, for example, using melted ice, liquids from canned goods, et cetera. He described how to purify water and what not to drink.

Mayor Derwin invited questions from the Council. Hearing none, she invited comments from the public.

Gerry Kohs referenced a book by Nicole Perloth, a Portola Valley native, on cybersecurity issues, and asked if Council Members were aware of the book, which deals with cybersecurity issues on local utility companies.

Mr. Seeley responded that they heard about the hacking of the water system recently and said that CalWater has a robust cyber security system, with all employees required to complete cyber security training and that they are keeping CalWater state-of-the art to keep their water systems safe. Ms. Smithson added that CalWater's system does not use the software that was hacked in the recent Florida situation, but uses a more robust software.

Kristi Corley said she had a friend who lost her house in the Fountain Grove fire in Santa Rosa, in a hilly area similar to Portola Valley where the fire fighters lost pressure at upper levels and had to come down to lower levels to get water from hydrants. Mr. Seeley said that CalWater uses booster pumps and portable generators that can be brought in from the district or even from outside at a moment's notice to keep the pressure up. Ms. Smithson reiterated this, and said that the generators are extremely well-maintained, well-oiled. She said they protect them as if our lives depend on it, which they do.

Town Manager Dennis thanked Ms. Smithson and Mr. Seeley for their comments, and for Ms. Smithson's responsiveness over the past year when the Town was dealing with PSPS events and also their attention to conversations regarding relocating the Town's AM radio unit. Thirdly, he thanked her for her interest in the program they are considering related to painting some of their fire hydrants and is looking forward to working with her on that. He also said a big thank you for being such a partner in conversations around the Smart Water Meter program. Ms. Smithson thanked the Town for their support, specifically in the AMI, saying it would not have been successful without their partnership. She appreciated them coming to the table, speaking on behalf of the residents, their customers. Town Manager Dennis added his thanks to Brandi de Garmeaux, Assistant to Town Manager, who managed the details of that.

Mayor Derwin thanked the participants for their discussion and shared that she does not, in fact, even think about her water supply during a fire, which is a testament to the incredible work of CalWater.

CONSENT AGENDA

- (3) **Approval of Minutes** – February 24, 2021
- (4) **Approval of Warrant List** – March 10, 2021
- (5) **Appointments by Mayor** – Member to the Parks & Recreation Committee

- (6) **Appointment by Mayor** – Member to the Geologic Safety Committee
- (7) **Request from Nature & Science Committee** – Committee Charter Change
- (8) **Request from Woodside Highlands Road Maintenance District Residents' Advisory Committee (WHRMD RAC)** – Adoption of 2020-'21 Budget

Annelise Connell commented on item 8, regarding transparency, and said the budget document contains a discrepancy. It refers to an advisory committee but that committee only existed on paper and wasn't actually real or held a meeting, so it could have not produced the document. She suggested the document was created by a corporation whose name is not on the document. The budget was submitted for approval at last night's meeting of the newly-chartered advisory committee, but the committee did not require any written documents to justify the \$150,000 road paving line item, not even a pretense of transparency. She wonders what is going on and was recently talking to some members of the Town Council, sharing her concerns about a corporation submitting its own budget with the newly-formed committee rubbering stamping it. She hopes the Council will look at this transparency issue. She asks that the budget be sent back to the Advisory Committee, who should require transparency, collect all supporting documents from the corporation and include the survey paid for by the road maintenance district and all documents that the corporation presented at its own meetings. She said the Advisory Committee should put its own name on a fully transparent budget with all document to be entered into the meeting minutes. If this were done, she would fully support the budget.

Mayor Derwin invited other comments on the Consent Agenda. Hearing none, she brought it back to the Council.

Vice Mayor Hughes asked to pull item 8 from the Consent Agenda.

Councilmember Richards moved to approve items 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 on the Consent Agenda. Seconded by Councilmember Aalfs, the motion carried 5-0 by roll call vote.

Vice Mayor Hughes said he attended the formal meeting of the Woodside Highlands Road Maintenance District Residents' Advisory Committee last night, in which this budget was on their agenda and they voted to approve it, and then spent the rest of the meeting discussing in detail the bids received and what actions to take to move forward on the work. He understands Ms. Connell's point that there's historically been a lack of formality in terms of how the road maintenance district has been operated, but says that has been fixed with the action of the Council to appoint the formal Residents Advisory Committee, and they are doing the work that they are supposed to be doing. He thus recommends approving this time.

Vice Mayor Hughes moved to approve item 8. Seconded by Councilmember Aalfs, the motion carried 5-0, by roll call vote.

REGULAR AGENDA

- (9) **Report by Bicycle, Pedestrian & Traffic Safety Committee – Update to Willowbrook Parking concerns**

Town Manager Dennis introduced Ed Holland, Chair of the Bicycle, Pedestrian & Traffic Safety Committee, who has been receiving information from Willowbrook residents related to parking.

Mr. Holland reported that they were approached last fall by a number of residents of Willowbrook Drive who have properties closest to the Alpine Road, who were concerned about parking on that street. This was occurring mostly on weekends, during busy times. He said it is an exacerbation of the typical problem seen, influenced probably by COVID and shutdowns, with people becoming more familiar with the area and visiting more frequently. One resident, Mr. Jim Green, has surveyed his neighbors and

begun an informal residents' group to gather their concerns to represent to the Bicycle, Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Committee. They've also brought their ideas for possible solutions. He presented some of these ideas. Driveways have been blocked at times or affected for line-of-sight to and from their driveways. The amount of parking and parking on both sides the roads, restricting traffic flow at busy times was also discussed. It was decided to form a subcommittee to discuss and decide what actions could be taken and the right way to engage with the residents. They have broken the problem into two things concerning safety. One, the direct safety and visibility from driveways. He said they are considering extending red curb areas at selected driveways at the request of individual residents. A letter to this effect was circulated to residents of a heavily-affected area. Secondly, he said to take the residents' concerns and ideas into consideration going forward into discussions about the situation. He said they are not ready to make any formal recommendations or design changes, because it is a tricky problem, likening it to a balloon, where squeezing it in one place makes it balloon out somewhere else. The BPTS has taken the concerns affecting a number of locations as a running agenda item almost since its inception in 2012. He invited any questions from the Councilmembers.

Town Manager Dennis agreed that this is a tough problem because it blends different types of issues, and also COVID has exacerbated the problem, so it's not clear what the problem will look like in the future. He said the approach of the Committee and staff has been to be deliberate and not make any rash decisions, knowing a number of residents will be engaging in the program to paint the curbs. That will be happening as the weather clears. Mr. Dennis, Mr. Holland and Mr. Howard felt it was important that the Council be informed on what that discussion looks like. The engagement of the community in the area has been incredible, and they appreciate that the focus has been on the safety issues that they perceive. Mr. Holland added that the group does have some expectations, and he looks to the Council for advice in how to manage the situation.

Vice Mayor Hughes remarked on the presentation of Mr. Green at the meeting and acknowledging the work he has done getting the residents on the same page. They are all asking for generally the same thing. His recommendation would be to have a special meeting of the BPTS, or its subcommittee, on this issue, with staff, to come up with an action plan. He said Town Manager Dennis had suggested some temporary measures that might solve the problem in the near term, six months or so. At the end of summer, as the Town is coming out of COVID, they could see if the traffic problems persist at that point and if they needed a longer term solution. He felt one more working meeting with staff and BPTS and neighbors to figure out the short term plan would be helpful.

Town Manager Dennis said if the Council was comfortable with it, they could have that meeting and come back with recommendation for a short term solution that is balanced, yet addresses the expectation of the neighbors. Vice Mayor Hughes, referring to the balloon illustration, said he expects the solution to be a gentle squeezing without a huge impact on other areas, focusing on the more substantial direct safety issues. He thinks there are things that can be easily done that would not have a huge impact elsewhere.

Town Manager Dennis also suggested it would be helpful to describe what the particular issues are. First, the number of cars that park on both sides of the road, creating a safety issue as it relates to the interactions with other vehicles and bicycles coming off of Alpine Road. The Fire District is able to get vehicles through, but if someone is trying to turn around there, it could cause a delay. The second issue is, in the past, the curb on the east side at Alpine Road was painted, presumably because of the way vehicles come off of upper Alpine Road onto Willowbrook, The Sheriff's Office has increased patrols there in order to ticket people. Folks are also parking on the east side trail, blocking access and pushing people onto the street in order to get to the trailheads.

Mr. Holland said they've gotten emails from residents living further away from the problem, saying they don't want restrictions on traffic and that there are multiple viewpoints, although Mr. Green and his committee have legitimate complaints. Mayor Derwin asked if the problem is generally on weekends as opposed to weekdays, and Mr. Holland said very much so.

Councilmember Richards asked what other temporary measures beyond painting the curbs were being discussed. Town Manager Dennis said placement of bollards along the road could be a temporary solution, although unattractive. It could give information about how people park and alleviate some issues, but could also push the problem further down. He said the bollards would probably not go beyond the median.

Mr. Holland noted that the Windy Hill Open Space no longer has a solid gate across their entranceway. But there is an area of parking by the bridge as you enter their property. Down the driveway, before the bridge, there is probably room for a few cars there. He wondered about approaching them to open parking within their property at their end of the trail. He thought it might offer space for approximately ten cars. Town Manager Dennis commented in regard to this point that it might be a good time to have a broader conversation with Mid-Pen around parking issues relating to existing and future facilities.

Mayor Derwin invited further questions or comments from the Council. Hearing none, she invited questions or comments from the public.

Mr. Kohs thought it was remarkable that there is a group of neighbors willing to give up parking on one side of the road and place it on the other for access and safety reasons. He remarked that on his own block, he couldn't imagine getting the neighbors to agree on something like that and he admired the neighbors for coming to that kind of agreement. Although it pushes some traffic further along, but he feels a temporary experiment like this seems reasonable.

Caroline Vertongen commented that one issue that has not been addressed, although she complimented Mr. Green and the neighbors for what they have done to try to solve the issue. She said they have tried to work with law enforcement to find out why the citations have no impact. She said they were told that San Mateo County cannot cite people from outside the county. She has tried to find out if that issue has been resolved, but not gotten answers. She said it's behavioral problems and not by Portola Valley residents, who she said are very open for people, but there are people taking advantage of their generosity and it's sad. Mr. Holland said nothing is illegal with what they're seeing with regard to the parking. He believes that citations have only been given for clear infractions of parking signage or blatantly blocking the roadway. He remarked that there is no desire to restrict people or show mean-spiritedness toward them. Town Manager Dennis noted that the Sheriff's Office in San Mateo County can cite vehicles from those who live outside San Mateo County, and that has been happening.

Councilmember Aalfs thanked those involved for their efforts to address this. He said there was a problem with this about a year ago when the lockdowns were first happening and part of the reason they asked Mid Pen to close Windy Hill for a while, because the situation on Willowbrook was so hazardous. He said he appreciates the focus on safety. His one suggestion was to maintain the focus on safety. Mr. Holland said the discussion had been helpful and also mentioned that Mr. Young thought if it continued to be problem after things return to normal, it might be time to bring in a traffic consultant to look at the problem again.

Mayor Derwin said that sounds like a good plan. She invited further comments from the public.

Betsy Morgenthaler complimented Mr. Green and the neighbors on their admirable attitude. She supports their coordination and working together as emblematic of what we all should do. She noticed on Sunday morning there was a lot of traffic. She checked out the Windy Hill parking lot. There were 49 cars there and the two handicapped places were empty. She said it was full to capacity, and she was glad it could accommodate all the cars. She applauded the idea of experimentation and thinks it will probably take a few iterations of it to learn from it. She advocates protecting open spaces and the beauty of them. She was standing in the parking lot of the Sequoias and noted that the parking lot there was not full, and she wondered about exploring that as an option. She also noted that on Portola Road the cars were very heavy, as is common. There were a number of cars over the white line and some fully blocking. Most beyond the Windy Hill parking sign can park more off-road, but to the south of that, they are very much

blocking the entire bicycle lane/shoulder. She's said it's hit-or-miss with the Sheriff's Officers patrolling the area. In regard to the green cards that they are urged to put on peoples' windshields, she said they do not seem to make a dent in the problem.

Mary Hufty remarked, in regard to opening up parking at the base of Windy Hill, that yes, there is some parking there, and it is also one of the most beautiful places in Portola Valley, close to the creek, and she thinks it would be wise to have consensus between the Trails Committee and the Open Space Committee and the Bicycle Committee, that they all agree to that alternative.

Mr. Holland said he feels they have a path forward and a reasonable amount of the Council's blessing to pursue the situation as outlined. He said he doesn't want the focus to be on just one area but always have an eye on other safety concerns as well.

Mayor Derwin thanked the Mr. Holland and his committee for their work.

(10) **COUNCIL LIAISON COMMITTEE AND REGIONAL AGENCIES REPORTS**

Vice Mayor Hughes said most of his topics had already been covered. He noted the ASCC met on Monday and discussed a new single family residence on 85 Palmer Lane, a substantial structure, but much of it is underground. It has a 2,000 square foot house and 4,000 square foot main level house, detached garage, detached artist's studio. There are a number of conditions to apply, but they were generally supportive of the project.

Councilmember Richards was unable to attend the Preparedness Committee, but Town Manager Dennis did. He mentioned that he and the Mayor have been working on setting up the groundwork for a Race and Equity Public Committee in Town. He said they are considering an April 20th agenda, at which point they hope to offer some basic ideas for the charter and framework. He said he is looking forward to that and to turning it over to a citizen's committee. They also talked to Rob Hayes at The Sequoias about the change in the structure there, with a new company taking over food service. They were approached by some of the workers and the union representative there who were concerned about what that is going to do to their livelihood. Rob gave them a positive review about the company, which is the largest food service company in the world and has been in charge of their food service for a long time. Previously, the managers of the system were Sequoias employees but will now be under this new company. He said they are in the process of negotiating the contract at present. He said they watch and wait to see how this pans out.

Mayor Derwin added that this will be all of the employees that are not clinical staff – the groundskeepers, the people who do the linens, et cetera, everyone except clinical staff – were essentially fired and were moved to the subcontractor, named Morrison, which is a division of Compass, who were already doing their food service. She said that the meeting with Rob, and his version, was quite different from the meeting they had with John Avalos and the workers. Councilmember Richards said at the time of that meeting there was little known about how the contract would pan out, and that has not yet been finalized but there is a fair amount of information that has come out and it looks positive, on paper anyway.

Councilmember Aalfs said Nature and Science met on the 25th. They are trying to push ahead with the speaker series. He believes they were working with staff to finalize a date for Roger Romani and "The Black Hole" talk, their first event. He said Leslie Field from Ice911 has also agreed to give a talk. He is not sure of the date for Roger's talk, hopefully later this month. He said Parks and Rec met on the 1st, and they are going to move forward with a pilot for a dog park, next to the sports court at Town Center. They are looking into putting up temporary fencing and having a dog park and seeing if people like having a place for having dogs off-leash. He reported that the skate ramp is gone. It was falling apart and was a danger. The Committee is thinking about steps to replace it at some point. He said there have been a few discussions with Alpine Inn. The parking lot next to Rossotti Field is half Town property and half Alpine Inn property, and we lease part of it to them, so that they can meet the parking requirements in their CUP.

He said they have been having conversations mostly with Alpine Strikers, making sure that the Strikers have enough parking spaces for practices and possibly games this spring. He said Alpine Inn needs a certain number of spaces to meet its CUP, and he said they would like to make sure a certain number of spaces are carved out whenever the field is going to be active, so parents can easily get in and out to the field for practices and games. He reported that he is no longer the Chair of the Board of Peninsula Clean Energy and that Rick DeGolia from Atherton has taken over that spot, but he is still on the Board. Donna Colson from Burlingame has taken over as the Vice Chair.

Councilmember Wernikoff asked regarding Parks and Rec if there was an update on the discussion about timing for the basketball court. They are hopefully going into the Orange on Monday. Councilmember Aalfs responded that the Committee felt like once we go into Orange, they were ready to put the hoops back up. He couldn't remember where outdoor basketball became practicable again on the COVID charts. Town Manager Dennis stated it is Orange.

Councilmember Wernikoff said she has not had official meetings with PVSD but thinks everyone is aware there is work being done for support of the Parcel Tax Measure S and she thinks there will be more communication about that around Town. She said this is an update to the previous parcel tax that's been in place for 34 years. The current one expires in June, so this is to replace that. It would actually be a decrease in the tax. Annual right now is \$581, and it would be reduced to \$461. She said this is an important measure for the school and funds about \$1 million of their budget. She thinks the ballots go out in April and the vote is in May. Regarding The Sequoias, she had a sweet meeting with the crew and it was nice to see happy faces, because pretty much everything other than the dining hall is open now. It was night and day from the last meeting, and she is happy for all of them. She said the Cultural Arts meeting is tomorrow, so she doesn't have an update there. She said the Financial Reporting Subcommittee was approved on January 27th and they have had two meetings since then. She said she is on a learning curve but one observation she has had is that we don't seem to have the amount of financial reporting that a lot of other communities have, particularly even small communities. She said most have a minimum of quarterly reports, which we don't have. Some towns have as much as monthly reports. She has been sharing that she thinks that this should be a priority for our Town, to get to quarterly financial and investment reporting. She thinks Town Manager Dennis is working towards that and she understands it has been complicated by implementation of the new software system. Her understanding is the contract was executed in January of 2020 and we're still working on it, with a timeline of almost through the end of May – an 18-month implementation period, which is long. She feels we need to focus on that area to make sure that gets done so that we can get to the kind of reporting that we should have in the Town. The subcommittee is now meeting weekly. She said the other subcommittee she is on is the Website Subcommittee, a project that's been going on for some time. She understands the launch is for June. She shared that she is excited about the relaunch of the website and thinks it a great opportunity for the Town to step up communications, particularly as it relates to Planning, Emergency and Wildfire, as well as financial information. She is not sure what the upcoming meetings of the Subcommittee are going to be, but she thinks there is great opportunity for the project and is looking forward to the results.

Mayor Derwin asked Town Manager Dennis who is doing the website. Town Manager Dennis said Brandi and Kari are primarily responsible. The entire staff is involved in preparing materials and reviewing the website, which has been ongoing activity of Staff for weeks, but Brandi and Kari are primarily responsible day-to-day. The Subcommittee is Councilmember Wernikoff and Vice Mayor Hughes.

Mayor Derwin said February 26th at a virtual Council of Cities meeting and City Selection meeting, Mark Nagales from South Francisco was elected to the Northern City seat on the TA to replace Rico Medina, who was elected to a seat on SamTrans. The presentation was regarding how they are dealing with their RHNA number. San Carlos' previous number was 596. Their new number is 2,700, and they've been building housing. She said she thought it could be educational for the Town, so she had the slides sent over. They are now having their conversations on density with the community. They've had two online workshops. They are also talking about childcare. She said she did a search committee to replace the Ed, who is stepping down. She said she and Town Manager Dennis had a meeting with CalWater with an

employee, Justin Skarb, essentially because CalWater has a lot of bills due from customers. At the end of 2020 they had \$9.6 million in overdue bills. She said in the Bear Gulch District, 345 customers are 90 days past due, for a total of \$240,00 and they are looking for help as to how they can collect those funds.

The Mayor said last week was Read Across America March, and she was able to participate, reading for 15 minutes to Ms. Ryniewicz's 5th grade class. She said she enjoyed the experience, and it was a chance to remember how reading was her refuge as a child. She said she choose, "I Am Malala," about the young Pakistani girl who was a champion for girls going to school, and who was shot in the face by the Taliban. She read the Young Readers Edition, and she thinks they enjoyed the passages she read. She was asked by a teacher to judge two inventions, one by a fourth grader, one by a sixth grader, who are trying to get into the state competition. She said she recruited John Richards who is an architect to help her. She said the fourth grade invention was to deal with wasps. The other one was a device for saxophone players. Councilmember Richards helped explain the invention, which is a small handheld battery-operated vacuum to slip over the mouthpiece and suck out the excess spit. He said it was very clever. Mayor Derwin shared that it was a pleasure to work with the schools, with the children, and she appreciated it.

Mayor Derwin reported that on March 4, Town Manager Dennis and she had a meeting with Ladera Church, a check-in about their proposed project. They have two pieces of property, one in unincorporated county, which is the main part. The other is in Portola Valley proper, and they would like to build six to eight units of affordable housing. Their two hurdles are to become an Affiliated Partner, of which they have completed one piece and have to complete the other pieces. Also, the language in the Affiliated Partner section of the Housing Element has to be rewritten, such that you don't have to be an employee of the church to live there. They talked about the timing and the Housing Element. She said she thinks they would like to do it sooner rather than later.

(11) **TOWN MANAGER REPORT**

Town Manager Dennis said he had a lengthy report to share. He said, regarding EPC, there was nothing in particular that came out of the committee. They have combined a few of their subcommittees to address issues around medical supplies, and we are very likely to see the CERPP division Portola Valley purchasing located next door to the substation, so may be using some of Portola Valley facility to help support that co-location.

He said the President is going to be signing a COVID relief bill probably Friday. The National Association of Cities has put out a spreadsheet on estimated amounts that cities or jurisdictions may be getting. The initial amount that is publicly available is \$860,000 for the Town of Portola Valley, which would be an incredible help as it relates to both impacts from COVID and support for other activities. Once the bill is signed, the first round, about half the amount, would be released in about 60 days.

He said it's been two years since the Town sponsored a Neighborhood Watch meeting, which is a meeting of all the captains of Neighborhood Watch. The Town was planning to do one March 20, 2020, when COVID hit, so it was put off, but it is planned for April, and is an opportunity to thank them for the work they are doing, and to welcome new Neighborhood Watch Committees into the fold and share information on how they can engage with residents and keep that fresh, which is a big struggle for Neighborhood Watch programs. The meeting will include Captain Corpus and other representatives of the Sheriff's Office.

He gave an update on the Mid Peninsula Regional Open Space District Board's planning process for the Hawthorn Complex. Mid Pen is expecting start more significant engagement later this year, particularly in the summer. He does not anticipate significant items to react to at that point, but he has been encouraging Mid Pen, as they develop public outreach to ensure that they include us and include residents in whatever forms that takes, and also talk to the maximum number of people, so no one is surprised.

He reported that the Wildfire Preparedness Committee will meet on March 18 and will be a substantial meeting because all the subcommittees have been very active over the last few months, since the last meeting. He anticipated topics to include insurance, evacuation planning, safety element planning, all things that we've been working on for some time, in addition of re-review of proposals that the Committee brought in front of the Council in December.

He said the fiscal system update, as Councilmember Wernikoff mentioned, has been an ongoing process. The contract was signed last year, with implementation started in and April, May, June timeframe. It has been a source of frustration for staff, the challenge being that elements of the system haven't been fully available, primarily from a reporting standpoint on the revenue side. There were challenges early on, to ensure that staff was able to get information into the system in a way that made sense. He said the Town utilizes three modules of Open Gov. The first module that was purchased but hasn't been deployed is the Transparency Tool, which you see in some other cities, which allows residents and visitors to take a look at the health of the budget, typically general ledger-related, year-to-date reports. Reports can also be created around an issue such as public safety. The second module was a Budget Builder, which staff has been using the last couple years, which is one reason there has been a new budget presentation from the Town. The third piece is the Financial system which replaced Fund Balance, which was no longer being supported and was an antiquated system. Challenges have been related to it being a Cloud system. Secondly, since Open Gov has made it their own system there have been delays in getting some of the sub modules ready, and thirdly, there have been delays in getting some of those sub modules ready for prime time, which has meant that the Town has been delayed in getting information in the system. The Subcommittee has been meeting recently and he has appreciated their engagement. He has gotten more actively involved in the management of this and has been satisfied with the response from Open Gov. They have deployed additional resources and staff and he feel confident that the system will be up and running in a few weeks to do the two primary things they need to do – the basic financial reporting and monitoring, and secondly, ensuring that the financial system is talking well with the budget system so they can do their budget. A lot of that activity is happening offline right now. They've been able to do much of what they normally do, but there has been frustration that some of the tools have not been available. Town Manager Dennis said he is feeling positive even though it has been frustrating, but he is looking forward is excited to have a good system in place.

Vice Mayor Hughes added that it seemed to him and Councilmember Wernikoff that the transfer over to the new system was much less far along that they thought it was. There are some basic functions of the system that haven't been done yet. There was some data that is not in there, so generating reports is not something they could do. As they have worked with Town Manager Dennis and Open Gov they have a clearer picture of what the project timeline looks like and what pieces are remaining. Because of the fact that there are three separate systems, all integrated, it's a lot more complex than he understood at first, and there is still a significant number of things to do. He said that Councilmember Wernikoff saw a demo of what the system should look like and went through the detailed project timeline with Open Gov.

Councilmember Wernikoff said her main takeaway from an oversight standpoint is it seems like it has taken a long time to get we are, and we are far from where we need to be. She has been through some of these implementations in other aspects of her life and find that because they say it's going to be done in a couple of weeks, when it' taken 14 months to get to where we are now, she has some skepticism. Her understanding is that reporting is not going to be done until late May. She said they need to stay on it and it's an important thing for the Town to shore up.

Town Manager Dennis agreed that the skepticism is warranted. He said his level of involvement has drastically increased and he is talking to them almost on a daily basis. He appreciates that they seem to understand their frustrations which have led to delays. He said there are different elements related to reporting, some of which are needed now to do the most basic things, some of which aren't needed until later. He said some of the features not needed for day-to-day operations are the ones that will come a little later, and they have been doing them outside the system anyway.

Town Manager Dennis mentioned Councilmember Aalfs' presentation last week and hopes everyone got a chance to see it. It is up to almost 80 views – ten times higher than most Council meetings. He said they have completed interviews for the Finance Support position, so there will be more to announce in the coming days. He said the second tennis court has been painted for pickleball and looks great. He said he plans to write the first Action Minutes for the Council meeting tomorrow, as directed. There will be three pieces – Action Minutes, the Meeting Summary, and the Council Meeting Summaries, which he writes on a bi-weekly basis. He will start putting the Action Minutes into the Agenda and he will speak to the Mayor and Vice Mayor about whether Action Minutes are the ones being approved.

He reported PV Donates conversations have been great, with great feedback from the committees on what they would like to see. He said one question they came up with a couple times was is this program intended to replace current expenditures by the Council on big ticket items? He told them that that is not the intent, but it is intended to support smaller types of programs, not the big ones that people may be thinking about. There may be efforts related to PV Donates as it relates to making those programs successful. Finally, Town Manager Dennis mentioned that at the next meeting on the 24th, Supervisor Don Horsley will be attending and speaking on County-related issues. The presentation by the San Mateo County Resource Conservation District, the RCD, now has sphere of influence in our part of the world and they are a very useful entity as it relates to agricultural issues traditionally, but they have also been engaged in wildfire-related issues and support Firewise. He said in April they anticipate Council priorities being finalized on the 14th. They are hoping to hear from Farmer's Market operators on the 14th as well, to hear how things are going. Later that month, the 28th will be the first major conversation about the Housing Element and the Race Equity Committee mentioned earlier.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

(12) **Town Council Digest** – February 25, 2021

None.

(13) **Town Council Digest** – March 4, 2021

None.

ADJOURNMENT [9:28 *p.m.*]

Mayor Derwin adjourned the meeting.

Mayor

Town Clerk