

PORTOLA VALLEY TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING NO. 1012, May 12, 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: Kari Chinn, Communications and Committee Engagement Analyst
Brandi de Garmeaux, Assistant to the Town Manager
Howard Young, Public Works Director
Laura Russell, Planning & Building Director
Sharon Hanlon, Town Clerk

Attendees:	Karyn Bechtel	Betsy Morganthaler	Gary Morgenthaler
	Bob Turcott	Caroline Vertongen	Cori Moesta
	Helen Quinn	Dale Quinn	Judith Murphy
	Kristi Corley	Michael Tomars	Karen Vahtra
	Nona Chiariello	Rita Comes	Captain Christina Corpus
	Kat Petrick	Ed Wood	Sheriff Carlos Bolanos
	Rusty Day		

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Bob Turcott said two weeks ago, after he shared his concern about wildfire safety ordinance being abandoned and reconciling the Town's ADA ordinances with the State's, he was surprised to learn from staff that there is a wildfire ordinance that's being retained. This was perplexing to him because nothing in the written or oral presentation referred to this, and the only reference to fire safety was our ordinances addressing emergency vehicle access. He asked, is this the wildfire ordinance that was being referred to, or is it something different? If different, he asked to be directed to it. When asked about waiving town ordinances in favor of the State's four-foot setback, staff reported that a neighboring community tried to fight this and failed, and furthermore was threatened with litigation by an outside entity had they been successful. In fact, setbacks, separation between structures, land use ordinances are precisely the tools through which wildfire safety policies are implemented. He expressed that intensification of wildfires by structures is devastating. The latent energy represented by a structure is many times that of vegetation on the same footprint and is why the National Fire Protection Association recommends 15-foot separation between sprinklered structures and 30 feet between unsprinklered structures. He said the modification proposed by the Planning Department would allow eight feet separation. Mr. Turcott felt that the Town should comply with state laws, but just as it does for seismic safety ordinances and vehicle access ordinances, it should also retain town ordinances that reduce the devastation of wildfire, including building separation. Local jurisdictions are entitled to limit state mandates when necessary, for life safety. The Council needs to make this clear to staff and committees. Mr. Turcott made a second point of clarification, stating he often encounter straw man arguments that advocates of fire safety are actually motivated by NIMBYism or want the town to simply ignore state mandates, or want the town to act illegally. He is clear that the Town should make its best effort to comply with state law. He said the people with the hard job of revising the Housing Element should leave their biases and concerns about the rationality of RHNA at the door, roll up their sleeves, and do the hard work of producing the best possible product. At the same time, the Town should also comply with state law regarding the Safety Element. It should follow the guidance of the Office of Planning and Research as specified in the California Code. It should conduct the long-

neglected Hazard and Risk Assessment, develop mitigation policies based on the findings, and implement the policies in the Safety Element and the ordinances in an objective, unbiased and thorough way. Mr. Turcott stated he heard an opinion from the Town Council two weeks ago, saying, "I absolutely think that we should roll the Safety Element into the Housing Element." He said this is exactly what to do if you want to subordinate safety to housing, and if you want to produce a result that doesn't have the confidence of the residents. He commented that the people working on the Safety Element should be blinded to and insulated from housing concerns. Safety should inform housing, not the other way around.

Mayor Derwin welcomed San Mateo County Sheriff, Carlos Bolanos, to the meeting.

(1) PRESENTATION – To honor Captain Christina Corpus

Mayor Derwin commended the extraordinary work Captain Corpus has done for Portola Valley for the past four years. She thanked her for her dedication, commitment and trademark grace under pressure. The Mayor said in the many years she has served on the Council, there has never been a Sheriff, Captain or Lieutenant assigned to Portola Valley with Christina's mix of law enforcement expertise, intellect, responsiveness and compassion and who models what a modern police officer should be. The Mayor shared Christina's background, stating she started her career with the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office in 2002, as a Correctional Officer. She worked in Control, Corrections, Community Policing, the Community Alliance to Revitalize Our Neighborhoods (CARON) program, Transportation and Court Security, as well as holding board positions at various bodies, including the Service League of San Mateo County. She has a BA from Union Institute and University, a MA from the USD School of Law, and most recently she completed an MS in Law Enforcement and Safety Leadership, also from USD. The Council is very excited for her new opportunity in Millbrae and wishes her nothing but sunny skies ahead, but the Mayor stated they are also heartbroken to see her go. She is glad that Carlos is at the meeting to hear this.

Councilmember Aalfs echoed the Mayor's words. He told Christina they will miss her but wish her the best in her new assignment. She has done tremendous work in promoting the safety and wellbeing of the community and is also behind the scenes in a time when law enforcement is being forced into some reckonings nationwide. She has, behind the scenes, pushed for responsibility and accountability for police departments, something he feels is critical for the trust and safety of our communities, for which he thanked her and wished her all the best.

Vice Mayor Hughes added to the thanks and added that one of the things that has been helpful during her tenure is her connection within the Sheriff's Department and her ability to put the Council in touch with whoever they need to be in touch with, when they needed to, in the Sheriff's Department, depending on what issue came up, whether it be license plate readers, fire safety, diversity issues, et cetera. His position as liaison with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Traffic Safety Committee brings interaction with the Sheriff's Department, and under Christina's leadership the policing has been better than the town has had in many years. Her service to the residents has been above and beyond.

Councilmember Richards echoed all the previous comments, stating he has appreciated Christina's professionalism and approachableness. He said it was so nice to have someone to call to talk things out with, without thinking this is a "scary police person" we have to deal with. He said Christina is a real person, and it felt great for the entire community, and he thanked her for that.

Town Manager Dennis said he has been fortunate as Town Manager to work with Captain Corpus in almost his entire time in Portola Valley. He said he has been totally spoiled and echoes what all the councilmembers have said. He will miss their varied conversations on how to make Portola Valley a safe, connected place, how to find ways to engage residents on issues of import, and make introductions to the new deputies coming into town. He said he will miss her and her sage advice and hopes she will stay

connected. He also appreciates Sheriff Bolanos assigning Lieutenant Mark Myers as interim. He has enjoyed their interactions so far and looks forward to the permanent addition to the Portola Valley team.

Captain Corpus thanked the Council for their comments and said it was a pleasure working with them and getting to know them. She thanked the Sheriff for all of his support and Town Manager Dennis for all the conversations and for working as a team with her. She will miss the councilmembers but said they will be in good hands with Lt. Myers and whoever the Sheriff appoints next. She reiterated it's been a pleasure and an honor hearing the Council's kind words tonight.

Sheriff Bolanos thanked the Portola Valley Council for always welcoming their staff and treating them like family. He said he will make sure to appoint a top-notch individual to continue to take care of a community that the Department considers its own. He thanked the Council for all they do to support those in public safety.

(2) PRESENTATION – Mental Health Month Presentation from the San Mateo County Status of Women

Mayor Derwin introduced Helen Tafeen, a Commissioner with the San Mateo County Commission on the Status of Women, who was in attendance to inform the community of all the mental health-related events offered by San Mateo Health Department in May, during Mental Health Month.

Ms. Tafeen said on the behalf of the Commission, they want to thank the Town of Portola Valley for acknowledging that mental health and freedom from substance abused issues is fundamental to the overall health and wellbeing of all community members. She said she wants to raise awareness of the disproportionate impact the pandemic has had on women. Although women comprise 39 percent of the work force, they were 60 percent of those who lost their jobs. Pregnant women and those with young children are experiencing a three- to five-fold increase in self-reported anxiety and depression symptoms, and tragically, women have been the target of the dramatic increase in domestic violence during the pandemic. She pointed out that women have borne a great deal of the brunt of the pandemic. During these unprecedented times – which are, thankfully, get much, much better – comes stress, sadness and anxiety. The Commission is urging women and their daughters to seek out professional help, as not a sign of weakness, but a sign of strength. She said practicing self-compassion is a must, as too often women are kind to others and dismissive of their own distress and needs. Ms. Tafeen shared that what brings her to the Council today is to talk about signing on to the San Mateo County Mental Health Month website and engaging in some of the activities being offered, including yoga, pet therapy, meditation, youth-led discussions, and raising awareness about anxiety. She closed with a thank you for allowing her to address this important topic and hopes the Council will encourage their residents to do so. Their website address is smchealth.org.

(3) PRESENTATION – Reimagine SamTrans

Amy Linehan and Millie Tolleson appeared to present this topic. Amy is a Public Affairs Specialist with SamTrans. She thanked the Council for time to give an update on Reimagine SamTrans. They are in Phase 2 of their project. Their goal was to provide an overview of the three bus network alternatives that they have come up with, and to get the Council's feedback and go over some of the possible changes for bus service in Portola Valley. They wanted to also talk about the ways members of the public can engage with them and provide their feedback on those alternatives and some of the proposed changes. She said the proposal tonight is not final, and they are here to take feedback and answer questions, Final decisions will be based on feedback they get at meetings like this one.

Millie Tolleson, Principal Planner with SamTrans Planning Team, gave a background on "Reimagine SamTrans," which is a comprehensive evaluation of the entire bus system. They have three goals for the project. First, to improve the experience for existing SamTrans customers. Second is to grow new and more frequent ridership on the bus system, and third is to build their efficiency and effectiveness as a

mobility provider. This project was launched in summer of 2019, and they are about halfway through. The project included a lot of public outreach, existing conditions analysis, and they spent the last winter designing three bus network alternatives, which is what is currently out for public input. Looking ahead, they will spend the summer taking everything they have heard and developing one new preferred bus network. There will be another round of public outreach, and then they will seek their Board's approval and adoption of the new bus system before beginning implementation in summer of 2022.

Ms. Tolleson explained there was a lot of work that informed the alternatives, including existing conditions analysis – what's working and not working about the system, the priorities of communities for SamTrans, and both riders' and nonriders' perceptions and desires for transportation. They worked with their Board and stakeholders to develop four guiding principles for designing the bus network alternatives. First, to employ customer-focused decision-making; to design service that can be reasonably delivered by their workforce; to be an effective mobility provider; and to provide transportation services that support the principles of social equity. They placed much effort on understanding areas of the county where concentrations of households live who identify as racial and ethnic minorities, who are paid lower wages, or who don't have access to their own vehicles, and this has informed much of the work done on the alternatives.

Ms. Tolleson turned the focus to school-related service, where the approach is to prioritize equity/high-need routes in all three alternatives; that is, routes that serve neighborhoods that have the characteristics of lower income or lacking access to a car, or racial or ethnic minorities. They are first looking at opportunities to consolidate trips. This is highly dependent on ridership and tends to vary annually, so it will likely be revisited every year. They also are looking at consolidating routes. There are ten examples of this throughout the system where they have identified two routes serving the same school which can become one route. Thirdly, they are looking at eliminating routes. This is the least-preferred option. There are two routes out of 37 school-related routes that are proposed for potential elimination. One is in Portola Valley and the other is in Menlo Park. She said that the school-related routes that average fewer than 15 passengers per trip are the ones that they are looking for opportunities to either consolidate or be more efficient, or in some cases, eliminate unless they serve an equity or high-need area.

Looking at the potential changes in Portola Valley, Ms. Tolleson said there currently are not any local routes in Portola Valley, but there are two school-related routes. They are proposing elimination of Route 85, which serves Ormondale Elementary School and has an average of 14 passengers per trip. They are also proposing elimination of morning trips only on Route 87, which serves Woodside High, but they would propose to keep the afternoon trips, which have typically about three times as many riders as the morning. The morning averages just six passengers, but they would propose to keep the afternoon trips on Route 87. Ms. Tolleson noted that public input on the proposals is being accepted through May 31st. They encourage people to visit reimaginesamtrans.com or call the customer service team if they prefer. They are also having many meetings and doing a limited number of pop-up events, as well as trying to make use of social media.

Mayor Derwin invited questions from the Council.

Vice Mayor Hughes asked how they would follow up on the impact of removing an existing route and how they would know that there was need to reinstate a route. Ms. Tolleson answered that they may hear it from the Town Council, from Woodside High or Ormondale. She said they spend a lot of time trying to stay in as close communication with the schools as possible. She agreed that the tough thing about school service is that the ridership turns over every few years. Reimagine SamTrans is a big project that is only done every ten years; however, they do look at school service every year, and this is not the last opportunity to make changes. Additionally, there is a fresh opportunity every single school year.

Vice Mayor Hughes referenced the Housing Element Update that all towns in the state are about to enter into and will be planning for a lot of new units being constructed. He asked how SamTrans anticipates

being involved in that process from a planning point of view, as towns execute on the plans and start building housing units and producing more demand for public transit services. Ms. Tolleson reiterated that they have opportunities to make changes to routes three times per year. Although this kind of large-scale project is only done every eight or ten years, there are more regular opportunities. They have spoken with the Town Manger regarding the Town's upcoming plans and seek to continue that conversation on a regular basis.

Councilmember Aalfs asked regarding the ridership numbers for Ormondale and Woodside High how stable they are from year to year, and how stable they are day-to-day Ms. Tolleson replied she thinks it is pretty stable, although there is a trend of fewer students in the morning than the afternoon on both routes. She said they have seen a little bit of increase in the last five years, but it is in the ballpark of one or two riders per day increase. Councilmember Aalfs asked if SamTrans ever does smaller busses or vans for smaller routes. Ms. Tolleson answered yes, but the main driver of the cost of the routes, and why they are so constrained, is not the vehicle size, but instead the bus operators.

Councilmember Wernikoff asked if the next opportunity to advocate for change in the town is a decade from now. Ms. Tolleson said they do make changes regularly to services to respond to community changes, particularly with the school service, so this is absolutely not the last opportunity. She said it is a very large project to look at every single route in the system and see how it all comes together, and this is the work that only happens every ten years or so, but it is not the last opportunity to look at more targeted community-level changes or improvements. Councilmember Wernikoff was also curious about bussing at a neighboring town, Woodside, a similar small community, and asked if they were impacted. Ms. Tolleson said she believes Route 87 also serves Woodside, so that same proposal that would affect Portola Valley would also affect Woodside.

Councilmember Richards remarked that these routes have been in service for quite a few years. He asked if there was a time at which they were actually viable routes in the past, or if they have always been woefully underutilized. Ms. Tolleson said they have always been under their service standard. Although they have increased a little bit in recent years, it has been in the magnitude of one or two riders a day only.

Mayor Derwin invited questions from the public.

Rita Comes asked if they had talked to Roberta, the head of the School District, about the increase of the number of kids that are in the school district. Ms. Comes said her daughter's kindergarten class at Ormondale was the largest kindergarten class in many, many years at that time, so all of those kids are now getting old enough to be able to take the bus on their own at a time when this bus service is now being reduced or cut. Ms. Comes thought there were about 850 homes that have been sold in Portola Valley in the past ten years and wondered if those numbers, along with the numbers of how many kids are actually in Portola Valley, have been considered in the planning, because it would be a shame with the RHNA numbers expected, to not have enough infrastructure and to not be able to offer this service.

Kristi Corley asked what marketing was done with Ormondale and Corte Madera parents to increase ridership in the past. She said Portola Valley residents pay taxes to the County for the bus routes. Since the town does not have a high school, parents that drive their kids to a different city for high school, freshman and sophomore year parents are driving both ways. She asked if the bus system by appointment was an option for Portola Valley residents, not just for students but for anyone without transportation. She is concerned about the RHNA numbers and adding 253 houses to the town on top of the current 1,800 houses and wants to make sure people in affordable housing can get to their jobs. Taking the route away may not be equitable. Ms. Tolleson responded she has made note of Ms. Corley's comments. She said the by-appointment (on-demand) service is being explored for some parts of the county. They are eager to learn when and where it works the best, and this would be an example of a smaller vehicle service that could be booked in real time. In terms of marketing to schools, they rely on

school partners to try to get the word out to the students, as they are the best connection to the students and parents. They also have a Youth Mobility Coordinator whose job it is to get the word out about services for youth. There are special, cheaper, fare products for youth, and other different pass products.

Karyn Bechtel thanked the Council for the questions they have asked but wanted to go a step further, raising the question of whether or not the way SamTrans is proposing to take the equity lens is tipping the equity scale appropriately. She said she raises this very carefully and thoughtfully; however, there was already minimal service the town for school-only service. She asked if there is still an opportunity to look at afternoon-only service, the way it's being proposed for the high school perhaps, as a way of still having an eye toward equity, but also not leaving an entire community out of the service area completely. She said she thinks it's important to keep residents feeling supported by the system and wanting to continue to support the system. Knowing there is something in our area would help. Ms. Bechtel shared that an email went out about the SamTrans public meetings, and Portola Valley and Woodside were not listed, and although she did receive an email apologizing for the oversight, it was striking to her that there was no meeting to go to at a time when the town is losing its service. She has filled out the survey. She wondered, when talking about consolidation as a strategy, if consolidating the high school/elementary/middle school afternoon route somehow in a new way could also be on the table. What happens is, maybe not that kids don't have access to cars, but you have two parents working who can't get to a kid at school, and the district is spread out over a huge geographical area that includes non-traversable distances by foot or bicycle. Ms. Bechtel said she attended Canada for two years and it was possible because her kids had a Clipper card. In afternoon when needed to, they could always get to the library from school, which was a huge benefit and not a situation you might think of when thinking of transportation needs in community. It is an important function and serves kids who don't have a lot of close-by after school options. She said she hopes the school district leadership is willing to have more conversations with SamTrans before the plan is finalized, because although she hears the comments that there are ways to bring service back, she worries that once it is gone it is quite a hurdle to get back.

Ms. Tolleson responded that the idea of keeping something like afternoon service only on Route 85 is something that could be explored. Regarding possibly consolidating service to multiple schools, this is something they've heard many reservations about with parents countywide – that is, elementary school kids riding with high school kids – but if there was more comfort among Portola Valley parents with different age groups sharing the same vehicle, then they might be able to preserve more service.

Mayor Derwin asked what the next steps are for the Council. Ms. Tolleson said their survey is open through the end of the month, and she encourages people to go to reimaginesamtrans.com and take the survey. After the survey closes, they will be trying to piece it all together this summer into the best possible network. She is happy to come back in the fall and share what their actual final proposed network would include.

CONSENT AGENDA

- (4) **Approval of Minutes** – Action and Detailed Summary for April 28, 2021
- (5) **Approval of Warrant List** – May 12, 2021
- (6) **Recommendation by Assistant to Town Manager** – Adoption of a Resolution Approving and Authorizing Execution of Farmers' Market License Agreement.
 - (a) Resolution of the Town Council of the Town of Portola Valley Approving and Authorizing Execution of an Agreement between the Town of Portola Valley and Nile Estep, dba Good Roots (Resolution No. ____)
- (7) **Appointment by Mayor** – Member to the Cultural Arts Committee

(8) **Sustainability Committee Survey – Book Club**

There were no public comments on the Consent Agenda.

Town Manager Dennis shared that for the first time there are two sets of minutes in the agenda packet. The new addition is Action Minutes as requested by the Council, which are very useful for those wishing to see only the actions that occurred during a Council meeting. For a time both sets will be included, to see how the Council likes it. If there is a need to make changes, they will entertain that conversation.

Mayor Derwin asked if any commissioner wanted to pull an item from the Consent Agenda. Hearing none, she asked for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda.

Vice Mayor Hughes moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Seconded by Councilmember Wernikoff, the motion carried 5-0, by roll call vote.

REGULAR AGENDA

(9) **Recommendation by Town Manager and Public Works Director – Adoption of Resolution Designating the Road Remnant for Open Space Purposes**

- (a) Adoption of Resolution of the Town Council of the Town of Portola Valley designating the portion of Town Public Right of Way known as the “Road Remnant” for Open Space purposes (Resolution No.____)

Town Manager Dennis presented the resolution related to designated open space uses for the Road Remnant property. As staff was developing the resolution and the map, they worked with Judith Murphy and Ms. Chiariello to ensure they got it right, including maximizing the amount of property that would be included in the Open Space use portion of the map and the resolution. He noted that the map changed from the last time the Council saw it as part of those conversations. When the information was presented on December 9, 2020, it was a smaller area. There was no comment received at the time. A determination was made in subsequent conversations that they wanted to expand the borders of the property.

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

Daniel Quinn thanked the Council for their work on this item. He likes the larger area. He appreciates the work that staff and Town Council have done, and especially appreciated Judy and Ms. Chiariello for getting involved and working on this. He feels it is appropriate to wait for the General Plan upgrade before casting this in concrete but is hoping for more guidance from the Council when the General Plan update is prepared. He hopes the Council’s intention is to move towards a permanent Open Space designation for the Road Remnant. Regarding the referenced benefits of the frog pond and its habitat to people, he pointed out that it is also of great benefit to the other creatures that use the pond, the ecology, et cetera. He said several people have pledged funds in donation for maintenance. He would like some guidance on when to release those funds, when they should be given and who to give them to, as well as what restrictions they should have.

Betsy Morganthaler thanked the Council and Mr. Young, saying this is the culmination of efforts of many others. Many have been “in the weeds” and invested sweat equity, turning out to maintain the beloved site, removing invasives and off-hauling, and others keeping them hydrated during the hot spell. She expressed deep appreciation to Ms. Chiariello and Ms. Morganthaler, who have done much to keep this before the town and grounded in tremendous depth of research and understanding. She referenced the

Jasper Ridge riparian team, who cataloged the spectrum of vascular plants that grow in the area, and Ms. Chiariello, who researched and provided important learning and education about the outer boundaries and stretches of the frog pond, where the Sierran chorus frogs live when there's no rain. Ms. Morganthaler said she hopes it will become "Nona's Frog Pond Trail" and that she is not a fan of "The Road Remnant," per se. She was appreciative to all involved in the Resolution, saying it has been a while in coming and very beautiful in arriving.

Nona Chiariello thanked the community, Town Council, Town Manager, Town staff and other committees for listening. She and many others thought hard about why the Road Remnant should be reserved for Open Space purposes, and she is very grateful that the Council now has before it a resolution that achieves what they saw as most critical – maintaining the Road Remnant to help protect the Frog Pond habitat, to protect the Frog Pond view shed, and to protect the trail and the Alpine Road Corridor. She hopes the spirit of listening will continue because some hard work lies ahead. First, revising the General Plan will entail thinking broadly and deeply about the future of Open Space in Portola Valley and what the phrase "Open Space purposes," as defined in this resolution really means. Secondly, she hopes all will remember that the debate on the Road Remnant started with a proposal about affordable housing. She wanted to thank the Council for trusting that people were sincere when they said that they were supportive of affordable housing, just not at the Road Remnant. She stated that she is completely in support of the resolution, but if protecting the Road Remnant ends up taking Portola Valley even further on a path of exclusivity and unaffordability, then the Town will have lost ground, and not gained.

Gary Morganthaler thanked everyone involved in the effort, which has taken a long time. He said they staff listened carefully to the community, and he believes it represents a very good faith effort on the part of the Town Council and Town Manager and Public Works Director. He agrees strongly with previous comments, as eloquently stated, and thinks the process created a level of open communications, trust, and goodwill with our community.

Hearing no further comments from the public, Mayor Derwin brought the item back to the Council. There was no discussion.

Vice Mayor Hughes moved to approve the Resolution as written. Seconded by Councilmember Richards, the motion carried, 5-0.

Judith Murphy was excited and agreed with Ms. Chiariello's eloquent comments. She offered an enormous thank you to Howard Young and Jeremy Dennis for their collaborative approach to carrying out Council's directive for the Frog Pond Park Road Remnant, and their promotion of thoughtful and inclusive conversations, producing the generously sized map which was all they hoped for to provide added protection for the Frog Pond habitat that the residents sought, and a lovely new park space as well. Ms. Murphy felt the collaboration and cooperation and willingness to stop and think through the details was remarkable.

PUBLIC HEARING

- (10) **Recommendation by Planning and Building Director** – First Reading of Ordinance Adding Home Hardening to Building Code

Mayor Derwin said this item is being continued to an agenda in the future, probably in the summer. He said they made the decision last week to pull the item to allow staff to have some additional conversations with the consultant who has been working on this to clarify a few issues that were still outstanding at that time. The delay is primarily due to the amount of work the Planning and Building Department has in bringing forward a variety of important projects. The date will be announced as soon as possible.

(11) **Recommendation by Wildfire Preparedness Committee** - Recommendation to Ban the Flammable Five

Town Manager Dennis explained this is one of six proposals the Council saw late last year that the Wildfire Preparedness Committee was working up and is a straightforward recommendation to ban new plantings of what they termed the Flammable Five – juniper, cypress, acacia, pine and eucalyptus trees. The staff report as written by the Committee does a good job describing the rationale behind this. If the Council moves forward on the recommendation, they will work with the appropriate committees and the Planning and Building Department to ensure that any materials provided in the future to those development projects would have this recommendation and know that these are trees that they would like to see not planted. In addition, they would reach out to homeowners on their own and through the Woodside Fire Protection District on removal as possible over time.

Mayor Derwin invited questions from Councilmembers.

Vice Mayor Hughes asked what the intensity would be with which people would be pushed to remove these trees. It was mentioned in the packet, for example, ASCC conditioning project approvals on tree removals in some cases. There may be properties in town where residents are just upgrading an electric panel and suddenly face massive costs, in which case they may not upgrade the electric panel. Or, if you have five eucalyptus trees on your property that are going to cost \$100,000 to take out, that may prevent you from otherwise applying for a building permit or doing other safety upgrades on your property because of the increased cost. He asked if part of staff's intent is to figure out that balance. He said he also sees a lot of work done by the Fire Safety Committee on fundraising to be able to help pay for some of those kinds of things and wondered if the efforts would be tied together.

Town Manager Dennis asked Karen Vahtra to address this question. Ms. Vahtra reported that the initial effort is to ban new plantings, taking the first step so that people don't unintentionally plant a pine tree or a Cyprus, and also to start an awareness program. She said that is why they came up with "Flammable Five," to be catchy, so people would at least have an awareness of what they should get rid of if they can. Later steps would be to allow the ASCC to consider removal of some of these trees. The first step is more the awareness to prevent adding any more problems, then moving forward, to figure out fundraising and how to give some incentives to remove particularly the eucalyptus, which is the worst.

Mayor Derwin invited comments from the public.

Helen Quinn strongly supported the recommendation and wondered if it should go one step further, because in the fire department recommendations there were two additional plants – the French Broom and the Coyote Brush, which were recommendation against. She recommended including at least the French Broom, stating it is an aggressive exotic which the Conservation Committee has been working hard to try to eliminate along the trails and in town generally. Town Manager Dennis mentioned that the Committee is also recommending the removal of both of those species, on page 199 of the staff report. Ms. Quinn was concerned that the French Broom should not be allowed to be planted. Town Manager Dennis said that he thinks that is the intent and he would be comfortable with an official ban. Ms. Vahtra said their focus was on the more common things that people would be planting. There is a lot of education about French Broom, and the Conservation Committee does a good job with awareness, including their annual French Broom Pull. She said that Flammable Five was catchier than Flammable Six, and though they're not against it, they decided to stop with five.

Ms. Murphy added in regard to the last comment, even without a ban, they would pick that up from the planting list and warn against doing that. But that does not cover all the small projects that don't come to Conservation, or people who are just changing their plantings. She feels they should just start with education around that, and they chose Flammable Five on purpose because it's catchy, it's good PR, it's

marketable and accomplishes 99 percent of what they want to do. Conservation will do what it can about the other plants.

Mayor Derwin invited comments from the Councilmembers.

Councilmember Richards asked if French Broom is even available at local nurseries. Ms. Chiariello advised that unfortunately it is. Councilmember Richards suggested that might be a place to focus education as well. Ms. Chiariello said she knows of students who have tried to do that kind of outreach, but it is a hard one.

Councilmember Aalfs thanked the Wildfire Committee for their work on this, one of several initiatives they've pushed forward. He supports this recommendation and would be fine with adding some language around the Coyote Brush and the French Broom, even though they're not necessarily as much of a concern for new plantings, but he doesn't mind being explicit about that either. He said, although he also likes the Flammable Five catch phrase, the other two species could perhaps be added as language that their removal and non-inclusion in new plantings be encouraged.

Vice Mayor Hughes suggested calling it the Flammable Five and adding the other two at the bottom with an asterisk. He thinks encouraging removal of all of them is advisable.

Councilmember Wernikoff agreed with the previous comments.

Mayor Derwin clarified that the Council likes the phrase, Flammable Five, but would like to include Coyote Brush and especially French Broom somewhere on a list with an asterisk.

Councilmember Aalfs moved to officially ban the Flammable Five as recommended by the Wildfire Preparedness Committee, and to also recommend removal of existing Coyote Brush and French Broom and non-inclusion of these species in new plantings. Seconded by Vice Mayor Hughes, the motion carried, 5-0.

(12) Recommendation by Assistant Town Manager – Website Update Launch

Ms. Chinn presented the efforts so far in preparing for the town's new website, the steps they will take towards getting to the launch, and their plan for after the launch. She said anyone who has been to the website recently can see that it is still living in 2013. With a new time and technology and new looks available, they are looking to upgrade the website. The current website frame doesn't allow for easy navigation and makes it difficult to access information. Staff has a hard time being able to create a dynamic, exciting front page. She said it has been really a one-way informational tool and moving forward they see a trend for more people accessing the site on mobile phones and tablets. The current frame is not very mobile-friendly, so one big change will be to update that.

The project was started about a year ago to plan for what they wanted the website to look and feel like and meet the needs of the community. They met with all department heads and the Town Manager to review and understand the needs for the departments and what they could do to help them do their job better and provide the information they need to get out to the community. They worked with staff and talked about what they needed to do their job better and also better understand what community members are looking for from them, and how to provide that on the website. They also looked at the data and at what people are actually doing on the website to understand how to make the process better for everyone.

From looking at last year's data they realized that in 2020 people were accessing the site in a very different way than they did in previous years, because of the pandemic. During 2020, 92.8 percent of people were accessing the website by their desktop. Compared to the previous year, 2019, there was a higher percentage of people accessing through mobile and tablets. Moving into 2021 and 2022, she said there will be an increase of mobile and tablet users. In 2020, the information people were most looking for

was about COVID-19. They were also looking at the Planning and Building Department, as well as trails and ways to get out into the community. By contrast, in 2019, people were looking at taking classes, looking at the calendars, and going into Town Center. Depending on the year, the month, or what is going on, people look for different information, so being able to present the relevant information for the time of year will be helpful for residents to find what they need quickly.

Ms.de Garreaux continued that they had a couple overarching goals with the website update. First, to make information as accessible as possible for those utilizing it, and free up staff time for those who need additional assistance. There are two sets of users coming to the website. For the return user, they wanted to make the documents easy to find, and for the new user they wanted to make it more explicit on where to start to get the information they need. The second goal was to organize the website so that the evergreen content is separate from dynamic content, so the dynamic content stays fresh. With these goals in mind, they are making the website more user-friendly. They are preparing to integrate online services that they are implementing through the new OpenGov software, reorganizing the content to make it more accessible. They met with each department head and the Town Manager to review and understand their needs and had multiple meetings with the Building and Planning Department to revamp the Building and Planning sections. They interviewed Town staff and reviewed the page visit data to determine the information most needed, asking, what are people calling the Town for? Why are they coming to the front desk and visiting the website? What are they complaining about not being able to do on the website, or information that's hard to find?

With this information, the team reimagined the navigation bars, reorganized and streamlined content to eliminate the "brain freeze" caused by a long list of items to click on. To make an easy transfer of content, they've been reorganizing the current content on the current website, to be able to see where everything could be on the new website. A new "Departments" will be included, and a "Business" tab will replace the Planning and Building tab. An "I Want To..." tab will lead users to the most commonly sought after information in an easily accessible place. The Town Council subcommittee helped select the template, colors and fonts for the new website, as well as evaluate and organize the website map. The home page will be brighter and crisper than the old website and components more malleable, in that they are able to change the tabs at the top, the buttons, and the main content section to emphasize specific content. With the new malleable components, they will have the ability to create a more dynamic homepage and also better support the online solutions being implemented through OpenGov, making them easier to find and showcase. They are anticipating having enhanced engagement, with the ability to showcase important issues, events, and opportunities for residents to give feedback.

Ms.de Garreaux shared the remaining timeline for the website update. On May 10th the current website was backed up, and they are currently transferring content to the new template. From May 10th to June 1st, they will be checking content and fixing the organization. They will be doing additional training with staff on the back end of the website and will decide what to emphasize on the homepage. On June 1st the wireframe will switch to the live site, and from June 1st to June 13th they will make sure everything is working. They will engage a small focus group to test the site. The group will be comprised of a few committee members, a few community members, staff members, and hopefully a member of the business community. From June 14th to June 18th, they will make any changes identified from the focus group and staff. June 21st is the tentative official public launch of the new website.

After the upgrade is complete, they will create a schedule for reviewing pages so that the content doesn't get stale. There are in the contract some additional tools available to utilize. For example, a semi-annual health check of the website, a semi-annual site analytics report, and they are hoping to do site analytics before and after to see what the difference is between the old and new website. They will be doing a graphics audit. In addition, they are also working with a company called Site Improve to ensure that accessibility requirements are met on the new website. Once launched, they will come back to the Council with a review of all the new features and new content.

Mayor Derwin invited comments and questions from Councilmembers.

Vice Mayor Hughes has been on the subcommittee and is glad to be on the verge of finally launching the site after all the work. Although there may be some wrinkles to iron out over the following weeks, from the public's point of view, if they go to the website after June 1st, they will see the new site. Ms.de Garneau replied this is correct and added that one of the goals with updating content on the current website was to have as little transition time as possible. Vice Mayor Hughes said oftentimes committees produce flyers and other content to put on the website. He asked how committees or community members should interact with staff in terms of getting new content or updates placed on the website. Ms. Chinn replied that the process will be the same. Anytime a committee member wants to do a particular project or wants to change their page, or have a new page, they can contact her. Ms.de Garneau added that they can do some engagement with the committees and are undertaking another project which will make it easier to communicate with all the committee chairs.

Councilmember Wernikoff thanked the staff for their work. She is excited about this and looking forward to it. She thinks it is a tremendous opportunity for the Town to have easily digestible information out there for the community to learn about particularly hot topics, like wildfire, housing, et cetera, to help prevent the misinformation that sometimes gets out there. She said it will be fantastic to have a more flexible website and to have information available in a more concise way, versus trying to find things in all the nooks and crannies where it currently resides. She thinks it will be a good resource for the community.

Councilmember Aalfs thanked the staff, Councilmember Wernikoff and Vice Mayor Hughes for moving this forward and is looking forward to seeing the website revamped.

(13) Discussion and Council Action – Planning & Building Department Staffing

Town Manager Dennis shared that when Planning and Building Director Russell started a few years ago, none of them anticipated that there would be the kinds of changes we would be considering as it relates to the Planning and Building Department given everything that's happening. He thanked her in advance for her extremely good work relating on this report and turned the presentation over to her.

Planning and Building Director Russell began the presentation on staffing in the Planning and Building Department. She said its useful to think about fiscal year 2018-2019 as a good reference point, a point before the pandemic started, but fairly recent. At that time, the staffing pattern was four full-time staff – herself, the planner and two technicians. There were two part-time contract staff, a planner and a building inspector, who was also the building official. At that time, it was a busy but manageable workload with little time for special projects or administrative work, but they were able to keep things moving. In fiscal year 2019-2020, the Council authorized a second full time planner position, However, about that time the associate planner moved on, so they recruited and hired an assistant planner, but were not able to hire the higher-level associate or senior planner. The pandemic started at this point, and they were not sure about a lot at that time. The Council decided to defund the associate/senior planner position due to the uncertainty of the time. They have been using consultant planners to provide services during that time. Director Russell explained that for building official services, there was a previous inspector who was also a certified building official, but she left the area at the start of the pandemic. Planning and Building Director Russell has been doing the majority of the Building Official work since that time and has been using consultant services to assist her with code interpretations and context and decision-making. On code compliance, the activity they have been able to do has been very limited because of the other workload. The technician is able to do a small amount of follow-up on code enforcement complaints, but they have only been able to address the more serious health and safety issues that have come up. Their traditional approach to code enforcement has been a very light touch. The Town has preferred neighbor-to-neighbor communications, and they emphasize reaching out to people and sharing best practices. They rarely use a notice of violation or other more serious enforcement action.

Director Russell said the work program has been evolving in many ways over the last couple years, becoming more complex with many more demands for customer service. They are working on significant development applications, more than the Town has seen in the past. With that has come increased community engagement and need for communication. She also thinks there is a connection to the Public Records Act requests that they are receiving. They used to see a couple per year total, and now are

getting them on a regular basis. They are also dealing with more complex state laws and applicants are requesting a very high level of service from them. Then there was the pandemic on top of that. Previous systems were all in-person and on paper, but within three months everything was virtual, necessitating initially closing down all permitting activity and focusing only on emergency permits. Gradually they developed new procedures and added new technology to get back to nearly full services by July of 2020. She said they have learned a lot through the process and can provide services remotely. However, many of these processes are slower than the old systems were, having to do with the number of contacts they have to have with people, the volume of communications and emails, and moving things around. Director Russell said that moving forward they hope to take the best of pre-pandemic systems, along with everything they've learned, to rework procedures to become as efficient as possible.

Director Russell said they have also experienced that the needs of the residents have changed, perhaps due to the pressure of the outside world and what everyone has been dealing with. Applicants have been interacting with staff differently, some just needing reassurance. One of the technicians who is known by many in the community has experienced that sometimes people seem to call her just because they need some reassurance that everything is going to be okay. They also deal with people that are more impatient and even more angry than ever before which takes a toll on staff. They recognize customer service as their core mission, but when putting all these things together, it has resulted in strained resources.

Director Russell presented tables in reference to volumes of work. She said from April to June of 2020 when the pandemic had just hit and they were mostly closed, they were still able to receive applications for 62 building permits, an important accomplishment for them to demonstrate to the community that they were still providing services and were still there to help people. Some were emergency permits for people under a lot of stress. The following quarter, July to September of 2020, they received 116 building permit applications – a very high number, especially considering they were using brand new permitting procedures that they were still testing out. That quarter, compared to a reference of fiscal year 2018-2019, showed a 28-percent increase. If that trend continues, they are looking at something like 448 permits by the end of the year, a 20-percent increase over the reference year of 2018-2019.

Director Russell explained two areas of work that the technicians do – tree removal permits and residential data reports. Both have had a significant amount of growth during the same time period. If the trends continue, with 38-percent increase in tree removal permits over the reference year. Residential data reports are even higher, and they are very busy in this area, with a 53-percent increase over 2018-2019 already. Code enforcement complaints increased dramatically in the past fiscal year. Director Russell said they feel the spike perhaps was related to a leaf-blower ordinance going into effect, but also because people have been at home, noticing things in the community. People have been on edge, and this may also have contributed to the number of code enforcement complaints received. She said some colleagues have reported the same thing.

Director Russell explained that planning applications data is not as easy to extract based on how the software works. In fiscal year 2019-2020, the number of permit applications received totaled 34. This fiscal year they are already at 52 applications, a 35-percent increase. They don't have exact data to compare to in the reference year of '18-'19, but do have the information for calendar year 2019, so a reasonable approximation that shows a 27-percent increase over that year. They are working on significant development projects right now, including Stanford Faculty Housing, the Neely Winery Conditional Use Permit. The Alpine Hills is in for an amendment to their Conditional Use Permit. Priory School is in for an amendment to their Conditional Use Permit. Alpine Inn Rossotti's is expected to come in for an application as well. The Housing Element Update was talked about in-depth at last meeting, and they are preparing to start work on the Safety Element Update as well.

Director Russell shared that there is a backlog of applications on the planning side. They've kept up pretty well on the building side but are very strained to do that at this time, so the backlog is bigger in planning and a little bit in building, and also in the areas of trying to keep the house clean, keeping up with the everyday things that are hard to get to. Right now, there is the same full-time staff – herself, the planner and two technicians. There are two part-time contract staff. Four planners at varying levels – Principal Planner, Senior Planner, and Assistant Planner – that are assigned to different projects according to their

levels. There is the contract building inspector. They have also brought on a contract code compliance officer to help with the code compliance backlog. Director Russell said she recently brought in a building official to assist her with the high-level and complex building-related issues.

Director Russell said the immediate item they are seeking Council direction on is to fill the Senior Planner position right away. This is really important for the Housing Element Update process and for the other Council priorities. That would be the majority of what that person would work on, and she expects about 85 percent of this position would go towards that type of work, which is paid for by the General Fund, and about 15 percent of their work would probably be reimbursable for development applications that they are working on. The expected salary is \$115,000 to \$130,000, plus benefits.

Next would be to retain the contract planner services. All of these services are as needed. There is not a commitment on these types of services. She would like to have the current planners continue on their projects, to have continuity on the projects to the degree that is possible. For other large projects, there would be planners at different levels to be able to assign those projects to. The majority of the work would be reimbursable through applicant deposits. They would like to have some funds available for general customer service and for special projects, because when they are helping people at the beginning of their project, they have not yet been reimbursed with the application fees. She said this is a very important part of the services they provide, and the one full-time planner is not going to be able to handle all of the customer service themselves, so they will need a contract planner to help with this, as well as the special projects, and maybe some of the other Council priorities that have come up. This may include things like updating the Design Guidelines for the Fire Safety recommendations, the trees that previously discussed, those types of things where funds are needed to be able to staff those tasks.

There is also a need to retain code compliance service on an as needed, no commitment basis. Director Russell stated that about three to four hours per week would probably be sufficient once they catch up a little bit, to have a reasonable response to complaints and to be able to close out cases. She said a good thing about having an experienced code compliance officer is that they are going to keep good records, tracking all complaints, and maintaining a clear record of what's been followed up on and what cases have been closed, which will be helpful to the Council and will also provide more data and information to help in decision-making. Director Russell said their plan, unless the Council would like them to do something different, is to maintain the current approach to code compliance, which is about communication and voluntary compliance. They still would not be issuing violations just because there is a contract code compliance officer. It would simply make it possible to follow up and to communicate and bring things to resolution. This would be a General Fund expense estimated at around \$23,000.

Next, Director Russell described the need to retain building official services as needed, about three to four hour per week, a person who would be advisory to Director Russell and in support of staff in dealing with complex issues by being able to go into the field and help with problem-solving. The person they have retained is very experienced and was previously at Menlo Park, having worked with Kara there, and coming to the Town very well-recommended by a colleague of Director Russell. He will be a face of the building division in a capacity the Town has not had since having a full-time building inspector, which will help on challenging projects. This would also be a General Fund expense, at \$25,000.

Director Russell then spoke of next steps. She said it is hard to tell right now where all the increased workload is coming from, some of it being a natural increase as housing stock is aging. Some is related to the pandemic and it is unknown how it is going to resolve. Some is related to market activity of the unusual economy of the pandemic and the very hot real estate market. Some is probably related to the number of development applications received currently. It is unknown what trends will continue. She said they will need to check in with the Council more regularly on the Planning and Building Department staffing, so they suspect they will come back in the middle of the fiscal year to see how things are going, and periodically after that, to monitor and keep up customer service levels. She said, for tonight, staff is seeking direction on two things. First, the recruitment of a senior planner, which they would like to immediately recruit upon approval. Secondly, feedback and direction on the remainder of the plan so that the information can be implemented into the budget process to bring forward in June.

Mayor Derwin invited questions from the Councilmembers.

Vice Mayor Hughes agreed there have been a lot of changes in the short term and will be more moving forward and moving into the Housing Element Update. He asked if the senior planner is currently budgeted, or if a budget amendment is needed first. Town Manager Dennis responded that the position was not deleted but the funding was eliminated for the fiscal year. There is no budget action required tonight because of the timing of the position. They would anticipate a person to come onboard very quickly in the new fiscal year, so there is no action required. Vice Mayor Hughes asked regarding the building official if it would be a General Fund cost, or if they are all project-related expenses, billable to applicants. Director Russell replied in some cases there may be a separate deposit account on what he is working on, but more likely it would be covered with the general building permit application and inspection fees. So, it is mostly a General Fund expenditure. The way the fees are set up in the Building Department is different than in Planning, where there are deposits for almost everything they do.

Mayor Derwin invited questions from the public. Hearing none, she brought it back to the Council, summarizing that they are asked to provide direction on, first, whether to fill a senior planner position immediately and secondly, direction on retaining contract planner, code compliance and building official services for \$30,000, \$23,000 and \$25,000, respectively.

Vice Mayor Hughes was supportive of all of the above.

Councilmember Aalfs agreed. He noted how hard the staff has been working to keep up with everything and he thinks they need more help in this area.

Councilmember Richards agreed with previous comments.

Councilmember Wernikoff agreed and commented that the report was very thorough and feels it is a no-brainer and a very important need.

Mayor Derwin concurred as well. She asked Town Manager Dennis if any of their special money could be used for this. Town Manager Dennis responded that he doesn't necessarily see a path for this, but they will explore it. It hasn't been part of the core conversations around use of the COVID-10 funds. He would be reluctant to use one-time funds for permanent positions, so they would need to be careful there.

Councilmember Richards moved to authorize staff to initiate recruitment of a senior planner and approve the retention of contract planning services, including code compliance and building official. Seconded by Vice Mayor Hughes, the motion carried, 5-0.

Town Manager Dennis commented that he appreciated the opportunity to have the conversation with Council tonight to be able to convey how challenging the last year has been for all departments. He said the staff is extraordinary and very talented. Half of the staff have spent their careers with Portola Valley. They were asked to completely transform the way they had conducted business for 20 years in some cases. He said they did an incredible job of that. Delays in the department had been expected to some degree, given the circumstances. He remarked that for six weeks there was no Planning Director. They are working very hard to complete the tasks that they know they can do as quickly as possible but are very appreciative of the Council hearing them tonight. He concluded by stating that the Planning and Building staff is full of people who are working hard for the community.

Mayor Derwin acknowledged the comments and said they get it. She thanked the staff. Director Russell in turn expressed that the Council's support means a lot to her and the staff. Councilmember Aalfs added that last year, in the depths of the despair, he was hearing from a lot of constituents and said the diligence and patience the staff showed in overcoming all of the obstacles was truly admirable.

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

Councilmember Richards attended a HEART meeting. Don Horsley ran the meeting. Armando Sanchez and Maheen Shafiabady were in attendance. Most of the meeting had to do with updating progress on their various programs, such as loans to housing developers, first-time home buyers' program, quick start program, mostly programs to loan money to people who are stretched in finding a place to live. They've

had great success with it, with 16 projects completed last year. He said they have a fabulous set of programs and they are doing wonderful work but do need more help and are exploring new opportunities. They also went through the GLADUR program, the ADU program they put together last year that he assisted on, putting out four designs for ADUs that are free to the user and pre-approved by several cities in the county. There is a website heartofsmc.org where people can see the designs and see what's available, download the designs, and if you're in one of the cities where they are pre-approved, be able to theoretically get them into construction quickly. He said it is an encouraging step in right direction.

Councilmember Richards also attended the Emergency Preparedness meeting. A representative from the Sheriff's Department was there, as well as Chief Linder, talking about, among other things, pre-planning for potential evacuations from the town, and an update on WPV-Ready. There will be a field day on June 26th for ham radio operators to get together. There was talked about an exercise coming up with WPV-CERT a region-wide exercise. Councilmember Richards said the Open Space Committee was well-attended. Some potential new members attended. The primary discussion pertained to possible description of the Open Space, describing what types of Open Space exist, the reason that the Open Spaces and what their purpose is. Top priorities for now include the Dengler property and Shady Trail, which are a little off the beaten track, He said most people don't even know the Dengler property is there. Vice Mayor Hughes was at the meeting and presented his proposal for developing parameters for Open Space easements as a possibility for using the Open Space funding, which they thought was a great idea. He attended the San Mateo Council of Cities. Anna Eshoo gave an informative update from Washington.

Councilmember Aalfs was on a call with Mayor Derwin and Town Manager Dennis with the Insurance Commissioner, Commissioner Lara. He thought it was a useful and interesting discussion, with the three from Portola Valley and their counterparts from the Town of Woodside and the Town of Hillsborough. Commissioner Lara was very receptive to their concerns, basically insurance cancellations. Councilmember Aalfs talked about being asked to provide housing that we might not be able to get insured. He was quite pleased by his response, as it was clearly something that was on his mind as well. He felt like the Commissioner is addressing it as one other angle to look at with regard to housing questions, along with just getting insurance for our existing houses. He attended the Parks and Rec meeting last week. The Zots to Tots picnic and concert are now scheduled for October 9th. They also discussed the dog park again. One public commentor pointed out the Day of the Horse is usually held in the space they are considering for the dog park. Councilmember Aalfs said he wants to be accommodating to the horse community, but it feels like there should be some compromise, and it seems extreme to take this very popular item off the table for something that is going to happen one day a year. There will be more discussion about it.

Councilmember Wernikoff attended the ASCC meeting. The primary agenda was update and review of the addition at Station 8. It was an opportunity for neighbors and the Conservation Committee to share their thoughts about the parking in particular. There was no action taken. Regarding use of funds for the business community, her understanding was they were going to wait for more guidance on the COVID relief funds. Once they have that, they would figure out a way to make certain funds available to local businesses. Councilmember Wernikoff didn't feel they know enough about it to talk more in detail at this point.

Town Manager Dennis said 151 pages of it was just released and he and Ms. Silver are reviewing it. Their initial read is that it does provide a lot of potential opportunities for the use of funds, including the business community. They will have more to report on that.

Vice Mayor Hughes reported on the BPTS Committee meeting on Wednesday the 5th a report from the Sheriff's Department. They wrote 125 parking citations in the month of March. Most of those are enforcement around Windy Hill. They wrote more in April, but the final numbers are not out yet. There was discussion about the continuing issues with parking there. The BPTS formed a subcommittee to look at changing some of the signage there to improve compliance. On May 22nd there is a Bike to Anywhere day. They will have an energizer station set up at Triangle Park for bikes going by, with tune ups and helmet fitting. He attended a Finance Committee meeting on Wednesday, the 5th. New member, Stephen Cassani, was welcomed. Vice Mayor Hughes updated the Finance Committee on the status of the

OpenGov project, which is moving along well. The Committee discussed shifting to a quarterly meeting schedule. Not just to review reports but also to discuss anything else that comes up in the interim, plus one or two additional meetings per year for budget and audit. The Open Space Acquisition Committee put together a brochure and will be working on taking that information and updating the Open Space content on the website as well. The Planning Commission's main item of discussion was an update from staff on the Housing Element process and timeline, as well as the fire safety process for reviewing undergrounding of utility applications when panels are updated and what sorts of things staff should communicate to applicants and when they might expect that the Commission would be more or less likely to grant exceptions. Staff was looking for guidance from the Planning Commission on how to talk to applicants about what they should consider when asking for exceptions. Vice Mayor Hughes and Mayor Derwin met with the Committee Chairs, mostly updating them on what's going on and what's coming up in the Town. Town Manager Dennis added it is a quarterly meeting that the Mayor and Vice Mayor primarily for updates. Mayor Derwin added there was discussion about a lot more people at the meetings and meetings are a little bit harder to handle. There were also questions on timing from coming back from COVID, but nothing unexpected.

Mayor Derwin had three meetings with the C/CAG ED Search Committee. They interviewed six candidates last week. She shared the day-long process of interviewing and choosing a final candidate. This candidate will come before the Board tomorrow night in a closed session.

Mayor Derwin attended the meeting with the committee chairs and reported that Craig Taylor shared something that a lot of people have said before. That is, he wondered if there was a way that everyone who was there could see who else was there. She said there was a lot of conversation about fire and that CPAW was discussed, as well as cameras with AI. She said it was a meaty discussion. Evacuation was discussed, and the fire clearing in town where people are clear-cutting. Also, the code compliance calls which Planning and Building Director Russell talked about previously. She also attended the Express Lanes Board meeting and reported that they hired a design firm to brand the Express Lanes.

Mayor Derwin commented on the meeting with the Insurance Commissioner. She felt he was very excited about the work people are doing on their property. He was not happy that people who were doing work on their property in places like Portola Valley are losing their insurance. He said the only way to force the insurance companies to not drop people would be an act of legislation, which is not going to happen because of the insurance lobby. He said the only way he could influence it is when they come before him for a rate review. Mayor Derwin said her broker was told that if you were rejected by all the name brand insurance companies, you can no longer go to Fair Plan, but must first exhaust surplus lines, such as Lloyds of London, Scottsdale, et cetera, which are very expensive. This is not true, and Fair Plan cannot tell people that you have to go to surplus lines first. Commissioner Lara talked about the importance of home hardening and talked about a lot of things being done in the town. He was not happy about places like Portola Valley being asked to add more housing when the insurance market is so unstable.

Mayor Derwin mentioned Anna Eshoo's presentation at the Council of Cities and her update on what is happening. She wants to bring back the SALT deduction. She was pushing the George Floyd Police Reform ACT, and also talked a lot about the CZU fire and the American Jobs Act. There hasn't been one done in a long time in Congress, and how this is a time to do some really big bills and infrastructure. Mayor Derwin quoted Ms. Eshoo as saying, "The world is watching to see if a democracy can do things together, grow and invest in our own democracy. The autocrats cannot win."

(15) **TOWN MANAGER REPORT**

Town Manager Dennis reported that at the next Council meeting the subcommittee working on COVID-related issues will present information related to return to the office and flexible work schedule ideas. He attended the Open Space Acquisition Committee meeting. It was his last meeting of the PV Donates tour. He will be bringing forward what was heard as a refined program and bring that back out to the committees. Overall, the committees were pretty pleased with the ideas. There were a lot of great suggestions related to types of projects that could be supported by the program. In the next week or so residents will be receiving a letter from the Fire Marshall, the annual defensible space letter. He thanked

the Fire Marshal for allowing him and his staff to include some additional information about things of consideration to them, including contacting them if someone wants to know if they need a permit or not. Also, the Conservation Committee provided language on timing of certain work. The online reservation system is up and functioning for pickle ball. Many more such services will be provided in the coming weeks and months. Ms.de Garneau has done an outstanding considering the types of things needed to be put online. Finally, he reported that Councilmember Aalfs and he attended the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District meeting, a special meeting to review their wildfire resiliency planning efforts that they have been working on for some time. He said they did a good job of identifying the various needs in all of the system's open spaces, including Windy Hill. Councilmember Aalfs and he thanked them for their work and for allowing Fire Marshal Bullard to participate in the conversations, which led to an outstanding plan for Windy Hills specifically. He let them know they stand by to assist them and encouraged them to fund and execute the mitigation efforts.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS


(16) **Town Council Digest** – April 29, 2021

(17) **Town Council Digest** – May 6, 2021

[none]

ADJOURNMENT [9:38 p.m.]

Mayor Derwin adjourned the meeting.



Mayor



Town Clerk