

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING NO. 779, OCTOBER 28, 2009

ROLL CALL

Mayor Wengert called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Ms. Howard called the roll:

Present: Councilmembers Derwin, Driscoll, Merk and Toben, and Mayor Wengert
Absent: None
Others: Town Manager Howard, Town Attorney Sloan and Town Clerk Hanlon

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Historian Nancy Lund asked to take a photo of the Council for the archives.

Councilmember Merk asked staff to provide Councilmembers with copies of the policy on responding to Portola Valley forum postings.

Pierre Fischer, Valley Oak, said he was a newly elected Board member of the Ranch and had been appointed as Town liaison for the next three years for non-operational issues.

(1) PRESENTATION: Conceptual Design of Ford Field Project [7:33 p.m.]

Peter Callander, Callander Associates, gave a presentation on the conceptual design of the Ford Field project. He discussed: 1) project scope; 2) community workshops; 3) activities at Ford Field; 4) input from Parks and Rec; 5) three alternatives developed; and 6) the preferred concept. He showed a computer generated walkthrough of the site and visual simulation of the proposed project.

Councilmember Toben said he was enthusiastic about what had been accomplished and pleased with the extent of community involvement. Responding to Councilmember Toben, Mr. Callander said the restrooms would be on the sewer and would hook up to the Alpine Rd. main. Depending on how the topo and alignment worked out, it might be gravity fed up to a point and then pumped. Responding to Councilmember Toben, he described the outfield fence and corridor separating it from Alpine. Responding to Councilmember Toben, he said the cost estimate should include a shade structure over the dugout.

Responding to Councilmember Derwin, Mr. Callander confirmed that the proposed restroom and snack shack were similar in size to the Town Center restroom building. Responding to Councilmember Derwin, he agreed it would be beneficial to collect rainwater if there was a good way to distribute it. He noted there were several options for recycling rainwater other than dumping it into the creek. He described the current trail location, which would remain.

Councilmember Driscoll asked if the batter would be looking into the sun. Mr. Callander said some calculations would need to be done, but after the first few years, the plant material should screen the sun. Councilmember Driscoll said large redwood trees could become a problem. Mr. Callander said there were many natives to choose from. Responding to Councilmember Driscoll, he described the other two options that had been developed and pros and cons of each. Councilmember Driscoll said with the preferred design, the right field corner crept out into the meadow. That appeared to be the tradeoff to keeping out of the riparian corridor. Mr. Callander said any series of alternatives provided tradeoffs. When the topographic survey was done, some things might need to be shifted.

Responding to Mayor Wengert, Mr. Callander described the proposed fencing and heights; there would also

be padding on top with a warning track. He described the backstop, which was 16-18 feet high and open mesh.

Bill Lane, Westridge Dr., said the plan looked very good. He was concerned about traffic. When the parking spaces were filled, people parked along Alpine and up Westridge. Mr. Callander confirmed that 3-4 parking spaces would be lost with the new design. Mr. Lane said the playoff games at Ford Field generated a lot of traffic. There was also a lot of speeding on that 40 mph length of Alpine. There could be a serious accident there. It was particularly dangerous after a game with people coming down Westridge and turning right and left. The signing coming out of the field should also be strengthened to remind people to look both ways. Mr. Callander agreed that adding any increase in usage would increase the traffic. Refining and perfecting this intersection/driveway approach should be included in the cost estimate so that it was a little more defined with appropriate signage. Secondly, operations/traffic management should be looked at for tournament events. The third issue was where people could park off site.

Responding to Gary Nielsen, Mr. Callander said there would be no encroachment onto the path that ran along the creek with the exception that he thought there should be a connection from that path to the restroom. It should be open for good surveillance. He considered that path to be an important part of the total park space. The scale of the path and location were fine. The path was well into the riparian corridor.

Virginia Bacon, Golden Oak, said the area was signed "Ford Field." She thought there was too much emphasis put on the Little League field, which historically served a very small segment of the demographic community in terms of age or gender. She would like the whole space considered as a community space. This space was not like the other athletic fields. It should be used not only the Little League but other groups in Town as well. She was also concerned about the loss of parking. Additionally, if the restroom was going to serve some of the other purposes, such as staging for the fire department or Town recycling events, it should be closer to the parking area for maintenance and use by handicapped people. All of these facilities seemed to be for the Little League. Referring to the plan, she said the existing storage was a big metal shack. She questioned why it was left in the diagram—especially if there would be storage under the bleachers. She liked the idea of the picnic tables and more use of the site around the oak trees.

Lindsey Bowen, Portola Road, said the Little League coaches felt it would be difficult to play baseball there with the sun setting in the west. It went right to the batters' eyes. It was bad with the current configuration and moving home plate south would cause more sun in peoples' eyes. Even if there were tall trees, you could not play. Redwood City made the same mistake on two fields—one was at the end of Seaport. They put the pitcher's mound directly west of the batter's plate, and you couldn't play there after three in the afternoon. He felt the design needed to be looked at for the safety of the kids. Additionally, when one game was ending and another was beginning on Saturday, there was a lot of interaction with the cars trying to get in there.

Tim Goode, Alpine Little League, said he thought the kids would be thrilled to play in a park like this. But, from the players' and coaches' standpoint, he would like to have a larger batting cage than what existed. As far as the field, it needed to be situated properly. Elements should be included that allowed kids to practice and play more effectively. That included a full batting cage, a bullpen on both sides, and the field safely situated.

Mr. Callander used the plan to show the ideal location for the field. But, it just didn't fit on this site. He described the impacts of reorienting the field in terms of other structures and the scenic corridor. The Town would not let anyone else do that. Even without the scenic corridor, it would encroach into the creek corridor. Once the topographic survey was done, how much space was available would be better defined. Mayor Wengert said there had been comments that the oak tree that the Town had gone to great lengths to save had a pretty significant impact on how much the orientation could change. Mr. Callander agreed it was an interesting design problem.

Councilmember Driscoll said he didn't want to spend a lot of money on a baseball field that the actual users didn't think would be a functional field. That would need to be addressed before he could approve the plan.

Councilmember Merk said companies that installed photovoltaics had programs that analyzed the position of the sun. It should be relatively easy to do a few simple calculations and chart where the sun was on different days of the year. In this case, the sun set behind the hills of Westridge whereas in Redwood City, there were miles of flat land with the sun disappearing much later in the day. The window here might be smaller than perceived. Additionally, during opening day, people parked in the parking spaces across from Ladera Oaks. Those were mostly businesses with the exception of the church, and there was not a lot of parking there on the weekends. The trail along the creek was primarily a horse trail. If there was a connection to the restrooms, there needed to be a hitching post. In terms of the tradeoff between the various plans, losing a little bit of the meadow instead of the riparian area resulted in a much nicer social space along the back area. Conceptually, he was very happy with the plan. The issue of the sun in players' eyes needed to be addressed.

Councilmember Toben said he was impressed by what he heard about the constraints on the site in terms of the Alpine scenic corridor setback, the creek, and the heritage tree the Town preserved. He did not recall ever playing on a diamond that was perfect in its orientation every day of the summer. There were some days out there when first base was impossible. That didn't seem to dampen the fun; sometimes it made for hilarious misplays at first base. At other times during the summer at different hours of the day, it was not a problem. Absent a complete re-orientation, which was not available here, it was a condition that had to be dealt with. This location had been a working ball field for decades. He liked the idea of toning down the batting cage. The green monster had been a visual blight on the Alpine scenic corridor for a long time. He was not entirely sure what was suggested in terms of making it bigger. He also questioned whether you could put two batters in a batting cage at one time and take into account safety considerations. He appreciated Ms. Bacon's point about thinking holistically about the site and trying to imagine what other communities of interest had a stake in the enjoyment of this site. Those communities of interest had not been very visible. At one time, a dog run had been discussed, but there was a lot of resistance to that. All things considered, he felt the location of the elements had been thoughtfully done and that the proposed plan was a nice synthesis of earlier versions. Once the solar trajectory was worked out, the Town would need to figure out how to pay for it.

Councilmember Derwin said the design was a nice balance of recreational and rustic. She agreed with Mr. Lane's concerns about traffic—particularly if the C1 trail was built. On game days with a lot of people on the trail and people on the road, there would be accidents. Losing parking places was not a good thing. She would like to see rainwater collection on the roofs of the buildings and a storage tank. She suggested naming it Ford Field Park to encourage use of the whole site.

Mayor Wengert agreed the consultant had done a terrific job in synthesizing a lot of input and ideas and had created a blend of attractive facilities for the ballplayers as well as other user groups. There were also huge constraints with riparian trails on both sides as well as tree issues. In terms of the solar issue, some final calculations and possible tweaking would be needed to minimize that impact and make it as good as possible. To the traffic concerns, this location would always be difficult. The twice-annual cleanup days took a lot of management to avoid accidents with bicycles and cars. It was a challenging intersection that might need to be part of a different solution longer term. She agreed with Councilmember Merk that nearby cooperating parking locations could be used. Overall, she supported the plan.

Regarding traffic, Councilmember Merk said having the entrance/apron with a striped crosswalk for the C1 trail and a stop sign coming out of the parking lot could have a significant impact.

Responding to Councilmember Driscoll, Ms. Howard said ABAG covered the cost of this phase, and the original budget of \$10,000 was still available. In terms of how to pay for it, the Council could decide to put it

off for two years, actively fundraise, or build it into the budget as a reserve similar to what was done for the Town Center for many years before it was built. Councilmember Driscoll suggested holding off any spending of the \$10,000 until after the election on Tuesday. Council concurred.

CONSENT AGENDA [8:32 p.m.]

By motion of Councilmember Toben, seconded by Councilmember Derwin, the item listed below was approved with the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Councilmembers Derwin, Driscoll, Merk and Toben, and Mayor Wengert
Noes: None

- (3) Warrant List of October 28, 2009, in the amount \$288,658.63.

REGULAR AGENDA

- (2) Minutes of the Town Council Meeting of 10/14/09 (Removed from Consent Agenda)

Councilmembers Driscoll, Merk and Toben submitted changes to the minutes of the 10/14/09 meeting. By motion and second, the minutes were approved as amended by a vote of 5-0.

- (4) Accept the Grant Pathway Easement from the Portola Glen Estates Homeowners' Association (Removed from Consent Agenda)

Referring to the Grant of Pathway Easement document, Councilmember Merk said it referred only to Lot A. In the metes and bounds descriptions of Segments B and C, there were three places where the metes and bounds description touched the lot line between Lot A and Lot B. Therefore, the trail would be on Lot B in three places. He was surprised to see that Lot B was not included in the grant document. Councilmember Driscoll said on the plan labeled Segment B, C and D, Lot A, trail segment L84 appeared to go on Lot 4. That had been a problem area because there were dogs on that property that reacted to people walking on the trails. If the centerline ran right down the property line, half the trail would be on their property.

Ms. Sloan read the last sentence in her memo of 10/13/09, noting that this was the way it was explained to her by Mr. Vlasic. That was how it stayed out of Lot B and Lot 4. The property owners wanted to make sure that none of the trail went on their property. She confirmed for Councilmember Driscoll that Segment L84 was the boundary and not the centerline. She suggested putting the language in the staff report in the engineering description.

Referring to the map of Segment F, Lot A, Councilmember Merk said segment F was not the trail. The grant and resolution described these as pathway easements. The metes and bounds description of Segment F and the map showed what he had been taught was the "spite strip," which was two feet wide. He asked what it was for, why it was there and why it wasn't described in all of the legal documents. Responding, Ms. Sloan said she would follow up with Mr. Vlasic and ask him to attend the next meeting.

- (5) Formation of an Ad-hoc Committee to Create a Master Plan for the Town-owned Spring Down Parcel [8:45 p.m.]

Ms. Howard reviewed the staff report of 10/28/09 on the formation of an ad-hoc committee to develop a master plan for the Spring Down 6-acre parcel. She said she had some ideas for committee membership and would bring back a list to the Council. Responding to Mayor Wengert, she suggested members from the Finance Committee, Trails Committee, Open Space Committee, Parks and Rec, Conservation Committee, and Planning Commission be included. Councilmember Toben said this was similar to the

committee put together for the Sausal Creek project, which worked reasonably well.

Ms. Bacon suggested inviting the community to see if there were people who were interested in serving on the committee. Councilmember Toben noted that there were some “at-large” members on the Sausal Creek committee.

Referring to the staff report, Councilmember Merk said hundreds of cubic yards of earth had been deposited there as a result of the excavation of the creek. To say that very little had been done to the property didn't do justice to the fact that the Town used it as a repository for a large amount of earth. In terms of the committee itself, he agreed it should be open to the community so that people with an interest would have the opportunity to be involved.

Responding to Councilmember Derwin, Ms. Howard said she hoped Mayor Wengert would chair the committee. She also recommended there be an additional Councilmember.

Councilmember Toben agreed committee input should be invited without boundaries. He discussed the dogs-on-Coal-Mine-trails process where there were formal committee members as well as the opportunity for members of the public to speak at any time. Because it was a volatile issue, some ground rules had been developed and everyone who participated committed to the ground rules. It worked well to have this two-tiered structure. The consensus took place primarily with the committee itself. It was transparent and all meetings were publicized. After discussion, Councilmembers agreed the meetings should be open to the public.

Councilmember Merk said the committee should not be too big. But because of the nature of the property and the fact that it was open space, an additional Conservation Committee member and/or additional Open Space Committee member could participate. Those Committees should be given slightly more weight.

Councilmember Driscoll suggested contacting the Whites and the Goodsteins. Mayor Wengert suggested Ms. Howard come back with a recommendation for participants, ground rules, etc. Responding to Councilmember Driscoll, Ms. Howard confirmed that Mr. Young would be asked to attend the first 1-2 meetings.

Councilmember Toben said an expectation for the committee members in the Coal Mine Ridge case was the obligation to consult with their community of interests and bring back commentary from that community. Raising those expectations and making sure people understood what was expected was an important way of assuring the success of this.

COUNCIL, STAFF, COMMITTEE REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

(6) Reports from Commission and Committee Liaisons [8:55 p.m.]

(a) Council of Cities

Councilmember Derwin said the program topic was “Building Healthy Communities.” The Chief of the San Mateo County Health System spoke about the need for children to exercise. Also, there would be a celebration at the Oracle Conference Center tomorrow from 4:30 to 7:00 for everyone who signed the Bill of Rights for Children.

(b) Conservation Committee

Councilmember Derwin said the Committee was organizing a community workshop on living with wildlife, which they hoped to do early next year. They also discussed: 1) the 1-year anniversary party for Sausal

Creek on Sunday from 9:30 to noon; 2) the Council's discussion on the Open Space Element; and 3) 2010 Committee goals. Everyone would be re-upping except for Sue Driscoll. Marianne Plunder would be the new Chair, with Paul Heiple Vice Chair. There was one vacancy.

(c) Firewise Meeting

Councilmember Derwin said she and Ms. Howard attended the meeting in Woodside. They discussed: 1) presenting a united front with an established message on the wildland/urban interface and the fuel problem; 2) running the chipper program from April to November and offering incentives to neighborhoods; 3) the mission statement; 4) program costs and training; and 5) CERPP. The next meeting would be November 17 at Woodside Town Hall.

(d) Green Subcommittee Meeting

Councilmember Derwin said the group continued to refine the point system.

(e) Green Speaker Series

Councilmember Derwin said she met with Ms. Howard, Ms. Lambert and Ms. de Garmeaux to discuss the series. The next event would be tied to home audits, alternatives for lawns, water, retrofits, etc. A bigger event for Earthday was also discussed. She also met with Ms. Lambert and Ms. de Garmeaux and discussed reinvigorating the Climate Protection Task Force with a new name and new people.

(f) Geologic Safety

Councilmember Driscoll said two meetings would be held this Saturday hosted by Committee members, the Town Planner and Town Geologist to discuss the updates of the Town's Geologic and Land Movement Potential Maps. One meeting would be for property owners along the San Andreas Fault and the other for property owners up in the Westridge Hills. The changes to the maps were not major but more of a consolidation of changes that had happened over the last 25 years.

(g) Planning Commission

Councilmember Merk said the Commission held its 1-year review of Roberts Market. There were no public comments, and the report from staff was accepted. The market was asked to re-evaluate their green program at the next review. The Commission also held a preliminary review of a CUP for installation of a pole antenna on Golden Oak Drive and Peak Lane on the Cal Water site. There were a lot of comments and questions about health, which was controlled by the federal government. Visual aspects, emergency backup power, security at the site, fencing and signage, co-location and coverage were discussed.

(h) Parks and Rec

Councilmember Merk said only four members attended. A number of people from the baseball community attended, and there was a lot of discussion about the field fees. The baseball people did not want to be charged the same amount as the soccer people because the baseball fields were much cheaper to maintain. There was also a discussion of why the Town's maintenance costs were so much higher than in other towns. They also discussed hours versus number of players as a basis for fees and the difference between competitive and recreational leagues/clubs. Mayor Wengert noted that the Committee would be holding a special meeting next week on the user fees.

(i) Historic Resources Committee

Councilmember Merk said the Committee discussed use of their budget. They needed a file cabinet, bookcase, extra keys made and security software. They had a huge amount of material that had been scanned, and they were concerned about that being corrupted. They also wanted to reinstall the Tom Ford marker under the tree at Ford Field.

(j) Cultural Arts Committee

Councilmember Toben said the Committee did not have a quorum but discussed a weekly or monthly music night at the Town Center for local musicians. There was also continuing interest in formalizing the process for selecting art to be displayed in the Town Center.

(k) ASCC

Councilmember Toben said the ASCC held a preliminary review a project on Golden Oak Drive on a parcel that stepped down a hillside. The buildable floor area was on two terraces that were separated by significant slope. The proposal was for a significant amount of development on the top terrace, which violated a number of the design standards, and a 750 sf guesthouse on the lower terrace. He described other problems on the parcel. They also reviewed: 1) a proposal for a residence on Stonegate; and 2) a non-permitted expansion of a "shed" on Canyon.

(l) C-1 Trail

Mayor Wengert said the trail was moving forward, and comments were being reviewed by Town staff. There would be two more meetings.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS [9:27 p.m.]

(7) Town Council 10/16/09 Weekly Digest

(a) Recognition of Eagle Scout

Referring to the Corleys' letter of 10/7/09, Councilmember Derwin supported Council sending a congratulatory letter to Ryan Corley on his achievement. Councilmember Merk said he did not think the Council had done this before, and he did not support the request. After discussion, Mayor Wengert said she would draft a letter of congratulation.

(b) Incident on Un-textured Driveway

Referring to Jennifer Walt's letter of 10/8/09, Mayor Wengert noted that Mr. Young had responded in a letter dated 10/15/09, which was also in the digest.

(8) Town Council 10/23/09 Weekly Digest

(a) Opposition to Cargill Development

Referring to the *The Daily News* article of 10/21/09, Councilmember Derwin said Menlo Park council member Kelly Fergusson contacted her and asked that the Town also draft a resolution opposing the Cargill project. Noting that she was personally opposed to the project, she asked Councilmembers to keep informed of the status/impacts of the project for future Council action.

ADJOURNMENT: 9:32 p.m.

Mayor

Town Clerk