

Melissa Thurman

From: Roberta Phillips <robertaphillips1@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, November 24, 2023 2:41 PM
To: City Council; Public Comment
Subject: Council meeting Nov 28 Item # 7

Dear Council Members

I looked at the the Staff Report for Item #7

It is for the Library Patio

The report does not tell the community how large the Patio is. it does not say if any land that is currently part of the Historic Orchard will be used by the Library. Are you making the square footage smaller ?

I heard rumors that the plan is to shove the trees closer together.

The roots of Apricot trees grow out , not down. They need to have room to grow and have maintenance equipment get to the trees.

Has the Orchardist or the History Museum had a chance to review the plans? I have heard that the Library wants to use land that is now part of the Orchard to the tune of thousands of square feet.

The community has not been given a chance to see the plans and comment. We have to be present at the Council meeting to comment, which is difficult. I hope no decision will be made without community involvement.

Save the Orchard

Roberta Phillips
32 year resident of Los Altos

Melissa Thurman

From: Bill Hough <psa188@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, November 27, 2023 9:52 AM
To: Public Comment
Cc: City Council
Subject: public comment on item not on the November 28 agenda

The Hamas attacks against Israel were an atrocity. It is difficult for me to discuss terrorism without using inappropriate language. I was in New York on 9/11, so I have first-hand knowledge regarding how awful the indiscriminate killing of innocent non-combatants can be. I was close enough to the World Trade Center site to smell the unpleasant odor of burnt flesh mixed with jet fuel that was present after the atrocity.

That said, there is no reason beyond stupid virtue signaling for the Los Altos City Council to waste time and effort to state the obvious. It is not Council's place to opine on foreign events. regardless of how awful these events might be. There are enough issues in governing this town without wasting time on irreverent issues.

Council needs to stay in its lane and deal with City issues.

Bill Hough
Los Altos

Melissa Thurman

From: Pat Marriott <patmarriott@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Monday, November 27, 2023 12:12 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT ITEM #7 PATIO NOVEMBER 28, 2023

Council Members:

I want to preface my comments about the patio by reflecting on the bigger picture: the civic center. Over the years, individual land use decisions have been made without a holistic plan. We have book storage sheds, a school garden, a dog park. All came about because of specific interest groups making a case for their needs.

Now we have another special interest group before you, which may or may not conflict with our historic orchard, important to yet another specific interest group. I understand all those groups wanting city support. I love dogs, I love libraries, and I love the orchard.

We have a limited supply of public land. That's why your vote tonight is so important and why you must ensure lots of public input before your "final action and approval of the project."

The staff report says, "The project before the City Council tonight reflects the direction provided on June 27, 2023" and recommends Council "send to Planning Commission for Final Design Approval."

What will you send?

There's nothing other than a vague description of location (north side of library) and features (umbrellas, fence, etc.). No square footage. No info on how many people can be accommodated. No sketches.

I thought all materials relevant to an agenda item were supposed to be included in the packet when the agenda is posted. However, the patio committee is holding back information until the last minute, just as it did at the June 27th council meeting.

Without a detailed plan to study prior to this November 28th council meeting, residents are left in the dark, unable to provide input. This is especially problematic since remote comments have been cut off.

I would think Council would also want to see the details before the meeting so you would have time to give thoughtful consideration to the proposal.

The patio task force presented an update at the most recent library commission meeting October 5. It reported: "The next meeting of the Advisory Committee (which will be virtual) is targeted for late October / early November, when the floor plan concept will be presented with character images. In late November there will be a Study Session with the Planning Commission and the City Council where a refined, illustrative plan will be presented along with a 3-D model."

The last two planning commission meetings were canceled, so I'm wondering why Council is getting the plan without any prior input. The city philosophy used to be that commission meetings were the

place to residents to provide comments. However, the staff report says, "Consideration by the Planning Commission after tonight shall reflect final action and approval of the project."

Once you give your "final" OK, what chance do residents – or commissioners have – to voice any opinions?

Without all relevant documents and without prior review by the planning commission, this item should not be on the agenda.

Thanks for listening,
Pat Marriott

Melissa Thurman

From: Robin Chapman <rchaps2@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, November 27, 2023 2:28 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: Los Altos Heritage Orchard

Monday November 27, 2023

Dear Madame Mayor, Los Altos City Manager, and Members of the Los Altos City Council:

I understand you are making a decision Tuesday, November 28, 2023, on a proposed patio for the Los Altos Library that would encroach upon the Los Altos Heritage Orchard, officially designated a City Historic Landmark by the Los Altos City Council in 1981. This cannot be done under the California Environmental Quality Act without public hearings and public reviews by the designated commissions in the City of Los Altos. State law says local citizens must be consulted if designated landmarks are removed, changed, or damaged in any way. Doing this could risk the status Los Altos has as a Certified Local Government under CEQA and this could mean the city would lose control of its ability to approve its own Environment Impact Reports. That would be a great loss for the city.

There are several other points worth mentioning:

- 1) The care of Los Altos Heritage Orchard has been so negligent in recent years that many of the apricot trees in it have died. As a consequence, the city has set aside money in its budget to enable the orchard to be restored, with the Los Altos History Museum designated as the agency to do the restoration. Are you seeking approval of a library patio into land where an irrigation system is about to be added and new trees are just about to go in? Restoration on one hand and construction into the Orchard on the other? This makes no sense at all.
- 2) The Heritage Orchard had no landmark sign nor interpretive sign for nearly 40 years. After a great deal of work by local citizens, both a landmark sign and an interpretive sign, designed by the Los Altos History Museum and paid for by the city, were finally installed in July 2019. I understand this proposed patio would require the destruction of the interpretive sign. Removing it after only four years isn't just a waste of money, it makes the Orchard's context a mystery for residents who don't already know its history.
- 3) The Los Altos Heritage Orchard sits on city land. The Los Altos Library is a county library. Does the city have no public hearing process that would allow residents to comment when the city seeks to give away a piece of a City Historic Landmark for use by a county agency?

My parents moved to Los Altos in 1950 and I was raised in Los Altos where my parents lived for more than six decades. I returned to Los Altos after many years as a journalist to care for my parents in their final illnesses. The beauty of Los Altos has inspired me to write three books about our region in the years since my return, and though I have recently moved to the nearby coast I continue to cherish the fact that I'll always be a Los Altos native. One of the unique landmarks of Los Altos is its Heritage Orchard. Architect Frank Lloyd Wright helped early city leaders choose this spot in the orchard for its Civic Center. A previous council gave it landmark status. Residents love it. I hope you will continue to protect and conserve it for generations to come.

Very truly yours,

Ms. Robin Chapman

El Granada, California

Melissa Thurman

From: Mary Cunneen Lion <mclion@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 28, 2023 12:56 PM
To: Public Comment
Cc: Paul 'Chip' L. III Lion
Subject: Library Patio proposal and encroachment on City landmark and Historic Orchard

Our names our Mary and Chip Lion, and have been city residents in Los Altos for over 60 years. We are writing to you today to ask that you do not approve the proposed project plan for the Library Patio Project, Agenda Item #17 that encroaches and alters the City's Landmark Heritage Orchard, and additionally directly stops and interferes with the City's approved and funded Restoration Project and historic, protected city treasure that is finally getting the attention that it deserves.

As volunteers in the Orchard for the last four months in the Restoration Project, we work in the orchard digging ditches, watering trees, collecting soil samples, analyzing health status of trees, every Tuesday Friday Saturday and Sunday. We have been so excited about the city's approval to restore the Los Altos landmark HERITAGE APRICOT ORCHARD. We also have talked to many people who stop us in our neon yellow vests to ask about our work and are so excited about this restoration to replant, irrigate and save these precious trees.

Some of the comments include: "This reminds me of my childhood". "Never let any more trees die." "Thank you." "We love this historic orchard." "Plant more trees." "How can I help?" The public excitement is overwhelming.

Our work in setting irrigation, soil prep and tree site preparation will be rewarded by the 300 apricot trees planned to be delivered in January, that maps to the City's Landmark Resolution, Historic Preservation Ordinance and associated parcel map.

We were surprised over the weekend to find out that the 2nd iteration of the Library Patio Proposed project was sited and located in the City Landmark Heritage that is ready to be planted and restored.

While we acknowledge the library, it cannot be at the cost of our protected landmark City Heritage Orchard.

This proposed plan is an encroachment on a protected City Historic Landmark. Plain and simple. It goes against City's agreement, resolution and ordinances which call for it's continued stewardship and protection by the City. As stewards of the City's historic and environmental assets and public lands, it is your job to properly protect these lands against runaway plans or landmark and historic land encroachment protected by City Ordinance and Resolutions, and the associated agreements for historical and environmental preservation under County and State provisions. Vote no on this location.

Chip Lion
Mary Cunneen Lion

Melissa Thurman

From: karenjsolheim@gmail.com
Sent: Tuesday, November 28, 2023 12:52 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT - NOT ON THE AGENDA

My name is Karen Solheim. I am a long-time resident of Los Altos.

I participated in the dog park public forum in October. I also plan to attend the second session on December 6. I would like to share some of my observations from the October session.

First, I heard a city employee say that there is plenty of parking next to the library. When I asked what parking he was talking about, he pointed to a small lot which is always full during library hours. The planners of the dog park seem to not realize that the parking lots at Hillview are shared by the visitors to the library, the history museum, the theater, the community center, the soccer field, the baseball diamond, as well as those who cannot find parking in downtown Los Altos for special events. Dog owners seeking to use the dog park are likely to be disappointed that there is no place to park.

Second, someone from the parks commission remarked that people always complain about losing parking spaces, but they get used to it. Who will tell the elderly citizens and young parents with their small children that they will have to get used to walking long distances to the library, sometimes in the rain? Visiting the library is one of the few free indoor activities available to the elderly and those with small children.

Third, I heard someone from the parks commission say that if we are going to have a dog park, let's have a world-class dog park. I can understand this enthusiasm, especially with a million dollar budget, but I hope it can be accomplished while balancing the needs of dog owners and other Los Altos residents.

Fourth, the parking lot is shaded by several very old majestic oak trees. Some of the dog owners at the design session said that the debris from the oak trees will hurt the dogs' feet. They suggested removing or greatly trimming back the trees. Please do not remove more protected oak trees.

Finally, many people at the design session offered suggestions that will allow keeping the parking lot and the oak trees while keeping the dog park at Hillview. They include: 1) reducing the size of the dog park, 2) splitting the dog park into one for small dogs and a separate one for large dogs while renovating the temporary dog park for the small dogs, and 3) taking a small part of the soccer field equal to the parking lot area for the dog park.

I recognize that the city has tried for years to find an acceptable location for a much-needed dog park. However, I hope that this frustration will not cause a default to a plan acceptable to the least number of people. As you know, over 400 people signed a petition asking to keep the parking lot across from the library.

I am looking forward to the December 6 dog park forum at 6:30pm at the Community Center. I hope a beautiful and usable dog park with ample parking will be the result.

Melissa Thurman

From: Catherine Nunes <nunescath@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 28, 2023 4:30 PM
To: Public Comment
Cc: City Council
Subject: Agenda Item #7 Use of Landmark Heritage Orchard Land for Library Patio Project

Dear City of Los Altos and City Council,

My name is Catherine Nunes. I have been a resident of Los Altos for over 30 years. I have been active in the community on city and public issues impacting environmental, natural and historic resources, the treasured places, spaces and trees that Los Altans love; and most especially the resources and landmarks the City has deemed important to preserve and protect.

Today, I am writing/speaking regarding the Library Patio Project and the requested "Authorization by City Council for the use of Civic Center Land for construction of a proposed outdoor library patio." I am requesting that you vote NO on this proposed move into the Los Altos Heritage Orchard, a City Historic Landmark. The "Civic Center" space was not properly identified as such in the paperwork on this project.

The Los Altos Heritage Orchard has been preserved repeatedly by the City of Los Altos since the deaths of Gilbert and Margaret of Smith. In 1978, after their deaths the preservation of this orchard was awarded the esteemed Historic Preservation Award from Santa Clara County. In 1981, the Los Altos Heritage Orchard was named a City Historic Landmark under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which identifies the history in our landscapes as being a key part of the environment worthy of protection. The 1981 council vote of landmark resolution 91-31 was filed with an Exhibit A map of the designated historic landmark space. With that vote the Orchard was registered with the State of California and protected by State law under CEQA.

First, our Heritage Orchard was beloved land, chosen. Then it was protected again and again by the City of Los Altos with resolution and ordinance in successive years. It is now protected by state law under CEQA, registered as a City Historic Landmark and subject to the provisions of your required stewardship as a Certified Local Government.

Because of all this protection, you are required to follow Local, County and State rules and procedures if you want to change even a part of this beloved space.

You should vote NO on this measure and I believe you will reject the proposed plans to alter this beloved space because if you vote in favor, you would be the first city council to give this precious land away. Once gone, it will never come back.

You have just recently authorized funds to restore the Los Altos Heritage Orchard. Why would you chop it up when the trees and sprinkler systems are now on order? Or claim it had no trees on the proposed area because they were removed for replanting?

People in Los Altos love this beautiful space. Please don't build on it. It is a protected, treasured Orchard and needs you to honor its historic land designations and environmental stewardship, and care.

I urge you to: Vote No.

Catherine Nunes
Los Altos Resident

November 27, 2023

Dear Mayor Meadows and Members of the Los Altos City Council,

As the Mayor's term comes to an end, we'd like to congratulate and thank her for a year of strong and effective leadership that led to many accomplishments.

We're especially proud that the 6th cycle housing element, which was approved by the Council early in 2023, has been certified by the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) for the state of California. While it hasn't been easy, we also applaud the Council's efforts to rezone parts of the city while, so far, leaving R-1 zoning untouched.

It also appears that with the strong leadership of City Manager Gabe Engeland, who the Council unanimously agreed to hire in 2021, both staffing shortages and financial management are being addressed appropriately.

In addition, the Council adopted revised norms and procedures for itself, set aside a parking plaza while the Los Altos Stage Company studies the feasibility of a downtown theater, and adopted a new annual budget and budgeting process, among other actions.

Many thanks to each of you for all you do for the residents of Los Altos.

Warm regards,

Los Altos Community Voices Steering Committee
Robin Abrams, Kim Cranston, Cathy Lazarus, Bill Sheppard, Marie Young