

Subject: FW: Community Garden

From: Lisa Wade [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, December 8, 2023 2:44 PM
To: Council <Council@losgatosca.gov>
Subject: Community Garden

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

Dear Mayor and Council Members,
I have been a resident of Los Gatos for 30 years and I am grateful for all your hard work!

I would like to express my support for the Los Gatos community garden. I believe this project will improve the physical and mental health of our community. The garden will provide many benefits to the environment and community. It will serve as a gathering place for residents and will give people a chance to do something positive for themselves, the community, and the environment at large.

Sincerely,
Lisa Wade

[REDACTED]

Subject:

FW: Pinehurst Community Garden & Lynn Ave Ped Path

From: Hamidah Sadler [REDACTED]

Sent: Thursday, December 7, 2023 7:50 PM

To: Town PPW <ppw@losgatosca.gov>

Subject: Pinehurst Community Garden & Lynn Ave Ped Path

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

Good Afternoon,

I live on Lynn Ave and I oppose both the garden and the pedestrian path. It won't be good for the kids, traffic, parking or Lynn Avenue. Secondly, I believe the only people who should have a real say in this process is the houses that back up to the open space. There are 6 single family homes and 5 duplexes on Lynn Ave that will be directly effected in their backyards if this happens. There are 8 single family homes on Blossom Valley Drive that will be directly effected by this being built. I believe that the only opinion on this matter should be those 24 families that will be directly effected by the building of a Garden and Pathway. Ask them directly and have their votes be the only that matter if it goes forward or not please. I am not one of those residents and again I am opposed to both proposals. Just leave it all alone.

Thank you,

Hamidah Sadler
[REDACTED]

Subject: FW: Pinehurst Community Garden Project

From: Lydia Norcia [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, December 7, 2023 8:08 PM
To: Town PPW <ppw@losgatosca.gov>
Subject: Pinehurst Community Garden Project

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

To whom it may concern.

I fully support this garden. The garden would enhance the neighborhood and provide a lovely haven for all the residents to use and enjoy. The garden would be a delightful place for seniors to visit and participate in the raised gardens. This project would bring together all ages in the community and bring joy to all.

Thank you,
Lydia Norcia
Resident of Los Gatos and Los Gatos Village.
[REDACTED]

Subject: FW: Lynn Avenue Pathway and Community Garden
Attachments: Lynn Avenue Pathway and Community Garden.docx

From: JUDITH BERGTHOLD [REDACTED] >
Sent: Monday, November 27, 2023 11:02 AM
To: Nicolle Burnham <NBurnham@losgatosca.gov>
Subject: RE: Lynn Avenue Pathway and Community Garden

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

Dear Nicolle,
Thank you for sending the photo of a similar situation.

When is the next Parks Commission meeting and will this issue be on the agenda? If so, what would be the agenda item number? If I understand correctly, comments will have to be emailed to rbaker@losgatosca.gov with a reference to an agenda item number. Where would I find that on the town website? I searched and couldn't find it.

I have attached a copy of our comments about both the parkway and community garden, which we would like to have put into the official record. Who else should I send a copy to?

Thank you for any help you can give us.

Sincerely,
Judy Bergthold

On 10/20/2023 2:34 PM -08 Nicolle Burnham <nburnham@losgatosca.gov> wrote:

Good afternoon Mrs. Bergthold-

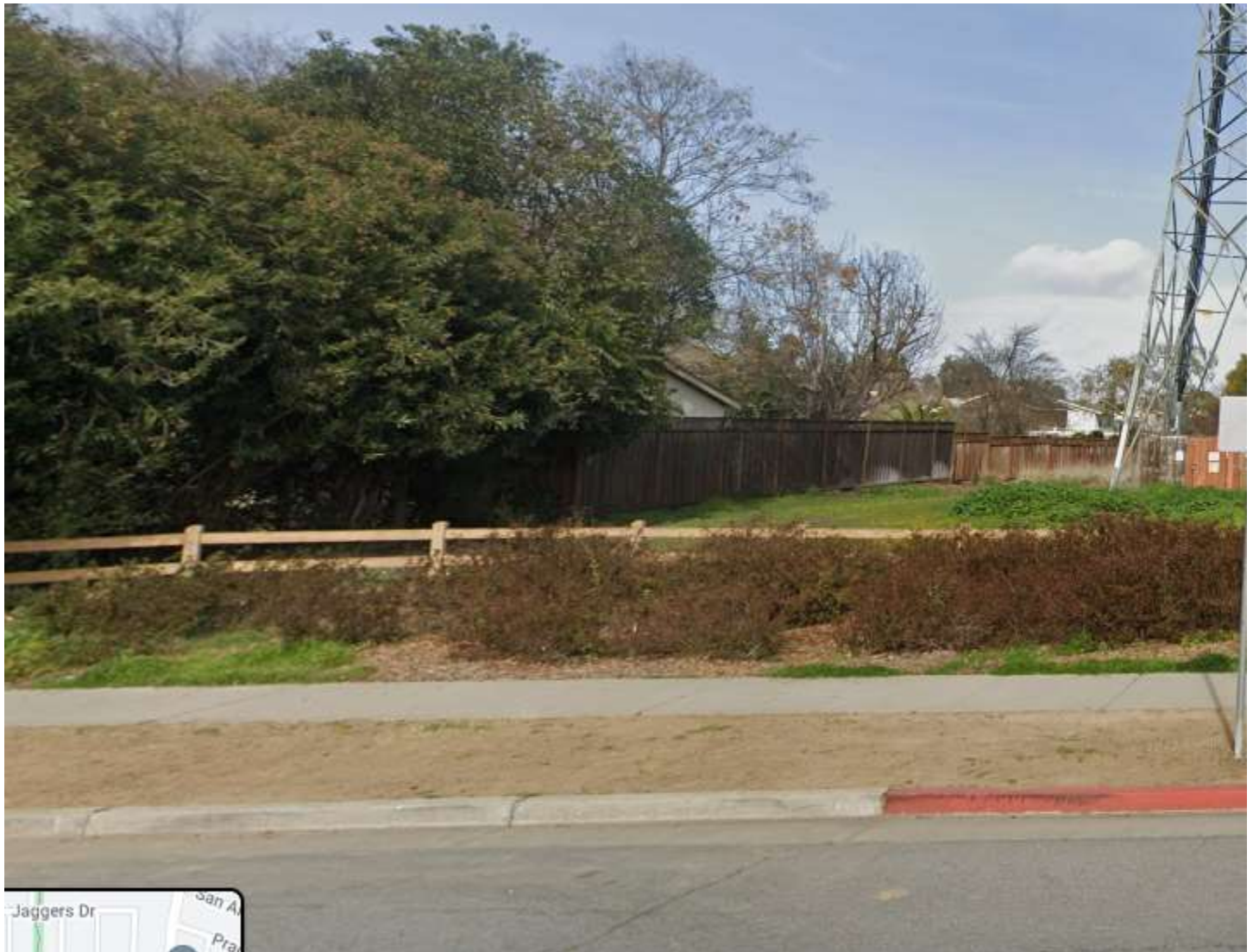
Thank you for this follow up email. The meeting this week was scheduled as part of the regularly scheduled meeting of the Town's Arts and Culture Commission. You will find that the future meetings will be scheduled for more convenient times and locations.

I appreciated you and your husband taking the time to talk with me after the meeting. It was nice to hear your perspective. As Marina and I thought about the comments we received, the ones your husband made about the past access by bikes and vehicles stood out. I want you to know that the pathway area would not be wide open, but rather the trail access will be limited via fencing, landscaping or a combination of both. Below is a phot of a similar trail head. I hope this might help ease your concerns about the idea of the public driving through there as they did in the past.

Please let me and Marina know you have more questions.

Have a great weekend,

Nicolle



From: JUDITH BERGTHOLD [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, October 20, 2023 12:54 PM
To: Nicolle Burnham <NBurnham@losgatosca.gov>
Subject: Lynn Avenue Pathway and Community Garden

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

Dear Nicolle,

It was nice meeting you on Wednesday at the meeting. My husband and I appreciated you taking the time to talk to us afterwards. We are hoping that the next meetings can be

scheduled after 6:00 or 7:00 so that the bulk of the neighbors, most of whom work, would be able to attend.

Sincerely,

Judy Bergthold

RE: LYNN AVENUE PEDESTRIAN PATH AND COMMUNITY GARDEN

We and the neighborhood are opposed to both of these projects.

The man who broached the subject of the Lynn Avenue Pathway and Community Garden to the Town Council **did not and does not live in the Lynn Avenue neighborhood**. He polled the neighbors more than once and got no support for either of these projects from our neighborhood. His family will not have to suffer the consequences, if either or both of these projects goes forward, but those who live here will.

We bought our piece of property more than 60 years ago specifically because the easement was behind us and was a buffer from noise and someone across our back fence. We sit in our back yard every day and enjoy the peace and tranquility it affords from the busy world. It is our oasis. The pathway will not only destroy this but bring loss of privacy, noise, and trash. Before P.G.&E. put up the cyclone fences and gates, we had a serious problem with motorcycles and cars racing through the easement, vandalism and even a fire. We are also concerned about the pathway making our property more vulnerable to break-ins and damage. So, it is also a **safety** issue for us. In addition to the above concerns, we feel there is a real possibility of it becoming a haven for the homeless. A few years ago a homeless person living in the easement had to be removed by a Los Gatos police officer. The stench from his using the area as a toilet was horrible! The pathway could also encourage illegal drug activity in proximity to Union School.

We have a rose garden in the easement, which we have a paid permit from P. G. & E. to use. We feel the pedestrian walkway would affect our enjoyment of this quiet spot and potentially subject it to vandalism.

The traffic on our street from the two schools in the area is already terrible. Cars park in front of houses during the week and on the week-ends. We can't even park in front of our own homes much of the time. The Community garden would add even more cars and noise to our neighborhood. Approximately 15-20 years ago a community garden was proposed in the same spot. The idea was abandoned because of neighborhood opposition. The neighborhood opposition still exists and is an important issue to consider.

Submitted by: Bob and Judy Bergthold

[REDACTED]

Subject: FW: community garden concerns

From: Jon Levitow [REDACTED] >
Sent: Wednesday, October 18, 2023 9:33 AM
To: Town PPW <ppw@losgatosca.gov>
Subject: community garden concerns

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

on Levitow
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Town of Los Gatos
Arts and Parks Commissions
ppw@losgatosca.gov

Oct. 17, 2023

Dear friends,

I am writing with regard to the proposals for a Pinehurst Community Garden and Lynn Avenue Pedestrian Path, which are up for public discussion in the LG Council on Oct. 18, 2023. Unfortunately, my work schedule prevents me from attending the meeting, but I am a Los Gatos homeowner, living on the same block of Pinehurst that the garden will be located. I hope that you will give my viewpoint the same weight as if I were able to be there because we are very worried that these projects will negatively impact the quality of life in our area.

Our house is on the corner of Blossom Valley Drive and Pinehurst, on the same block as the proposed garden, across the street but with a backyard fence adjacent to the same PG and E easement that is under discussion. So we are basically “kitty corner” to the proposed garden, which would approximately 30 yards away from our back fence.

When a young man named Kevin first came to the area to discuss the project with local homeowners, I spoke with him about it, so he has heard my concerns before. At the time we talked, I appreciated his community-spirit and his willingness to hear the opinions of the people in the area. I don’t much like being in the position of arguing against something that is intended to improve and beautify our community. These are surely worthy goals.

However, my wife and I both are very concerned that the garden in particular will increase the noise and congestion on our street. As you might expect, we love the quiet of our neighborhood. What community resident doesn’t treasure the limited amount of “peace and quiet” that they have? We already tolerate a certain amount of traffic and school noise on weekday afternoons because of Union Middle School, which has an exit on to Lynn Avenue. Putting another neighborhood gathering place in the area, it seems to us, would threaten the quiet of the “off-hours,” the summer evenings, and the weekends, as well.

When Kevin and I talked, he was sympathetic to my concerns and assured me that the garden would operate with strict rules for conduct and that an online signup list would keep congestion to a minimum. I imagine, nevertheless, that even with the best of intentions, a new public area will bring additional noise in the form of cars coming and going and people talking, and beyond that, it is easy to imagine things getting out of hand. The garden would easily come to seem to people like a park or a playground, with adults

picnicking and drinking, children playing in the easement, music coming from cellphones and boom-boxes, barking dogs,...even after hour teenage activities like parties and fireworks?

From our point of view, all of these would be very unwelcome developments over our backyard fence. In a big city, a “community garden” may well offer a break from urban congestion, but in a quiet suburb, surely it would have the opposite effect and increase the concentration of people and noisy activity in the area.

We hope that the Los Gatos City Council will take the interests of the local residents like us very seriously when weighing whether or not such projects as the ones being proposed are realistic. Thank you very much for taking public comment on this issue. I would be happy to discuss any of the above concerns further, personally or via email or by phone, as above.

Sincerely, Jon Levitow and Amanda Morgan

Subject: FW: Pinehurst Community garden

From: Hanne Olofsen <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, October 18, 2023 10:23 AM
To: Town PPW <ppw@losgatosca.gov>
Subject: Pinehurst Community garden

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

I just received your notice about Pinehurst Community Garden. I live on Lynn Ave. This idea has been presented to us before and as coming neighbors we were against it.
My biggest concern is the parking situation. We are inundated with cars already do to the sports going on at Union School. My question is what are you going to do about the parking?
Next question - the pedestrian path sounds good since Lynn Ave does not have sidewalks. Hopefully it is only going to be a pedestrian path with no school kids on their electrical bikes.
Sorry, I cannot make the meeting tonight

Regards

Hanne Olofsen
[REDACTED]

From: Jon Levitow [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, December 12, 2023 4:18 PM
To: Nicolle Burnham <NBurnham@losgatosca.gov>
Subject: Pinehurst Community Garden project

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

Jon Levitow
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Nicolle Burnham
Parks and Public Works Director
NBurnham@LosGatosCA.gov

Dear Director Burnham,
Greetings. I hope this letter finds you well.

I believe we spoke at the meeting on Dec. 7, so what I say in the following letter will not be new to you. Nevertheless, I think it's only fair that you should be cognizant of what I'm arguing in the letter that I'm sending to other Los Gatos officials. So, I'm reproducing it with few changes here.

As a Los Gatos homeowner (for 20 years), I am writing to ask for concrete answers about the status of a proposal before the LG town council to construct a "Pedestrian Pathway" running through a current PG&E easement that extends from Union Avenue to Pinehurst St., north of Blossom Valley Drive, and a "Community Garden" in the same easement on opposite side of Pinehurst.

My wife and I attended the community meeting regarding these projects at the Los Gatos Adult Education Center on Dec. 7, and we left greatly upset by the scale of the projects and the sudden, arbitrary way that they are being imposed on the local residents. These projects will affect us very directly. Our home is located on the corner of Pinehurst and Blossom Valley Drive, and our back fence borders the easement marked out for the "Pathway," while the area for the "Community Garden" is directly across the street.

I will try to be brief, but I would like to explain our concerns if I you will allow me.

The first notice we received about the plans was in the notice of a town meeting about them on Oct. 18, but work obligations kept us from attending. Fortunately, last Thursday, Dec. 7, there was a second meeting, and my wife and I were able to be there.

What we heard and saw there shocked us. Naturally, we thought that the city of Los Gatos would start a project of this scope by soliciting opinions from the residents

directly impacted – but that was not at all what we encountered. The project was presented to us as already in motion, with extensive plans drawn up, including a range of options for the layout of the sites, photographs of various examples of parkland development to compare, and professionally-done landscape drawings.

You may well have seen these same plans.

I can tell you that a number of neighbors attended the meeting (whom we did not know), and almost all of us were utterly dismayed by what we saw and heard. The facilitators at the meeting did their best to respect our feelings and even to console us, but they made clear that their job was to register our input with regard to the various options on the table – but not to evaluate the reasonableness of the project overall.

To put it bluntly once more, we are furious that such extensive plans, which will completely transform the area in which we live, have been drawn up – apparently without any input from the residents who live here.

As for the merits of the ideas being proposed, many questions need asking, perhaps first of all: who exactly are the Los Gatos residents in need of additional gardening space? In a big city, a “community garden” may provide very welcome open space and reduce congestion – but here the opposite is sure to be the result: more people, more traffic, more human and animal noise – not to speak of various kinds of possible bad behavior, from drinking to lighting fireworks – located directly behind our back fences. Of course we are anxious to preserve the modicum of quiet that these easements provide. Who wouldn't be?

As you may be aware, the vicinity of Pinehurst, Lynn Avenue, and Blossom Valley Drive is already the focus of a lot of traffic and noise related to activities at Union Middle School. Has the city actually studied how much congestion currently exists on Lynn Avenue (on the opposite side of the easement from us), not just from the daily school activities but also from privately-run sports which make use of the field? I suggest you listen to the residents directly affected, some of whom were at the meeting on Thursday. Living near the school, we bear our fair share of city congestion and are naturally upset at the prospect of being sandwiched between school activities on one side and these new parks on the other.

I can only tell you that it was hard to avoid the impression that the planners of this initiative were well aware that the residents of the area wouldn't be happy about it, and this was precisely why no one consulted with us regarding the initial decision. Could the intention to bypass us entirely also be why the third meeting on the subject is scheduled for Dec. 19, during the run-up to the holidays? Our suspicion is that the answer to this last question is yes – which adds to our sense of betrayal and our anger.

Without making this personal, I first met the individual whom we all believe to be the original proponent of the idea a couple years ago when he was checking out the area. At the time, I thought he might have in mind a row of 5 or 6 planters behind a

chain-link fence, but he and the city-planner people have clearly run with the idea and gone way beyond that.

The plans we saw for both the “Community Garden” and “Pedestrian Pathway” far exceeded anything tailored to fit a residential area. What they were talking about, without naming it as such, was a large public park, with 15 – 20 raised planters and a possible orchard as well, benches, a seating area that could be used for events, classes, and meetings, as well as “native plants” educational tours and art exhibits.

I expect you have seen the site for yourself, but perhaps you should come out and look at it and imagine all that over the back fences of people on both sides – and then imagine it was your back fence! Every person talking on a cell-phone, every pod of teenagers, and every barking dog would be the soundtrack filling your backyard and coming through the windows while you make dinner, rest after work, or sleep late in the morning!

You get the idea so I'll stop here.

Director Burnham, residents of this area deserve answers on the status of these projects. I expect you'll attend the next meeting on this subject, which will be open to the community, on Tues., Dec. 19 (“5:00 or 5:30,” they said). I know that the neighbors will present a petition in opposition to the projects at that time. This letter probably makes my point of view clear, and of course, like other working people, my free time is very limited, but I would also be happy to speak with you further, on the phone or via “Zoom,” or to meet with you personally.

I know that it's the job of the city government to consider and to balance many competing interests so I appreciate your time and attention.

Sincerely, Jon Levitow

From: Town PPW <ppw@losgatosca.gov>

Sent: Thursday, October 26, 2023 9:05 AM

To: Marina Chislett <MChislett@losgatosca.gov>; Meredith Johnston <MJohnston@losgatosca.gov>

Subject: FW: Pinehurst Community Garden and Lynn Avenue Pedestrian Path

FYI~

From: Hamidah Sadler [REDACTED]

Sent: Thursday, October 26, 2023 8:42 AM

To: Town PPW <ppw@losgatosca.gov>

Subject: Pinehurst Community Garden and Lynn Avenue Pedestrian Path

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

Good Morning,

I am a resident of Los Gatos that lives on Lynn Avenue between Union Avenue and Pinehurst Avenue. I am on a street that is a major cut through to 4 prominent schools. On the Union Avenue side you have Leigh High School and the Stratford School, on Pinehurst side you have Union Middle School and Alta Vista Elementary. We get about 1000+ students and parents going both directions 2x a day for just school drop off and pick up, that doesn't include sporting events that happen at Union Middle School on the daily and all weekends. There is limited parking and no sidewalks and no speed humps. I have asked the city repeatedly for speed humps, at a bare minimum to slow these drivers and motor bikes down, especially when we have additional kids walking to school and on bicycles. Sadly we do not have speed humps. I would really like to see speed humps on Lynn Ave and Pinehurst Ave. I would also like to see a proper stop light at the intersection of Union Ave and Lynn Ave to alleviate the massive traffic during school drop off, pick up and on weekends, and it will slow every one down.

I am not in favor of the Pinehurst Community Garden as it will just invite more people and traffic that our streets can't handle already. In addition, it will invite critters, raccoons, coyotes, wild turkeys, squirrels, moles, etc to eat the fruits and veggies in the garden. It will put unnecessary noise in the backyards of my neighbors, whom live on Pinehurst and Blossom Valley. It will put a strain on our already strained parking and frequently the people who are tending the gardens won't be able to park near their gardens because of school traffic and sporting events. It also will put an additional strain on our already strained water supply in our area. There isn't water there, so they will have to drill down to find or create a water source. We already get asked not to water our plants and get high fees if we do for our own yards, it doesn't seem logical to put in another area in our neighborhood that would add to that strain. Finally, what happens if it isn't rented and who handles the maintenance and keeps it clean and beautiful. It may end up just a lot with raised planters that are uncared for and overgrown. All of the neighbors that want to grow fruits and vegetables already have enough yard space to do so.

I am not in favor of the Lynn Avenue Pedestrian Path. The negatives outweigh the positives and without living on these streets, it is hard to understand because it looks like a great idea on paper. It will create better flow on Lynn Ave, but you will see many more problems and accidents on Pinehurst between Blossom Valley and Lynn Ave. The amount of foot traffic and bicycles that are going to pour out of that pathway and into the streets to get to Alta Vista Elementary and Union Middle School will create a huge bottle neck. Kids are going to ride there bikes right out into the street cutting left or right and into traffic depending on where they need to get to. We have a shortage of crossing guards already so I don't know how you would create an orderly way of streaming out of the pathway and into the streets they need to

get where they are going. The neighbors that back to the Pathway and I are not in favor of the pathway because there will now be noise in their backyards, trash, lights streaming in, possibly homeless, and who is going to tend to it and maintain any plants, trash cans, etc? Privacy fences were mentioned but that may block views of the mountains, which we so love. Most of these people have lived here a long time because they love it. I don't think they moved to those homes to have a park behind them. Light poles will shine into their yards no matter how low you make them. What about safety at night, what time does the pathway close, who is going to police it if needed? We know teens will hang out there til all hours, we don't really want to invite that either.

If you do decide to go ahead with the pathway, please put a separate pedestrian lane and separate bike lane. The amount of traffic won't be able to handle both without people getting knocked into. Additionally, the kids will just ride their bikes on any grass, tearing it up.

Please keep us all informed of you proceedings.

Hamidah Sadler
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

From: Kevin Arroyo [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, October 19, 2023 5:28 PM
To: Nicolle Burnham <NBurnham@losgatosca.gov>; Marina Chislett <MChislett@losgatosca.gov>
Cc: Heidi Owens [REDACTED]; Mark H. Zhang [REDACTED]; Elif Soyarslan [REDACTED]
Subject: LG Community Garden/Walkway - Updates & Requests

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

Hello Nicolle and Marina - I have a few updates/requests after last night's meeting:

- There is a treasurer with community garden bookkeeping experience and potential Co-presidents interested in running the Volunteer Board so far. Please confirm Los Gatos residency requirements do not apply to these positions.
- I would also like to expand our Board search to local service groups (ex Rotary, Lions Club, etc) to gauge their potential interest in running the operations. I believe they'd bring structure and stability to set up and initially run the program, with the understanding it's on a renewable 5-7 year (hypothetical) basis.
- Is there a plan to create a dedicated seat on the Parks Commission for a Community Garden liaison? If not, how will the coordination occur between the Volunteer Board and Town?
- I'd like to install a Town approved sign at the garden site advertising the Volunteer Board positions. This publicity would be beneficial with attracting qualified candidates. Please advise if I can submit a sign layout for Town approval, or if the Town prefers to create one.
- Per last night's slideshow, I would like to continue a productive discussion on soliciting the public's feedback to integrate into the project's design. I would like to post the request on Nextdoor and have

individuals send comments directly to MChislett@losgatosca.gov. Please let me know if this is acceptable.

Thanks for all of your work!

Kevin Arroyo
[REDACTED]

-----Original Message-----

From: Tevis Ignacio [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, October 19, 2023 5:32 PM
To: Marina Chislett <MChislett@losgatosca.gov>
Subject: Re: Easement behind 327 Blossom Valley Dr.

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

To whom it May concern,

Before I submit some ideas for such use of easements (PG&E and city owned part of easement's) in public meeting held on Oct.18, 2023 - I attempt to register this complaint about an ongoing argument over use and authority of subject matter. My brother Tracy did not and does not want to be involved in this subject matter - as he had enough with "governments" in general and want to sell the house and move out of state like so many people have already done.

As I am a recently retired General Contractor that might not have the best reputation with Governments (due to arguments with some "authority figures" that abuse or neglect to act / dismiss complaints / arguments...) after being abused based on my beliefs. Basically I was forced off the House that I built and owned by a corrupt judge that I disqualified from the start of a so called divorce case .. and I went "underground" as I took on this "so-called justice system"

As I attempted to say in the 3 minutes allowed.. (that fell on deaf ears..) a history of an ongoing easement (Flooding) problem to the west side of easement properties that should be addressed... and directed at "Valley Water-"

As I also claim to be a prophetic dreamer, and based on a dream in which my Grandfather spoke to me (I am doing the things I am doing or did ..) as such was brought up in my presentation to PG&E that I submitted to them by email and spoke to an PG&E employee about the subject matter (around June 26, 2023) as legal matter became an issue...

I've taken full responsibility for the things I did in this easement, (Fenced off portion that my Grandfather eluded that was his / he was a supervisor for 30 years for PG&E and just told me to tell his buddies.. as I submitted such presentation to them..

(To Follow)

Just for the record... I bought and built my House in Cupertino, as it was a 2.18 acre park under my General Contractor name of TRICON CONSTRUCTION.. and I believe the same high voltage Power-lines ran through that property, and I had no problems with PG&E then.. (as this complaint is against Valley Water .. and a flooding issue / ongoing dispute of easement uses...

Respectfully Submitted (within 24 hours of speaking before community meeting on PPW issue)

Tevis R. Ignacio

My Name is Hanne Olofsen I live at [REDACTED] I am writing in regards to the suggested Pinehurst Community Garden. I do not know if the members of the Arts or Park Commission are aware of that some years ago it was suggested to have a community garden at Pinehurst. The idea never came through since we as neighbors were opposed to the idea.

We already have a big parking problem at Lynn Ave and part of Pinehurst due to sports going on at Union Middle School. Sometimes I can hardly get out of my driveway. I do tolerate it since I think it is a good idea for kids to do sports.

I have a hard time to see that we need a community garden since everybody around here have there own garden. It will create more parking problems plus attract young kids and homeless people.

If the town wants to do something for the neighborhood why can we not have a little Park like the one on Thomas Drive. I walk there often with my dog and it is a very peaceful place.

What we really need on Lynn Ave is a speed bump like the one on Longridge. Only 50% of the cars that come from Blossom Valley Dr. to turn right respect the stop sign. They come flying around the corner and I admit it is hard not to speed when the stretch is a straight line.

In regards to the pedestrian Path Design if it goes through I hope that there will be a strict division between pedestrians and bikes. The young kids on their electric bikes are dangerous. They hardly ever have lights on and they are so quiet so you cannot hear them when they come from behind

Greetings Neighbor,

I am a Lynn Ave cul de sac resident and attended the meeting on Oct 18, 2023; representing myself and neighbors who were unable to attend. I found the meeting informative and wanted to share what I learned from the discussions so that others could be informed.

Pinehurst Community Garden (831-4610) & Lynn Ave Pedestrian Path Design (832-4510)

The Arts and Culture Committee is advisory to the Town Council. The Commission shall make recommendations to the Town Council

Quote from the Capital Improvement Program Website

"The Pinehurst Community Garden project will study options to install a community garden within a Town lot near Pinehurst Avenue. The Lynn Avenue Pedestrian Path Design project will study options to design a pedestrian pathway through an open lot near Lynn Avenue between Pinehurst Avenue and Union Avenue. These lots include easements with Valley Water and PG&E. Given their close proximity, staff is developing concept plans for both of these projects concurrently. Considering these projects together will allow for the development and design of a cohesive public space that serves the community."

<https://www.losgatosca.gov/108/Capital-Improvement-Program>

Public Comment Notes from Attending the Arts and Culture Commission Meeting from Wednesday, Oct. 18, 2023 at 4:00 p.m.

- The discussion of the Garden and Pathway was Article 2 of the Agenda.
- Project introduction by Marina Chislett
- The presentation was given by the contracted designer of the garden and the contracted designer of the pathway.
- Slide presentation can be found below:
<https://www.losgatosca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/36667/Community-Meeting-Presentation>
- **10/18/2023** is Outreach Meeting Round One: Project Introduction
- Outreach Round Two: Multiple Concepts 2 to 3 for Each location around December 2023/ January 2024. Goal: Seek feedback on concepts refine each plan
- Outreach Round Three: Present Final Concept of each location March/ April 2024
- The proposal for the garden stated that there was an expressed interest in the community, that it was something to give back to the community, provide education, create a community and get to know your neighbors.
- The proposal for the pathway expressed that would be a safe place for pedestrians and bicyclists to use as there is no sidewalk or bike path on Lynn Ave.

Comments from the Board

- Is there parking available for the garden?
 - Response: Have not discussed parking yet.
- Who is this for? Who is going to regulate and maintain? What is the plot size? How big of planters?
 - Response: This is for the neighbors and the community. Whomever signs up for a planter box the community will maintain. Designate a community garden lead. They do not know the plot size yet. They do not know how big of planter boxes yet. To maintain tools and supplies a nominal fee will be collected from the gardeners who are participating.
- Who's idea was this?
 - Gentleman from the public introduced himself. He said he grew up in Los Gatos and loves the area. Moved away and came back. Used to live behind Howes playlot. Said he wanted to give something back to the community and came up with the idea.
- Who manages the garden and thoughts about safety?
 - Possibly putting a fence around the garden to keep vandals and undesirables out.
- Who manages the pathway?
 - The town?
- Since this was an Arts Commission meeting there was a lot of discussion about how to incorporate a lot of public works of art in the community garden.

Comments from the Public

- Estimated about 12 people from the public attending. 6 to 8 people spoke, mostly Lynn Ave residents. Most were not in favor of the garden or pathway. One landlord was okay with it but had concerns about privacy. Only two in favor, one of them being the gentleman who started the idea, and the other representing the senior citizens (did not state address).
- Public Comments were not mentioned in the meeting minutes, except from the commission. However, two emails opposing the projects were included.
<https://www.losgatosca.gov/AgendaCenter/Arts-and-Culture-Commission-1>

- **Public Comments:**

- Major concerns about parking, traffic, and safety related to school and soccer games. Overall feeling from the group is that there is no places to park already, a garden will only compound the issue. If a parking lot is built for the garden, people guarantee soccer folks will use it and will be unavailable for gardening.
- Suggested speed bumps and a bike lane instead of a pathway behind homes for Lynn Ave.
- Concerns about light pollution. If a pathway is to be, make short knee-high pathway lights that are only solar powered that turn off at night when they run out of power.
- Concerns about privacy, strangers walking behind backyards.
- Quality of life with choice of living area. With the idea of planting trees on the path, and a shed and trees in the garden, what happens to our view of the mountains?
- Who is this for? The area is not a dense urban neighborhood which is where most community gardens are popular. Most homes in the area have their own yards.
- Local schools already have their own education gardens, can barely get volunteers parents to come and help. Who will participate in a community garden? What happens when no one wants to take care of it anymore or loses interest?
- A long-term resident of 60 plus years shared that the PG&E pathway that connects Union Ave and Pinehurst used to be open. It invited a lot of unwanted activity, pedestrians, loitering, motorcycles and even cars. It was determined a liability and PG&E fenced it off for safety. Reopening would bring back a lot of problems.
- Concerns about where the water would come from. Residents already get penalized for watering their yards more than two days a week, but it's okay to water a community garden. (During summer months in 100-degree weather, two days a week will not be enough for a garden).
- In favor of the garden, it would be a place where senior citizens can get together and share common interests. A place where senior citizens can congregate and visit.

Personal Commentary and Takeaway

After the meeting was adjourned a few of us personally spoke with the contractors and the originator of the idea. The contractor for the pathway stated that they are only the designers, and they take their lead from the town for design ideas. He said both projects are separate and may eventually be looked at independently from each other.

I spoke with the designer for the garden and the gentleman behind the idea. I asked when he did his door-to-door survey in 2020 how much support for the garden did he receive. He said that when he did not get support from the neighbors on Lynn Ave, and those who would be affected directly, he reached out further away from the area on Nextdoor and Facebook to gather support for his idea. The people who this garden would be affecting it seems are not in favor of it.

This meeting, and other upcoming meetings are currently for brainstorming and to hear from the public. After the final meeting, it is decided if the project will move forward or not.

Please email your comments, questions, or concerns to:
Parks and Public Works Dept Email: PPW@losgatosca.gov

Please call the Town Manager's Office at (408) 354-6832 if you do not have computer access and would like to receive notifications from the Town in a different manner.

(I was not aware that public comment was only included in the minutes via email. In person comments are not reported in minutes. These were the instructions from the last meeting to keep in mind for future meetings being held later this year.)

Deadlines for Public Comment and Presentations are as follows: • If you are unable to participate in person, you may email rbaker@losgatosca.gov with the subject line "Public Comment Item #_" (insert the item number relevant to your comment). Persons wishing to submit written comments to be included in the materials provided to Commission must provide the comments as follows:

- o For inclusion in the regular packet: by 11:00 a.m. the Friday before the Commission meeting*
- o For inclusion in an Addendum: by 11:00 a.m. the Monday or Tuesday before the Commission meeting*
- o For inclusion in a Desk Item: by 11:00 a.m. on the day of the Meeting • Persons wishing to make an audio/visual presentation on any agenda item must submit the presentation electronically, either in person or via email to rbaker@losgatosca.gov, to the by 3:00 p.m. the day of the meeting.*

My Two Cents:

I'm not convinced of the necessity of the proposed garden and walkway behind Lynn Ave. The individual championing this project is not a current resident of our neighborhood, and their stated motivations, such as "just because" and "to give back to the community," appear somewhat insubstantial, particularly given their non-resident status. If the objective of the walkway is to enhance pedestrian safety, it would be prudent to consider more pragmatic alternatives, such as the addition of sidewalks to our streets.

Our neighborhood is not characterized by the density of an urban area, where gardening opportunities for youth are limited. All of our local schools already offer garden access for students interested in horticulture, and the properties in our area typically feature spacious yards, affording residents the opportunity to establish their own gardens. Importantly, it appears that there is limited, if any, support from the residents directly affected by this project, with potential adverse effects on their quality of life and property values.

It is essential to acknowledge that not every open space needs to be developed. In an environment with homes positioned closely together, yards adjacent to one another, and two-story residences overlooking their neighbors' backyards, having a serene, unoccupied space is a cherished and refreshing aspect of our neighborhood, which is one of the reasons people choose to reside here.

I respectfully urge you to contemplate voicing your concerns about this project at the upcoming local meeting. By doing so, we can ensure that future community developments consider the desires and concerns of our residents.

RE: Lynn Avenue Pathway and Pinehurst Community Garden

We live on Lynn Avenue. Our property backs up to the proposed Lynn Avenue Pathway in the P.G.&E easement. The Pathway will severely impact our quality of life and use of our property. We are opposed to both it and the Pinehurst Community Garden. We have a paid permit from P.G. & E. to use the easement from our back fence to thirty feet into the easement.

We feel the residents of the Lynn Avenue neighborhood should have been informed about these two proposed plans before it reached the advanced planning stage that it has now. We think whoever planned these two projects knew that the residents who would be impacted by this would oppose it. Hence, we were bypassed in the initial planning stages. Since the first meeting, there has been no alternative proposed other than that these two projects be completed. We don't feel like the town is really listening to our concerns and objections and taking them seriously. We have not been given the option of these two projects being abandoned. Our neighborhood doesn't support either of these projects. Support from others who don't live in the neighborhood and won't be impacted by them should not have a say in what happens. We feel there are better places for the town to spend this money than disrupting the lives of those living in the Lynn Avenue neighborhood. We reiterate again that the person bringing this before the Town Council in the first place **did not and does not live** in the Lynn Avenue neighborhood. He **did not have support from the neighbors** even though he polled us more than once.

We were at the December 7th meeting for the Lynn Avenue Pathway and the Pinehurst Community Garden projects, as well as the October 18th meeting. At the last meeting all that was presented were 3 different options for each project. There was not an option for us to opt for neither project to go forward. The town representatives reporting on this from our discussions at the December 7th meeting didn't adequately convey the fact that most everyone was against the Pathway and Community Garden. The one man who was in favor doesn't live in our neighborhood.

Scheduling the next meeting on December 19th right before the holidays when people are either going out of town or preparing for the holidays, seems like a ploy to keep the attendance and opposition to these projects low. We are so upset and saddened that the town we have lived in and loved for over 60 years could be so unconcerned about our objections to these projects and our quality of life.

Submitted by Bob and Judy Bergthold