

Thursday, September 18, 2025, at 6:00 P.M.
Council Chambers, 26379 Fremont Road, Los Altos Hills, California

Present: Mayor Kavita Tankha, Vice Mayor Rajiv Bhateja, Council Member Stanley Mok,
Council Member Linda Swan, Council Member George Tyson
Absent: None
Staff: City Manager Peter Pirnejad, Deputy City Manager Code Einfalt, Public Works
Director WooJae Kim, Community Development Director Jay Bradford, Finance
Director Thomas Leung, Senior Planner Jonathan Fox, and City Clerk Arika
Birdsong-Miller

CALL TO ORDER (6:00 P.M.)

Mayor Tankha called the meeting to order at 6:05 P.M.

ROLL CALL

Mayor Kavita Tankha, Vice Mayor Rajiv Bhateja, Council Member Stanley Mok, Council Member Linda Swan, and Council Member Tyson were present.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

1. AGENDA REVIEW

City Manager Peter Pirnejad requested that **Item 5G**, a Resolution to Adopt a Pilot Bench Donation Policy, be pulled and referred back to the Open Space and Pathways Committee for further review before returning to Council at a future date. City Manager Pirnejad also asked that **Item 7D**, Waiver of Reading and Introduction of an Ordinance Amending Title 4, Chapter 1 "Emergency Organization and Function", Title 2, Chapter 4 "Purchasing System", and Title 6, Chapter 5 "Nuisance Abatement" be referred back to the Emergency Preparedness and Response Committee before returning to Council at a future date.

Vice Mayor Bhateja asked that Item 7I, Resolution Adopting Revised Employee Handbook, including Personnel Rules and Regulations and Employee Classification and Compensation Plan be removed from the Consent Calendar for a separate discussion.

2. PRESENTATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

A. Proclamation Recognizing September as Childhood Cancer Awareness Month

Mayor Tankha presented a proclamation recognizing September 2025 as Childhood Cancer Awareness Month. The proclamation notes that childhood cancer is the leading cause of disease-related death among U.S. children and encourages community awareness, support for families, and backing of research.

B. Proclamation Recognizing Compassion Week in the Town of Los Altos Hills, October 4th through October 12th, 2025

Council Member Linda Swan presented a proclamation recognizing October 4–12, 2025, as Compassion Week in Los Altos Hills. The proclamation highlights the Town's values of kindness, inclusion, civic engagement, and service; notes that community partners will offer volunteer and educational activities addressing local needs; and encourages all residents to

participate.

C. Proclamation Establishing September as National Emergency Management Awareness Month

Deputy City Manager Cody Einfalt presented a proclamation recognizing September 2025 as National Emergency Preparedness Month, aligned with FEMA’s theme “Preparedness Starts at Home” (know your risks, make and practice a family plan, build a kit, stay informed). The proclamation encourages residents to sign up for alerts at AlertSCC.org and take simple steps now to strengthen readiness, response, and recovery.

D. Report from the Los Altos Hills Community Fire District

Los Altos Hills Community Fire District General Manager J. Logan gave the second in a series of monthly presentations to the Council, highlighting the District’s wildfire risk reduction, disaster preparedness, and service metrics.

Programs reviewed included parcel-level defensible space and chipping, evacuation route clearing, shaded fuel breaks (including the I-280 project), grant partnerships, and community outreach. Logan emphasized the strong collaboration between the Town, Fire Marshal, and District staff through weekly coordination meetings and noted progress on code enforcement and weed abatement efforts.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

1. **Nick French**, a Los Altos Hills resident, expressed strong support for the Home Ignition Zone (HIZ) program, noting that he is a participant and appreciates its benefits despite its high cost. He mentioned that one of the Town’s former programs he greatly valued was the Tree Removal Program, which ended around six years ago.

He explained that since the program ended, many residents have not been removing dead trees because of the expense, leading to an increase in dead trees throughout Town — a potential safety and fire hazard. He encouraged the Town to consider reviving the Tree Removal Program, even if limited in scope or to specific tree types.

Lastly, he observed that Los Altos Hills currently has one of the least restrictive tree removal policies, allowing removal of nearly all trees except oaks. He suggested the Town consider adopting a stricter tree policy to improve environmental protection and safety.

2. **Ian Earnest**, a Los Altos Hills resident, raised a concern about a Town program that tracks properties not properly maintained year after year. He said there is a list associated with this program but that it’s unclear how properties are added to or removed from the list.

He shared that his late father’s property was placed on the list even though Ian had been maintaining it. After selling the home, he suspects the new owner remains on the list without being aware of it. He asked the Town to clarify how properties are designated for inclusion and removal from the list.

3. **Cathy Lacardo**, a Los Altos Hills resident, shared a concern similar to others discussed during the meeting. She explained that her elderly neighbors have an oak tree with a large, heavy limb that is in danger of falling, potentially onto her property and the fence that

encloses her horse.

She said her neighbors are kind and approachable, but they are unaware of the tree's risk and cannot afford the high cost (around \$3,000) of having the limb removed. Kathy expressed a desire to help them but doesn't know where to turn for assistance or what affordable solution to suggest for safely addressing the issue.

4. **Eric Bredo**, a Los Altos Hills resident, expressed appreciation for the Town's practical and sensible approach and specifically praised the Chipping Program, calling it "fabulous."

He noted that the program has positive spillover benefits beyond individual properties — for example, he and his neighbor use it to trim trees along their private lane, ensuring fire trucks have clear access in case of an emergency. He thanked the Town for supporting a program that provides broader community safety benefits.

5. **John O'Connell**, a Los Altos Hills resident, urged the Town to take a broader view when clearing evacuation routes. He pointed to a nearby property 60–70 feet above Arastradero with numerous eucalyptus trees owned by a 93-year-old resident who likely can't afford removal. He argued this presents a justifiable safety concern and asked the Town to keep a more open mind and explore the issue in greater depth, including how to address hazardous trees on adjacent private properties that impact evacuation safety.

E. Appointment to the Los Altos Hills Technology Committee

Vice Mayor Bhateja made a Motion to Appoint **Andreas Bibl and Rajesh Shakkarwar** to the Los Altos Hills Technology Committee.

Council Member Mok seconded the motion. **APPROVED, VOTE 5-0**

Vice Mayor Bhateja reported that the Technology Committee moved to add two additional members and requested Council consideration at a future meeting.

By consensus, the Council agreed to place the Technology Committee's request for additional members on the next Council agenda.

F. Appointment to the Los Altos Hills Finance and Investment Committee

Mayor Tankha made a motion to appoint **Amy Young** to the Los Altos Hills Finance and Investment Committee.

Council Member Tyson seconded the motion. **APPROVED, VOTE 5-0**

G. Reappointment to the Los Altos Hills History Committee

Council Member Swan made a motion to reappoint **Sally Woods** to the Los Altos Hills History Committee.

Mayor Tankha seconded the motion. **APPROVED, VOTE 5-0**

H. Appointment to the Los Altos Hills Environmental Design and Protection Committee

Mayor Tankha made a motion to appoint **Anna Chien** to the Los Altos Hills Environmental Design and Protection Committee.

Council Member Swan seconded the motion. **APPROVED, VOTE 5-0**

3. **PRESENTATIONS FROM THE FLOOR**

1. **Michelle Wu**, a Los Altos Hills resident, Chair of the 2025 Vine and Wines Planning Committee, announced that the Town of Los Altos Hills and Hills 2000 Friends of the Hills will jointly host the Vine and Wines event on October 12, 2025, from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. She explained that tickets are \$40, which supports local vendors, and emphasized that all participating winemakers are Los Altos Hills residents who grow their vines within the Town's borders.

Michelle invited all residents to attend and enjoy this popular community event celebrating local craftsmanship and community spirit. She also noted that several Council Members have volunteered or grow their own vines, highlighting the event's strong local involvement.

2. **Eric Bredo**, a Los Altos Hills resident, spoke regarding the City Manager's contract renewal, noting it has been a challenging year for the Town and Council. He referenced issues such as the builder's remedy threat, Housing Element revisions, the Twin Oaks project, a related lawsuit, and the CAL FIRE risk classification debate. He commended the City Manager for successfully securing state approval of the Housing Element but ultimately stated that renewing his contract would be divisive and urged the Council not to reappoint him, expressing his view "regretfully."
3. **R K Anand**, a Los Altos Hills resident, urged the Council to reconsider renewing the City Manager's contract, citing concerns about the handling of the Housing Element, communication of risks to the Council, possible collusion with a Twin Oaks property owner, and misrepresentation of fire hazards.

He emphasized that residents expect the Town's leadership to act with honesty and integrity, and that maintaining public trust is critical. RK described this decision as an important turning point for the Town, thanked the City Manager for his service, but reiterated that the situation warrants re-evaluation of his continued employment.

4. **Nick Bylam**, a Los Altos Hills resident, expressed growing concern about the Town's management and whether it is being run in the best interest of residents. He said he has heard widespread concerns about the City Manager's integrity and responsiveness, noting that some residents feel they have been misled or ignored. Although he does not know the City Manager personally, Nick stated that a lack of honesty and engagement with residents is troubling. He concluded by saying that while there are smaller issues he could raise, such as planning and zoning, he believes leadership accountability is the central concern.
5. **John O'Connell**, a Los Altos Hills resident, stated that while he initially avoided personal discussions during debates over the Housing Element, recent conversations with about 80 residents led him to conclude that the Town is not operating effectively. He cited concerns about pushback to resident feedback on building and planning services, emphasizing that customer satisfaction and accountability should be priorities.

He also raised a moral concern about delays in refunding residents who were overcharged for fees, stating that transparency should have required notifying those affected immediately.

John concluded that the Town needs to reassess its leadership direction, saying residents do not want a “CEO and chairman of the board” style of management in Los Altos Hills and suggesting that such an approach does not align with the community’s values.

6. **Andy Coan**, a Los Altos Hills resident, spoke on behalf of several concerned residents and neighbors, stating that many in the community have lost confidence in the City Manager’s leadership. He urged the Council not to renew the City Manager’s contract and to begin a search for new leadership that prioritizes transparency and integrity. He outlined key concerns shared by residents, including a lack of transparency and misrepresentation on key issues such as the fire map, over-reliance on consultants, reports of staff turnover and low morale, and mishandling of the Housing Element.

Andy emphasized that these issues reflect a pattern of mistakes rather than isolated incidents and warned that renewing the contract would further erode public trust.

7. **Lanvi Evans**, a Los Altos Hills resident, urged the Council not to renew the City Manager’s contract, expressing frustration that residents have had to repeat the same concerns for more than two years. She emphasized that the community feels the City Manager does not act in the Town’s best interests and that residents want their voices to be heard. She noted that discussions about community priorities, such as fire safety and evacuation routes, have been hindered under the current leadership. She concluded by imploring the Council to listen to residents and not renew the contract.
8. **Alexi Tumarkin**, a Los Altos Hills resident, stated that the past four years under current leadership have represented stagnation and missed opportunities. He said the Town is not evolving into a modern, 21st-century organization, noting a lack of technological advancement and an overreliance on outside consultants instead of leveraging the expertise within the community. He pointed to ongoing issues such as above-ground utilities, frequent power outages, and fire hazards from falling trees, emphasizing that these could be mitigated through better coordination and innovation.

Alexi urged the Council to reject the renewal of the City Manager’s contract and seek a leader who can modernize Town operations while optimizing budgets and staffing.

9. **Eric Evans**, a Los Altos Hills resident, said he became concerned about the City Manager’s leadership after learning that CAL FIRE hazard zone changes affecting his property were made by the Town without direct notice. He referenced statements from the City Manager’s 2021 LinkedIn post pledging transparency, resident engagement, and innovation, and said those promises have not been upheld.

Eric cited two major concerns: the lack of direct notification to roughly 150 affected property owners regarding the CAL FIRE map updates, and an email in which the City Manager allegedly advised a developer to delay submitting a large multifamily project until after the Housing Element was approved. He said both examples contradict the City Manager’s stated commitment to community engagement and transparency.

10. **Cheryl Evans**, a Los Altos Hills resident, said Los Altos Hills has long relied on collaboration between residents, the Council, and the City Manager to uphold the community’s shared

vision. She expressed concern that the current City Manager has overstepped his administrative role by attempting to shape policy and advance his own agenda. She cited examples of misrepresentation and lack of transparency, including unnotified changes to CAL FIRE hazard designations affecting more than 170 properties, and withholding information related to the Housing Element. She also referenced inaccurate cost data used to justify not refunding overcharged planning fees.

Cheryl urged the Council to demand integrity, honesty, and transparency from staff and stated that the current City Manager does not meet those standards.

11. **Elizabeth Wilson**, a Los Altos Hills resident, shared that she grew up in Los Altos Hills and returned in 2000 seeking the peaceful, community-oriented life she remembered. She said that sense of calm changed after the current City Manager was hired in 2021, describing a noticeable decline in morale at Town Hall, with long-time staff and committee volunteers leaving in frustration. She expressed concern that residents no longer feel like stakeholders, citing increased reliance on consultants, reduced accessibility of Town staff, and communication that feels less transparent.

Elizabeth stated that the City Manager appears to prioritize shaping opinion rather than serving residents' vision and urged the Council to end what she described as a climate of unrest and mistrust by finding a manager who respects the Town's culture and puts residents first.

12. **Neal Mielke**, explained that wildfire prevention is the number one issue facing Los Altos Hills. He said that while he dislikes state housing mandates such as RHNA and SB 9, wildfire poses the greatest physical threat to the Town's survival.

Neal warned that the Town's rural character is becoming a liability, as insurance companies are canceling policies and lenders are reluctant to finance properties. He emphasized that this threatens the Town's identity and quality of life. He urged the Council to recognize the significant gap between current conditions and necessary fire safety standards, citing CAL FIRE guidelines that require major vegetation clearance and tree spacing. Neal concluded by encouraging bold action, stating that if the Town isn't receiving complaints for doing too much, it's not doing enough to mitigate wildfire risk.

13. **Walt Wilson**, a Los Altos Hills resident, said he initially doubted reports of micromanagement, staff turnover, and low morale within the Town organization until he observed it firsthand. He described attending a staff retirement party where the atmosphere shifted to fear and silence when the City Manager entered the room, which he said revealed a culture of intimidation.

Walt also referenced the Twin Oaks Planning Commission meeting, where he felt the City Manager appeared to act on behalf of the landowners rather than the Town, negotiating plans that were not aligned with the community's character. He further cited the CAL FIRE hazard map issue as another example of deception and lack of transparency, concluding that the City Manager is a poor cultural fit for Los Altos Hills and that the Town is "in deep trouble" under his leadership.

14. **Michael Grady**, a Los Altos Hills resident, stated that residents and the Council deserve a City Manager who provides transparent, accurate, and complete information when shaping policy decisions. He said he believes new leadership is needed to restore trust and accountability.

Michael referenced documents obtained through a Public Records Act lawsuit, which he said revealed emails showing the City Manager's private communications with the Twin Oaks property owner regarding a large housing proposal of 300 to 500 units along Arastradero Road. He expressed concern that these communications appeared to avoid public disclosure and transparency during the Housing Element process. He concluded by encouraging the Council to review his written comments included in the meeting packet.

15. **Ian Earnest**, a Los Altos Hills resident, recalled speaking to the Council about a year and a half ago regarding concerns over misrepresentations related to the Twin Oaks development. He said those concerns have since proven valid, noting the lawsuit costs and the Town's setbacks with the Housing Element as consequences of those issues.

Ian concluded by urging the Council to end the matter by not renewing the City Manager's contract.

16. **Nina Anand**, a Los Altos Hills resident, expressed support for other residents who urged the Council not to renew the City Manager's contract. She stated that in her view, the City Manager has demonstrated behavior that has undermined trust and transparency, citing concerns about misleading communication and fear-based management.

Nina asked the Council to honor residents' concerns and to seek a City Manager who aligns with the Town's values and collaborative philosophy, fostering openness and integrity in local governance.

17. **Lara Parikh**, spoke as a policy advocate for Senate Bill 68 (SB 68), which would require all California restaurants to disclose the top nine food allergens in each menu item, in any format they choose. She explained that as someone who lives with severe food allergies, the bill would allow her, and millions of others, to dine out safely and confidently.

Lara noted that similar allergen disclosure standards have been in place in the European Union for over a decade, and if approved by Governor Newsom on October 9, SB 68 would make California the first U.S. state to adopt such protections. She concluded by asking the Council to help raise awareness and support for this important public health legislation.

18. **Bridget Morgan**, a Los Altos Hills resident, emphasized her deep appreciation for the Town and reminded the Council that they are the employers of Town staff and accountable to the residents who elect them and fund the Town through taxes. She expressed concern that residents have not been included in the City Manager's performance evaluation process, noting there has been no effort to gather community feedback.

Bridget said that allowing only two minutes of public comment is insufficient and suggested the Council form an ad hoc committee or hold listening sessions to ensure residents' voices are part of the contract renewal discussion. She urged the Council to prioritize transparency and resident participation in evaluating Town leadership.

19. **Sue Welch**, a Los Altos Hills resident, requested that the Council allow residents to participate in the City Manager's performance review and contract renewal process. She said the Town was founded on a tradition of resident involvement and volunteer collaboration, emphasizing that community input has long guided local decision-making.

Sue referenced past instances where residents successfully mobilized to protect Town interests,

such as preserving Byrne Preserve from development. She expressed concern that longstanding management issues have persisted under the current City Manager and cited a past public comment attributed to him that, in her view, reflected disregard for resident feedback. She urged the Council to take residents' concerns seriously, noting that after four years of similar complaints, it may be time for a change in leadership.

- 20. Martha Bowden**, a Los Altos Hills resident, said this is the first time she has lost confidence in Town leadership. She described the Housing Element process over the past two years as poorly managed, citing delays, lack of transparency, and misinformation provided to residents, particularly concerning the Twin Oaks project and the rezoning of six properties.

Martha stated that residents' questions were not answered accurately, leading to confusion and setbacks. She criticized the development agreement process as a delay tactic that wasted valuable time and expressed frustration that the Housing Element amendment continues to be postponed, even when expected on Council agendas. She concluded by stating that, due to these issues, the City Manager's contract should not be renewed.

- 21. Glenn Wilkerson**, a Los Altos Hills resident, began by thanking fellow residents for welcoming his family when they moved to Los Altos Hills. He said that while he understands people have concerns, he feels the community has become overly harsh and unkind in its tone toward one another and toward Town leadership.

Glenn said he does not personally know the City Manager but observed that the position is not highly paid relative to the Town's wealth and that without sufficient funding, it is difficult to attract and retain senior staff, forcing reliance on junior employees or consultants.

He contrasted the current administration with the previous one, saying that while past leadership often focused on saying "no," the current City Manager at least makes an effort to find solutions. Glenn concluded by urging residents to be kinder and more understanding, to remember that Town staff are human beings, and to encourage more participation from younger residents in civic life.

- 22. Nick French**, a Los Altos Hills resident, said he was not speaking directly about the City Manager but rather about the Town's response following public concerns raised in 2023. He recalled participating in those earlier discussions about staff turnover and said the Town's November 30, 2023, press release, which aimed to address those issues, contained statements he believes were inaccurate or misleading.

Nick said he had spoken personally with former employees and felt the explanation in the press release did not reflect their experiences. While he did not place full blame on the City Manager, he said he found the Council's handling of the issue troubling, suggesting that accountability should rest with the Town Council for how it communicated and responded to resident concerns.

- 23. Kim Tam**, a Los Altos Hills resident, urged the Council not to renew the City Manager's contract, stating that many residents in attendance shared the same view. She described the City Manager's continued employment as a liability and emphasized that the large turnout reflected widespread opposition to renewal.

Kim also expressed concern about a consultant hired by the Town, saying the consultant's work lacked a scientific basis or community input and amounted to a waste of taxpayer funds.

She concluded by again asking the Council not to renew the City Manager's employment.

24. **Namrata Anand**, a Los Altos Hills resident, said she initially planned to echo others' comments but wanted to share her own perspective as a younger resident. She explained that during the Housing Element process, she found it difficult to understand the information provided by the City Manager and the Council, describing the experience as one marked by obfuscation and lack of clarity.

Drawing on her background in mathematics and her experience working at a small startup, Namrata said that when communication becomes unclear or inconsistent, it signals deeper organizational problems. She added that this lack of transparency and progress can discourage younger residents from participating in civic life.

While acknowledging the importance of grace and fairness, she concluded by agreeing with others who oppose renewing the City Manager's contract, citing the confusing and obstructive nature of the recent Housing Element process.

25. **Sally Wood**, a Los Altos Hills resident, speaking on behalf of the History Committee, announced the committee's annual history presentation taking place on Sunday, October 12th at 2:00 p.m. The event, titled "*Ferrari Family Memories from Over 100 Years in Los Altos Hills*," will be presented by Bernardo Ferrari, a lifelong resident, and will feature photos and stories about early life in the area. She invited everyone to attend, noting that RSVPs are encouraged for planning the reception, but walk-ins are welcome.

26. **Birgitta Indaco**, a Los Altos Hills resident, asked the Council to evaluate how the City Manager is serving residents and volunteers. She urged the Town to restore full counter hours at Town Hall, fully staff the Planning Department to strengthen code enforcement, and reduce reliance on consultants, saying many reports have gone unused and wasted funds. Birgitta also expressed concern that Town operations seem focused on generating revenue through increased fees rather than serving residents, citing pathway project deposits as an example.

27. **Prakash Adromi**, a Los Altos Hills resident, thanked the Council for making progress on the Housing Element amendment and encouraged them to maintain momentum on this time-sensitive work. He reminded the Council of an agreement related to the Twin Oaks property, stating that future development should not exceed the height of the finished first floor as previously conditioned. Prakash concluded by expressing strong opposition to renewing the City Manager's contract, citing poor communication and a need for more reliable leadership.

28. **Yasir Handafy**, a Los Altos Hills resident, said he has lived in Los Altos Hills for a year, though his father lived there for 33 years. He described the community as welcoming and kind, noting that neighbors helped him understand Town issues like the Housing Element when he first moved in. Yasir shared that he had a positive initial impression of the City Manager, finding him personable, but after learning more about recent Town matters, he concluded that it is time for new leadership and urged the Council not to renew the City Manager's contract.

29. **Tami Nguyen**, a Los Altos Hills resident, said that residents elect the Council to make informed decisions, which depend on accurate and transparent information from Town staff. She stated that over recent years, City Manager Peter Pirnejad has shown a pattern of withholding or misrepresenting information, which has eroded residents' trust in Town leadership.

She cited two examples: the CAL FIRE hazard zone map, where she said the City Manager's office presented incorrect data that raised wildfire risk designations without informing the Council or residents; and the Housing Element process, where she said an inexperienced and costly consultant was hired and residents' input was disregarded. She also criticized the proposed Twin Oaks development agreement, calling it inconsistent with Town values. Tami concluded that these actions reflect a loss of public confidence in the City Manager's leadership.

30. Ananya Anand, a Los Altos Hills resident, expressed that she and her family have attended many meetings on the Housing Element and believe the City Manager's contract should not be renewed. She urged the Council to listen to residents of all ages, noting that the community is largely united in wanting new leadership to help restore trust in Town government.

4. INFORMATIONAL REPORTS (items provided solely for informational purposes)

A. Treasurer's Report (June 2025) – This item was provided solely for informational purposes.

B. Disbursement Report (June 2025) - This item was provided solely for informational purposes.

C. Treasurer's Report (July 2025) - This item was provided solely for informational purposes.

D. Disbursement Report (July 2025) - This item was provided solely for informational purposes.

E. Quarterly Report (June 2025) - This item was provided solely for informational purposes.

5. CONSENT CALENDAR

Council Member Swan made a motion to Approve the Consent Calendar, removing **ITEM 5G** (Resolution Approving a Pilot Bench Donation Policy for the Town of Los Altos Hills) and **ITEM 5I** (Resolution Adopting Revised Employee Handbook, including Personnel Rules and Regulations and Employee Classification and Compensation Plan). **Council Member Mok** seconded the motion. **APPROVED, VOTE 5-0**

MOTION PASSED: 5-0

AYES: Tankha, Bhateja, Mok, Swan, Tyson

NOES: None

RECUSE: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: None

A. Approval of the Regular City Council Meeting Minutes June 26, 2025

APPROVED, VOTE 5-0

B. Approval of the Regular City Council Meeting Minutes July 21, 2025

APPROVED, VOTE 5-0

C. Waive Second Reading and Adopt an Ordinance Amending Article 8 of Chapter 2, Title 10 of the Town of Los Altos Hills Municipal Code Related to the Water Efficiency Landscape Ordinance (WELO) **APPROVED, VOTE 5-0**

D. Resolution Accepting an Open Space Easement at 13010 East Sunset Drive (Lands of Anchor View LLC) **APPROVED, VOTE 5-0**

- E. Resolution Accepting an Open Space Easement at 26790 Saint Francis Drive (Land of First Serendipity LLC) **APPROVED, VOTE 5-0**
- F. Resolution Approving the Abandonment of a Slope Easement at 26875 Nina Place; Lands of Bowers **APPROVED, VOTE 5-0**
- G. *Resolution Adopting a Pilot Bench Donation Policy for the Town of Los Altos Hills*

Removed from Consideration on this agenda.

- H. Resolution Approving an Amendment to the Los Altos Hills Classification Plan and Salary Schedule, Effective Fiscal Year 2025-26 to Establish a New Classification Title and Salary Range for Engineering Technician and Approving the Engineering Technician Job Specification **APPROVED, VOTE 5-0**
- I. *Resolution Adopting Revised Employee Handbook, including Personnel Rules and Regulations and Employee Classification and Compensation Plan*

Removed from the Consent Calendar for a separate discussion.

- J. Appointment of the Cal Cities 2025 Voting Delegate Alternate **APPROVED, VOTE 5-0**

ITEM 5I: Resolution Adopting Revised Employee Handbook, including Personnel Rules and Regulations and Employee Classification and Compensation Plan

Vice Mayor Bhateja made a motion to approve the Resolution Adopting Revised Employee Handbook, including Personnel Rules and Regulations and Employee Classification and Compensation Plan. **Council Member Tyson** seconded the motion. **APPROVED, VOTE 5-0**

6. ONGOING BUSINESS- NONE

7. PUBLIC HEARING

- A. Resolution Adopting the 2024 Pathway Fee Nexus Study and the Proposed FY26 Pathway Impact Fee Update in Accordance with the Mitigation Fee Act; and Waiver of the First Reading and Introduction of an Ordinance Amending Article 6 of Chapter 2, Title 10 of the Los Altos Hills Municipal Code for the Pathway Impact Fee Update

Public Works Director WooJae Kim presented a staff report recommending that the City Council adopt the 2024 Pathway Fee Nexus Study and update the FY 2026 Pathway Impact Fee pursuant to the Mitigation Fee Act, as well as introduce an ordinance amending Los Altos Hills Municipal Code Sections 10-2.606 and 10-2.608 to align the Town's code with current fee and implementation requirements. Director Kim reviewed the history of the Town's Master Path Plan, established in 1981, and the creation of the Pathway Fund and associated impact fee in 1996, which have since been periodically adjusted to support ongoing pathway development. The most recent fee schedule was approved in 2019, and a temporary waiver for ADU fees was adopted in 2023 to support the Town's Housing Element implementation.

Director Kim explained that escalating construction costs and the need for consistent, transparent application of pathway requirements prompted an updated nexus study, prepared by Matrix Consulting Group, which identifies the cost basis and methodology for the revised impact fee. He summarized the study's findings, noting that average construction costs over the past two years are approximately \$1.06 million per mile, with 85.88 miles of planned pathways remaining for a total system cost of roughly \$91 million. Dividing that cost among 3,151

households equates to about \$28,900 per household, which supports a fee of \$5.49 per square foot of new habitable floor area (including barns and stables over 900 square feet). The new fee structure replaces the flat 2019 rates with a square-foot-based calculation consistent with AB 602, applies to new homes and qualifying additions, and sets a maximum fee based on 7,000 square feet of habitable space, with annual escalation tied to the ENR Construction Cost Index. Additions totaling under 900 square feet within a ten-year period remain exempt, and ADU fees continue to be waived through 2031.

Director Kim explained that property owners may either pay the impact fee or, if their parcel lies on the Master Path Plan, construct and dedicate a conforming pathway in lieu of the fee, provided the Town inspects and accepts the improvements; the City Attorney clarified that such arrangements must be administered as an impact fee program, not a discretionary “in-lieu” alternative. Director Kim also outlined administrative updates to the municipal code, including clearer definitions of habitable area, removal of outdated references to ADU fees, and new provisions detailing waiver eligibility and required easements, along with encroachment permit procedures and deposits to cover engineering plan review, inspection, and testing for privately built pathways. He noted that the Pathways Committee, Finance and Investment Committee, and Planning Commission reviewed the draft study and recommended approval with refinements, including simplified deposits, retention of the 900-square-foot exemption, and exploration of fees for multifamily or SB 9 projects; following a public hearing on September 4, 2025, the Planning Commission unanimously recommended adoption and asked for improved recordkeeping, a pathway-fee database, and future flexibility for native or off-road alignments.

Director Kim stated that required public notices were provided in accordance with AB 602 and that the fee update is categorically exempt from CEQA under Section 15301(c). Finally, Director Kim reviewed fiscal implications, noting current Pathway Fund revenues and a fund balance earmarked for upcoming Summerhill Avenue and Magdalena Road projects, with future annual revenues estimated between \$150,000 and \$200,000, depending on how many developers elect to construct pathways rather than pay the fee. He confirmed the proposal aligns with the Town’s 2024–25 Council Work Plan goal of maintaining infrastructure through periodic fee updates and that, upon adoption, the new impact fee would take effect 60 days after final passage under Government Code Section 66017.

The Public Hearing was opened for comments.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

1. **Eric Evans**, a Los Altos Hills resident, commented that, based on his 25 years of experience as a builder, the Town should keep the pathway construction and inspection process as straightforward as possible. He suggested that the civil engineer for each project could include standard Town pathway details directly on the construction plans, perform a final inspection, and provide a sign-off letter. Evans proposed that the Town’s inspection card simply include lines for subgrade and header board inspections, allowing the Town inspector to verify compaction and general compliance. The civil engineer could then confirm the pathway’s location and construction before the Town performs a final walk-through and approval. He concluded that such a simplified process would make the program more efficient and eliminate unnecessary complexity.
2. **John O’Connell**, a Los Altos Hills resident, stated that after attending several meetings on the topic, he still sees a major gap in the proposed pathway fee structure. He explained that

many residents, including himself, own properties built in the 1980s when pathways were constructed as part of the subdivision process rather than being assessed by square footage. He emphasized that there are no available records confirming whether those property owners already paid into the pathway system, noting that neither he nor the Town has documentation. O'Connell argued that this creates a fairness and nexus issue, as the Town should not assess new fees unless it can first prove that a fee was never previously paid. He also pointed out that state law does not require fees to be based on square footage but allows it only when no stronger nexus exists. He urged the Town to explore better nexus options, as discussed by the Planning Commission, and to improve recordkeeping so residents can clearly see how fees are calculated and justified.

3. **Garrett Brewer**, a Los Altos Hills resident, shared that he and his wife are in the process of renovating their older home to bring it up to current fire code standards and have already submitted their construction application. Brewer expressed concern that the proposed pathway fees would significantly increase their construction costs and asked the Council to consider a fee waiver for homeowners who are already in the permitting process. He explained that these added costs could alter the overall feasibility of their project, especially given current economic conditions and the lengthy approval process with the fire department. Brewer also noted that his property is not located on a designated pathway, which means he does not have the option to build a path in lieu of paying the fee. He stated that he would gladly contribute labor to build a path if it were possible, but since that option does not exist for his property, he asked the Council to take this limitation into consideration. He concluded by expressing his family's excitement about raising their children in the community and their desire to be good neighbors.
4. **Birgitta Indaco**, a Los Altos Hills resident, provided clarification regarding the Planning Commission's recommendation on native pathways. She stated that after reviewing their recorded motion from the prior Planning Commission meeting, the fourth bullet under the Commission's recommendations to the Public Works Director specifies that the impact fee should *not* apply to off-road native paths built by homeowners, provided those paths are reviewed and confirmed by both the Pathways Committee and the Public Works Committee. She clarified that this exemption does not apply to roadside paths, which are typically classified as Type 2B. Indaco explained that former Pathways Committee Chair Lisa Brito, now serving on the Planning Commission, had emphasized that many native pathways exist internally within private properties and should be treated differently from roadside paths. The Commission's motion reflected this by recommending a waiver of the impact fee for such off-road native paths, subject to appropriate review and compliance with Town standards. Indaco also noted, in her personal remarks, that she found the additional \$325 application fee excessive and expressed concern that it appeared to function as an unnecessary financial burden on residents.
5. **Carol Gottlieb**, a Los Altos Hills resident, stated that in the past, residents who built their own pathways were not charged separate pathway fees, as the construction was considered part of their overall project. She expressed concern that the introduction of new fees would discourage residents from building paths and emphasized the importance of incentivizing, rather than penalizing, those who wish to contribute to the Town's pathway system. Mrs. Gottlieb recommended that any required deposits or fees, including impact or encroachment fees, be limited to no more than \$2,000. She shared her experience repaving her driveway, noting that although she was required to obtain County approval for work along a County-owned road, she was not charged any encroachment fees.

Mrs. Gottlieb urged that any fees related to pathway construction remain minimal. She also clarified that subdivisions, typically consisting of four or more lots, generally include pathways along the new streets, while smaller parcel splits involving only two or three lots may not. She further noted that in some cases, when a property owner granted a pathway easement, they were not required to construct the path. Lastly, Mrs. Gottlieb commented that native paths are often easy to establish, as many follow existing trails that are already usable, except where physical barriers such as creeks are present.

6. **Sue Welch**, a Los Altos Hills resident, raised questions regarding the legality and methodology of the proposed fees. She stated that, to her understanding, the State sets limits on how large an impact fee can be, and expressed concern that the addition of obligatory or supplemental fees could effectively function as “secret added-on impact fees.” Mrs. Welch questioned whether these additional charges are legal and whether they should, in fact, be considered part of the total impact fee calculation. She also commented on the fee structure itself, stating that she did not understand how an increase in a home’s habitable square footage could be considered equivalent to population growth, noting that in many cases, residents are simply building larger houses rather than increasing the number of occupants.

Vice Mayor Bhateja moved to adopt the 2024 Pathway Fee Nexus Study and the proposed FY26 Pathway Impact Fee update in accordance with the Mitigation Fee Act, with the following added modifications:

- Lower the amount of deposits to be taken in: \$1,000 for Pathways Surveys and \$1,000 for Pathway Construction Inspections

And direct staff to:

- Return the deposit after signoff in 9- days (confirm language to be included on a receipt of payment)
- And refer native pathways to the Pathways Committee, Public Works Department, and then the Planning Commission

And Waive the First Reading and Introduce an Ordinance amending Article 6 of Chapter 2, Title 10 of the Los Altos Hills Municipal Code, Modifying Sections 10-2.606 Payment of pathway fees and/or dedication of pathway easements and 10-2.608- Pathway Fee.

Council Member Tyson seconded the motion. **APPROVED, VOTE 5-0**

MOTION PASSED: 5-0

AYES: Tankha, Bhateja, Mok, Swan, Tyson

NOES: None

RECUSE: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: None

Vice Mayor Bhateja made a Supplement to the prior Motion directing that any residential project that has an application in place be subject to the original fee provided. **Council Member Tyson** seconded the motion. **APPROVE, VOTE 5-0**

Vice Mayor Bhateja made a motion to extend the meeting past 10 PM. **Council Member Tyson** seconded the motion. **APPROVED, VOTE 5-0**

- B. Resolution Adopting a Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring and

Reporting Program Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") Section 15074 and Approving a Conditional Use Permit, Variance, and Grading Policy Exception for a new Operation Center at 26451 Ascension Drive; Lands of Purissima Hills Water District; File #CUP23-0004

Senior Planner Jonathan Fox provided a presentation on the conditional use permit request from the Purissima Hills Water District for property located at 26451 Ascension Drive.

Mr. Fox described the property's location near Town Hall, existing site features including two water tanks, a pump house, and an existing operations building proposed for demolition, and noted the presence of a 0.624-acre conservation easement restricting construction, grading, and vegetation removal.

He explained that the Water District is requesting approval to construct a new two-story, 7,600 square foot operations and maintenance building to replace the existing one-story facility. The project requires several variances related to rear and side setbacks, maximum development area, floor area, building height, driveway width, and ground coverage, as well as a grading policy exception to exceed the maximum allowable cut for primary structures and yard areas.

Mr. Fox summarized that the Planning Commission held a public hearing on July 10, 2025, voting 4-1 to recommend approval subject to conditions, including incorporation of mitigation measures from the environmental document and requiring the Planning Commission to serve as the hearing authority for the future landscape screening plan.

He reviewed project details such as lot size, slope, and floor area calculations, presented site plans and 3D renderings, and highlighted the proposed design featuring concrete and vertical wood paneling with a metal pitched roof. He also outlined the public notification process, which began in May 2024 and continued through September 2025, along with the Water District's independent outreach efforts and letters of support from nearby property owners.

Mr. Fox concluded by recommending that the City Council adopt the resolution to approve the Mitigated Negative Declaration, Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, Conditional Use Permit, Variance, and Grading Policy Exception for the project.

Vice Mayor Bhateja recused himself from this item, stating he was within 500 feet of the subject property.

The Public Hearing was opened for comments.

Council Member Tyson made a motion to Approve the Resolution adopting Mitigated Negative Declaration & Mitigation Monitoring & Reporting Program; and approve the Conditional Use Permit, Variance, and Grading Policy Exception, subject to the conditions of approval. **Council Member Mok** seconded the motion. **APPROVED, VOTE 4-0-1**

MOTION PASSED: 4-0-1

AYES: Tankha, Mok, Swan, Tyson

NOES: None

RECUSE: Bhateja

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: None

- C. Resolution Approving Amendments to the Town's Story Pole Policy Under Housing Element Program B-16 to Streamline the Story Pole Requirement or Allow Alternatives in Lieu of Story Poles

Senior Planner Jonathan Fox explained the proposed amendments to the Town's Story Pole Policy to ensure compliance with Housing Element Program B16.

Mr. Fox explained that the Town's existing Story Pole Policy, originally adopted in 1999 and last amended in 2016, requires the installation of height poles and orange netting prior to public hearings to help visualize proposed development. He noted that Program B16 of the adopted Housing Element requires the Town to review, streamline, or modify its story pole requirements, or allow for renderings in lieu of story poles, with a completion deadline of the third quarter of 2025.

Mr. Fox stated that the Planning Commission reviewed the proposed amendments at a study session in July 2025 and at a public hearing on September 4, 2025, where it voted unanimously to recommend approval. The amendments focus on three main areas: timing, requirements, and exemptions.

For timing, the installation period for story poles would be reduced from 24 days to 10 days prior to a public hearing, aligning the policy with the Town's actual practice of verifying story pole installation concurrent with the 10-day public notice period.

For requirements, the amendment clarifies that story poles must be constructed of a rigid material, such as lumber or metal poles.

For exemptions, the Planning Commission supported two categories. First, single-family residences not exceeding 19 feet in height and 4,000 square feet in floor area, and that do not request variances or exceptions, may provide a 3D rendering displayed adjacent to the public hearing notice (minimum size 24 by 36 inches) instead of installing story poles. Second, multifamily buildings not exceeding 19 feet in height and not requesting variances or exceptions may also provide a 3D rendering in lieu of story poles.

Mr. Fox summarized that additional updates include minor grammatical edits for clarity, replacing the term "second units" with "accessory dwelling units," and incorporating the new timing, material specification, and exemption provisions.

He concluded by recommending that the City Council adopt a resolution approving amendments to the Town's Story Pole Policy for compliance with Housing Element Program B16.

Council Member Tyson made a motion to Adopt a resolution making findings and denying the appeal and authorizing the City Manager to execute a Sewer Construction and Dedication Agreement. **Council Member Swan** seconded the motion. **APPROVED, VOTE 5-0**

MOTION PASSED: 5-0

AYES: Tankha, Bhateja, Mok, Swan, Tyson

NOES: None

RECUSE: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: None

- D. *Waiver of Reading and Introduction of an Ordinance Amending Title 4, Chapter 1 "Emergency Organization and Function", Title 2, Chapter 4 "Purchasing System", and Title 6, Chapter 5 "Nuisance Abatement" of the Los Altos Hills Municipal Code to add new Management Positions, Revise and Remove Outdated Provisions, and Establish New Authority and Procedures for Emergency Response*

Removed from consideration on this agenda.

8. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Review and Accept the Annual Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Inventory Update to Track Progress Toward the Town's 2030 Reduction Target

Community Development Director Jay Bradford introduced **Environmental Initiatives Committee Member Mike Salameh**, noting that they collaborated on the staff report and presentation.

Mr. Salameh presented an overview of the Town's progress toward greenhouse gas reduction goals and recommendations for accelerating climate action. He explained that there is significant public interest in climate initiatives and referenced both positive and critical media coverage related to Los Altos Hills' leadership in reach codes. His presentation focused on three main topics: greenhouse gas reduction progress, opportunities to increase the rate of improvement, and actions requested of the City Council.

Mr. Salameh described the Environmental Initiatives Committee's Climate Subcommittee, which tracks emissions and measures progress against the Town's adopted goals. He noted that the Town's Climate Action Plan targets a 52 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 compared to 2005 levels. He explained that Town operations represent only 0.2 percent of total community emissions but are vital for setting an example through government facilities such as Town Hall, which uses a heat pump HVAC system, solar power, and electric vehicle charging stations.

Mr. Salameh reviewed the Town's progress toward reducing emissions from government operations, highlighting major reductions achieved when garbage and fire service fleets converted to renewable diesel. These efforts have resulted in the Town surpassing its 2030 target for government emissions reduction. He credited individuals including Steve Schmidt and Anand for their work with GreenWaste and County Fire on these conversions.

He then discussed communitywide emissions, which account for over 99 percent of total emissions. He noted that while the Town has achieved a 22 percent reduction since 2005, it remains short of the 2030 goal. Major sources of emissions include vehicle travel and residential natural gas use for heating and water. Mr. Salameh emphasized that many residents have already achieved significant reductions by switching to electric vehicles and installing heat pump systems without sacrificing comfort or cost efficiency.

He highlighted several key successes, including the Town's advocacy for Foothill College's decision to pursue an electric heat pump system for its pool instead of a gas heater, avoiding a 5 percent increase in community emissions. He stated that the most effective opportunities for further progress include electrifying residential heating systems and increasing awareness of available incentives, such as those offered by Silicon Valley Clean Energy, the state, and the Town's own \$1,000 rebate for heat pump water heaters.

Mr. Salameh emphasized the importance of public education, particularly in making residents aware of the environmental impact of gas appliances and the availability of cost-effective electric alternatives. He suggested that the Town take a stronger role in communicating environmental achievements and opportunities through its regular newsletters, providing local, factual, and solutions-oriented information rather than abstract or alarmist messaging.

He concluded by encouraging the City Council to continue supporting reach codes, maintain the greenhouse gas inventory, advance projects such as the Foothill College pool electrification, and expand public education on environmental initiatives to reinforce the Town's leadership and community engagement in sustainability.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

1. **Anand Ranganathan**, a Los Altos Hills resident, thanked Mike Salameh for his presentation and expressed concern that the Town will not meet its 2030 greenhouse gas reduction goals unless the City Council makes climate action a higher priority. He stated that progress will require not only new ordinances but also dedicated funding, especially as federal support declines. He cautioned against focusing solely on government emission reductions and urged the Town to take broader, more proactive steps to achieve its overall climate goals.

Vice Mayor Bhateja made a motion to Accept the annual GHG inventory update to track progress toward the Town's 2030 reduction target. **Council Member Swan** seconded the motion. **APPROVED, VOTE 5-0**

MOTION PASSED: 5-0

AYES: Tankha, Bhateja, Mok, Swan, Tyson

NOES: None

RECUSE: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: None

- B. Discussion and direction on a Proposed Ordinance Amending Title 8 (Building Regulations) of the Los Altos Hills Municipal Code and Adopting by Reference the 2025 California Building Standards Code, Including but not Limited to Administrative, Building, Residential Building, Electrical, Mechanical, Plumbing, Energy, Historical Building, Existing Building, and Referenced Standards, Including Local Modifications and Amendments to the Codes

Community Development Director Jay Bradford presented a staff report on the proposed ordinance amending Title 8 of the Los Altos Hills Municipal Code to adopt by reference the 2025 California Building Standards Code, together with proposed local amendments.

Mr. Bradford explained that the California Building Standards Code is updated every three years, with the 2025 Standards becoming effective statewide on January 1, 2026. The Town must adopt these Standards, along with any desired local amendments, before that date to ensure consistency with local conditions such as topography, climate, and wildfire risk.

He noted that Assembly Bill 130, enacted in 2025, places a six-year moratorium on most changes to residential building standards, but allows exceptions for fire safety, accessibility, and certain sustainability measures. Staff therefore seeks to preserve existing local amendments and adopt additional ones that address local needs and align with the Town's

Climate Action Plan and wildfire resilience goals.

The report outlined proposed amendments to the Building, Residential, Electrical, Fire, and Green Building Codes. Highlights include: allowing permit extensions and fee refunds under defined conditions; adopting penalties for unpermitted or incomplete work; requiring Class A roofing and ember-resistant vents; mandating replacement of outdated electrical panels; incorporating Santa Clara County Fire Department amendments; and retaining the Town's Zero NOx policy. Committee recommendations include establishing a gas shut-off valve safety program, adopting Wildland–Urban Interface standards town-wide, and transitioning from air-conditioning to heat-pump systems at replacement.

Mr. Bradford stated that adoption of the 2025 Codes and amendments would not impact the General Fund, as enforcement costs are covered by existing fees, and that the action is exempt from CEQA review. Staff will return to Council later in the year with the final adopting ordinance to ensure the locally amended standards take effect on January 1, 2026.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

1. **Anand Ranganathan**, a Los Altos Hills resident, encouraged the Council to approve the proposals.
2. **Allan Epstein**, a Los Altos Hills resident, explained that residents should not have to request refunds of building deposits.

Vice Mayor Bhateja made a motion to work with the Town Committees, Santa Clara County Fire Department, and Los Altos Hills Fire District to prepare amendments in these areas and bring back policies and/or resolutions/ordinances for consideration and potential adoption.

Council Member Swan seconded the motion. **APPROVED, VOTE 5-0**

Council Member Swan made a motion to bring back the Council recommendations to adopt Part 7 of the CBCS (Formerly R337) with the local modifications to apply Town Wide.

Council Member Mok seconded the motion. **APPROVED, VOTE 5-0**

Vice Mayor Bhateja made a motion to work with the SCC Fire Department to bring any proposed clarifications back to the City Council for consideration and adoption.

Council Member Tyson seconded the motion. **APPROVED, VOTE 5-0**

Vice Mayor Bhateja made a motion to bring back modifications to the administrative section of the Building Code with necessary changes to help enforce said code and the administration and safeguards in the issuance of refunds and fee collection, adding a modification that refunds do not need to be requested and will be issued in 90 days.

Council Member Mok seconded the motion. **APPROVED, VOTE 5-0**

Vice Mayor Bhateja made a motion to bring back modifications to the administrative section of the Building Code with necessary changes to help clarify enforcement and penalties to maintain compliance with the Building Code Standards.

Council Member Tyson seconded the motion. **APPROVED, VOTE 5-0**

Vice Mayor Bhateja made a motion to bring back technical amendments to the Building, Residential, and Electric Codes.

Council Member Tyson seconded the motion. **APPROVED, VOTE 5-0**

Vice Mayor Bhateja made a motion to bring back technical amendments for Fire, Green Building Code, Building Construction Standards, and Construction Time Limits, and eliminate the chapter on Green Building Regulation.

Council Member Mok seconded the motion. **APPROVED, VOTE 5-0**

- C. Consideration of an Appeal from the Property Owner of 12251 Stonebrook Drive (APN: 336-28-067) of the City Engineer's Determination on the Parcel Frontage Sewer Extension Requirement for Sewer Review Application No. SR25-0013; and Adopt a Resolution Making Findings and Granting or Denying the Appeal and Authorizing the City Manager to Execute a Sewer Construction and Dedication Agreement

Mayor Tankha recused herself; **Vice Mayor Bhateja** assumed the chair for this item.

Public Works Director and City Engineer WooJae Kim presented the item regarding the appeal of the City Engineer's determination related to the Sewer Main Extension application for 12251 Stonebrook Drive.

Mr. Kim explained that the property is currently on a septic system and, as part of an SB9 and ADU project, the owner is seeking to connect to the Town's sewer system located over 200 feet away. Since the existing sewer main is beyond 200 feet, Town Municipal Code Section 6-4.102 does not require a connection. However, the applicant opted to connect voluntarily due to challenges with upgrading the septic system under County and State requirements.

Mr. Kim outlined that Town ordinance requires sewer main extensions to run the full frontage of a parcel if other properties could benefit from the connection. Staff determined that six nearby properties could potentially connect in the future, requiring the applicant to extend the sewer main an additional 190 feet for a total of approximately 410 feet. The applicant appealed, citing cost concerns of over \$100,000, arguing that the requirement was not an objective standard under SB9 and ADU law and that it created unnecessary constraints inconsistent with the Town's Housing Element goals.

Mr. Kim stated that staff applied the full frontage requirement because other parcels could benefit and the Housing Element does not identify sewer connections as a governmental constraint. He noted that the City Engineer denied the applicant's request to limit the extension on September 3, 2025, and the appeal was filed on September 8, 2025.

Staff recommended that the City Council consider the appeal and adopt a resolution either granting or denying it and authorize the City Manager to execute the necessary sewer construction and dedication agreement for the project.

Architect Jessica Resmini, representing the applicant, explained that the project at 12251 Stonebrook Drive involves constructing an SB 9 unit and an ADU on a 1.3-acre parcel currently served by a septic system. She stated that the property is approximately 200–220 feet from the nearest sewer main and that extending the line as required by the City Engineer would add about \$140,000 to \$200,000 in cost—nearly 20 percent of the total project budget.

Ms. Resmini argued that requiring a full-frontage sewer extension conflicts with state housing laws for SB 9 and ADU projects because it introduces subjective judgment, unnecessary cost, and barriers to housing creation. She said only three nearby homes—not six—could realistically benefit from the sewer line, and future connections are speculative. She emphasized that the project provides multi-generational housing consistent with state goals and the Town’s own Housing Element, which calls for removing regulatory constraints on new housing.

She asked the Council to uphold state law by allowing the project to connect directly to the existing sewer main without requiring a full-frontage extension.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

1. **Allan Epstein**, a Los Altos Hills resident, stated that the Town’s existing ordinance requires applicants to extend sewer lines to the end of their property frontage and that this requirement is neither a violation of law nor a subjective standard. He shared his own experience constructing a sewer line in Town, which later enabled nearby property owners to connect and develop additional homes. While acknowledging the additional cost involved, he said this approach has long allowed the Town to expand its sewer system fairly. Mr. Epstein concluded by urging the Council to deny the appeal, noting that granting it would shift the financial burden on to future property owners.

Council Member Tyson made a motion to Adopt a resolution making findings and denying the appeal and authorizing the City Manager to execute a Sewer Construction and Dedication Agreement.

Council Member Swan seconded the motion. **APPROVED, VOTE 4-0-1**

MOTION PASSED: 4-0-1

AYES: Bhateja, Mok, Swan, Tyson

NOES: None

RECUSE: Tankha

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: None

9. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES, SUBCOMMITTEES, AND COUNCILMEMBERS ON OUTSIDE AGENCIES

Council Member Tyson stated that residents will begin to receive a \$50 check from Silicon Valley Clean Energy.

Mayor Tankha stated that Los Altos may be open to providing public safety services to the Town of Los Altos Hills.

10. STAFF REPORTS

A. **City Attorney Steve Mattas** had no report.

B. **City Clerk Arika Miller** had no report.

C. **Planning Director Jay Bradford** reported on progress following the June adoption of the Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ) maps, when Council directed evaluation of community-wide mitigation measures in coordination with the Emergency Preparedness and Response

Committee (EPRC). The EPRC met in August and September to review options, with a phased timeline continuing through the fall toward a final report.

Key strategies discussed included structural hardening, local building code amendments, and vegetation management through defensible space zones (0–5 feet, 5–30 feet, and 30–100 feet and beyond). Staff emphasized the importance of aligning private property responsibilities with regional conservation and open space policies. Available programs that could support community resilience were highlighted, including *Safer from Wildfires* (CA Department of Insurance), the *Wildfire-Prepared Home Program* (Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety), *Firewise USA* (NFPA), and CAL FIRE’s *Fire Risk Reduction Community* framework.

The EPRC recommendations focused on adopting Wildland–Urban Interface (WUI) standards town-wide, requiring non-combustible fencing near structures, clarifying defensible space standards, and sustaining community program participation. Some recommendations will require discussion with other Town committees and collaboration with the Fire District and County Fire Department.

Community Development Department Listening Session

Staff also introduced plans for a resident feedback session on planning and building services, part of the 2024–2025 Workplan. The goal is to gather input on what is working well and where improvements are needed, with Council guidance sought on noticing, engagement, and logistics.

Staff has engaged Conrad Public Relations to support outreach. Recommended strategies include five or more social media posts, a Town-wide mailer with survey links, pre- and post-event surveys, and supplemental newspaper advertising. The event will feature a staff presentation covering the development review process, coordination with outside agencies, state review timelines compared to Town performance, and current services with forecasted improvements. Both in-person and remote participation will be offered, and the session will be recorded and posted online.

Following the event, staff will return to Council with a summary of community feedback and survey results to inform future Workplan updates.

- D. **Finance Director Thomas Leung** shared that the Town has been awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting by the Government Finance Officers Association for our Annual Comprehensive Financial Report for the year ending June 30, 2024. This is the highest recognition in government financial reporting and reflects our strong commitment to transparency and accountability.

On the pension front, CalPERS recently announced a preliminary net investment return of 11.6% for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025. That’s well above their assumed rate of 6.8%, and it boosts the system’s funded status. This is encouraging news, as strong returns help reduce long-term pension costs.

- E. **Public Works Director WooJae Kim** reported on the El Monte Fire Station Utility Undergrounding (Rule 20A) Project
- On Monday next week, the Town’s contractor will start restoring and paving El Monte, Elena, and Moody at the project locations before the wet season and cooler weather. The paving work will occur throughout next week, including on Saturday, September 27, with no work scheduled for Sunday. Paving work will continue through Monday, September 29.

One lane closures are expected, and there may be limited access to driveways during the actual paving days.

- PG&E and Comcast are done with undergrounding their overhead facilities, but AT&T is still working on its underground, which will continue through the end of October. Once AT&T finishes undergrounding and splicing work, they will remove the overhead wires and power poles within the project area for the completion of the Rule 20A project.

F. **City Manager Peter Pirnejad** reported on the following:

Compassion Week

Compassion Week is a community-wide initiative that encourages service and giving back, taking place from October 4–12 this year. During this special week, Town staff will be volunteering locally at Hidden Villa. Stay tuned to hear more about what we'll be doing to give back to our community.

HIZ Assessment at Town Hall

Just this last month, Town Hall completed our HIZ assessment with the LAH County Fire District. Staff is planning on taking the findings of the assessment to a few of our standing committees to discuss the recommended next steps for the Town Hall property. Staff hopes that highlighting Town Hall's HIZ assessment will encourage more residents to sign up for their own assessment.

Public Comment

I want to begin by acknowledging the many speakers tonight. I listened carefully and taken extensive notes. I serve at the pleasure of the City Council, and I deeply respect the voices of our community.

While it is never easy to hear hard feedback, it is essential, and I am committed to learning from it and continuously improving. At the same time, I am proud of the work of our staff and the progress we have made together. Our team is navigating extraordinary pressures from the State—whether it be compliance with our Housing Element to ensure we retain certification, or the adoption of CalFire maps under extremely tight timelines in response to tragic fire events across California. These state mandates are in addition to the council's goals and our day-to-day operations.

Added to this are the impacts of constantly changing state legislation, regulations that are often unclear and open to interpretation, and short timelines that leave very little room for slippage. These vague standards create inconsistent interpretations, which places Towns like ours in a particularly difficult position and often at odds with our public. In the example of the housing element, a misstep could expose us to builder's remedy and SB330 applications; on the other, we risk being found out of compliance with our Housing Element and state law and in either case the Community is affected. In this uncertain landscape, our intent is not to lead the Council in a single direction, but to provide the best information we can while protecting the interests of the Town so that the Council can make informed decisions with and on behalf of the community.

In the end, we are navigating this difficult landscape not despite the community, but with the community. We dedicate significant time to seeking public feedback, keeping the Town informed, and working with our committees to ensure that our decisions are thoughtful and transparent.

I remain committed to advancing the goals of the Council, supporting our committees, and serving our residents while continuing to recruit and retain high-quality staff. Together, we have achieved important milestones: Certifying and maintaining our Housing Element, interpreting and applying state fire mapping requirements, completing major Capital Projects, modernizing our antiquated systems and services, improving corporate culture and reducing staff turnover, while advancing an ambitious set of goals set by the Council while running the Town Operations.

I will continue to strive for the right balance between the expectations of the community, the directives of the Council, navigating unfunded state mandates, while attracting/retaining quality staff. My intention has always been to serve with integrity, to support the Council's vision, and to ensure that the Town operates at the highest standard of public service.

Upcoming Events:

Drive-Thru Shred Event

The Drive-Thru Shred Event is available to help residents responsibly destroy confidential documents. Residents are invited to bring up to 15 standard file boxes or 15 paper bags of documents to shred. The event is a free service for the residents of Los Altos Hills. Proof of residency will be required to access the event.

Date: Saturday, September 20, 2025

Time: 8:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Address: Town Hall Parking Lot, 26379 Fremont Road, Los Altos Hills, CA 94022

Touch a Truck

Do you know a child who's fascinated by trucks of all shapes and sizes? Bring them out for a hands-on experience where they can climb aboard, explore how these impressive machines work, and snap some unforgettable photos!

Kids will get to see vehicles up close from the Town of Los Altos Hills Public Works team, Santa Clara County Fire, PalAmerican Security, GreenWaste Recovery, Silicon Valley Clean Energy, and more. It's the perfect chance for young truck enthusiasts to discover the vehicles that keep our community safe and running every day.

Date: Saturday, September 27, 2025

Time: 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Address: Gardner Bullis Elementary School, 25890 Fremont R Los Altos Hills, CA 94022

11. COUNCIL INITIATED ITEMS

A. External Access and Data Security Concerns re: Flock ALPR Data

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- 1. Trevor Chandler**
- 2. Anand Ranganathan**

There was a consensus of the Council to bring this item back on an upcoming meeting for consideration.

B. Streamlining Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Permitting and Development

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- 1. Birgitta Indaco**

City Council asked that the Planning Commission create an Ad Hoc Committee for options on streamlining ADU permitting and development.

City Council created an Ad Hoc Committee with Mayor Tankha and Vice Mayor Bhateja to select a facilitator for the Community Development Department Listening Session on October 22, 2025. APPROVED, VOTE 5-0

12. ADJOURN

Mayor Tankha adjourned the meeting in memory of former City of Cupertino Council Member Hung Wei.

The meeting adjourned at 1:28 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Arika Birdsong-Miller". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Arika Birdsong-Miller