

Town of Los Altos Hills

City Council Special Meeting Minutes

Monday, November 17, 2025, at 5:00 P.M.

Council Chambers, 26379 Fremont Road, Los Altos Hills, California &
217 Berwyn Drive W #228, Mobile, AL 36608

Present: Mayor Kavita Tankha, Vice Mayor Rajiv Bhateja, Council Member Stanley Mok,
Council Member Linda Swan, and Council Member George Tyson
Absent: None
Staff: Acting City Manager Cody Einfalt, Community Development Director Jay
Bradford, and City Clerk Arika Birdsong-Miller

CALL TO ORDER (5:00 P.M.)

Mayor Tankha called the meeting to order at 5:00 P.M.

1. ROLL CALL

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

Council Member Swan participated remotely at 217 Berwyn Drive W #228, Mobile, AL 36608, pursuant to Assembly Bill 2449, due to caregiving responsibilities for a family member.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT (Public Comment is Limited to Items which are the Subject of the Special Meeting)

Public Comments were taken at the end of the presentation.

3. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Informational Report on Potential Ballot Measure Amending the Open Space Initiative of 2002 to Redesignate Portion of O’Keefe Property from the Open Space Preserve Designation to Multi-Family Residential and to Remove the Voter Approval Requirement for Conveyance of the Land for Multi-Family Housing

Attorney Steve Mattas presented an informational report regarding a potential ballot measure that would amend the Open Space Initiative of 2002. The purpose of the presentation was to provide background information, legal context, and procedural timelines related to a possible voter-sponsored initiative affecting the O’Keefe Property.

The City Attorney explained that the California Housing Element Law requires the Town of Los Altos Hills to maintain an adequate inventory of sites to meet its Regional Housing Need Allocation (RHNA) for the 2023–2031 planning period. The Town’s assigned RHNA obligation is 489 housing units, including 197 units designated for extremely low-, very low, and low-income households. In addition to meeting its RHNA requirements, the Town is also subject to “No Net Loss” provisions, which require that if approved development results in a reduction of housing capacity, the Town must identify and make available additional sites within 180 days to offset that loss.

As part of its efforts to comply with these state requirements, the City Council previously formed an Ad Hoc Committee to explore alternative housing sites. Through this process, the Town-owned property commonly known as the O’Keefe Property was identified as a potential housing site due to its location near major transportation corridors, including Interstate 280 and El Monte Road, and its proximity to other sites already identified in the Housing Element, such as Foothill College and St. Nicholas School.

The presentation reviewed the history of the Open Space Initiative of 2002, which was adopted by the City Council following voter approval. That initiative redesignated several Town-owned properties, including the O’Keefe Property, as “Open Space Preserve.” Under the initiative, this designation may only be revised by a subsequent vote of the electorate. In addition, the initiative generally requires voter approval for any conveyance, sale, or abandonment of properties covered by the initiative.

The City Attorney outlined the key elements of a potential ballot measure that would amend the 2002 initiative. The purpose of such a measure would be to redesignate a portion of the O’Keefe Property from “Open Space Preserve” to “Multifamily Residential” in the Town’s General Plan Land Use Diagram, thereby allowing the property to be considered as a potential site for multi-family housing. The proposed redesignation would permit residential uses only and would allow the Town to sell, lease, or convey portions of the redesignated property for multi-family residential development. Importantly, the presentation emphasized that the proposed measure would not alter the “Open Space Conservation Area” designation on the southern portion of the property, nor would it affect the Purissima Creek streambed or the required 50-foot setback from the outer edge of the creek.

The City Attorney also addressed title and ownership considerations associated with the O’Keefe Property. According to deed records, the property was conveyed to the Town by the State of California, subject to a condition that it be used exclusively for public purposes, with a reversionary interest allowing the property to revert to the State if that condition is not met. The presentation noted that the use of the property for affordable housing would likely qualify as a public purpose under California law. This conclusion is supported by court decisions recognizing affordable housing as a legitimate governmental purpose, as well as by state policy declarations and Executive Order N-06-19, which directs state agencies to prioritize excess land for affordable housing development and consider land exchanges with local governments.

Finally, the City Attorney presented two potential procedural timelines for a citizen-sponsored initiative, depending on whether the measure was to be placed on the June 2, 2026, special election ballot or the November 3, 2026, general election ballot. The presentation outlined the required steps under the California Elections Code, including filing a notice of intention, preparation and publication of the ballot title and summary, circulation of petitions for signatures, verification of signatures by the City Clerk in coordination with the County elections office, certification of sufficiency, and eventual placement of the measure on the ballot. In both scenarios, if approved by voters, the initiative would take effect ten days after the City Council declares the election results.

Public Comments:

1. **Mike Grady**, a Los Altos Hills resident, stated that the City Council should retain complete control over land use decisions and determine what is appropriate for any given property.

2. **Anita Baldwin**, a Los Altos Hills resident, supported limiting development on the site to affordable housing only and expressed opposition to being subject to the builder's remedy.
3. **Eric Bredo**, a Los Altos Hills resident, stated that the O'Keefe site is currently not well utilized.
4. **Jennifer Couperus**, a Los Altos Hills resident, expressed concern that the O'Keefe property could be utilized for housing and stated it would be better suited for a light industrial or clean-energy use.
5. **John O'Connell**, a Los Altos Hills resident, characterized the initiative as one piece of a larger puzzle and expressed disappointment in the lack of progress on the housing element.
6. **Rajesh Shakkarwar**, a Los Altos Hills resident, expressed concern that the initiative is disconnected from prior Council discussions, emphasized the need to protect the environment, raised concerns regarding a burial site, and stated that further research is needed.
7. **Mitesh Dhruv**, a Los Altos Hills resident, stated that voters in 2002 made a deliberate decision regarding open space and expressed concern that residents lack understanding of the initiative and that it would not stop development at O'Keefe.
8. **Ash Nangia**, a Los Altos Hills resident, stated that they purchased property near O'Keefe approximately 18 months ago because it was designated as open space and found the language of the initiative confusing.
9. **Susan Stark**, a Los Altos Hills resident, raised concerns about potential redevelopment due to limited access, including a small single-lane road serving the area.
10. **Carol Gottlieb**, a Los Altos Hills resident, expressed opposition to the site being removed from open space preservation.
11. **Corlo Panaccione**, a Los Altos Hills resident, stated that increasing density along a double road would spread impacts across the community and encouraged blending development into the surrounding area.
12. **Cheryl Evans**, a Los Altos Hills resident, urged the Town to preserve its rural character.
13. **Kate Woodward**, a Los Altos Hills resident, raised environmental concerns and requested a deeper environmental review, including due diligence and an environmental study.
14. **Sheila**, a Los Altos Hills resident, referenced a \$100,000 grant intended to restore or redo open space.
15. **Judy Mahonovic**, a Los Altos Hills resident, stated that she moved to Los Altos Hills in 2002 and chose to live near O'Keefe because it was designated as open space, noting that removal from open space designation was presented as an option at that time.

16. **Achint Wadhwa**, a Los Altos Hills resident, expressed concern with the process, potential land subsidence, and questioned what studies have been conducted, including whether land around Town Hall has been evaluated.

17. **Sue Welch**, a Los Altos Hills resident, expressed sympathy for residents near O’Keefe and directed frustration toward the State, stating that the situation has been imposed on the Town.

18. **Glenn Wilkerson**, a Los Altos Hills resident, stated that the Town must either make decisions and compromises locally or risk having the State take over governance.

19. **Tamar Bar**, a Los Altos Hills resident, emphasized the importance of planning that demonstrates all potential areas have been evaluated.

20. **Iran Angia**, a Los Altos Hills resident, raised general environmental concerns.

21. **Farshid Jamshidian**, a Los Altos Hills resident, expressed concern about the process and traffic impacts, particularly regarding emergency access.

22. **Julie Panaccione**, a Los Altos Hills resident, stated that the area is rural and expressed concern about the disruption of existing pathways.

23. **Eric Evans**, a Los Altos Hills resident, suggested that development could potentially be structured to comply with requirements, avoid the builder’s remedy, and become an asset to the community.

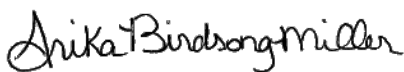
24. **Jitze Couperus**, a Los Altos Hills resident, referenced the 2022 Open Space Initiative and noted it was championed by his late wife, Nancy Couperus.

25. **Awadwa**, a Los Altos Hills resident, referred to the builder’s remedy as a “boogeyman,” stated that O’Keefe residents have no say in the process, questioned why residents should care about the builder’s remedy, and expressed concern that the matter is moving forward without sufficient study.

4. **ADJOURN**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



Arika Birdsong-Miller