

TOWN OF LOS ALTOS HILLS
OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE MINUTES
Held at 13061 Byrd Lane
Los Altos Hills, CA 94022
MAY 10, 2023

Call to Order

- The meeting was called to order at 9:03 am. Members present: Peter Brown, Richard Contreras, Kit Gordon, Wendie Ward, Anita Baldwin. Absent: George Clifford, Viggie Mokkarala, Jean Struthers. Also present: the Hon. Lisa Schmidt, Paul Marcos (by zoom).

Minutes

- PB moved and RC seconded the April 8, 2023 OSC minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

Announcements

- It was suggested that Jean and Dave Struthers be nominated for a Lifetime Achievements Award. LS said she would send a note to council members.
- KG reported on the Redwood Grove event, which celebrated plants and diversity.
- KG noted that the town map did not have a GIS layer which would allow overlay of landslide areas in town. Having this would improve town safety.

Planning

Planning site reviews:

- 25980 Todd Lane (remodel and addition). No major issues. After discussion, it was decided that an OSE wasn't warranted. There is an existing building on the property that could be an ADU. Recommendations moved by WW and seconded by PB. Passed unanimously.

Recommendations:

1. Recommend landscaping with native plants. Recommend protect native wildflowers existing on slope. See calscape.org for list of plants native to the Bay Area.

2. Add Condition of Approval (COA) Shall remove all Stinkwort plants (*Dittrichia graveolens*) from entire property and the road ROW by manual pulling or herbicide by Sept 1 of each year until final building approval.

- SB9 Applications: on hold

Fast Track meeting recaps:

- April 18: Cancelled.
- April 25: 25538 Hidden Springs Court (landscaping, fence, gate); and 26080 Quail Lane (new residence, pool, ADU). Reviewed by GC, no issues.
- May 2: 25091 Tapa Way (garage, pool, spa, ADU). This has recommendations listed in our Jan. 11, 2023 minutes. WW reviewed.
- May 2: 13867 Robleda Road (new residence, garage, pool, spa and ADU). WW reviewed. She noted that an ADU not previously discussed sits on top of the large drainage pipe.
- May 9: 26481 Purissima Road (remodel, addition, landscaping). RC reviewed. No issues.

New Business

- KG noticed remarks about coyotes in the City Manager's bulletin and suggested more specific and improved information ought to be put out on how best to live with coyotes. Members voted to send updated information to be placed in one of the upcoming City Manager's reports. WW moved and RC seconded, motion passed unanimously.
- OSC info table at town hall picnic: OSC will share a table with EDPC.

Continuing Business

- New OSC webpages: Last month, AB, PB and VM formed an Ad Hoc committee to suggest improvements to the look and format of the new pages. AB drew up a document which was sent to OSC members as well as committee chairs for comment. This draft document is attached and will be finalized soon and sent to Deborah Padovan to send on to the webpage consultants.
- LS reported on the Proposed Code of Conduct for Committees and said she and Council Member George Tyson were finishing a revised document.
- SOD Blitz May 20-21. Members can sign up and choose a region to test.
- Native plant garden at town hall: its installation may not be in the budget this year. However, the eucalyptus may be removed.

Open Discussion

None.

Adjournment by KG at 10:37 am.

Attachment: OSC COMM WEBPAGE BEAUTIFICATION.doc
OSC/ab

DRAFT MEMO

When finalized, to be sent to D. Padovan

To: The Open Space Committee

From: The Ad Hoc Committee on Committee Website Beautification

Subject: The recent changes to the Los Altos Hills Town committee webpages

The Open Space Committee's Ad Hoc Committee on Website Beautification, composed of Peter Brown, Viggie Mokkarala, and Anita Baldwin, met on April 19, 2023 to discuss the town's proposed new webpage look for the committees.

For some background on this, AB talked to Deborah Padovan about the proposed changes. She was very clear that the new website pages for committees, which she acknowledged were not particularly pretty, needed to be updated so she could more easily track and input changes. She asked us to provide her with specifics, without being able to promise that the company would be able to accommodate those changes. She would then send the recommendations on to the company.

General Observations on provenance and aesthetics

1. In general, the site is not laid out for easy use and is not inviting. We will address this below. It seems the company Clearbase was brought in to make the changes.
2. Because only the committee websites are to be changed, the new design is dissimilar to the Los Altos Hills home page, and switching from the home page to the committee page is jarring.
3. The colors used in the proposed design are not attractive, nor is the boxy design or the thin type face. We acknowledge that the firm designing the website may have limitations and parameters necessary when changes need to be made to update the site.

Some specific inaccuracies, irritations in use, and mistakes

1. When you click on the Open Space Committee, the top of the page misidentifies it as a "board." Right below that, it says Open Space Committee, and below that: "type: Committee." And why say that when it's just been identified?
2. "Creating authority." This is not filled in and is not necessary, or poorly placed.
3. "Agendas and minutes" – to get to them, it says "click here." Bad design – why not just click on the heading?
4. Among the headings at the very top is "vacancies." But when it's chosen, it's difficult to use and if you're interested in a vacancy on a certain committee, you can use the

“apply” button under the list of full members. The heading “expirations” suffers from some of the same problems.

5. The Associate Members are listed before the Full Members, which is confusing. And when they are finally listed, the box includes a number of arcane information: “seat name”? “Calculated term”? “Appointed by committee”? Doesn’t the City Council officially appoint members?

6. There is a box at the bottom entitled “meetings.” Not clear what it’s for.

Possible Recommendations

1. Begin with a beautiful picture, just like the current LAH home page does, to draw people in. In fact, it’d be a neat touch if each committee had its own picture symbolic of its special purpose.

2. Follow with a description of the committee’s duties, and its charter.

3. Add a short description of what the committee has accomplished over the years, so a town citizen might say, I want to be on this committee.

4. List the meeting times and location, as well as the composition of the committee (how many members, etc.)

5. Then list the full members, Council liaison, and associate members. Finally, the salient documents, so people can find more information: agendas and minutes; helpful documents, resources.

For a look at an alternative which is more what we’re suggesting, check out Portola Valley’s Conservation Committee website. It has problems, but it’s a lot more attractive and friendly. It also has drop down menus, which could be a plus.

We understand that there may be certain website design parameters which restrict some of the proposed changes. And we definitely want town staff to have the easiest time possible when using the webpages for their needs. Maybe the boxiness and the colors, as well as the redundancies, which we can understand might benefit staff, can’t be changed. But if we could streamline the order of the text, as suggested above, that would be an improvement.

May, 2023