

**Town of Los Altos Hills
Town Council Workshop
Held February 5, 2021**

February 2021

**Management
Partners**



Table of Contents

Workshop Report.....	1
Workshop Overview	2
Opening Comments	2
Council Service and Teamwork	2
Effective Practices for Elected Officials.....	3
Discussion of Council Norms.....	4
Fire District Presentation and Update on Past Priorities	5
Discussion of Goals	5
Top Priorities for FY 2021-22	7
Next Steps and Wrap Up.....	7

Workshop Report

Leaders in the Town of Los Altos Hills held a Council workshop on February 5, 2021. Nancy Hetrick, Vice President with Management Partners, facilitated the workshop, assisted by Claire Coleman, Senior Management Analyst.

All members of the City Council and City Manager Carl Cahill actively participated in the workshop. Town staff, Sheriff's Captain Urena and representatives from the Fire District were also in attendance throughout.

Workshop Preparation. In preparation for the workshop, Nancy conducted individual interviews with each Council member and collaborated with the City Manager about the workshop. Management Partners prepared an agenda, handouts, and slide deck for the workshop.

City Council

**Mayor
Kavita Tankha**



**Vice Mayor
George K. Tyson**



**Council Member
Linda G. Swan**



**Council Member
Stanley Q. Mok**



**Council Member
Lisa H. Schmidt**



Town Staff

- Carl Cahill, City Manager
- Deborah Padovan, City Clerk
- Sarina Revillar, Administrative Services Director
- Zachary Dahl, Planning and Building Director
- Nichol Bowersox, Public Works Director/City Engineer
- Sarah Robustelli, Community Services Supervisor
- Jacob Abfour, Maintenance Superintendent

Workshop Overview

Objectives

- Set a solid foundation for how Councilmembers will work together and with staff
- Celebrate accomplishments
- Discuss Council priorities for the coming year

Workshop Ground Rules

At the start of the workshop, the facilitators suggested several ground rules to help the group have a successful workshop.

- Listen with intention
- Everyone's voice matters
- Seek consensus
- Respect differences
- Enjoy the day

Bike Rack

The facilitator explained that items that were raised but would not receive immediate attention would be recorded on a "bike rack."

Opening Comments

The workshop began with a call to order and a welcome by Mayor Tankha, who then opened the session for public comments.

Council Service and Teamwork

Councilmembers reflected on the following questions to get to know each other and understand more about each person's service to the Town of Los Altos Hills.

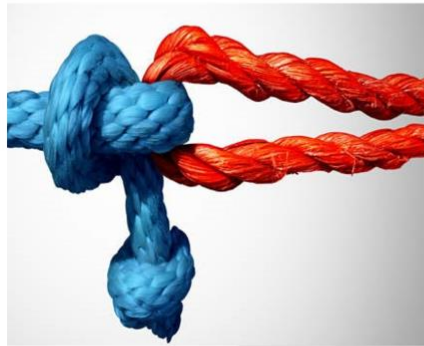
- ***What inspired you to get involved in public service?***
 - Want to get things done and make positive change, especially towards health and welfare
 - Got involved with the women's movement and am now excited to serve the community
 - Passionate about the Town's history and pathways, want the Town to preserve its character and continue to improve
 - Want to protect the Town and help make it even better
 - Want to give back to the community

- ***In one word, how would you like the community to view this Council?***
 - Productive
 - Transparent
 - Accomplishments
 - Collaborative
 - Successful

Effective Practices for Elected Officials

Nancy presented factors of good governance and attributes of high-performing councils. She then asked for reflection on an article published by the Institute for Local Government about the best governance practices of exceptional Councils that was sent to Councilmembers in advance of the workshop.

Good Governance is About...



Building relationships through:

- Effective leadership by the Mayor and Council
- Responsive management and leadership by the City Manager
- Meaningful communication that is honest, direct, respectful, proactive
- Understanding roles and fulfilling expectations
- Fostering mutual respect and building trust
- Ethics

Attributes of High Performing Councils

- Commit to true partnerships among councilmembers, City Manager and Staff
- Exhibit clarity and respect for roles and responsibilities
- Demonstrate civility and respect for all
- Conduct effective meetings
- Hold themselves and the City Manager accountable
- Practice continuous learning



The Councilmembers' discussion is summarized below.

- We are successful when we keep an open mind and can be true to ourselves (authentic)
- We need to make sure that we are transparent and respectful of everyone who works on the team
- We need to commit to work together collaboratively
- It's important to remember that Council sets the agenda and the City Manager implements it
- Vote your conscious and what you believe to be best; ok to vote how we feel

Discussion of Council Norms

Norms are a set of agreed upon behaviors established to help the Council be most effective as a policy-making group and to set expectations for working together.

Nancy reviewed a list of sample City Council norms as a starting point for discussion. The sample list included the following:

- Treat each other with dignity and respect
- Value and encourage the input of others, and challenge ideas not individuals in our role as policy makers
- Disagree agreeably and maintain decorum at the dais
- Act with integrity and lead by example
- Assume positive intentions
- Listen with intention; strive to make others feel heard

Councilmembers discussed the sample norms and what might be relevant to Los Altos Hills. There was agreement that the Town has a strong tradition of collaboration and good behavior, and that the current Council gets along well. However, they also recognize there is no guarantee it will always be the case and it could be beneficial to document what has helped to foster a collegial group dynamic in the past so when issues become more contentious there are established norms to learn on.

Nancy reminded Councilmembers that the sample set of norms would be included in this workshop report and they can determine at a later date if they wish to formalize a set for Los Altos Hills. Additional examples from other jurisdictions can be provided if requested.

Fire District Presentation and Update on Past Priorities



After a brief break, representatives from the Los Altos Hills County Fire District, led by General Manager J. Logan, provided an update about the District. General Manager Logan presented the goals of the District, emphasizing its commitment to “reclaim relevance and value.” Councilmembers noted that fire risk is a top priority for residents due to the recent fires that approached the Town and expressed a desire to support and partner with the District to ensure successful outcomes for Town residents.

City Manager Carl Cahill then presented a review of the previous year’s priorities and other accomplishments from the past year. Planning and Building Director Zach Dahl commented on some of the recent actions for the General Plan update. Mayor Tankha and Vice-Mayor Tyson expressed satisfaction with the progress that had been made on the previous year’s goals, particularly the Pathways Master Plan. They agreed they were, “Glad we held it together” through the difficult circumstances experienced in 2020.

Discussion of Goals

Council revisited the focus areas from last year and added a focus area of Public Safety (previously part of “Quality of Life and Community Character”) to reflect the level of importance.

For each, the discussion focused on what Council hopes to accomplish in the coming year and whether it is a top priority for the Town. The top priorities are shown in yellow in Tables 1, 2, 3 and 4 and were determined when at least three Councilmembers identified them as their highest priority based on urgency and/or the degree of effort required. Some priorities will be addressed through the budget process (e.g., parks and recreation improvements; pathways investment).

Table 1. Quality of Life and Community Character

Priorities	Discussion Notes
Advocate continued local control of zoning/housing requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore options for increasing advocacy for Los Altos Hills in Sacramento • Emphasize why a statewide, one-size-fits-all approach does not address the unique topography in Los Altos Hills • Evaluate opportunities for regional partnerships in advocating for local control
Exploration of undergrounding utilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to move forward with the phased approach (El Monte first) and determine costs.

Table 2. Public Safety

Priorities	Discussion Notes
Fire Safety Plan/emergency preparedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide consistent messaging and public education for residents regarding safety mitigation measures; “Keep it simple” • Assemble a task force/committee representing the Town and the District to strengthen partnership • Strengthen communication channels with the District and increase the frequency of Council/ community updates • Bring the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) map back to the Planning Commission for reevaluation
Police services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore implementation of license plate reader technology
Advocate to maintain local control of fire services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently under review by LAFCO. Remains a priority, but limited action required in the next 12 months.

Table 3. Effective Service Delivery and Governance

Priorities	Discussion Notes
Use of committees/volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify the role and requirements of committees to strengthen effectiveness and leverage the use of volunteers (i.e., Brown Act requirements)
Continue technology investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update the Town website to create an archive of historical documents like the Green Sheets (Town founding documents)
Maintain financial standing/ efficient delivery of services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain fiscal stewardship
Use the “Green Sheets” as resource for evaluating and establishing Town policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the General Plan to identify which Green Sheet principles are included and identify any gaps

Table 4. Infrastructure

Priorities	Discussion Notes
Town Hall addition/remodel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review plan updates and cost implications before construction moves forward
Road safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No discussion
Parks needs assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will be addressed through the budget process
Continue Pathways investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will be addressed through the budget process

Top Priorities for FY 2021-22

In summary, the top priorities for the coming year are listed below:

- Fire safety
- Advocacy for continued local control of zoning/housing
- Public services
- Undergrounding utilities
- Use of committees
- Town Hall addition/remodel

Next Steps and Wrap Up

The workshop concluded with a discussion of key take-aways. They included optimism about the Council and establishing common goals, gratitude for the opportunity to learn and listen, and excitement for the prospect of holding in-person meetings again soon.