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plastic bag ban? | Page 13

The Almanac

THE HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER FOR MENLO PARK, ATHERTON, PORTOLA VALLEY AND WOODSIDE

APRIL 25, 2012 | VOL. 47 NO. 35

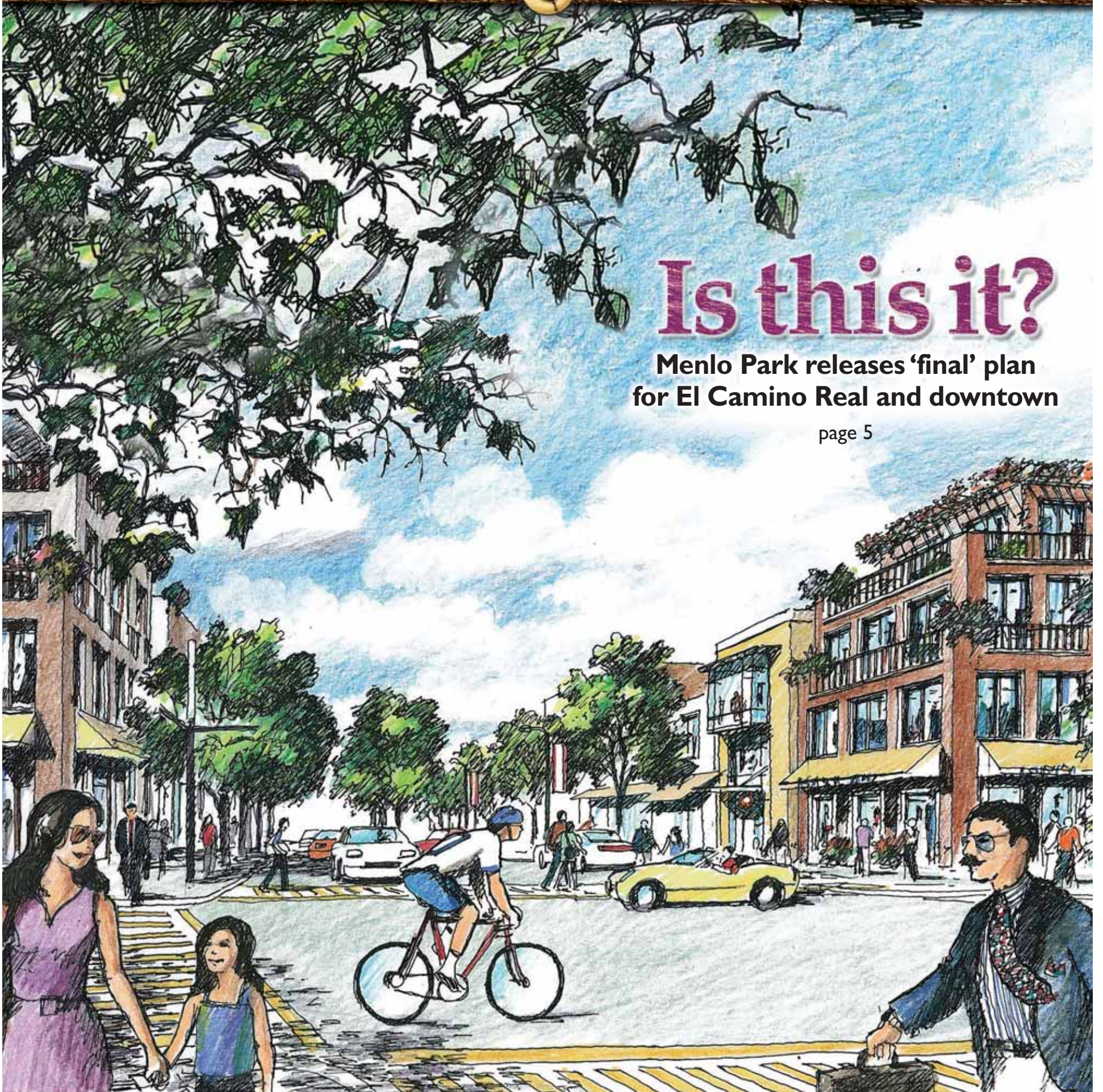


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Is this it?

Menlo Park releases 'final' plan
for El Camino Real and downtown

page 5



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Photo by Michelle Le/The Almanac

Menlo App Academy founders Max Colbert, left, and Matthew Dillabough show some iPhone apps they've created. The boys are seventh-graders at La Entrada.

Kids are teachers in new academy

By Renee Batti

Almanac News Editor

It all started as a fathers-and-sons project: La Entrada seventh-graders Max Colbert and Matthew Dillabough became intrigued by the idea of creating their own iPhone apps, and enlisted their dads to help them learn code and make products for Apple's App Store.

For six months beginning last year, the foursome immersed themselves in the project, building a number of apps relating to topics ranging from the computer game "Call of Duty: Modern Warfare" and Star Wars to the Lakers basketball team and celiac disease, according to Linda Itskovitz, Max's mother.

The fruits of their labor didn't take long to ripen: Both boys have had apps accepted by the App Store, they note with excitement.

Matthew's quiz on celiac disease is now available to the world of iPhone and iPad

users, and he says he's close to having a second one — "with information and cool facts" about the disease, which he has — accepted as well.

And Max's app on "Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 3 Facts & Guide," is steadily making its way toward his goal of 100,000 downloads by June. The project demanded about 20 hours of research, he says, and he's done a number of updates since the app was first made available.

Their success has led to a recently completed pilot program of two weekend camps to teach other kids the art of the app: building them, submitting them to the App Store and, in the process, sharpening their presentation skills.

Now, the boys are gearing up for four one-week summer camp academies to teach sixth- through ninth-grade kids the skills they've developed over the last year. Their new enterprise, the Menlo App Academy, will be conducted in the converted pool

house of the Atherton home of one of the families.

Even in an area that grows entrepreneurs like window box planters sprout marigolds, Max and Matthew are unusual, given their age and the academic demands on their time. Enthusiastic, articulate and demonstrably skilled in the areas of research and technology, the boys are as eager to share their skills in building apps through their academy as they are to share the passion they feel for the subjects they've built their apps around.

Matthew's father, Gary Dillabough, notes that the boys are also sharing their technical expertise with adults, and will hold a class for interested teachers at their school.

During the pilot program, the six participating students created apps on subjects including World Cup soccer, chess, Morse code, and

See **APP ACADEMY**, page 6

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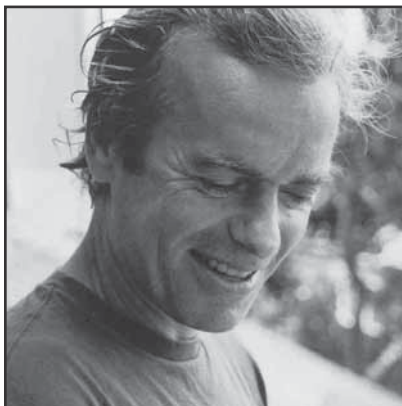


Photo by Isabel Fonseca

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NOTICE OF INTENT TO ADOPT A NEGATIVE DECLARATION

NAME OF PROJECT: Construction of New and Existing Metal Storage Building Project

LOCATION: Within the existing West Bay Sanitary District (District) Flow Equalization Facility (FEF) located at 1700 Marsh Road in the City of Menlo Park (City). The regional vicinity of the site is located east of Bayfront Parkway and Marsh Road in Menlo Park.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The District, a special district of the State of California, proposes to construct a new and existing metal storage building and rehabilitate the existing metal storage building on the existing site. The proposed improvements will be approximately 5,600 square feet of new and 2,100 square feet of existing within an allowable 26,000 square feet area. The storage building will house existing equipment that the District requires to continue providing daily and emergency response to the service area. The proposed project consists of traffic, noise, and dust control elements to insure compliance with City requirements.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT the West Bay Sanitary District, San Mateo County, California intends to adopt a Negative Declaration for this project. This Negative Declaration is based upon a finding that there is no substantial evidence before the District that the project will have a significant effect upon the environment. The reasons to support such a finding are documented by an Initial Study prepared by the District. To obtain a copy of the Draft Negative Declaration (which includes the Initial Study) or review information used to prepare the Initial Study, contact Phil Scott, West Bay Sanitary District, 500 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, CA 94025, (650) 321-0384.

The public review period for the Draft Negative Declaration begins on April 16, 2012 and ends on May 14, 2012. Please submit any written comments on the Draft Negative Declaration to the District by 5:00 p.m., Monday, May 14, 2012. A public hearing will be held before the District Board of Directors on May 23, 2012 at 7:00 p.m., in the District Offices located at 500 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, California. Following the public hearing, the Board will consider approving the Negative Declaration.

/s/ Phil Scott _____ Dated: April 16, 2012
Phil Scott
District Manager

Local News

MENLO PARK | AHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY



Rendering courtesy of the city of Menlo Park

The specific plan's vision for El Camino Real, looking north at the intersection of Ravenswood Avenue, with Kepler's bookstore on the right. The plan recommends keeping four lanes along the main thoroughfare, and adding improvements to let pedestrians and bicyclists more easily negotiate the street.

Is this it?

Menlo Park releases 'final' plan for El Camino Real and downtown

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

The plan to re-imagine the downtown/El Camino Real areas of Menlo Park began five years ago, in 2007. "We need to do something," said one participant in the series of workshops that followed.

Now, in 2012, that "something" that needs to be done has taken what may be its final shape for the next three decades.

One man behind the plan, Thomas Rogers, the city's associate planner, has the unenviable task of shepherding the process through meeting after meeting. He had nothing but praise for the effort of commissioners and council members who reviewed the plan.

"Menlo Park is lucky to have that kind of dedication, as well as expertise — they all really understand the

details, as well as the overall concepts," he told the Almanac.

The city staff was also happy with turnout at community workshops. The level of participation impressed other cities, he said, noting that "getting 150 people to a discussion about land uses, building standards, and circulation improvements is a great feat!"

Mr. Rogers received the Golden Acorn public service award from the Chamber of Commerce last year for his work.

He said that if the specific plan is approved as hoped, he'll still have plenty to do.

"Even if it is approved by the council, there is the potential of a referendum or CEQA lawsuit, both of which have happened in Menlo Park before," he said. "We've set up a transparent, public-oriented process, so I hope the

risk of either of those is low, but you never know."

Revised plan

According to the final draft, if the downtown/El Camino areas are built up to the plan's full specifications, it could amount to approximately 330,000 square feet of additional retail and commercial development, 680 new housing units, and 380 new hotel rooms. The draft equated that to 1,357 new jobs and 1,537 new Menlo Park residents.

Mr. Rogers outlined the key revisions made to an earlier draft of the plan, now found in the final draft:

- Maximum building heights lowered from 60 feet to 48 feet in the areas immediately west and east of the Caltrain station.

- In the station area, and along southeast El Camino Real, maximum

facade heights decreased from 45 feet to 38 feet.

- Along El Camino Real, to the north and east of Santa Cruz Avenue, building heights can reach 48 feet, but only in exchange for additional public benefits.

- Height of downtown parking garages is limited to 38 feet.

- New building break and facade modulation requirements to prevent developing a monolithic street front.

- A new category for bike lane improvements in areas where lanes are desired in the future but not feasible right now due to constraints such as parking.

- No expanded sidewalks or curb extensions (otherwise known as bulb-outs) along central El Camino Real. Curb lines remain the same to allow

See **PLAN**, page 8

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2010 Sangiacomo Vineyard Pinot Noir, Sonoma CoastSale \$47.99

95 points-Pinot Report. Beautiful, sexy and poised. The fruit, oak and mineral nuances are in perfect harmony. This is flat out delicious and the finish seems endless.

2010 Gap's Crown Vineyard Pinot Noir, Sonoma CoastSale \$47.99

94 points-Pinot Report. This is the biggest, darkest, richest and most dense of the group with pretty wood spice and baking spice. What this lacks in finesse, it makes up for with dramatic richness.

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Obituary: Virginia Rugeiro, longtime Atherton resident

Services are set for Tuesday, April 24, for Virginia Lee Rugeiro, a 33-year Atherton resident and familiar presence at council meetings and community events. Ms. Rugeiro died April 15 at home at the age of 81.

The funeral Mass is scheduled for 11 a.m. at Church of the Nativity, 210 Oak Grove Avenue in Menlo Park.

A San Francisco native, Virginia was the third of five children born to Robert and Mary Griffin. She attended Lowell High School and the City College of San Francisco, and worked in retail at the H. Leibes and G.E.T.S. stores.

She and her husband, John Rugeiro, were married for 59 years. She was "an inspirational advocate" for the town of Atherton, her family said, and was a member of the Atherton Dames, a volunteer group of women focused on fundraising and advocating for Holbrook-Palmer Park.

John Rugeiro said his wife was a 24-year cancer survivor who hadn't spent a day in the hospital since the time she was treated for that illness. But in mid-March, she started "slowing down

a bit," although she still attended community events and town meetings.

Late last month, she was diagnosed with another form of cancer, and had begun receiving hospice care the day before she died.

Mr. Rugeiro said his wife attended the last meeting of the town's Transportation Committee, on which he serves. She was an advocate for slowing down traffic on their street and the surrounding area "to protect pedestrians and the people walking with strollers," and was researching a type of traffic-calming device for the town at the time of her death, he said. "I'm going to follow up with it," he added.

In addition to her husband, she is survived by her children Paul, Nancy Daum, and John; their spouses; and six grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her grandson Joshua Rugeiro.

A reception will be held after the morning service at a location to be announced at the church.

The family requests that, in lieu of flowers, memorial donations be made to the American Cancer Society.

APP ACADEMY

continued from page 3

others, with each participant completing a project.

For both the pilot program and the upcoming summer camp, Max and Matthew enlisted help from their brothers, fifth-graders at La Entrada. John Dillabough and William Colbert, who have also learned to build apps, do tech support and are the chief activity officers. The younger boys are also "in charge of snacks," their big brothers say.

Now that the pilot program is complete, the boys say they are eager to learn HTML, a program that will enable them to submit their apps to a firm, PhoneGap, that will make the apps available to users of electronics from makers other than Apple.

Meanwhile, they are taking applications for their summer camp academies — which are filling up fast. Ms. Itskovitz notes that the academies are

"fully supervised," and designed for kids with little or no prior programming experience.

Each student will complete an app "that can be submitted to the App Store, and they will also hone their presentation skills in the process," she says. "Campers will present their apps to the group as if they were seeking funding from a venture capitalist, an idea that came from Matthew's dad, a local venture capitalist."

The cost for a one-week academy is \$350. Matthew notes that they're offering one position in each academy on "full scholarship for kids of less advantage." The assistance will include making a computer available for the student to take home to work on his or her project.

Go to menloappacademy.com to learn more about the academy or to enroll in a summer camp academy.

Ms. Itskovitz and Brett Colbert are Max's parents. Matthew's parents are Gary and Michelle Dillabough. ■

City clears path for Facebook

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

■ MENLO PARK

One by one, the public speakers at the April 17 meeting told the council in no uncertain terms what they thought about the proposed agreement with Facebook. And what they thought was all good.

The council apparently shared those sentiments, as it voted 5-0 to approve the terms.

The agreement lets Facebook go ahead with plans to employ as many as 6,600 people at its new headquarters at 1 Hacker Way in Menlo Park in return for a number of public benefits, including cash for the city.

Ten weeks of negotiations led to an agreement described as “so generous, so fair” by one speaker. The terms include:

- A total of \$8.5 million in graduated payments during the next 10 years, and followed by \$5 million during the subsequent four years as long as Facebook chooses to still exceed the former employee cap of 3,600 at the campus.

- Funding for bicycle and pedestrian improvements in Menlo Park and East Palo Alto, including at the intersection of Willow Road and U.S. 101.

- Capital improvement funding, local internship and job training programs, and economic incentives for Facebook employees to shop locally.

- A vehicle trip cap of 15,000 per day, with no more than

2,600 during each commute period. The periods are from 7 to 9 a.m. and from 4 to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Go to tinyurl.com/75wogfn to view the staff report and complete term sheet.

Exceeding the trip cap carries stiff daily penalties of \$500 to \$100,000 depending on the number of violations, according to a table provided in the staff report. “That table was kinda scary to me,” admitted

Facebook agrees to provide public benefits in return for right to expand operations in Menlo Park.

David Ebersman, Facebook’s chief financial officer, during the meeting. “I hadn’t seen it presented that way before.”

Since East Palo Alto would also be impacted by traffic, the agreement includes a clause that splits the trip cap fines between Menlo Park and the neighboring city, at a percentage to be determined in the future.

Councilman Rich Cline, who along with Mayor Kirsten Keith sat on the negotiations subcommittee, said he was grateful for Facebook’s willingness to collaborate. “You back up the brand with what you do,” he observed at the meeting.

He described going home during the last round of negotiations and wondering “if

there’s a mushroom cloud on the horizon. There was frustration on their part when they heard our final ask. They didn’t express it, but came back and collaborated again” and said the agreement would lead to a better community.

News about agreements with other impacted agencies, such as the Menlo Park Fire Protection District, trickled out following the council’s approval of the development agreement.

Facebook agreed to fund up to \$300,000 in fire-safety enhancements, including traffic pre-emption devices along four primary emergency access routes leading to the new Menlo Park campus, which will give emergency vehicles the

right-of-way through traffic signals, district chief Harold Schapelhouman announced on April 19.

“We are very appreciative of the financial and community support Facebook is providing to help support emergency response so the fire district can respond quickly in any emergency situation to the eastern areas of Menlo Park,” the chief said. “This agreement is only part of a broader relationship we have developed with Facebook to address the support of essential emergency services to this community and the Facebook campus.”

The final environmental impact report for Facebook’s planned campus expansion is expected to be released this week. ■

Beechwood School gets room to grow

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

Belle Haven resident Matt Henry got his wish: There were five green lights on the dais on April 17. The City Council unanimously voted to sell 1.5 acres on Terminal Avenue to Beechwood School, a private Belle Haven facility for grades K-8.

For \$1.25 million, the school not only got the 1.5 acres, but also the adjacent land the school currently sits on at 50 Terminal Ave.

According to principal Dave Laurence, the school plans to expand and build permanent structures to replace temporary facilities on the campus. “We expect to start construction in

the summer of 2013,” he told the Almanac. “The plan is to do half of the project in the summer of 2013 and the other half in the summer of 2014.”

The contract lets the city buy

Menlo Park council approves land sale in 5-0 vote.

back the land for the purchase price if a new school “is not substantially completed” within five years, and also gives Menlo Park preference if the school decides to sell the land for a non-educational use.

The sight of actual construction going on at the site will be something the community

hasn’t seen for 11 years, despite Habitat for Humanity’s efforts to build 22 affordable homes on the parcel since 2001. The nonprofit canceled the project after running into financial problems and community opposition.

Beechwood School faced its own challenges while trying to buy the land.

Previously council members had stated that the school’s bid was not high enough, but now both sides have decided that \$1.25 million is a fair price.

“It’s going to make our school better,” Mr. Laurence told the council during the Tuesday night meeting, saying that now students will have “more room to run and play and learn.” ■

REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Monica Corman



Buying in a Tight Market

Dear Monica:

I want to buy a home in a market where inventory is low, demand is high, and multiple offers are common. I may only want to stay in the property three to five years. How can I buy intelligently in this market? Should I try to rent instead?

Robert G.

Dear Robert:

I know that it is not easy to be a buyer in this market. You should take a hard look at each of your options and decide which is the best for you. Good four bedroom rentals in good school districts are hard to find, especially ones that rent for longer than 12-24 months. You would probably have to move multiple times in a five year period.

Buying a home is a more stable option. You can either buy in the lower

end of the range, e.g., an older home that needs updating, or you can buy an updated home in the mid-price range. There is more demand for these homes and you will likely be in competition with others. You need to be willing to compete to succeed, even to the point of feeling a little uncomfortable. That is the nature of a rising market, which we are currently in.

If you can afford to buy in the high end, you will have less competition but you will have more money invested in real estate. When you are ready to sell the property, it may be a good market or not. The area you want to buy in is strong and stable in the long term, but there are periodic fluctuations. Timing is key to selling well. Decide which of these options makes the most sense for you and find a home that fits.

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CHRIS AYERS PHOTO



Menlo releases final plan for downtown, El Camino Real

PLAN

continued from page 5

the possible addition of car lanes in the future, although the plan doesn't advocate going to six lanes of traffic. Going to six lanes would delete about 40 parking spaces, according to the city's analysis.

Mr. Rogers pointed to three changes meant to address the concerns of the Downtown Alliance, a group of downtown property and business owners worried about the plan's impact on the local economy. The revised specific plan suggests:

- Testing Santa Cruz Avenue sidewalks and central plaza, the Chestnut Street paseo, and market place improvements before full installation.

- Not allowing development on parking plazas, except for a small section of the market place area.

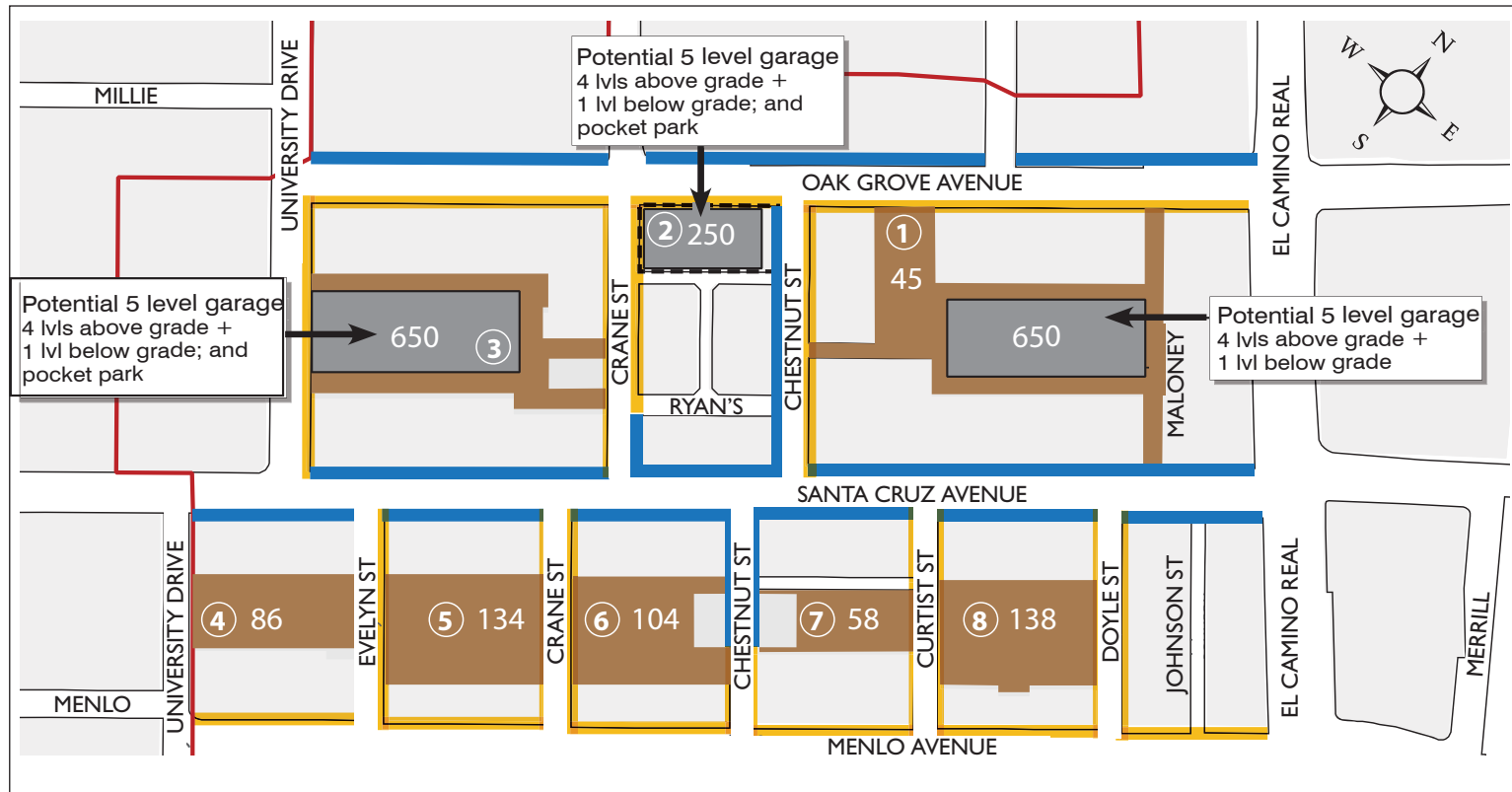
- Including parking plaza 2 (off Oak Grove Avenue and Chestnut Street) as a potential garage site.

Nancy Couperus, co-founder of the Downtown Alliance, said it will take some time to examine the final draft. She said the revisions listed by Mr. Rogers were suggested by the Planning Commission last fall and then accepted by the council.

"We were glad at the time that the commission did hear our concerns and that these modifications to the plan were made," she said in an email. "These were all very positive developments."

The Alliance remains concerned, however, about the impact of the proposed market place and partial closure of Chestnut Street on neighboring businesses and the weekly farmers' market, as well as whether the Menlo Park Presbyterian Church plans to expand.

"Even though we've been assured that no development plans are being contemplated, the purchase by the church of the five properties along University Drive from Santa Cruz Avenue to Oak Grove still makes



Map courtesy of the city of Menlo Park

Three potential parking garage sites are proposed in the latest version of the specific plan. The plan assumes up to two garages would be built. Parking Plaza 2 (off Oak Grove Avenue) is now included as a possible site, although plan analysis notes the layout would allow parking on only one side of the garage ramp, thus bumping up the relative cost per space.

us nervous," Ms. Couperus said. "If adequate parking is built on the church property and not on a public parking plaza, however, those fears will be mainly allayed."

She did not comment on the possibility of a lawsuit. The Downtown Alliance hired the Shulte, Mihaly & Weinberger LLP law firm last year to evaluate the draft environmental impact report (EIR) for the specific plan. At that time the attorneys concluded the report was flawed in eight areas, which will doubtless be scrutinized further with the release of the final EIR, which the city released alongside the final draft of the specific plan on April 19.

El Camino Real

Whether just passing through or spending some time in Menlo Park, people usually wind up on El Camino Real at some point. The specific plan aims to encourage mixed-use development along the corridor, particularly in the empty car dealership lots, without making the city look like a metropolis — thus the restrictions on building and facade heights.

One of the first things people notice about the local stretch of El Camino Real is the traffic. While discussions investigated

whether to expand the road to six lanes, the specific plan describes the "preferred configuration" of Menlo Park's main artery as four lanes with on-street parking and bike lanes.

The plan recommends a west-bound bike lane on Ravenswood

The market place is meant to complement, not compete with, the farmers' market, the plan says.

and Menlo avenues, and declares adding lanes on El Camino Real in the same area as well as from Encinal to Valparaiso avenues "feasible." However, south of Ravenswood and Menlo avenues, the curb's not wide enough, although that might change as properties undergo development.

Just like riding a bike down the main corridor, crossing the city's streets on foot can be a hair-raising experience. Although the revised plan doesn't include bulb-outs at El Camino Real's intersections with Oak Grove, Santa Cruz, and Ravenswood avenues — for now — it would try to make getting across the roads safer with high-visibility crosswalk and sidewalk upgrades, such as countdown timers, and grade-separated crossings above or below railroad tracks. New "public spaces" such as tree-shaded paseos, plazas and parks would let pedestrians stroll from

Fremont Park to the Caltrain station area or the Civic Center.

Santa Cruz Avenue

Pocket parks also pop up off Santa Cruz Avenue, near University Drive, Oak Grove Avenue, and Crane Street, along with a central plaza at its intersection with Chestnut Street. The specific plan suggests a market plaza located at

parking plazas 6 and 7 next to a paseo, off Chestnut Street. According to the revised draft, the market place is meant to complement, not compete with, the farmers' market, and could be used for everything from a band shell to restaurants to food stalls.

Development

The revised plan spells out five types of land use, and 10 zoning

districts, for the downtown/El Camino Real area. With a prevailing theme of "mixed use," the new regulations allow development of retail, residential, office, and public service facilities, for example. The zones allowing the most development are found at the southeast end of El Camino Real, with intensity decreasing moving north.

The plan seeks to limit development in two ways: capping the size of specific types of uses such as non-retail or office; and setting density limits for new construction or conversion of office space, especially medical and dental offices.

Other mechanisms attempt to protect local independent businesses from competition by larger chains. The plan proposes limiting both the size of particular businesses and the number of potential locations for larger operations. It also restricts ground-floor mixed-use development to mainly retail and restaurants. ▀

PUBLIC HEARINGS

The Planning Commission is scheduled to review and make its recommendations on the final draft of the specific plan and its environmental impact report on Monday, April 30. The meeting will start at 7 p.m. in the council chambers in the Civic Center at 701 Laurel St. The documents are then expected to go before the City Council on June 5 and June 12.

ON THE COVER

A rendering of what the intersection of El Camino Real and Santa Cruz Avenue could look like 30 years from now, according to the specific plan. The view is looking west on Santa Cruz Avenue. Wider sidewalks, taller buildings, mixed-use development, and improved crosswalk visibility are some of the new features proposed to encourage a vital downtown. Rendering courtesy of the city of Menlo Park.

Principals named for two schools

By Renee Batti

Almanac News Editor

Two new principals have been named to head Menlo Park City School District schools: Hillview Middle School in Menlo Park and Encinal School in Atherton.

Sharon A. Burns, principal of a Mountain View elementary school of 582 students, will be Encinal's new principal; and Erik A. Burmeister, principal of an 850-student San Jose middle school, will take over the Hillview post, pending school board approval.

Superintendent Maurice Ghysels of the Menlo Park City School District named the two administrators last week. The school board is expected to approve the appointments on May 8.

Encinal School

Ms. Burns has headed Frank L. Huff Elementary School for the last four years. During that time, she has "overseen the training and certification of all teachers in Gifted and Talented Education (GATE), while at the same time achieving a 30-point API (Academic Performance Index) increase for Latino student (and an 11-point overall increase for the school ...)," Mr. Ghysels said in a written statement announcing the appointment.

Mr. Ghysels and Ms. Burns have worked together before, when he served as superintendent of the Mountain View Whisman School District until he resigned that post in 2010.

She was "put forward as a candidate for the Encinal principal position by an outside search firm and was identified by our district interviewing panel as a finalist for the job," he said.

Before she became principal of Huff, Ms. Burns "spent 2005-2008 educating and coaching new teachers in the Mountain View Whisman School District," Mr. Ghysels said.



Sharon Burns, left, and Erik Burmeister are new principals in the Menlo Park City School District.

"She was one of the inaugural graduates of the Leadership Academy we established in the district when I was superintendent, which was designed to nurture and groom high-performing teachers for leadership positions."

The district sent out Ms. Burns' written responses to questions about various aspects of her past work and future plans at Encinal. Among her comments: "I believe parents make vital contributions, both academic and non-academic, toward creating the overall culture of a school. A true partnership with parents is required to ensure that students get the best education possible."

She said she believes in being "as accessible as possible" to parents while still addressing the demands she faces as principal.

Ms. Burns will replace Allison Liner as principal of the 772-student school in Atherton. Ms. Liner will leave her post at the end of the school year to become the district's chief learning officer.

Hillview Middle School

Mr. Burmeister was recently named California Middle Grades Principal of the Year 2012. He has been principal of Union Middle School in the Union School District since July 2007, and was the school's assistant principal for two years before that.

In a written statement announcing the appointment late last week, Superintendent Ghysels said: "The panels of administrators, teachers and parents who interviewed Erik during our rigorous hiring process

were consistently impressed by his commitment to innovation in education, as well as his understanding and appreciation of middle school students and their needs."

As Union School principal, Mr. Burmeister "has raised the school's API score by 102 points, and almost completely closed the achievement gap between white and Asian and Hispanic students," Mr. Ghysels said. "In 2001, for the first time in the school's history, every eighth-grade student met Union's requirements for graduation."

In addition, he said, no student is achieving at below-basic level, and more advanced students have been achieving at higher levels than in the past.

Mr. Burmeister's performance apparently has been attracting attention statewide. Mr. Ghysels said that more than 400 teachers, superintendents and board members from all over California have visited Union School over the past three years "to witness first-hand how Erik's team has implemented a program of meaningful learning and achievement for all students."

In his responses to a series of questions posed by the district and made available online, Mr. Burmeister commented on his goals as Hillview principal, saying he hopes that, under his leadership, the middle school "will reflect the unique developmental, social and academic needs of the young teenager."

"Both in our teaching methods and the broader culture of the school, we need to take positive risks, explore new frontiers, harness the natural energy of the teenager into amazing academic and social learning opportunities."

Mr. Burmeister will replace Mike Melton, who is retiring at the end of the school year.

Go to tinyurl.com/d6mhrne to read Ms. Burns' responses to questions from the district.

Go to tinyurl.com/cn2zmxid for Mr. Burmeister's responses. ■



Presented by
Mark Schmidt
Licensed Optician

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As middle age approaches, the eye lens becomes increasingly inflexible, making it harder to focus on near objects. This condition, known as "presbyopia" leads nearly everyone by age 60 to purchase reading glasses. The question then becomes: Why not buy inexpensive glasses at the pharmacy? The fact of the matter is that, because both lenses in these inexpensive reading glasses have the same effective power, they might not work well for people with significantly different focusing

power in each eye. Drugstore reading glasses are also set up with optical centers that provide for average pupillary distance (distance between two pupils), and may not match the wearer's eyes. Most important, any change in vision should prompt a professional eye exam.

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Mark Schmidt is an American Board of Opticianry and National Contact Lens Examiners Certified Optician licensed by the Medical Board of California. He can be easily reached at Menlo Optical, 1166 University Drive, Menlo Park. 650-322-3900.

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■ POLICE CALLS

MENLO PARK

Residential burglary reports:

■ Losses estimated at \$2,000 in break-in and theft of birth certificates, insurance information and miscellaneous jewelry, Henderson Ave., April 6.

■ Loss estimated at \$1,200 in unforced entry through kitchen window and theft of laptop computer, Laurel St., April 11.

■ Losses estimated at \$900 in unforced entry through unlocked bedroom sliding door and theft of three Tiffany necklaces, Cotton St., April 16.

■ Loss estimated at \$100 in forced entry through unlocked window after cutting screen and theft of antique wedding band, Concord Drive, April 15.

Auto burglary reports:

■ Loss estimated at \$269 in slashing of convertible roof and theft of tripod and flashlight from vehicle trunk, Sharon Park Drive, April 6.

■ Loss estimated at \$20 in entry through unlocked door and theft of cell phone charger, Hedge Road, April 17.

Attempted robbery report: John Sandifer, 36, of Redwood City arrested on attempted robbery charges after allegedly refusing to pay for cigarettes at gas station, reaching into his jacket as if for a weapon, and trying but failing to enter locked area of convenience store, Marsh Road, April 18.

Theft reports:

■ Losses estimated at \$2,250 in theft of cable TV box, two remote controls and DVD collection placed on sidewalk as victim was in process of moving, Sharon Road, April 17.

■ Losses estimated at \$1,500 in theft of tools from toolbox on construction site, Haven Ave., April 13.

■ Losses estimated at \$950 in theft of prescription sunglasses, GPS device and circular saw from unlocked vehicle, French Court, April 15.

■ Loss estimated at \$900 in theft of unlocked bicycle, Magnolia Court, April 18.

■ Losses estimated at \$730 in theft of swimming suit and two pairs of shoes delivered to door but not there when victim arrived home, Woodland Ave., April 18.

■ Loss estimated at \$300 in theft of unattended cell phone from cafeteria table, Jefferson Drive,

April 6.

■ Loss of about \$70 from coin box of sidewalk newspaper machine, one of three machines with damage done to padlocks, 600 block of Santa Cruz Ave., April 8.

Fraud reports:

■ Losses of \$9,300 in unauthorized purchases made from fraudulent checking account in victim's name, main police station at 701 Laurel St., April 16.

■ Transient Duane Hoffman, 51, arrested on charges that include unauthorized use of credit card, Rosewood Sand Hill Hotel at 2825 Sand Hill Road, April 9.

Stolen vehicle reports: Red 1998 Acura from driveway, Chester St., April 8.

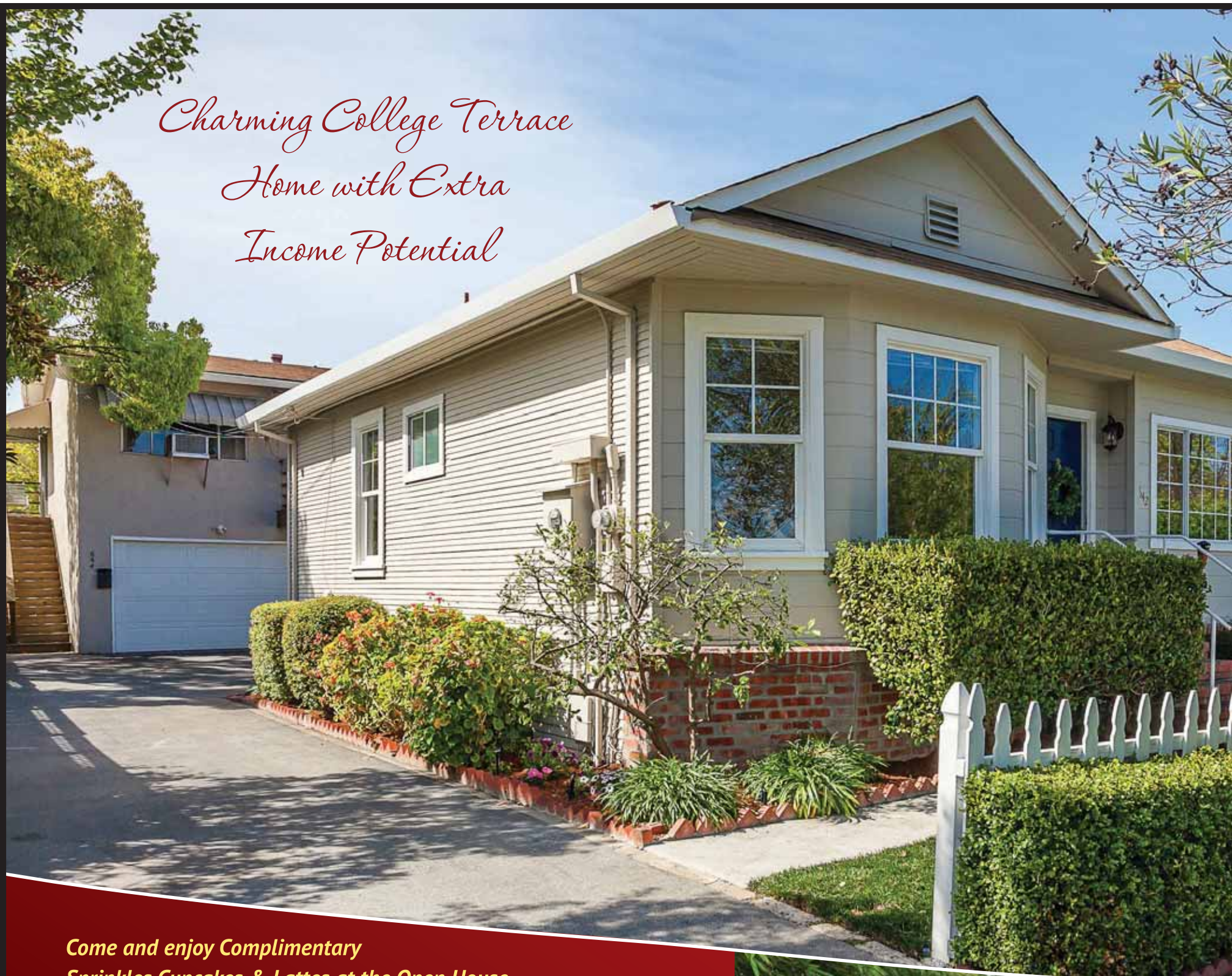
■ Green 1998 Volvo S70 unlocked with keys inside, Independence Drive, April 15.

WOODSIDE

Auto burglary report: Unknown losses from tools stolen in break-in to locked bed of pickup truck, Park N Ride, April 9.

Theft report: Loss estimated at \$250 in theft of video camera from unlocked vehicle, Oakford Road, April 11.

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Council reviews progress on Ford Field fundraising

■ PORTOLA VALLEY

A progress report on community fundraising for a proposed \$540,000 renovation of Ford (baseball) Field in Portola Valley comes to the Town Council at its 7:30 meeting on Wednesday, April 25.

About \$254,000 of the total is not yet firmly accounted for, and the town could be on the hook for what it does not raise in donations if it awards bids. Weighing heavily is a preference for groundbreaking in June so as to be far enough along when the rains start, but this is also a concern for other projects in the region that are competing for contractors.

The town has been promised a grant from the Sand Hill Foundation that would match up to

\$100,000 from the community. So far, the community has given \$1,800, a staff report says.

The report answers a key question: the council had asked whether \$50,000 pledged by the Alpine-West Menlo Little League could go toward that \$100,000 goal. It cannot, said a foundation representative.

The Little League commitment came before the offer of the matching grant, Executive Director Ash McNeely told Interim Assistant Town Manager Barbara Powell, according to the report. "The challenge is to new prospective donors," Ms. McNeely said.



Singer Pasquale Esposito visits with former Haven Family House residents Eliceo and Angel Cendejas, Executive Director Wendy Mattes, and miniature horse Kachina at Riley's Place.

Photo by Kathy Dugan

Italian tenor to perform at Riley's Place benefit

Die-hard fans will be pleased to hear that Italian tenor Pasquale Esposito is back by popular demand. For the second year in a row, he and his band will be performing to raise money for a local charity that runs a small farm in Woodside to provide animal therapy for children in need.

Founded in 2009, Riley's Place serves about 1,200 children a year, according to Executive Director Wendy Mattes. She oversees a collection of miniature horses, goats, rabbits, guinea pigs and a cat stabled in the rear of the National Center for Equine Facilitated Therapy at 880 Runnymede Road in Woodside.

Year-round, children who are challenged by major illnesses, disabilities, homelessness and domestic violence are invited to come interact with the animals in their hilly rural setting. Hens and roosters strut around the barn, and specially trained therapy dogs and NCEFT horses join in at times.

When volunteers take the animals offsite to see children at Ronald McDonald House at Stan-

ford or Shelter Network's Haven Family House in Menlo Park, some sheep and chickens might come along, too.

As a nonprofit, Riley's Place depends on sponsors and outside support. The third annual benefit dinner and concert will take place on Saturday, May 19, at the Elks Lodge in Palo Alto from 5:30 to 9 p.m.

Humorist Michael Pritchard will emcee the presentation, which will include some children speaking, a video, and silent and live auctions. Mr. Esposito will then serenade the guests with songs ranging from opera to contemporary.

Originally from Naples, the singer now lives in San Jose, where Ms. Mattes says he has developed a loyal following. Those fans showed up at last year's Italian dinner gala and she expects them to be back dancing at this year's event, too.

Tickets are \$100 each. The deadline for ordering is May 12. Contact wendy@rileys-place.org or call (650) 703-5199.

Going green pays off for business park

■ MENLO BRIEFS

the regular meeting at 7 p.m.

Saturday: Rebuilding Together Day

Rebuilding Together Peninsula celebrates 23 years on Saturday, April 28, as volunteers gather to repair and renovate community facilities and homes of low-income members of the community.

This year, teams will tackle 66 projects, including five homes and one community facility — Shelter Network's Haven Family House — in Menlo Park.

See rebuildingpeninsula.org for more information and to sign up.

Tuesday: 'Bathtubs

Bathtubs Everywhere'

Café Borrone is hosting an art exhibition, "Bathtubs Bathtubs Everywhere," by artists Michael Killen and Harry Cohen. Meet the artists on Tuesday, April 24, from 6 to 8 p.m. at the cafe, located at 1010 El Camino Real.

Concern about the proposed Cargill Saltworks Project inspired the artists, who said they wanted to increase awareness of the potential harm the development could cause.

"When I walked in and saw the

art I thought I had just gulped down a double espresso. This art is as alive as graffiti, but you know there is something deep behind it," café owner Roy Borrone said in a press release about the exhibit.

Shelly Masur gets Democratic nod

The crowded race for a seat on the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors has yet to thin out, but one of the eight candidates can now add the endorsement of the San Mateo County Democratic Central Committee to her list.

Shelly Masur got the nod, according to an announcement on April 20. The Redwood City school board member has been the leader in fundraising for the campaign to replace District 4 Supervisor Rose Jacobs Gibson, who terms out this year.

The top two vote-getters in the June 5 primary will face a runoff election in November. The other candidates are Menlo Park council members Andy Cohen and Kirsten Keith; county school board member Guillermo "Memo" Morantes, also of Menlo Park; East Palo Alto council members Carlos Romero and David Woods; Redwood City Planning Commissioner Ernesto "Ernie" Schmidt; and former county clerk-recorder-assessor and chief elections officer Warren Slocum.

Atherton: Special council meetings set

■ BRIEFS

Football fundraiser on Saturday

Freshmen playing against freshmen on the gridiron at Menlo-Atherton High School? The board of the Menlo-Atherton Football Association is considering the idea for the 2012 season.

The board is hosting a fundraising dance on Saturday, April 28, in an effort to raise about \$60,000 — \$40,000 to fund a 40-player freshman team, and \$20,000 for new varsity uniforms.

The M-A Football Bear Bash begins at 7 p.m. at the Arrillaga gymnasium in the complex at 701 Laurel St. in Menlo Park. "The Members," a Menlo Park-based band, will play live music.

The 2011 season went well for Menlo-Atherton. Varsity Head Coach Sione Taufouu was named coach of the year, the varsity team made it to the championship game, and the junior varsity team

was undefeated.

The school played under the lights at home for the first time and drew record crowds, the football association said.

Go to www.menloathertonfootball.com for more information.

Online auction benefits M-A High School

The Menlo-Atherton High School online auction goes live April 23 to April 29, when people can bid on items and getaways donated by parents and the community, says Paula Rash, spokesperson for the auction.

Visit www.maauction.org to make bids.

Among some 100 items and getaways are: A week in Tahoe, Steamboat Springs, or Sayulita, Mexico; a summer in New York City; Giants tickets; and dinner at Evvia restaurant in Palo Alto.

Proceeds benefit M-A High students through the school's Foundation For the Future.

County seeks public comment on plastic-bag ban at checkout

By Dave Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

With the support of Menlo Park, Portola Valley, Woodside and most other city and town governments in San Mateo County, the county's Department of Environmental Health Services is asking the public to comment on the scope of a proposed county-wide ordinance that would ban the use by retailers of single-use plastic bags at checkout counters.

Paper bags would still be available at the counters, but customers would have to buy them — paying a minimum of 10 cents until Dec. 31, 2014, and 25 cents after that.

The point would be to encourage people to shop with their own reusable bags, Dean Peterson, the director of Environmental Health Services for San Mateo County, told the Portola Valley Town Council recently.

An environmental impact report (EIR) is in the works. A staff report online describes the proposed ordinance and includes ways to comment, either by writing or by attending one of six public meetings, including one at 6 p.m. on Thursday, May 3, in the Redwood City Public Library at 1044 Middlefield Road.

Submit written comments before May 6 to Planner Camille M. Leung in the Planning and Building Department at 455 County Center, Second Floor, in Redwood City, CA 94063. By email, contact Ms. Leung at cleung@smcgov.org.

Public comments will "help cities and local jurisdictions decide whether to ban paper and plastic bags," the report says.

Redwood City joins Portola Valley, Woodside and Menlo Park among the 18 city and town governments in San Mateo County listed as supporting this proposal. Atherton is not on the list, but then Atherton has no retail outlets. The list also includes six cities and towns in Santa Clara County.

A group effort is important in that ordinances in individual communities have been vulnerable to court challenges by deep-pocketed bag manufacturers. With an EIR, paid for by the county, this ordinance would be harder to challenge, Mr. Peterson told the Woodside Town Council in March.

Restaurants and other food service outlets would be exempt, and the ban would not affect the plastic bags used for raw or bulk foods, medicines and bags meant to prevent cross-contamination inside a shopping bag. Retailers would have to keep detailed records on bag-related costs and



Photo by Michelle Le/The Almanac

Rumors of a ban on plastic bags at retail checkout counters are true. The county's Department of Environmental Health Services is rallying support for a county-wide environmental ordinance that would also levy a 10-cent fee for a paper bag, thereby encouraging customers to bring their own reusable bags.

revenues related to complying with this ordinance.

Meeting schedule

Here is the schedule of public meetings:

- Half Moon Bay: Wednesday, April 18, at 6 p.m. in the Ted Adcock Community/Senior Cen-

ter Sun Room at 535 Kelly Avenue.

- San Mateo: Thursday, April 19, at 5:30 p.m. in the Oak Room at San Mateo Public Library at 55 West Third Ave.

- Mountain View: Wednesday,

See **PLASTIC BAGS**, page 16

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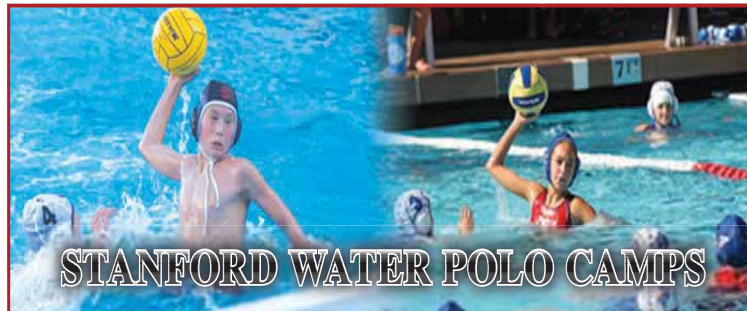
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(continued on next page)

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(continued from previous page)

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synapseschool.org/curriculum/summer 650-866-5824

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Road work in Portola Valley

By Dave Boyce
 Almanac Staff Writer

New asphalt and repainted surface markings are coming to selected roadways in Portola Valley, most of them in the Portola Valley Ranch neighborhood.

The work is set to start this week, and continue through June 30, weather permitting. Road surfaces may be rough and uneven and contain loose gravel, and may be in an unfinished condition for a time, the town said. Contractors are allowed this flexibility in exchange for competitive pricing on the work.

Motorists may encounter regulated traffic on weekdays between 8 a.m. and 5:30 p.m., with no-parking and tow-away signs going up two days ahead of the work, the Public Works Department said.

For questions or concerns during construction, call on-site inspector Tom Anderson at (831) 915-3395.

Email hyoung@portolavalley.net to contact Public Works Director Howard Young for general project questions, or call him at 851-1700, ext. 200.

The details:

■ A more intensive grading and resurfacing known as cape seal is set for Georgia Lane off Portola Road, Golden Oak Drive in the Westridge neighborhood, and Bear Paw, Longspur, Ohlone and Valley Oak streets in the Ranch, Public Works Director Howard Young told the Almanac.

■ A less intensive resurfacing using a slurry seal is set for Upper Alpine Road, Bayberry Street in unincorporated Los Trancos Woods/Vista Verde, and the following roadways in the Ranch: Buckeye, Coyote Hill and Foxtail courts; Hawkview, Thistle, Wintercreek and Woodfern streets; Coalmine View, and Franciscan Ridge. ■

PLASTIC BAGS

continued from page 13

April 25, at 6 p.m. in the City Council Chambers at 500 Castro St.

■ South San Francisco: Thursday, April 26, at 6 p.m. in the Municipal Services Building at 33 Arroyo Drive.

■ Campbell: Wednesday, May 2, at 6 p.m. in the Campbell Public Library at 77 Harrison Ave.

■ Milpitas: Thursday, May 3, at 2 p.m. in Room 140 in the Barbara Lee Senior Center at 40 North Milpitas Boulevard.

■ Redwood City: Thursday, May 3, at 6 p.m. in the Redwood City Public Library at 1044 Middlefield Road.

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Town backs bans on plastic bags at checkout, Styrofoam containers

By Dave Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

The Portola Valley Town Council has agreed to adopt a San Mateo County ordinance that bans Styrofoam food containers, and support another law that would ban plastic bags at retail checkout stands.

The council — with members Ted Driscoll and Jeff Aalfs absent — adopted “by reference” on April 11 a county ordinance that prohibits food vendors from selling carryout food in containers made of polystyrene, often called Styrofoam. The material cannot be recycled or re-used and contaminates roadsides, waterways and the ocean.

The council plans to take final action April 25, and the law would go into effect 30 days later.

Retailers affected by the polystyrene ban include food trucks that come to town, Roberts Market, the restaurant at the Alpine Hills Swim and Tennis Club, and the Alpine Inn, also known as Rossotti's.

Roberts, the Alpine Hills restaurant and the Portola Cafe Deli have already adopted practices consistent with the polystyrene ban, Brandi de Garmeaux, the town's coordinator for environmental initiatives, said. The town will be contacting Rossotti's, and “has worked quite a bit” with the food trucks, Ms. de Garmeaux said.

In adopting this ordinance by reference, the town joins a regional effort managed and enforced by the county.

Authors to speak at Atherton benefit

Celebrated authors Anne Lamott and Dr. Abraham Verghese will appear on stage at a spring garden party from 4 to 7 p.m. Sunday, April 29, in Atherton. The event benefits Bay Area-based Global AIDS Interfaith Alliance (GAIA).

Baba Ken Okulolu and the Nigerian Brothers will perform. Wine from Kingston Vineyards, provided by Portola Valley resident and winery owner Courtney Kingston, and gourmet appetizers from Paradise Foods will be served.

Kaboni Gondwe, recipient of a GAIA nursing scholarship and current Fulbright scholar, will share her life story with guests. Ms. Gondwe is from Malawi, a southern Africa country where the Global AIDS Interfaith Alliance works to feed, clothe and educate AIDS orphans and provide HIV testing.

Marty Arscott of Atherton chairs GAIA; Andy Pflaum of Portola Valley is vice chair.

Go to thegaia.org to purchase tickets.

PORTOLA VALLEY

Mayor Maryann Derwin and council members John Richards and Ann Wengert also voted to support a proposed plastic bag ban that would require customers at checkout stands who don't have their own reusable bags to pay for new paper ones. A majority on the Woodside Town Council voted to support this proposal in March.

“I think it's great,” Ms. Wengert said before voting to support the proposed ban on the bags.

“I do, too,” Mr. Richards said. “It's about time,” Mayor Derwin said.

The ban would affect handled plastic bags at checkout counters, not the plastic bags used to package produce and meat.

Paper bags would go for a minimum of 10 cents until Dec. 31, 2014, and 25 cents after that. The point would be to encourage people to shop with their own reusable bags, Dean Peterson, the director of Environmental Health Services for San Mateo County, told the council.

During a discussion of a similar ordinance now in effect in San Jose, Councilwoman Ann Wengert questioned Mr. Peterson on compliance and the effect on families buying lots of groceries. “It's a complete change of behavior,” she noted.

Compliance is going well, Mr. Peterson said. “Lately, they've gotten their minds around it.”

As for large purchases of groceries, the fact that there's been no data indicates that it's probably not a

problem, he said.

“It's a huge change in behavior. ... We need to go back to a more sustainable way of living,” Mr. Peterson said. “This is one of the ways we can do that.”

A ban on all single-use bags is not unforeseeable, he said, and noted having heard of one store in a Bay Area grocery chain that has checkout counters that have no bags at all. ■

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Editor & Publisher

Tom Gibboney

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Managing Editor Richard Hine

News Editor Renee Batti

Lifestyles Editor Jane Knoerle

Staff Writers

Dave Boyce, Sandy Brundage

Contributors Marjorie Mader,

Barbara Wood, Kate Daly

Special Sections Editors

Carol Blitzer, Sue Dremann

Photographer Michelle Le

Design & Production

Design Director Raul Perez

Designers Linda Atilano, Lili Cao,

Shannon Corey, Diane Haas, Paul

Llewellyn, Scott Peterson

Advertising

Vice President Sales

and Marketing Tom Zahiralis

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Adam Carter

Real Estate Manager Neal Fine

Real Estate and Advertising

Coordinator Diane Martin

Classified Legal Advertising

Alicia Santillan

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Newsroom Fax: (650) 223-7525

Advertising: (650) 854-2626

Advertising Fax: (650) 854-3650

Email news and photos with

captions to:

Editor@AlmanacNews.com

Email letters to:

letters@AlmanacNews.com

The Almanac, established in September 1965, is delivered each week to residents of Menlo Park, Atherton, Portola Valley and Woodside and adjacent unincorporated areas of southern San Mateo County. The Almanac is qualified by decree of the Superior Court of San Mateo County to publish public notices of a governmental and legal nature, as stated in Decree No. 147530, issued December 21, 1969.

Subscriptions are \$60 for one year and \$100 for two years.



WHAT'S YOUR VIEW?

All views must include a home address and contact phone number. Published letters will also appear on the web site, www.TheAlmanacOnline.com, and occasionally on the Town Square forum.

TOWN SQUARE FORUM

Post your views on the Town Square forum at www.TheAlmanacOnline.com

EMAIL your views to:

letters@almanacnews.com and note this it is a letter to the editor in the subject line.

MAIL or deliver to:

Editor at the Almanac,
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Menlo Park, CA 94025.

CALL the Viewpoint desk at 223-6507.

A big thumbs up for Facebook deal

If Menlo Park didn't get everything it wanted in the recently completed negotiations with Facebook, it's hard to imagine what didn't make the final cut.

With more than 800 million users signed up for its ubiquitous social networking site and a massive public stock offering around the corner, Facebook apparently was not interested in haggling with Menlo Park over a few million dollars.

Instead, the company agreed to pay the city \$8.5 million in graduated payments over the next 10 years to make up for the sales tax that another manufacturer would generate. In return, Facebook receives the right to add 3,000 employees to the 3,600 already permitted at the former Sun campus on what is now

1 Hacker Way. The company accepted a cap of 15,000 vehicle trips per day, with no more than 2,600 each in the morning and evening commute hours, from 7 to 9 a.m. and 4 to 6 p.m.

The deal was hailed by many speakers at last week's City Council meeting and passed 5-0. Mayor Kirsten Keith and other officials spoke highly of the company, with Councilman Rich Cline saying he was grateful for the company's willingness to collaborate.

Beyond the cash payouts to Menlo Park, the agreement shows how deeply the company is committed to being a good neighbor. For example, Facebook said it will create a local community fund with an initial \$500,000 contribution in partnership with an existing nonprofit organization. Menlo Park and East Palo Alto will each place a member on the board of the nonprofit, with Facebook filling the remaining three seats.

The company will sponsor a wide range of job fairs and workshops, including a session on how to get a job at Facebook. Going even further, the company's vendors will let local residents know when they are hiring, and Facebook will promote local opportunities for its own employees to volunteer within the community.

EDITORIAL

The opinion of The Almanac

The agreement also addresses housing, with Facebook investing in a housing project in Menlo Park by either committing to leasing units or allowing the developer to market the project to company employees. It's looking at other possibilities, including investments in low-income housing tax credits, according to Facebook.

Area merchants will be happy to hear that the Facebooks program — which provides a trackable \$25 debit card for Facebook employees to spend at nearby businesses — will continue for three years. The company also agreed to try to use local vendors for on-campus goods and services, and to contribute to a Willow Road business improvement district with \$50,000 in seed funding.

Facebook is prepared to tackle a wide range of projects, from improving bicycle and pedestrian trails in Menlo Park and East Palo Alto to assisting with running electrical transmission lines underground in its neighborhood. The company will also work with the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge to adopt policies to protect local wildlife and the ecosystem.

To better protect its buildings and personnel, Facebook will pay up to \$300,000 to improve fire safety, including the installation of a system for Menlo Park Fire Protection District trucks to gain the right-of-way through four traffic signals on Willow Road.

Chief Harold Schapelhouman said the deal is only part of a broad relationship to address support of essential emergency services in the eastern community and on the Facebook campus.

East Palo Alto also stands to benefit, through sharing traffic cap violation fines and other agreements, although the final details weren't available at press time.

Through these agreements and their efforts to welcome the community to their new home, Facebook is already a significant player on the Midpeninsula. Menlo Park, East Palo Alto and the fire district are fortunate to have a company of this caliber to add its formidable presence here. We are pleased to join the crowd with a "thumbs up" for Facebook.

Our Regional Heritage

This stone castle on Portola Road is the only surviving building of Willowbrook Farm, where Herbert E. Law grew herbs in the early 1900s. Mr. Law's property extended all the way to Alpine Road and was home to up to 50 men and a few women who tended the gardens and fields to produce the herbs and exotic plants used to make his "miracle" drug Viavi, which was sold around the world.

Portola Valley Archives



LETTERS

Our readers write

Questions on sewer line responsibility

Editor:

As a homeowner in Menlo Park, I understand that the sewer line to the main trunk from my street clean-out is my responsibility.

As a longtime resident, I don't know when I earned that responsibility. My question is when did this happen and did I have a voice in the matter?

Also if the city owns the sidewalk and street over my sewer line, can I have them remove and replace it so I can repair my sewer line?

Tom Wong
Hedge Road, Menlo Park

Menlo failed other cities in negotiations

Editor:

Kudos are due to Facebook for simultaneously negotiating with Menlo Park, East Palo Alto and the Menlo Park Fire Protection District (which predates and serves Menlo Park, Atherton and East Palo Alto) on the impact of its planned expansion on each of these entities. Facebook has shown remarkable patience and understanding in this process.

Shame on the city of Menlo Park for its totally selfish behavior in this process. Under the law the city of Menlo Park was the designated lead agency for these negotiations.

Unfortunately Menlo Park so completely ignored the impacts of this project on other local jurisdictions that those jurisdictions were forced to negotiate directly with Facebook.

One jurisdiction, Atherton, did not lose faith in Menlo Park to properly perform its legally obligated lead agency role, and, as a result, ended up with nothing. I suspect that Atherton may well now attempt to block this project in court, a sad, but totally preventable outcome.

With the Facebook project, the city of Menlo Park totally disgraced itself as being a selfish and irresponsible lead agency. And this is not the first such failure — Menlo Park did exactly the same thing on the Gateway project.

Peter Carpenter
Larchmont Drive, Atherton

Cut downtown plan, not the library staff

Editor:

The city of Menlo Park needs to stop throwing money at the ill-advised downtown plan and support our city services instead.

Case in point: our library hours and staff have been cut back again and again, and now I learn that the city is about to do away with library staff service at the circulation desk altogether, and plans to install an RFID checkout system instead.

These systems are riddled with problems and are hugely frustrating for library patrons. In addition, they expose people to yet another source of radio waves — the last thing we need.

Instead of adding to the \$1.5 million of our tax dollars that the city has handed over to the consultants who came up with a plan for our downtown that only a developer could love, let's fund our library staff.

Otherwise: imagine waiting in line for the privilege of using the automated RFID checkout, opening every CD and DVD you wish to check out, and putting them one by one into a slot so they can be read by these machines, which are notorious for breaking down and/or not working properly.

Imagine missing the opportunity to interact with a familiar library staff member, who may not only remind you that your library card needs renewing, but also may comment on a book or film you're checking out, or make a recommendation regarding a book or film you never heard of.

The RFID checkout plan is a lose-lose proposition. The community loses, the library loses, the library staff loses.

Not long ago, our council gave well over \$2 million to Menlo-Atherton High School to help build its Performing Arts Center. This has been of nearly no value to our residents.

Let's be wiser with our money. Let's jettison the RFID plan and keep our library fully staffed. Let's preserve what we have — it's worth preserving.

Cherie Zaslowsky
Downtown Menlo Park

Saturday-Sunday, April 28-29

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City of Menlo Park Document Destruction & Electronics Recycling Event



In time for Spring Cleaning, the City of Menlo Park will hold a Document Destruction and Electronics Recycling Event. Residents and businesses can drop off confidential documents for destruction and recycle outdated electronics.

When: Saturday, May 5th from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Where: Menlo Park Corporation Yard: 333 Burgess Drive

What:

- Up to three boxes (10" x 12" x 15") of confidential documents per vehicle
- All electronics are accepted
- Limit of 5 fluorescent tubes/bulbs per vehicle

Who: Menlo Park residents and businesses (driver's license, business card or business license required)

For more information, contact City of Menlo Park Environmental Program at (650) 330-6740 or email recycle@menlopark.org

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LUXURY REAL ESTATE

Menlo Park



A harmonious mix of traditional aesthetics and contemporary finishes, this gorgeous new construction has all the features to satisfy even the most discerning buyer. This 5BR, 6.5BA Mediterranean-inspired home boasts 6,000SF of living space set on a sprawling 19,600SF lot. Sleek fixtures, smart home systems, streamlined moldings, and monochromatic motif give it a modern flair. Located on a peaceful street within the award-winning Las Lomas School District, this spectacular home has it all. \$4,800,000
Jennifer Gonzalez La'O 650.218.6491

Lake Tahoe



On the West Shore of Lake Tahoe, The Schilling Estate at Paradise Flat offers a once in a lifetime opportunity to purchase arguably one of the finest properties in all of Lake Tahoe. Built by Master Craftsmen, this estate has vaulted ceilings, 9BR, 9BA, 4980SF+/- of living space, dining room with seating for 16, grand fireplace, 7.35 acres of sunny, level, pristine land & 400FT of lake & beach frontage. Offered for the first time since 1935, this property is on 2 legal parcels which offers opportunity to build an additional estate & 2 additional guest homes. \$19,950,000
Michael Oliver 530.308.4728

PENINSULA OFFICE
1050 Doyle Street
Menlo Park, CA 94025
Tel: 650.321.8900
www.oliverlux.com

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5355 W. Lake Blvd.
Homewood, CA 96141
Tel: 530.525.5100
www.oliverlux.com