

Questionnaire for City Council Candidates 2009

Palo Alto Neighborhoods (PAN)

To the readers: The intended audience for this questionnaire is normal residents who are interested in the issues (versus activists who are deeply enmeshed) and the candidates were instructed to respond appropriately (detail and length). The candidates have diverse backgrounds and the questions are intended to be open enough to allow them to demonstrate their knowledge, experience, priorities and perspectives while being constrained enough to allow you to make comparisons between the candidates. The questions are not intended to allow safe, generic responses that reveal little. The candidates' responses will stay in the same order relative to each other, but we rotated whose response is first. Candidates have the option of including clickable links (hyperlinks) in their responses and of making the name at the beginning of each response clickable.

For more information on the candidates and their positions, you are encouraged to visit their individual websites, which can be found at:

[I] Corey Levens : www.electcoreylevens.com

Terminology: "the City" refers to the government of the City of Palo Alto.

1. Reason for running: What are your primary reasons for running for City Council?

[I] Corey Levens : www.electcoreylevens.com

Twenty years ago, my wife and I moved to Palo Alto to raise our family, pursue our careers, and live in a city which shared our values and ideals. But in those 20 years, we watched as Palo Alto leadership consistently failed to resolve major issues and made decisions that detracted from the quality of life in our community. The next City Council will be called upon to confront at least six major challenges: Eliminating a huge budget deficit; encouraging development without compromising quality of life; financing the upgrading of Palo Alto's decaying infrastructure; addressing complex housing issues; High Speed Rail; and, now, repairing Palo Alto's damaged labor relations.

The new Council needs an infusion of new leadership which is free from and unburdened by the lack of vision of previous Councils and councilmembers. The next City Council must have the courage to address these issues, backed up by the real-world skills, knowledge and experience necessary to do so.

I will bring a NEW VOICE and a NEW PERSPECTIVE to the City Council. I have practiced corporate law for more than 20 years representing large corporations and now focusing on start-up and emerging growth companies; I am intimately knowledgeable of the needs and concerns of small business owners having previously owned and operated a small retail business, a franchise called "Once Upon a Child," starting with a store in Mountain View and a second store in San Jose; I am deeply involved in local neighborhood and school organizations having served on the Board of Directors of my local neighborhood association, the Green Acres Improvement Association, serving 4 years on each of the Nixon Elementary School, Terman Middle School, and Gunn High School Site Councils, being a member of the High School Task Force and the Terman School Principal Search Committee, and serving on the Board of Directors of the Stanford Campus Recreation Association (SCRA).

I believe I will be a valuable member of the City Council and can make a fundamental difference working with other councilmembers as we usher Palo Alto into the next decade. I am committed to working tirelessly to make Palo Alto a stronger and better place to live, work, and enjoy the highest quality of life.

2. Experience:

Non-incumbents: Describe your personal experience with Palo Alto City government and recent issues that have come before the Council (Public Hearings). What was your role? (For example, did you send an email, speak to the Council, lead a group of citizens, etc.?) How extensively were you involved?

Incumbent (Klein): What have been your major initiatives on the Council? Describe your role and the results.

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To date, my involvement in the community has focused on local neighborhood and school organizations and issues. I have served on the Board of Directors of my local neighborhood association, the Green Acres Improvement Association, for 4 years; I served for 4 years on each of the Nixon Elementary School and Terman Middle School Site Councils and am currently serving my fourth year on the Gunn High School Site Councils; I was a member of the High School Task Force and the Terman School Principal Search Committee; and I have served on the Board of Directors of the Stanford Campus Recreation Association (SCRA), which just re-opened after a total renovation, for the last 5 years.

I have not been an ardent “Council watcher” and only occasionally attended City Council meetings. I have, however, paid close attention to the activities and decisions of the Council and their impact on the neighborhoods of Palo Alto. And, as a practicing attorney with my office located in Palo Alto, I have paid close attention to the manner in which the Council has treated the business community. It is my dissatisfaction with what I have seen that has motivated me to run for the Council. As a new candidate, and one who has not sought or accepted the endorsements of former or sitting Council members, I believe I can bring a sorely needed and long overdue NEW VOICE and NEW PERSPECTIVE to the Council.

3. Potential conflicts of interest: The City Council can be hampered in its deliberations when members have to [recuse](#) themselves because of conflicts of interest. Please identify potential conflicts that you may have (excluding your personal residence) in ongoing or forthcoming issues.

[I] Corey Levens : www.electcoreylevens.com

My wife, Anjini Kochar, has been an employee of Stanford University since we moved to the Palo Alto/Stanford area 20 years ago. Initially, she was a member of the faculty in the Economics Department, and for about the last 10 years has been a Research Fellow at the Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research. She is currently the head of SIEPR’s India Program.

As a result of this connection, I will unfortunately need to recuse myself from the affairs of the Council that deal with issues concerning Stanford. I do not, to my knowledge, have any other conflicts of interest.

- 4. Deficit:** The City has a large structural deficit. A large part of its costs are for employees, both current and retired. How do you propose to contain those costs? If you advocate reductions in the workforce, which services would be affected? Do you advocate an alternative way(s) to contain costs?

[I] Corey Levens : www.electcoreylevens.com

I believe the budget deficit, currently projected at more than \$10,000,000, and the even larger projected deficits for the next few years, are the biggest threat to the City and the very nature, character, and quality of life we have enjoyed in Palo Alto. Budget deficits of this size will have a cancerous impact threatening the City's ability to provide the services and programs that make Palo Alto special. Environmental plans, transportation services, arts projects, and other services and facilities will all be placed in jeopardy unless we can control our finances. We urgently need a City Council with a NEW VOICE and a NEW PERSPECTIVE to attack this problem.

Palo Alto's costs for providing services are greater than virtually every other community in our area for providing similar services. The City's ratio of workers to population far exceeds Mountain View's, for example, and is a major factor behind the structural deficit that Palo Alto faces. Currently, the City Council, trying to make up for past years of bad negotiating, has determined that the City's workers should fund a large part of our deficit through wage and benefits cuts. While such cuts, if they occur, would assist in managing our deficit, they would likely be more than offset by the deterioration in labor relations and quality of life for our community that will ensue. They also do not address the large structural deficit in the budget.

I therefore prefer an approach that more directly addresses the structural deficit. There are currently many unfilled positions which the City continues to fully fund and which I believe can be eliminated and which I believe our workers will support eliminating. The current solutions being put forth also make no mention of correcting the even bigger problem of the ratio of managerial and supervisory staff to workers of approximately 1 manager for every 3 staff workers. These are the high paying positions most Palo Altans refer to when they complain about the large salaries being paid to City workers.

The City Council's proposal for closing this year's budget deficit also includes one time accounting manipulations (e.g., \$3 million in temporary funding reductions for the City's infrastructure and \$1.4 million in proposed increases from other funds to the General Fund). Instead of "borrowing" from such funds and delaying the repair of streets and sidewalks, we should be borrowing from the "rainy day" funds that have been established to compensate for unusual circumstances, such as the unusual economic times we are now experiencing. I believe such borrowing will be a one time event and that with the changes described above we can make substantial progress towards closing our budget deficits in 2010 and beyond.

- 5. Business license tax:** What is your position on a business license tax, such as the one on the November ballot?

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As a former small business owner (I owned and operated a retail, franchise children's store, "Once Upon A Child," in Mountain View, and a second store in San Jose, from 1993-98), I am extremely familiar with the concerns of small business owners and the burdens placed upon them. As a corporate attorney for 20 years, I am extremely familiar with the concerns of large corporations.

A business tax, depending on how it is constructed, can be a significant and legitimate source of revenue for Palo Alto. Provided it is properly designed and applied, I am in favor of a business tax **so long as it is no greater than the lowest such tax in any of the surrounding communities with which Palo Alto competes for attracting new businesses**. Palo Alto must stem the exodus of businesses from Palo Alto to other communities and must start attracting businesses to our City. The decline in sales tax revenue is a large contributor to our current budget woes, and it cannot all be attributed to a declining economy. To enact the business tax being proposed by the Council at this time is bad policy. It is time to bring new thinking to the Council.

In designing a business tax, the form of business tax I would support would be based on receipts, rather than on the number of employees. A tax based on the number of employees (as the business community favored), would provide a direct incentive for cutting employment and I would find it difficult to support such a policy. I believe a receipts based tax makes much more sense and is easily manageable (the software I used in the '90's allowed me to determine my receipts at any given time). I am aware that the business community is wary of a tax based on receipts due to confidentiality concerns (as a small business owner I would not have wanted my revenues made public), but I believe that with the assistance of the business community such concerns can be overcome. Finally, I believe that for any business tax, small businesses should pay only a nominal tax, and the rates should be graduated according to the size of the business up to a specified maximum amount.

6. Utilities Funds: Currently a portion of the City's Utility Fund is paid into the General Fund. What do you think are appropriate levels for such payments?

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Palo Alto's City Charter requires that the revenues from each of our public utilities (electric, gas, water, water collection emergency plant replacement) be kept in separate funds from other receipts and that these revenues be used for specified purposes – payment of operating and maintenance expenses, payment of interest on funded debt, repayment of principal, payment of capital expenditures, and an annual payment to a reserve fund for contingencies (subject to certain limitations). Any remaining amount is then paid to the General Fund.

In effect, then, funds paid into the General Fund from the revenues collected by Palo Alto's utilities amount to taxes levied on the people of Palo Alto, who are the primary consumers for these utilities. The question, then, is how much of our utility payments should comprise a tax on the people of Palo Alto as opposed to necessary payments for required reserves?

I do not believe that the City's Utility Fund should be used as a means to tax the people of Palo Alto (and I question the legality of doing so). Rates should be sufficient to adequately fund the various reserves required by the City Charter in order to assure proper functioning utilities and to cover risks and contingencies. The amounts paid into these reserves must then be monitored on a regular basis to insure that adequate reserves are maintained.

7. High Speed Rail (HSR): What is your position on HSR, including undergrounding? If HSR is built, should the City request a station? What should be the City's role?

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The High Speed Rail project is potentially the most divisive and most important issue to face the Palo Alto community in a generation. No other issue or project will have as great an impact on the community in terms of land use and economic issues. It is essential, therefore, that the Palo Alto City Council speak with a united voice on this issue in order to have the greatest impact and influence with the HSR Authority. I believe that Palo Alto will also have to work closely with other communities, as it has done in some instances already, to have its concerns be heard and considered. Funding our own redundant, independent studies and filing meaningless friend of court briefs are a waste of valuable resources.

At present, it is impossible to make a judgment on HSR. There are simply too many variables and too many unknown issues. It seems to me, however, that the HSR route (Pacheco Pass vs. Altamont Pass), the impact of that route on Palo Alto, and the design of HSR in Palo Alto are at the heart of the issue for Palo Alto. Additionally, if the HSR route goes through Palo Alto, we must determine whether we want a station in Palo Alto or whether we prefer to watch as the trains zip through our City for stops in Redwood City or other locales. The City Council must be vigilant and forceful in making its position known and heard, otherwise, we run the risk of being steamrolled by Sacramento and others with vested interests.

In order for me to support HSR, several conditions will need to be satisfied. Most importantly, the dislocation of people and homes along the chosen route must be minimized at all costs. In addition, it is absolutely unacceptable for HSR design to, in effect, divide the community by virtue of a huge, obtrusive, "wall" that bisects Palo Alto from one end to the other. This most likely means either tunneling through the City or elevating the tracks (as was shown in a creative design proposed by architects located in Palo Alto). Regardless, it is imperative that the design have the approval of the people of Palo Alto.

If an acceptable route and design for HSR is finally approved, I believe that the economic well-being of Palo Alto requires that there be a station in Palo Alto. HSR will be a symbol of the type of progress and innovation that Palo Alto, as the heart and soul of Silicon Valley, is known for throughout the world. To have HSR simply run through our community without stopping, and permit other communities to reap the rewards and benefits that a HSR station will bring, is unacceptable. Such a prospect will inevitably lead to a shift of economic power and influence to the communities where stations are located. Palo Alto is already losing businesses at an alarming rate. A HSR station will help reverse that flow and bring business, and sales tax revenues, back to Palo Alto.

8. Retail: Palo Alto has multiple business districts and neighborhood centers. The health of a retail area is dependent on far more than just individual stores. Although cities cannot provide the level of management found in malls, other cities do more than Palo Alto. What should the City do to support the retail sector?

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From 1993-1998, I owned and operated a small, retail franchise children's store, "Once Upon A Child," in Mountain View. I later opened a second store in San Jose. The retail sector is, in my opinion and from my experience, the most difficult business there is. I eventually sold my stores and returned to the much "saner" hours of practicing law in a large law firm. I have unlimited respect for the grit and determination of the owners of the many retail businesses in Palo Alto. My response to this question is, therefore, based on my personal experiences in owning a small business in the retail sector.

As a store owner, I did not expect the city to manage the mall my store was located in, or to provide subsidies, or to determine what type of store would locate near me. What I did

expect was that the city would efficiently and professionally provide basic services, such as police and fire protection, that the trash would be collected regularly, and, most of all, that the city would not make doing business more difficult than it inherently is. I also found that my best days were when there were city celebrations, art fairs, and other similar functions going on.

To support the retail sector, therefore, the City must provide the services we all expect of the City and do so efficiently and effectively. The City should encourage and, when appropriate, promote community events. Such events serve to improve the quality of life in Palo Alto and make life in here more exciting and interesting. But most of all, the City must not make it more difficult and expensive to do business in Palo Alto than it already is. We cannot afford to drive these businesses away to other cities. Palo Alto has already lost too many businesses. We must reverse this tide.

9. High-density housing: What is your perspective on the major forces pushing for high-density housing?

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Living in south Palo Alto (in the Green Acres neighborhood), where we have recently experienced the completion of several new projects with high-density housing, I appreciate the concern behind this question. Due to the scarcity of undeveloped land in Palo Alto, most developers, in order to maximize the financial return on their investment, will seek to include as much housing as possible in their projects. Inevitably, such an approach places increased stress on Palo Alto's already stretched City services and decaying infrastructure. Clearly, we have also been victimized by a City Council that has too often been influenced by the parties seeking to build such projects.

I believe each project must be judged and reviewed on a case-by-case basis and that the review process must be streamlined. I do not believe that there should be one, City-wide regulation that governs the density of every project built in Palo Alto. Given the number of projects proposed each year in Palo Alto, it is possible, and appropriate, for each project to be judged on its own merits. Each project must also be reviewed based on where it is proposed to be built, recent development in the proposed area, etc. With a case-by-case review, and a more rational and streamlined review process, I believe we can bring sanity and reason back to the Palo Alto planning process.

10. Development impacts: The City has been criticized for allowing developers to understate the impacts of their projects, and thus avoid paying for measures to reduce the problems created. How much of a problem is this? What changes are needed?

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Whether the problem described is real or perceived, the fact is that most Palo Altans believe the problem exists and is widespread. And whether the problem is the greed or carelessness of developers, or the necessary reaction to the City's laborious, ponderous, and frustrating review process, the fact is that the process for reviewing projects, the so-called "Palo Alto Process," is very much at the heart of the problem.

Make no mistake, if a developer understates, for whatever reason, the impact of their project, a mechanism for penalizing the developer must be instituted and implemented. Equally important, however, is to reform the Palo Alto process for reviewing projects so that good, well-planned projects do not languish and risk cancellation for other reasons, such as a failing

economy (Alma Plaza and, perhaps, the JJ&F project). Worse, we do not know how many projects were never brought to Palo Alto in the first place because the investors and developers did not want to deal with the Palo Alto Process. Palo Alto no longer has the luxury of assuming every developer has to, or even wants to, come to Palo Alto. We compete for projects the same as every other community on the Peninsula. We must make certain that the best of those projects are brought to Palo Alto.

11. Affordable Housing: The City's current approach to providing affordable housing relies heavily on requiring new housing developments to include affordable units. What is your assessment of this approach? What changes would you make?

[I] Corey Levens : www.electcoreylevens.com

In general, I do not oppose an approach which requires a certain number of affordable housing units in new housing developments. I do not believe, however, that it is reasonable to set a fixed percentage that applies to every development. Every project and development is different which means that the economics and financing for each project will be specific to that project. For example, larger projects may have the flexibility to include larger numbers and percentages of affordable housing units and still provide an economic return that is attractive enough to obtain the necessary financing and support. Smaller projects, however, will generally provide a smaller return on investment and to mandate certain numbers of affordable housing units in such projects may have the effect of killing the project. This is a result that has happened too often in Palo Alto and which benefits no one.

In addition, at a recent Council meeting where this issue arose in connection with a well-known project (JJ&F), certain Council members attempted to start negotiating the number of required affordable housing units at the meeting where approval of a phase of the project was being sought. Such negotiations should not be occurring at Council meetings, but should be resolved prior to meetings (this would also help in controlling the length of Council meetings). In this case, after receiving assurances from the developer that such changes would make the project no longer economically feasible and force them to kill the project, the proposed last second changes were rejected. It is entirely inappropriate, however, for such core issues to be negotiated with developers on a last second basis. No one could be expected to agree to such changes without performing extensive and thorough economic analyses to see if the changes are feasible. This would then require postponing a decision until such analyses could be done. And the Palo Alto Process would live on...

12. Planned Community (PC) Zoning: Planned Community zoning is controversial because it is perceived as being routinely abused. What is your perspective on the use of this zoning? Use specific examples to illustrate your points.

[I] Corey Levens : www.electcoreylevens.com

Planned Community (PC) Zoning is an essential tool for development. Unfortunately, it is also a tool which can be easily abused. PC districts are intended to accommodate developments that include combinations of uses such as residential, commercial, industrial, or other activities. It is primarily to be used for developments which are of substantial public benefit and which conform with and enhance the policies and programs of the Palo Alto Comprehensive Plan. Proposals for PC Zoning are first to be submitted to the Planning Commission. If approved, they then move to the Architectural Review Board. If approved by

the ARB, the proposal goes back to the Planning Commission for final planning, after which it is submitted to the City Council for “final action.” The problem, of course, is that the Palo Alto Process too often rears its ugly head, there are numerous delays and reconsiderations to accommodate every comment and criticism, and no final action is ever taken with the result that potentially valuable and beneficial projects do not get completed or are severely diluted.

While the Comprehensive Plan provides detailed descriptions of PC districts and the regulations for approving them, these rules and regulations are subject to manipulation. This leads to what is commonly, and derogatorily, referred to as the “Palo Alto Process.” We must ensure, therefore, that when an application for a Planned Community district is reviewed and considered that the guidelines set forth in the Comprehensive Plan are strictly adhered to. A PC district must be approved only when the applicable zoning restrictions for a project do not provide sufficient flexibility to allow for the proposed development and there is a substantial public benefit to be derived from the project.

Necessarily, and as set forth in the Comprehensive Plan, it is the City Council that is the ultimate judge of whether to approve PC zoning. Too often, however, the Council has been influenced by vocal minorities and special interest groups advocating for or against a project. Council members will often (as in the JJ&F project) attempt to negotiate project details and minutia at Council meetings, cavalierly proposing changes to the overall nature and economics of a project and thereby negating the efforts of all those who have worked on, and are much more knowledgeable of, the project. The result is often unending delays, if not cancellation, of potentially valuable projects.

As a Council member, I will do all I can to make the “Palo Alto Process” obsolete.

13. Stanford Hospital Project: The expansion of the Stanford Hospital will have substantial impacts on Palo Alto, most significantly increased traffic and requirements for additional housing. What do you think is appropriate for the City to require of Stanford as part of this project?

[I] Corey Levens : www.electcoreylevens.com

My wife, Anjini Kochar, has been an employee of Stanford University since we moved to the Palo Alto/Stanford area 20 years ago. Initially, she was a member of the faculty in the Economics Department, and for about the last 10 years has been a Research Fellow at the Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research. She is currently the head of SIEPR’s India Program. As a result, I will need to recuse myself from the affairs of the Council that deal with issues concerning Stanford.

The City Council must recognize that Palo Alto and Stanford have a unique, symbiotic relationship and that the sum of the parts is much greater than each taken together individually. Palo Alto and Stanford are greatly defined by their proximity and connection to each other. While we will inevitably have our disagreements and “sibling” spats, each must recognize that, in most cases, what is good for one will, and should be, good for the other.

We must work closely with Stanford on the development of projects such as the Stanford Hospital and expansions of the Stanford Shopping Center. While it is entirely appropriate for Palo Alto to fight for necessary improvements or changes in design that will benefit Palo Alto, I believe that Palo Alto has hurt itself in the past by taking overly aggressive positions, especially with regard to the Stanford Shopping Center. We are now paying for these and many other failures in the form of a \$10 million budget deficit.

While the Stanford Hospital project is an essential project for Stanford and is one that will also greatly benefit the Palo Alto community, Palo Alto must insure that basic City services are not disrupted, that the quality of life in Palo Alto is not adversely affected, and that the costs of this, or any other project, do not outweigh the benefits. It is entirely reasonable and appropriate, for example, that Stanford be asked to contribute to the cost of improvements to infrastructure which are necessary to accommodate such a project.

14. Civic Engagement: What is your interpretation of the term “civic engagement”? What are your priorities for improvements in this area?

[I] Corey Levens : www.electcoreylevens.com

Civic engagement is the act by which members of the community volunteer their knowledge, expertise, and energy to the community at large whether to assist in the proper functioning of city government or to otherwise contribute to the common good.

The people of Palo Alto possess an extraordinary reserve of talent that can benefit the City in virtually every facet of City government. The breadth and scope of the expertise of our population is unmatched by any other community. The question, then, is what is the best means by which Palo Alto can harness this incredible potential? I believe that the City can employ many tools and techniques, whether by simply maintaining lists of volunteers and their various specialties, perhaps using social media tools, or other mechanisms for tapping into vast human resources of our community.

In encouraging civic engagement, however, we must be careful that the essential purpose of the particular engagement is not lost and that the services of the community are employed in an efficient and targeted manner and are properly managed. The recent experience with the re-design of the City’s website is a good example of the positive, but also the potentially negative, aspects of civic engagement. While there were many talented and motivated people participating in this project, several members of the group working on this project apparently became frustrated with the lack of direction and leadership, and the loss of focus during the life of the project. If we are to take full advantage of the willingness of members of our talented community to volunteer their services for the benefit of the City, we must make sure that the experience is a positive one. We need for those who volunteer to come away from such experiences willing to volunteer their services again when needed, and acting as recruiters of others in the community to do the same.

15. Neighborhood Associations: In what ways have neighborhood associations been beneficial to the City? What, if anything, would you change about that relationship?

[I] Corey Levens : www.electcoreylevens.com

Neighborhood Associations can serve a vital and effective role in the operation and functioning of City government by acting as a mechanism for providing essential information to the City concerning the mood, needs, and concerns of the many Palo Alto neighborhoods. While each Neighborhood Association will adopt the method of operation that best suits its community, all Neighborhood Associations have as a primary concern preserving the qualities and values that make their community special.

I have served on the Board of Directors of my Neighborhood Association, the Green Acres Improvement Association (off Arastradero next to Terman Park and the Cabana Hotel) for the last several years. While our Association tends to take a low key approach, primarily due to

our small size, we always pay close attention to the concerns and activities of other Neighborhood Associations. And while the GAIA has tended not to be a very activist Association, when critical issues arose that had the potential of drastically changing the neighborhood, it was the GAIA that was able to mobilize the community and to ultimately successfully protect and preserve the well-being of the neighborhood.

Neighborhood Associations are at their best when they are keeping the City informed of the concerns and needs of their respective communities. In so doing, they can insure that City government is responsive to those concerns and needs. In taking counsel from a Neighborhood Association, however, the City Council must be certain that a Neighborhood Association is representative of its community. If, for example, a Neighborhood Association is run by the same, small group of people year after year, it runs the risk of becoming insular and not reflective of the community it serves. In such an instance, the value of seeking counsel from a Neighborhood Association is drastically reduced and may even be a detriment.

16. Meeting Effectiveness: Council meetings often run to well after midnight, and decisions are deferred (continued) or referred (sent back for further consideration). What would you do to improve the effectiveness of Council meetings?

[I] Corey Levens : www.electcoreylevens.com

When City Council meetings run into the early morning hours, the Council must recognize that open government and transparency in the Council's operations suffer, and that effective government also suffers. There are several possibilities to improving the effectiveness and efficiency of Council meetings.

As a corporate attorney, I have attended hundreds of meetings of Boards of Directors as an advisor. As a member of the Board of Directors of my neighborhood association and of the Stanford Campus Recreation Association (SCRA), and of other such bodies, I have attended many such meetings as a director. I have found that the most important element in running an efficient board meeting is preparation and pre-meeting discussion concerning the items on the agenda. To the extent time is spent in any meeting on discussion or debate between council members which could have taken place before the meeting, all members of the public are inconvenienced and the Council's effectiveness is diminished. This is different from public statements and opinions which council members may have on an issue and which are very appropriately made at a Council meeting.

I have also attended Council meetings, however, where the public was given the opportunity to speak and speaker after speaker rose to make the same point over and over again. While no one seeks to deny or limit the public's right to be heard, there surely are mechanisms that can be used or devised to let the public know that their voice has been heard without listening to essentially the same speech ad infinitum.

17. Balancing Issues: A major focus of the current Council has been environmental issues, especially those related to Global Warming. Using this as a specific example, explain how you think Council and staff should allocate time and effort to the many issues that come before them.

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While I fully support the Council's past work on environmental issues (I support the conclusions and recommendations set forth in the Climate Control Plan, the Zero Waste Plan, and the Green Building Ordinance), I do not believe it is the Council's role to be making or

attempting to influence international policy. We have more than enough issues to deal with close to home and precious little time and resources to waste on issues over which Palo Alto has no influence or power to affect.

If, however, a national or international issue intimately affects our community, then I believe it is appropriate to act and/or to make our voice heard. Environmental protection and preservation is a good example of such an issue. Preserving and protecting the environment is a responsibility of all citizens and I am proud that Palo Alto has taken a leadership role in this regard. The policies Palo Alto has implemented, as cited above, are wholly appropriate.

The Council must be careful, however, that when it speaks in its official capacity as our elected representatives, that it reflects the will and mood of the people of Palo Alto. If this is in question, then council members must be clear to delineate their public and private roles and speak appropriately.

18. (Optional) Unasked Question: If there is a question you think we should have asked, ask and answer it.

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ReplaceWithYourAnswer