

Oak Knoll PTO
Minutes of the PTO Special General Meeting
9/12/24
8:30 AM
Oak Knoll Bikes Racks

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| 2024-2025 Executive Board Officers Present: | |
| Laura Low Ah Kee, President | Celeste Lopez, Teacher Representative |
| Francie Maletis, Vice President | Alicia Payton-Miyazaki, Oak Knoll Principal |
| Meredith Nonnenberg, Parliamentarian | Rachel Maclay, Financial Secretary |
| Lesley Geivett, Treasurer | Karen Clancy, Oak Knoll Assistant Principal |
| Amy Kurpius, Secretary | Maren Gernitis, Auditor |
| Suzy Francisco, Communications Chair | |

Additional Attendees:

- Please see sign-in sheet

Absent

- Lindsay Nalevanko, OCC PTO Engagement Lead

Quorum present: Yes

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| I. | Call To Order & Welcome | Laura Low Ah Kee |
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- The meeting was called to order at 8:21 AM by President Laura Low Ah Kee

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| II. | Bond Measure U Discussion | Laura Low Ah Kee |
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- PTO President introduced the purpose of the meeting: to educate the Oak Knoll community on Measure U bond measure and offer both “Yes” and “No” on Measure U Campaigns to share their perspective. She noted that the Bond Measure currently only has a “Yes on U Campaign;” there is currently no organized opposing Campaign, and that is the reason why there was no one present to formally present the opposing viewpoint to the PTO General Membership.
 - Introduced Katherine Bicer who leads the “Yes on U Campaign”
- Bicer provided an overview of Bond Measure U, which proposes facilities improvements to MPCSD with \$124 million in general bond obligations. In 2023, the Menlo Park City School District underwent the first comprehensive facilities needs assessment since 2006 and found many critical improvements necessary to maintain the safety and quality of MPCSD schools. The district divided the needs into four categories: campus security, seismic safety, climate resilience and modern technology. Measure U will allow MPCSD to:
 - Replace 65-year-old classroom buildings with structures that meet modern seismic standards
 - Upgrade security systems to control access to campuses and detect intruders, and also modernize fire alarms
 - Install electric air conditioning in classrooms to address rising temperatures - over 90% of our classrooms do not have A/C, which distracts from learning
 - Lower Laurel will need to be redone from the ground up and that is why it takes a hefty portion of \$124 million (~\$66 million)

- Oak Knoll to receive approximately \$18 million dollars in facilities upgrades
- Bicer offered to answer any questions the Oak Knoll community may have about the Bond (Q & A session):
 - How does the Bond system work? The way school bonds work, the district places it on the ballot and the people who live in the area are allowed to vote on it.
 - Eligible to vote on the bond based on residential address
 - Funds raised from a bond can only be used for school facility improvements
 - How do we talk to neighbors who don't have kids in the district?
 - Offer a flier, send them to the website (<https://www.safeschools4mp.org/>), note that there is a critical need now, not later.
 - Why haven't we done it sooner? It's expensive; it's been 18 years since any facilities evaluation and improvement has been done.
 - There are available matching State and Federal funds now that likely won't be available in a few years: \$28 million in available funds. These funds do not cost our community/taxpayers any money and lowered the cost of the Bond dollar amount by \$28 million.
 - Increases the attractiveness of our town—this community's educational excellence is what attracts people to Menlo Park (e.g., there is a tangible return for investing in our schools—an increase in property value and demand for properties in Menlo Park in general; creating a better place to live)
 - What is the financial impact for homeowners?
 - This bond will increase homeowners' taxes by about \$19 per \$100,000 assessed value per year over the life of the bond. The district's current bond taxes are lower than our 7 neighboring San Mateo County school districts because a bond has not passed since 2013. In that time, our neighbors have passed 13 bonds to maintain their facilities. MPCSD's new bond will bring our taxes to a similar level as our neighbors.
 - Renters will not see a direct impact as it is homeowners who typically pay property taxes.
 - How are the dollars issued to the District?
 - If approved in November, Measure U will *authorize* the sale of \$124 million in bonds, but they will be sold over time, based on project needs. Moreover, financial experts determine what type of bond makes the most sense (much like a mortgage).
 - Typically, it is a 20-30 year bond. After all the bonds are sold, there will be no additional bonds issued under Measure U.
 - Bonds are a bit like mortgages—they can be refunded (e.g., refinanced) as interest rates lower; the district is committed to refunding to save taxpayers money.
 - If it doesn't pass now, what happens?
 - The bond election must take place during a regularly scheduled election cycle; generally speaking, this is the State Primary and General Elections in *even* years
 - The only time we are all voting together is this fall or in two years
 - These facilities issues and needs are not going away and pushing it down the line for two years doesn't solve the problem and may end up costing taxpayers more (lose out on the \$28 million matching funds and cost of improvements will have risen)
 - How quickly do the funds become available if it passes?

- The November vote authorizes the bonds; they are then issued in bundles over a number of years based on the readiness of each of the projects.
 - Some projects are quick, short “go do” projects that can be done over the summer, for example; others are more long term projects that require more planning and design.
 - Superintendent Gracia is in the process of creating a timeline for all the work planned so there is an understanding of implementation.
- Principal Payton-Miyazaki noted some tangible needs that directly impact Oak Knoll:
 - 10 years ago, A/C may not have been necessary, but with global warming, it is very critical now
 - More shade structures are needed and the cost to design and install these are hefty
 - Example: tried to put shade over the back playground sandbox and the cost was going to be \$65,000-70,000 (because of stringent state construction standards for schools—e.g., structure has to be dug 9’ into the ground).
 - Fire alarms—kids have sit out on the blacktop in the sun frequently (without shade structures) because the fire alarm is very antiquated and rings constantly
 - Oak Knoll is a very open campus and although it’s in a safe neighborhood, there needs to be more safety measures in place
 - Flooded hallways and leaks that happen each winter when it rains
- Bicer had three actionable items/requests for the Oak Knoll PTO Community:
 - The Measure U Campaign is seeking an official endorsement by the Oak Knoll PTO General Community
 - Please consider donating your time and money (takes a lot of effort to win a campaign—both monetarily and human effort— trying to raise another \$75,000 to help with the campaign), and
 - The Menlo Park community looks to the parent and teacher community to understand how they should vote on school issues. Please consider educating community members who may not have a direct connection to the schools.
 - Discussion about crafting a personalized letter for parents to utilize and send to their neighbors to educate and provide relevant information about the Bond. Perhaps through neighborhood email lists or other.
- Upon Bicer’s departure, Alison Wong moved for the Oak Knoll PTO General Members to endorse Menlo Park Bond Measure U. Seconded by Meredith Nonenberg. The vote was called and the motion for the Oak Knoll General Members to officially endorse Measure U was approved unanimously.

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| III. | Adjournment | Laura Low Ah Kee |
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- President Laura Low Ah Kee adjourned the meeting at 8:54 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Amy Kurpius

September 2024 PTO Special Meeting – Sign In

| Print Name | Signature | Date |
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| Amy Kurpius | <i>Amy Kurpius</i> | 9/12/24 |
| Francie Males | <i>Francie Males</i> | 9/12/24 |
| Katherine Glass | <i>Katherine Glass</i> | 9/12/24 |
| Wesley Culverett | <i>Wesley Culverett</i> | 9/12/24 |
| Kanwal Ahluwalia | <i>Kanwal Ahluwalia</i> | 9/12/24 |
| Celeste Lopez | <i>Celeste Lopez</i> | 9/12-24 |
| Karen Clancy | <i>Karen Clancy</i> | 9/12-24 |
| Mica Taylor | <i>Mica Taylor</i> | 9/12-24 |
| Rachel Macdonald | <i>Rachel Macdonald</i> | 9/12/24 |
| Rebecca Boenig | <i>Rebecca Boenig</i> | 9/12/24 |
| SUZY FRANCESCO | <i>SUZY FRANCESCO</i> | 9/12/24 |
| Corey Binns | <i>Corey Binns</i> | 9/12/24 |
| Bjorn Carst | <i>Bjorn Carst</i> | 9/12/24 |
| Alison Wong | <i>Alison Wong</i> | 9/12/24 |
| Alison Wise | <i>Alison Wise</i> | 9/12/24 |
| Miya Kang | <i>Miya Kang</i> | 9/12/24 |
| Kelly Griggs | <i>Kelly Griggs</i> | 9/12/24 |
| Sigui Tennant-Poltz | <i>Sigui Tennant-Poltz</i> | 9/12/24 |
| Clorie Camp | <i>Clorie Camp</i> | 9/12/24 |
| Janet Light | <i>Janet Light</i> | 9/12/24 |
| Jiang Chen | <i>Jiang Chen</i> | 9/12/24 |
| MEREDITH NUNBERGER | <i>Meredith Nunberger</i> | 9/12/24 |
| Garen Gemitis | <i>Garen Gemitis</i> | 9/12/24 |
| Tim GERVITIS | <i>Tim GERVITIS</i> | 9/12/2024 |
| Jennifer Baskin | <i>Jennifer Baskin</i> | 9/12/2024 |
| Sally Lovano | <i>Sally Lovano</i> | 9-12-24 |