

January 4, 2024

Town Council  
Town of Portola Valley  
765 Portola Road  
Portola Valley, CA 94028

Dear Town Council Members,

It is my pleasure to show my appreciation and recognition for the 25 years that Carol Borck has been working in the Planning Department for the Town.

You are lucky to have an employee that has served the Town for so many years. I was lucky, and as you are, to have hired Carol as my Planning Technician on January 11, 1999. We didn't have as many applicants that showed as much enthusiasm as Carol. She was ready to get started. The Town Manager was so impressed with Carol, that he wanted to have her take on the position of the Town Clerk, that was not going to happen under my watch.

Carol is a very responsible, reliable, efficient, trust worthy and a special staff member in the Town Community. She has undertaken a number of new positions of responsibility over the years. She has been there to assist the Town in every direction, and showed respect for all the changes that have occurred.

At this moment, I show my congratulations to Carol for those 25 years. I wish that I could be present to acknowledge my sincere appreciation of the work Carol as taken on.

Respectfully, Leslie Lambert (Retired Planning Manager)

cc: Town Manager  
Acting Planning Director  
Carol Borck

**From:** [webmaster@portolavalley.net](mailto:webmaster@portolavalley.net)  
**To:** [Town Center](#)  
**Subject:** New Entry on Town Council Comments Survey  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 9, 2024 2:21:51 PM

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A new entry to a form/survey has been submitted.

**Form Name:** Comment on an Agenda Item for Town Council Meeting  
**Date & Time:** 01/09/2024 2:21 PM  
**Response #:** 61  
**Submitter ID:** [REDACTED]  
**IP address:** [REDACTED]  
**Time to complete:** 2 min. , 52 sec.

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### Survey Details

#### Page 1

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**1. First and Last Name**

Karen Vahtra

**2. Email address ( will not be publicly displayed)**

[REDACTED]

**3. Organization ( Enter name of organization, business, or non profit if you are submitting comments on their behalf.)**

Not answered

**4. Street address ( will not be publicly displayed)**

[REDACTED]

**5. City**

Portola Valley

**6. State**

CA

**7. Zip Code**

94028

**8. Date of Meeting you are submitting comment for.**

01/10/2024

**9. Agenda Item number or name**

6.b

**10. Comment**

Dear Town Council,

I support the restructuring of our committees and allowing a number of them to act in a transparent manner without complying with the Brown Act. I have several comments, questions, and suggestions from the meeting packet material.

1. Liaisons or Point of Contact: Am I correctly assuming that some Town Manager Committees will no longer have a Town Council member participation? Many of these meetings probably do not need a Town Council member at every meeting for the entire duration.

The packet creates a new role Town Council POC (at Town Manager discretion) - leaving the opportunity of a Town Manager Committee (TMC) to not have a Town Council POC (TCPOC). What is the role and responsibility of the TCPOC and how does that differ from a liaison role?

Of the eight new Town Manager committees and one Group will there be any currently without a TCPOC?

2. Challenges 1 of 3: The background material describes a few existing challenges of our volunteer committees. But from what I have gathered in the current proposal, 3 of the 4 items do not seem to be addressed by the restructuring and leave some unanswered questions.

First, "It is not always clear that there is an alignment between Town Council and committee priorities" (red page 104). Although I agree that there is not always complete alignment between committee work and Town Council priorities, this proposal does not address this concern. Since even small groups of people will not always completely agree on anything, I'm not sure this goal is realistic.

3. Challenges 2 of 3: "Not all committee policies and procedures are being implemented consistently." Again, I do not see anything in this material addressing this concern directly.

4. Challenges 3 of 3: "The current committee handbook is ambiguous and outdated." Again, I do not see anything in this material addressing this concern. Will there be a project to rewriting the committee handbook?

5. Optional meeting recording: A number of years ago, the Town Council and many of the committee meetings had substantive meeting notes. In the recent years, most of the meeting notes are simple action items or quite terse. We as a community have come to rely upon meeting recordings to remain informed. Many community members miss the detailed meeting notes as reading is significantly faster than listening to a video even at a faster rate. Detailed meeting notes also enable much quicker searching for a particular item in the past record. Not requiring recordings could be problematic when important discussions occur as listening live is not always an option.

Otter AI has been given high ratings for a transcription product at affordable rates. The Race and Equity committee has been exploring this but did have an issue in September 2023. Perhaps the town can formally investigate using this or other similar products.

6. Budget: Although the budget approval would lie within two separate domains, I think a process should exist to look at the budget of all committees holistically. The solution may be a one page report showing the

budget for all committees.

7. Groups: I think creating more informal groups is a good idea. In the packet the only official group listed is the Historic Resources Group. I can think of several other Groups we have had in town in 2023: Committee of Committees, the town's Hawthornes Ad-Hoc Committee, and the ADU Ambassadors. For completeness, I think it would be helpful to list these committees on the website if they remain in place, and a formal notice of some kind if they are dissolved.

8. Ad-Hoc Committees: In the past we used the terminology "Ad-Hoc Committee" which was temporary and in some cases follow the Brown Act in other cases do not. I served on the Ad-Hoc Wildfire Committee, which was a Brown Act committee, and now there is a town (not Mid-Pen) Hawthornes Ad-Hoc committee, which is not a Brown Act committee and not a Town Manager Committee as defined in this document. Will this type of formal committee structure exist in the future or simply be a temporary committee or a Group?

9. Resolution: The resolution (on red page 110) lists eight Advisory Committees that are now dissolved but does not include the Emergency Preparedness committee that was marked as a TMC committee (on red page 109). One of these two items appears to be an error.

10. Town Manager Actions: Item III in the resolution states: "The Town Manager shall take all action necessary and appropriate to effectuate this Resolution, including but not limited to making appropriate updates to the Town website and the Committee and Commission Handbook." The wording implies that the Town Manager will rewrite the Committee and Commission Handbook independently without the involvement of the committees or approval by the Town Council.

11. Committee Handbook Group: Developing a new handbook and adjusting the procedures will take some time and require buy in by many volunteers. Since our town staff is very new and understaffed, I would suggest creating a Committee Handbook Group to guide this process. The final product would be a new handbook but also perhaps an attempt to address some of the challenges listed in the background material. They can work with the Town Manager, the Town Council subcommittee, the Committee of Committees, various current and former committee members, and the entire community at large to develop a set of solid procedures for the future.

**11. Optional: You can upload a copy of your comments.**

Thank you,  
**Portola Valley, CA**

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**From:** [webmaster@portolavalley.net](mailto:webmaster@portolavalley.net)  
**To:** [Town Center](#)  
**Subject:** New Entry on Town Council Comments Survey  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 10, 2024 12:14:31 PM

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A new entry to a form/survey has been submitted.

**Form Name:** Comment on an Agenda Item for Town Council Meeting  
**Date & Time:** 01/10/2024 12:14 PM  
**Response #:** 62  
**Submitter ID:** [REDACTED]  
**IP address:** [REDACTED]  
**Time to complete:** 28 min. , 18 sec.

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### Survey Details

#### Page 1

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**1. First and Last Name**

Karen Askey

**2. Email address ( will not be publicly displayed)**

[REDACTED]

**3. Organization ( Enter name of organization, business, or non profit if you are submitting comments on their behalf.)**

Not answered

**4. Street address ( will not be publicly displayed)**

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**5. City**

PORTOLA VALLEY

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94028

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01/10/2024

**9. Agenda Item number or name**

Housing Element

**10. Comment**

see attached PDF

**11. Optional: You can upload a copy of your comments.**

1\_10\_24 TC Comments on Housing Element - Google Docs.pdf

Thank you,  
**Portola Valley, CA**

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**This is an automated message generated by Granicus. Please do not reply directly to this email.**

Dear Town Council -

I, like many residents, am in favor of adopting the Housing Element draft submitted to you this evening. While I do not agree with the state's approach to this RHNA cycle, I feel that Portola Valley has done as much as it can do to comply with the state mandate. And I am confident our Town will continue to find creative alternatives as we move forward (i.e., the Sunrise Clause).

Kudos to Jon Biggs and the Planning Department for meeting with HCD six times in the past few months! And classifying the Opt-In program as a pilot program is an improvement, in my opinion, as this program is controversial with many residents.

As we move forward, I have a couple of requests:

1. With respect to the supportive housing plan for 4394 Alpine Road, let's figure out how we can get credit for each unit built. If 10 residential units are built for 10 residents, albeit with a shared kitchen, we should receive credit for 10 units. Can we continue to work with the state to become aligned on this?
2. I'm a big fan of ADUs/JADUs and feel they can greatly contribute to our affordable housing quotas for this cycle, if we start our educational and incentive programs immediately. As an ADU Ambassador, I recently had a conversation with some residents interested in building an ADU, but they had no idea where to start or whom to speak with. They asked if there were pre-designed units or models they could visit to make things simpler. They were thrilled to learn about JADUs and that they could have both an ADU and a JADU as they age in place. Interest heightens when folks learn that ADUs/JADUs can serve to house relatives, students, local employees, teachers, etc.

2023 San Mateo County Income Limits state that the low-income limit for an individual is \$104,000. That number opens eyes. And the rent limit for a studio apartment for that individual is \$2,602. Showing actual numbers changes perspective and can open more doors...

Please make our ADU/JADU programs a top priority.

Thank you for your consideration, your time, and your caring. Your efforts are appreciated!

Karen

**From:** [webmaster@portolavalley.net](mailto:webmaster@portolavalley.net)  
**To:** [Town Center](#)  
**Subject:** New Entry on Town Council Comments Survey  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 10, 2024 12:19:25 PM

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A new entry to a form/survey has been submitted.

**Form Name:** Comment on an Agenda Item for Town Council Meeting  
**Date & Time:** 01/10/2024 12:19 PM  
**Response #:** 63  
**Submitter ID:** [REDACTED]  
**IP address:** [REDACTED]  
**Time to complete:** 2 min. , 38 sec.

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### Survey Details

#### Page 1

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Housing Element

**10. Comment**

Hi, an addendum to my comments I just submitted.

I meant to include the link to the 2023 San Mateo County Income Limits web pages, for your reading pleasure -

<https://www.smcgov.org/media/144471/download?inline=>

Thanks,  
Karen

**11. Optional: You can upload a copy of your comments.**

Thank you,  
**Portola Valley, CA**

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