



## Message from Outgoing Mayor

*It has been my privilege to serve as your Mayor this past year. I would like to share some of my parting thoughts with you.*

### What are the important lessons learned?

**1.** Problems and issues need to be recognized and dealt with as they arise. The Council spent considerable time dealing with personnel matters and revisiting past policies that were flawed in some way. Hiring City Manager Jerry Gruber and City Attorney Wynne Furth was the Council's solution to ensure issues are handled quickly and correctly. Our solution is working.

**2.** Community safety, improved drainage, and maintenance of streets are still important reasons why Atherton residents voted to renew the parcel tax. Despite the impact on each of us, passage of the parcel tax provides breathing room to consider cost and revenue options needed to sustain Town government functions.

**3.** Residents need time to digest new proposals and to understand how the proposals personally affect them. Greater use of public workshop formats allowing for interaction between residents, staff, and Council help ensure that issues and options are thoroughly understood. The result will be better decision making.

**4.** The prospect of having High-Speed Rail (HSR) trains coming through the Peninsula rail corridor is a real possibility. Unless the State legislature determines the financial projections are not realistic we will see 200 more trains a day going through Atherton, probably on an elevated structure. The Rail Committee, Town Staff, and Council Members are working with other communities, elected officials, and HSR contractors to protect the economic and environmental impact on our residents.

**5.** Town government needs to be proactive in providing information about significant matters such as selection of a new Police Chief, settlement of law suits, etc. This will be a cultural change for us, but a necessary one.

**6.** We are tapping a small portion of the educational and professional experience of our Town residents. The challenge is how we engage residents early on when issues are raised. Increased resident participation will help us to arrive at better over all solutions.

In 2010, I expect we will complete the clean up process and be able to focus on the issues of cost containment, revenue options including replacing the parcel tax, infrastructure

improvements, safety and disaster preparedness, and high-speed rail. In addition, we need to make decisions on renovating or replacing the Council Chambers, Police headquarters, Administrative offices, including the Public Works and Building Departments. The current structures fail to meet seismic and building code requirements. We need to continue to improve our problem-tracking process, institute an administrative process for handling ordinance violations, and pursue more efficient ways of providing services.

In conclusion, thank you to the Measure S & T committee members John Thibault, Richard Moore, Doug DeVivo, John Davey, and Elizabeth Lewis; and advisors Phil Lively and Bill Widmer for your successful efforts.

Thank you fellow Council Members, Town Staff, and residents for a memorable experience being your Mayor. My very best wishes to all.

Sincerely,

*j.c.*

Jerry Carlson

### Inside This Issue

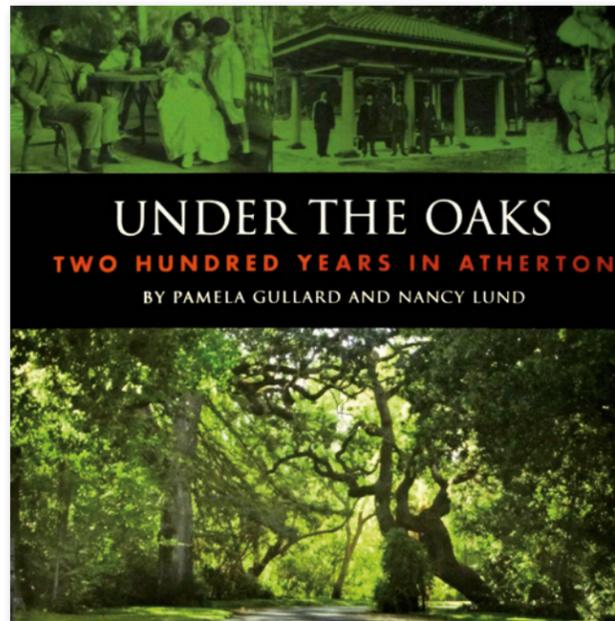
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# A GREAT GIFT

Under the Oaks  
Two Hundred Years in Atherton

**A GREAT GIFT** – The book “Under the Oaks, Two Hundred Years in Atherton” on the history of Atherton, is available for sale at the Atherton Heritage Room, 92 Ashfield Road for \$75.00 plus tax. The Heritage Room is open from 10 a.m. to noon every Tuesday and can be reached at 688-6540.

One of the estates that is featured in the book is the Commodore Watkins Home. It is the only home in Atherton on the National Historic Register. Owners Dave and Rhoda Herron are proud of their historic home and we are proud of the way they have restored their lovely 1866 home.



Town of Atherton Council Chambers

Photo by Melanie Brabenec  
Cover Background Photo by Melanie Brabenec

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# Atherton Appoints New Police Chief Mike Guerra

Chief Mike Guerra has been with the Atherton Police Department since 1984. Over the last 25 years, Mike has worked in many assignments including: Patrol, Investigations, School Resource Officer, and K-9 Handler. In addition, he rose through the ranks from officer to lieutenant, and ultimately to chief.

One of Mike’s strengths is that he has a strong educational background in management, and has worked in a variety of organizational settings across four continents at some point to improve organizational efficiency and effectiveness. His educational background includes the following degrees from the University of San Francisco: BS degree in Organizational Behavior, Master’s degree in Human Resources & Organization Development, and Doctor of Education degree in Organization and Leadership with an emphasis in Pacific Leadership International. He understands the importance of building relationships within the community and listening to what the residents have to say to gain an understanding of how to leverage the Department’s



Newly appointed Police Chief Mike Guerra with his son Jack at the swearing in ceremony

knowledge, intelligence, and resources to create value within the Town for our residents. The foundation of productive business relationships has been and always will be trust. Character counts and maintaining the highest level of trust between the residents and the Atherton Police Department is a vital element of our relationship.

When the Atherton Police Department last received a report card from residents, PD earned an overall “A” grade with a 97% customer satisfaction score. This shows that the Atherton Police Department is successfully meeting the needs of the Town. This also tells Chief Guerra that there are areas where the Atherton Police Department is doing better than 97% and other areas where they earned less than an “A” grade. The Chief’s emphasis is going to be to preserve the vitality of those areas where the PD is successful, while taking the Department to the next level by challenging the organization to improve its overall score another 3% the next time the community issues a report card.

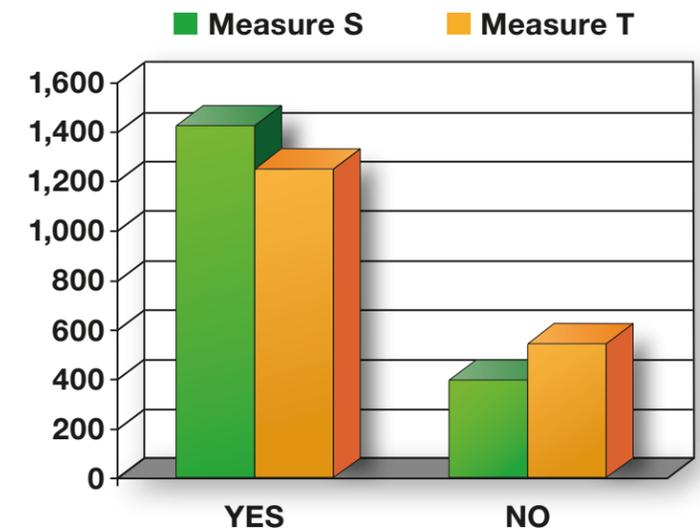
# Measures S & T Pass! Atherton Residents Renew Parcel Tax for Four More Years

At the November 3, 2009 Election, Atherton residents voted to renew the existing Parcel Tax with no increase, for an additional four year period beginning July 1, 2010.

Of the 5,054 registered voters in Atherton, approximately 36% of the residents (1,800) cast their votes on November 3. Measure S received 1,426 YES votes and 403 NO votes, handily passing by the required two-third’s majority, a 78% margin. Measure T received 1,252 YES votes and 547 NO votes, significantly passing the required simple majority by a 69.6% margin.

The Parcel Tax has been a source of additional revenue for the Town since it was first passed in 1980 to compensate for the impact of Prop 13. For most parcels in Atherton, ranging from ½ acre to 2 acres in size, the annual cost is \$750 and is fully tax deductible. It provides over \$1.86 million in revenue and represents approximately 17% of the Town’s current fiscal budget.

Proceeds of the Parcel Tax are used to maintain current levels of public safety, road and drainage maintenance, and help fund police services.



# News Flash —

## Park Irrigation Project will close areas of the park

A project to replace all of the main underground irrigation piping for Holbrook-Palmer Park will soon be underway. Construction will be on the master irrigation system in early January 2010. Trenches will be dug throughout the park to install the pipes. A new well will be drilled near the restroom building. When completed, the existing irrigation systems will have a more adequate and reliable supply of water. The project will result in closure of portions of the park during the construction period from January through mid-March of 2010. The closed areas will be fenced for safety. Please do not enter the closed areas without an escort.

## Atherton Post Office Is Here To Serve You!

A new Agreement has been signed with the U.S. Postal Service that significantly decreases the payments the U.S. Postal Service makes to the Town of Atherton to run our Postal Contract Unit. The City Council will be discussing the future of Atherton's "Post Office." There will be opportunity for public input and you are encouraged to participate fully. In the meantime, the Postal Contract Unit remains open for business.

As a Postal Contract Unit, the Town is not a full service Post Office. We offer stamps, money orders, and most packages can be mailed. Only cash or checks are accepted. Located inside Town Hall, 91 Ashfield Road, Atherton. Hours are Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to Noon and 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

## Emergency Evacuation Route Signage in the Walsh Road area in West Atherton

The Atherton Police Department and the Menlo Park Fire District have installed Emergency Evacuation Route Signage in the Walsh Road area in West Atherton. This project, designed in conjunction with the Atherton Disaster Preparedness Committee, is part of a collective program designed to safeguard Atherton residents living along Walsh Road west of the Alameda De Las Pulgas. This geographic area is potentially at risk for flooding and fire.



Former Police Chief Glenn Nielsen and Menlo Park Fire Protection District Chief Harold Schapelhouman assist with installation of informational and directional signs on Walsh Road to assist residents with emergency egress

## A MESSAGE FROM CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICER

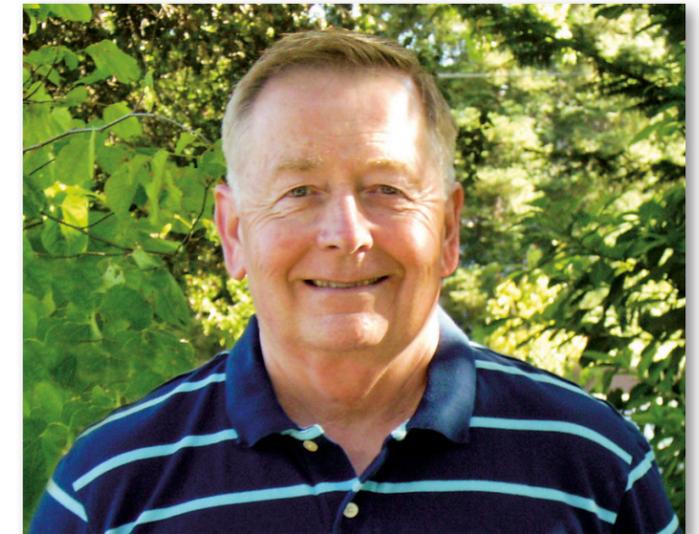
### Robert L. Cushing

#### RESIDENTS CONCERNED ABOUT OBJECTS IN THE PARK STRIP

One of the most common complaints that I receive from Atherton residents is the improper placement of objects in the park strip in front of the home. It is not uncommon for residents to place large boulders, wood rounds, logs or other items in the park strip adjacent to the roadway. It is important for property owners to know that placement of any items, especially those designed to discourage parking, is strictly prohibited. This practice can create severe safety hazards to pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers. It may constitute a liability for the property owner. When considering the placement of anything in the right of way it is important to know that a six-foot area from the paved surface of the roadway must be avoided. Items that are placed within this area constitute a severe safety hazard and are subject to removal. Before you place anything in or near the right of way, please consult with the Public Works Department.

#### RESIDENTS CONCERNED ABOUT PLACEMENT OF REFUSE CONTAINERS

In many areas of Atherton, residents leave their garbage and trash cans in front of the residence near the driveway several days before their pickup and they fail to remove the cans in a timely manner. The rule of thumb that I recommend is to place the cans in the pickup area after 6pm on the day before pickup. The cans should be tightly closed and should not be placed on the roadway. On pickup day cans should be returned to their storage area (out of public view) no later than 6pm. Too often cans are left for the gardener or housekeeper to deal with and unless they are



on the premises every day the cans are left out until they return. This practice affects your neighbors and creates an impact on surrounding properties and can easily be remedied.

#### RESIDENTS CONCERNED ABOUT BARKING DOGS

One of the most frequent complaints that my office receives is barking dogs. A constantly barking dog is an unhappy dog and that unhappiness is quickly felt by the neighbors. There is no excuse for a resident to allow their dog to continually bark. Dogs can be trained not to bark and they should be kept inside if barking is a problem. The Atherton Police Department can issue citations to dog owners who allow their dog to continually bark. The Code Enforcement procedure for barking dog complaints includes: 1) a field visit to verify the problem; 2) notification of the problem sent to the owner or resident; 3) and a deadline to correct the problem.

## Preparing for Less Water

By Kathy Anderson and Valerie Gardner  
of the Atherton Environmental Programs Committee

The Town needs to begin efforts to help the community learn to conserve water. Starting January 1, 2010, the State's new Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance will go into effect for all California cities. The Bay Area Water Supply and Conservation Agency (BAWSCA) is coordinating a regional effort to implement both Indoor and Outdoor Water Use Efficiency Ordinances in response to the state legislation that will impose responsibilities on local jurisdictions.

Athertonians need to prepare themselves for water reductions and start voluntarily conserving their use of our limited supply of water, to be better prepared for potentially dramatic decreases. San Mateo County water customers are being asked to reduce their water use by 10% right now. For those who are looking at ways to reduce water

use in the home, there are many easy and money-saving ways to meet this 10% voluntary reduction target.



Our local water supplier, California Water Service Company has a variety of water conservation programs and rebates aimed at helping residents save water and money, including: In-Home Water use Surveys; Landscaping Water Audits; High-Efficiency Toilet rebates up to \$150 and Rebates up to \$200 for High-Efficiency Washing Machines. Learn more at [calwater.com](http://calwater.com). Also, sites like [h2oconserve.org](http://h2oconserve.org) and [wateruseitwisely.com](http://wateruseitwisely.com) have fun ways to learn what your water usage is like compared to others and to learn more ways to conserve. Finally, if you are building a new home or renovating, be aware of the new water efficiency ordinances that go into effect on January 1, 2010.

# Census 2010: It's In Our Hands

**Census Day is April 1.** The Census is the method the Federal Government uses to count each resident in the country. The Federal Government allocates 400 billion dollars each year using Census data. Because a population count only occurs every ten years, there is a lot at stake if Atherton or San Mateo County is under represented in the 2010 Census. According to a report compiled by PricewaterhouseCoopers, an undercount in the 2000 census is estimated to have cost California \$1.5 billion from 2002 to 2012.

The Census 2010 message is simple: **It's Easy, It's Safe, Its Important!**

**It's Easy:** Being counted is easy because the form is mailed to every home and residents will have the choice of English, Spanish or several Asian languages. It takes only ten minutes to complete. Please fill out the questionnaire and send it back in the pre-paid postage envelope.

**It's Safe:** Being counted is safe because personal information provided on the census form is confidential and can't be shared with any other agency.

**It's Important:** All residents, from children to seniors, regardless of citizenship or immigration status should be counted in the census.

When people are not counted, our community loses funding for important programs. Being counted is important because it brings Federal and State dollars to our community and lets our community leaders know who they serve.

Please help work toward a complete count in 2010 by taking the time to fill out your Census Questionnaire, scheduled to arrive in your mailbox in March. Make yourself count in 2010!

For more information please visit our county website: [www.co.sanmateo.ca.us/census](http://www.co.sanmateo.ca.us/census)

# BRFT Finds Town In Immediate Need Of More And Safer Space

The Blue Ribbon Task Force presented its fifteen months of work and findings on a new Town Center to the City Council on November 19th at Jennings Pavilion. It graphically showed the poor and crowded conditions that the public visits and employees work in. We have buildings that don't conform to California's seismic, fire, or other codes; nor provide the space for nearly twice as many employees as in 1965 when Atherton last built a Town Center for its Police, Administration, and other functions.

BRFT estimates the Town needs about 27,000 square feet (it now has about 14,000) that will conform with Federal ADA and EEOC requirements; and with the specialty construction and furnishings needed to meet the State's Essential Facilities requirements, as well as an Emergency Operations Center. For example, no bathroom meets ADA requirements. The sole bathroom in the police and dispatch area must serve both male

and female officers, suspects and witnesses, as well as intoxicated, and often ill individuals. Active storage, now in the attic of the 1965 building is both an earthquake and fire risk, and the 12 year old 'temporary' modules are at the end of their useful lives.

BRFT found deep community support from those who attended its presentations in late 2008. The nearly 70 page report reflects community ideas indicating the Town Center should stay near its present location, should be either contemporary or Mission style architecture (like the 1920s chambers); and be a series of linked pavilions if construction must be staged due to financial challenges. Total costs are estimated around \$15M, including parking, landscaping, and professional fees.

BRFT was led by Council Members Marsala and Dobbie, and included representatives from four community organizations.

# Atherton Police Department Seeking Cadets



The Atherton Police Department is actively seeking cadets for our Police Explorer Post #823. Police Explorers must be between 14 – 21 years of age. The cadets must pass a background check and oral interview prior to attending the Explorer Academy. The Explorer Academy runs for 9 consecutive Sundays (intermixed with a few Saturday changes). Explorers aid police officers in their jobs and, in the process, learn about the criminal justice system. Explorers often choose law enforcement as a career goal. The next Police Explorer Academies are tentatively set for January 2010 and September 2010.

If you are interested please contact Officer DeVlugt or Officer Pronske at 688-6500. You may also stop by the Atherton Police Department to pick up information and application forms.



*I would like to take this opportunity to say hello to all Athertonians and to let you know that my staff and I are here to help you. If you have any concerns, would like to find out more information on a particular item, or just want to stop by and say hello, please feel free to do so. My staff and I look forward to providing you professional service, a timely response, and a warm and friendly smile.*

*Jerry Gruber, City Manager*

## Members of the Town Council

Meet the third Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m.  
Town Council Chambers • 94 Ashfield Road • Atherton

**Kathleen McKeithen, Mayor**  
*kmckeithen@ci.atherton.ca.us*  
321-3633

**Jim Dobbie, Vice Mayor**  
*jdobbie@ci.atherton.ca.us*  
327-3946

**Jerry Carlson, Council Member**  
*jcarlson@ci.atherton.ca.us*  
321-1327

**Charles E. Marsala, Council Member**  
*cmarsala@ci.atherton.ca.us*  
328-7113

**Elizabeth Lewis, Council Member**  
*elewis@ci.atherton.ca.us*  
533-8830

**OUR MISSION**  
**Town of Atherton**  
**Organizational Mission Statement**

The Mission of the Administration of the Town of Atherton is to:

- Provide high-quality, innovative services;
- Appreciate and develop human resources;
- Manage physical plant and financial resources efficiently;
- Protect the unique environment that makes Atherton special.

INCORPORATED SEPTEMBER 12, 1923

## Directory of Town Offices

**Main Number: 650-752-0500**  
**Fax Number: 650-688-6528**  
**Email: [atherton@ci.atherton.ca.us](mailto:atherton@ci.atherton.ca.us)**  
**Website: [www.ci.atherton.ca.us](http://www.ci.atherton.ca.us)**

**Administration**  
General Information/Post Office  
752-0500  
Jerry Gruber  
*City Manager*  
752-0504  
Eileen Wilkerson  
*Assistant City Manager*  
752-0546  
Theresa DellaSanta  
*Executive Assistant/Deputy City Clerk*  
752-0529

**Town Planner**  
Neal Martin  
*Town Planner*  
752-0544  
Lisa Costa Sanders  
*Deputy Town Planner*  
752-0544

**City Attorney**  
Wynne Furth  
*City Attorney*  
752-0500

**Police**  
Emergency: 911  
General Information  
688-6500  
Mike Guerra  
*Police Chief*  
752-0508  
**Finance**  
Louise Ho  
*Finance Director*  
752-0552

**Public Works**  
Information/Permits  
752-0570  
Duncan Jones  
*Director of Public Works*  
752-0532  
Steve Tyler  
*Superintendent of Public Works*  
752-0541  
Jean Cardona  
*Parks Program Manager*  
752-0534

## Contacts & Telephone Numbers

**Building**  
Information/Inspections  
752-0560  
Daily Inspection Schedule  
752-0561  
Mike Wassman  
*Building Official*  
752-0518  
Kathy Hughes Anderson  
*Town Arborist*  
752-0526  
Robert Cushing  
*Code Enforcement*  
752-0553

**Library**  
General Information  
328-2422  
Library events  
[www.smcl.org/libraries/ath](http://www.smcl.org/libraries/ath)

**Heritage Room**  
Atherton Heritage Association  
688-6540

# Contact Information

## Town of Atherton

91 Ashfield Road  
Atherton, CA 94027

# Helpful Phone Numbers

**Menlo Park Fire District**  
Emergency: 911 or 323-2404  
Business Administration Office  
688-8400

**Atherton Schools**  
Encinal School \_\_\_\_ 326-5164  
Las Lomitas \_\_\_\_ 854-5900  
Laurel School \_\_\_\_ 324-0186  
M-A High School \_\_\_\_ 322-5311  
Menlo College \_\_\_\_ 556-3656  
Menlo School \_\_\_\_ 330-2000  
Sacred Heart \_\_\_\_ 322-1866  
Saint Josephs \_\_\_\_ 322-9931  
Selby Lane \_\_\_\_ 368-3996

**County Services**  
Animal Control  
363-4840  
Assessor  
363-4500  
Richard Gordon,  
Supervisor, 3rd District  
363-4569  
Voter Registration  
312-5222  
Mosquito Abatement  
West Nile Virus  
(877) 968-2473  
Service Calls/Info  
344-8592  
[www.smcmad.org](http://www.smcmad.org)

**Utilities**  
Comcast Cable  
800-945-2288  
California Water Service  
367-6800  
Pacific Gas & Electric  
800-743-5000  
Fair Oaks Sanitation District  
363-4100  
West Bay Sanitation District  
321-0384

**Waste/Recycling**  
Allied Waste  
592-2411

# Town Community Calendar Winter 2010

## February 2010

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

## March 2010

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

## April 2010

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

## February 2010

2	Atherton Rail Committee	6:00 p.m.	Council Chambers
3	Park & Recreation Commission	6:30 p.m.	H-P Park, Main House
3	General Plan Committee	6:00 p.m.	Council Chambers
15	<b>President's Day Observed</b>	<b>Town Offices Closed</b>	
17	City Council	7:00 p.m.	Council Chambers
23	Arts Committee	1:00 p.m.	H-P Park, Garden Room
24	Planning Commission	6:00 p.m.	Council Chambers
25	Tree Committee	4:00 p.m.	Admin. Offices Mtg. Rm.

## March 2010

3	Park & Recreation Commission	6:30 p.m.	H-P Park, Garden Room
9	Transportation Committee	6:00 p.m.	Council Chambers
17	City Council	7:00 p.m.	Council Chambers
23	Arts Committee	1:00 p.m.	H-P Park, Garden Room
24	Planning Commission	6:00 p.m.	Council Chambers
25	Tree Committee	4:00 p.m.	Admin. Offices Mtg. Rm.

## April 2010

6	Atherton Rail Committee	6:00 p.m.	Council Chambers
7	Environmental Programs Committee	10:00 a.m.	Admin. Offices Mtg. Rm.
7	Park & Recreation Commission	5:30 p.m.	H-P Park, Main House
21	City Council	7:00 p.m.	Council Chambers
22	Tree Committee	4:00 p.m.	Admin. Offices Mtg. Rm.
27	Arts Committee	1:00 p.m.	H-P Park, Garden Room
28	Planning Commission	6:00 p.m.	Council Chambers

For information on changes and special meetings call 752-0500 or check the Town Community Calendar at [www.ci.atherton.ca.us](http://www.ci.atherton.ca.us)



## Town of Atherton

91 Ashfield Road  
Atherton, CA 94027

PRESORTED  
STANDARD  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
MENLO PARK, CA  
PERMIT NO. 26

## Winter Newsletter



ECRWSS

**Atherton Resident**

Atherton, CA 94027

**Important Information Inside**