



MONTHLY MATTERS

George Rodericks | City Manager | grodericks@athertonca.gov

Feb 2025 Agenda Topics

Study Session - Feb 4 (4 pm)
Special Meeting - Feb 11 (11 am)
Regular Meeting - Feb 18 (6 pm)

Tentative Agenda Topics -

- Mid-Year Budget Report (Feb 4)
- Earth Day Activity Report (Feb 4)
- Senior Task Force Discussion on Objectives (Feb 11)
- Council and Committee Chair/Vice Chair Workshop (Feb 11)
- 2nd Reading and Adoption of Inclusionary Ordinance (Feb 18)
- 1st Reading and Adoption of SB 79 Design Standards (Feb 18)
- Award of Contract for Event Management Services at the Park (Feb 18)
- SB 707 Policy Adoption (Feb 18)

On The Horizon

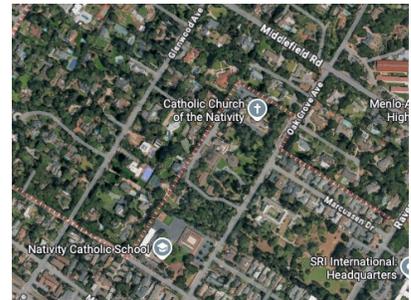
- PD Annual Reports (Mar 4)
- FY 2026/27 Budget Kick-Off (Mar 4)
- 1st Reading and Introduction of Heritage Tree Ordinance Revisions (Mar 18)

Charting a Course in the New Year

In January, the City Council began the year with a focus on housing.

At the January 14 Study Session, the Council received an update on potential housing development at

Menlo College. Community members who have been working directly with the College shared information from their discussions with Menlo College representatives about exploring conceptual plans for teacher, faculty, and staff housing on campus.



Menlo College indicated that this type of housing would help support its workforce while also contributing toward the Town’s state-mandated affordable housing requirements. The community group is continuing to work with the College during the early conceptual design phase to help develop preliminary plans that could serve as a foundation for future fundraising and implementation efforts.

At its January 21 Regular Meeting, the City Council introduced an Inclusionary Housing Ordinance and conducted its first reading. An Inclusionary Housing Ordinance requires certain residential developments to include a minimum percentage of homes that are affordable at defined income levels. As an alternative, developers may pay an in-lieu fee to support the creation of affordable housing elsewhere.

In considering the ordinance, the Council set both the required minimum affordability percentage and the in-lieu fee amount.



Charter City Discussion Resources

Join us as we embark on an exploration of becoming a charter city. Currently, Atherton is a General Law City, meaning our governance is largely dictated by state statutes. A Charter City operates under its own local charter. A charter establishes a framework for how a city governs its municipal affairs, as allowed under the California Constitution, while remaining subject to state law on matters of statewide concern.

Over the next few months, the Town will be hosting a series of community workshops and neighborhood meetings to discuss the possibility of becoming a charter city. A charter must be approved by the voters and at this time, no decision has been made to put the matter on the ballot. For more info, visit the Town's [Charter City website](#).

The discussion focused on balancing the Town's state-mandated housing obligations with potential impacts on neighborhoods and nearby properties. The Council was also mindful of how state Density Bonus laws could affect development intensity and sought to establish standards that are careful and measured.

The Inclusionary Housing Ordinance applies only to properties zoned RM-10, RM-20/40, properties subject to the SB 79 overlay, and properties eligible for development under SB 1123.

Other items discussed at the meeting included ways to reduce the use of gas-powered lawn care equipment at Town parks. The City Council directed staff to work with the Town's landscape maintenance contractor to identify areas where battery-operated equipment could be used. The Council also directed staff to begin evaluating options to enhance the audio-visual capabilities at the Pavilion to better support community events and meetings.

Lastly, on January 29, the Town held a [Community Workshop](#) to provide residents with an overview of what it means to be a General Law City versus a Charter City. The workshop was informational in nature, and staff emphasized that the Town has not made any decision to pursue a charter. Any future consideration of a charter would require voter approval. The presentation focused on explaining what charter status can and cannot do, particularly in the context of increasing state laws that affect local decision-making. It was made clear that charter status does not override state housing laws, zoning requirements, or the Town's General Plan, and does not exempt the Town from state-mandated housing obligations.

The workshop also addressed topics such as public contracting, prevailing wage requirements, governance, and taxation. Staff explained that while charter cities may have some flexibility in specific municipal matters, many requirements remain governed by state law. Overall, community members were engaged and focused on understanding the implications of charter authority, expressing interest in local control while also emphasizing the importance of transparency, careful evaluation, and maintaining voter protections as the Town continues to explore the issue.

For more information on the Town's exploration of becoming a charter city, contact the City Manager at via [email](#) or visit the Town's [Charter City website](#).