



**Item No. 5A.
Town of Atherton**

TO: PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

FROM: STEVE TYLER – PARK SUPERINTENDENT

DATE: APRIL 6, 2016

SUBJECT: ART DONATION

DISCUSSION TOPIC

The Atherton Art Foundation seeks approval to purchase and install Lizard (2) sculptures and install them on the water tower.

ANALYSIS

(see attached presentation)

FINANCIAL

Art and installation to be paid for by the Atherton Arts Foundation.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notification was achieved by posting the agenda, with this agenda item being listed, at least 72 hours prior to the meeting in print and electronically. Information about the project is also disseminated via the Town's electronic News Flash and Atherton Online. There are approximately 1,200 subscribers to the Town's electronic News Flash publications. Subscribers include residents as well as stakeholders – to include, but be not limited to, media outlets, school districts, Menlo Park Fire District, service providers (water, power, and sewer), and regional elected officials.

Attachments:

The Atherton Arts Foundation has the opportunity to purchase one or a pair of wall mountable lizard sculptures that we think would be a delightful addition to Holbrook Palmer Park. As you are aware we recently placed our Snail sculpture on the path a bit beyond the water tower in the direction of Middlefield Road. When approaching the water tower on this path the watertower presents a bare wall that would make an excellent frame for one or both of these sculptures. The display would be similar to the picture below with or without the smaller lizard. The pieces are respectively about 79" and 44" long. I have approached two members of the Town Council with the idea and both reacted positively to the concept though they did not have the opportunity to see the sculptures.

These pieces were designed and built by Richard Swenson, who resides near Santa Fe. On the following page I have included a write up about Mr. Swenson and his work in the Los Alamos Monitor and a photo of the larger lizard mounted on a wall with a bystander to give a sense of size.

When we present this idea to the Park and Recreation Commission I will try to have available a properly scaled photo of the water tower with the sculptures digitally mounted on it. We hope you will agree that this would be a nice enhancement for the park.



Senior center displays sculptures by local artist

Richard Swenson > Artwork is made from scraps of metal

Thursday, May 30, 2013 at 10:31 am

Richard Swenson, a local sculptor who focuses on creating art from unaltered objects such as scrap metal parts found in junk yards and repair shops, displayed his work for visitors of Betty Ehart Senior Center. Featuring animal shapes such as frogs, penguins, bunnies and crabs, the display cases can be found on the second floor lobby of the center.

The central theme of Swenson's sculptures is "The Primacy of Nature Over the Industrial Society." Born and raised on a ranch in North Dakota, the sculptor experienced a world without electricity, running water, or indoor conveniences. His childhood world, unaltered by industrial society, focused on the relationships between man and animal, something that most children of the current generation are not likely to comprehend.

"It would be a lonesome place in this high-tech world without animals, for we are one of them," Swenson said, in a quote that stands out within the promotional pamphlet for the display.

His work has been shown at local venues such as the New Concept Gallery in Santa Fe, as well as out-of-state establishments, such as the Louisiana Art and Science Museum in Baton Rouge, and the Longue Vue House and Gardens in New Orleans.

At the Louisiana Art and Science Museum, 30 of his sculptures were displayed alongside an exhibit from the creators of Sesame Street.

With such achievements, one would be surprised to know that, in his lifetime, Swenson was a Navy SEAL, and made a career out of acoustic research in support of anti-submarine warfare.

He started sculpting after retiring, in an attempt to keep himself busy. During that time, he began collecting John Deere tractors, and using the extra parts for his sculptures.

"We live in an advanced industrial society in a swamp of information and material complexity that overwhelm us," Swenson said. Through his art, he attempts to use this material complexity in a creative manner.

The display can be visited during regular senior center hours, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Saturday.

