



Item No. 3 Town of Atherton

CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT – STUDY SESSION

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: GEORGE RODERICKS, CITY MANAGER

DATE: JUNE 6, 2018

SUBJECT: JOINT MEETING REQUEST FROM THE MENLO PARK FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

RECOMMENDATION

Review attached letter and provide staff with direction regarding the request.

BACKGROUND | ANALYSIS

On May 10, 2018, the President of the Board of Directors for the Menlo Park Fire Protection District sent the attached letter to the Mayor and Council. On May 23, 2018, staff was forwarded a copy of the letter by the Clerk of the Board.

The Board President is contacting the Town to arrange another joint study session to discuss matters of mutual interest. The letter advises that there are two paramount issues of importance to the Fire Board that are of mutual interest:

- a) Mobility within the Fire District; and
- b) The installation of a district-wide alerting system to address disasters.

Both of the above issues were touched upon at the last joint meeting held by the Town and District; but were not dealt with in depth. The District's concern for mobility are focused on three emergency response routes:

- Middlefield Road
- Marsh Road from Fair Oaks Lane to Bayfront Expressway
- El Camino Real from Menlo Park to the Redwood City border

The letter requests a suggestion of several possible dates in the next several months. Similar letters requesting joint meetings were sent to East Palo Alto, Menlo Park, and San Mateo County.

POLICY FOCUS

If the Council is interested in participating in a joint meeting with the Fire District it would be appropriate to provide staff with a couple of topics of focus that can be suggested as well as a timeframe for meeting dates.

FISCAL IMPACT

None.

COMMISSION/COMMITTEE FEEDBACK/REFERRAL

This item ____ has or X has not been before a Town Committee or Commission.

- ____ Audit/Finance Committee (meets every other month)
- ____ Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee (meets as needed)
- ____ Civic Center Advisory Committee (meets as needed)
- ____ Environmental Programs Committee (meets every other month)
- ____ Park and Recreation Committee (meets each month)
- ____ Planning Commission (meets each month)
- ____ Rail Committee (meets every other month)
- ____ Transportation Committee (meets every other month)

ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT 1 – May 10, 2018 Letter from Menlo Park Fire Protection District



Menlo Park Fire Protection District

Fire Chief
Harold Schapelhouman

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Board of Directors
Chuck Bernstein
Virginia Chang Kiraly
Peter F. Carpenter
Robert J. Silano
Robert Jones

May 10, 2018

Cary Wiest, Mayor
Town Council
Town of Atherton
91 Ashfield Road
Atherton, CA 94027

Dear Cary & Council Members:

In my capacity as President of the Board of the Menlo Park Fire Protection District, I am contacting you to arrange another joint study session of our two agencies to discuss several urgent matters of mutual interest. Of paramount importance to the Fire Board are the issues of (a) mobility within the Fire District (which we discussed at a previous joint meeting) and (b) the installation of a district-wide alerting system to address disasters.

As you are aware from your frequent attendance at Fire Board meetings, the mission of the District is "to protect and preserve life, property and the environment from the impacts of fire, disaster, injury and illness." In pursuit of this mission, the Board passed Resolution 1476-2011, designating primary emergency response routes that are essential to timely responses, and Resolution 1818-2015, establishing specific standards for acceptable response times. Unfortunately, our ability to meet the required response times in certain parts of the District has deteriorated for a variety of reasons (roadway design, roadway widths, traffic control devices, traffic congestion), but with the most challenging being gridlock during commute hours.

I am informed that in Atherton this is evident on the following emergency response routes:

- Middlefield Road
- Marsh Road from Fair Oaks Lane to Bayfront Expressway
- El Camino Real from Menlo Park to the Redwood City border

We are now at the tipping point where delays in our responses during more than half the waking hours of the residents of Atherton can and will have catastrophic consequences for those needing emergency services. It is essential that we find and implement solutions to address these problems.

With respect to disaster preparedness, recent experiences with fires in the North Bay, flooding in San Jose, and the Napa earthquake have pointed out the inadequacy of the alerting system and procedures in those areas. The District has made effective and timely alerting one of its top five priorities for implementation this year. At the same time, we understand that emergency planning is by law the domain of local municipalities, so we want to be sure that what we do does not interfere with plans the Town of Atherton may have in place to address community notification. Moreover, while what we are planning would initially affect only our own facilities and equipment, it may be that cooperation between our agencies could result in an alerting system that would reach more Atherton residents and do so in a more timely and effective manner.

I am aware that there are other issues that may benefit from the proposed joint study session such as shared use of the new emergency operation center we are building. You may well have several other issues too, though our experience with a joint meeting in Atherton before suggests that there typically is not enough time to address more than two to four issues at a single meeting.

I look forward to your positive response to this invitation. If you could suggest several possible dates in the next several months, I would survey the other members of the Fire Board to find the one that works best. Since you meet on Wednesdays and we meet on Tuesday evenings, those days could perhaps be starting points.

Yours truly,



Charles D. Bernstein, President
Board of Directors

CB/ms

c.c.: Directors
Harold Schapelhouman, Chief

Enclosures:

Copies of letters sent to other jurisdictions