



Item No. 6 Town of Atherton

CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT – STUDY SESSION

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
GEORGE RODERICKS, CITY MANAGER

FROM: ROBERT OVADIA, PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR

DATE: OCTOBER 7, 2020

SUBJECT: PROVIDE DIRECTION TO STAFF REGARDING EVENT
MANAGEMENT SERVICES AT HOLBROOK-PALMER PARK

RECOMMENDATION

Provide direction to staff regarding the contract for event management services at Holbrook-Palmer Park.

BACKGROUND

Catering by Dana (CBD) had been successfully providing event management services for the Town since 2014. The services contract was for an initial term of three (3) years and allowed for two individual 2-year extensions. The contract with CBD was set to expire on March 17, 2021 following the end of the second contract extension.

Due to the effects of COVID-19 on the catering services and event management sector, Catering by Dana made the decision to permanently close permanently. Catering by Dana provided its notice of intent to terminate the agreement on August 18, 2020 with an effective date of September 18, 2020. Karunia (Nia) Harianto has been the on-site representative for Catering by Dana, managing advertisements, reservations and events since the retirement of Julie Simonin in June 2019.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and related health orders issued by the San Mateo County Health Officer and the State of California, social events and gatherings were initially prohibited and then limited. The event facilities in Holbrook-Palmer Park have been closed to the public since the emergency declaration in March 2020. Small gatherings were permitted to restart in August 2020 with special precautions and limitations on attendees.

ANALYSIS

To maintain the availability of rental facilities and services at Holbrook-Palmer Park, the Town requires the services of an event manager to be responsible for the marketing of the park facilities,

cleaning of event facilities, and management of the events in accordance with Town requirements. The following options are presented for Council consideration:

1. Closing. In consideration of COVID-19 and the limitations on public gatherings, the Council may elect to temporarily stop the marketing of Holbrook-Palmer Park and close the facilities to outside reservations. As the situation with COVID-19 is dynamic and it is unknown if and when restrictions on public gatherings will be relaxed and/or lifted, the facilities cannot be used to their full potential. The cleaning services provided by the contract would need to be picked up by the Town.
2. RFP. The Town could seek to enter into an agreement with an event management company or provider. Staff would prepare a Request for Proposals (RFP) for event management services to solicit proposals from interested parties. In 2014, when the Town issued its RFP for event management services, one response was received. COVID-19 has negatively impacted many businesses in the hospitality and event industry and it is unclear what type or level of responses the Town may receive at this time.
3. Interjurisdictional Agreement. The Town could seek to partner with a neighboring jurisdiction for management of its event facilities. Redwood City and Menlo Park both provide facility rentals and there may be an opportunity to partner with them for management of rentals at Holbrook-Palmer Park. Neither Menlo Park nor Redwood City are allowing for indoor facility rentals at this time. Redwood City is allowing limited use of outdoor spaces for outdoor businesses activities (gyms, yoga, etc.) with an hourly rental fee. Menlo Park is not renting spaces for social gatherings and is limiting field bookings to sports and fitness activities. It is unclear if neighboring jurisdictions will be willing to partner and provide the level of service that the Town desires with regards to facility rentals and event management. It is unlikely that these jurisdictions would market the Town's facilities in the same way as the Town via a private event services vendor.
4. Agreement Assignment. Karunia (Nia) Harianto, who has been managing the events at Holbrook-Palmer Park since June 2019, has been working in the corporate, catering and hospitality industry for over 25 years. Nia earned her Master Certification in Hospitality Management from Cornell University. Her career has included coordination of many big community events, fundraisings and experience in all aspect of event planning and coordination. Nia has reinstated her sole proprietorship and is willing to obtain the insurance required by the agreement and is willing to provide a continuity of services through the current CBD agreement term. Her familiarity with the park and its venues will provide for a seamless transition. Nia is currently providing interim services through a stand-alone time and materials agreement while the Council decides on its next steps. If this option is selected, the Town will work to assign the current agreement to Nia and prepare an RFP and/or other options for Council consideration as the agreement term nears its close.

Though closing the park to facility rentals may be acceptable during the short run, maintaining Holbrook-Palmer Park and its facilities as a premium location for events has been a priority for the Council. Active marketing and management are important in that effort. Issuance of an RFP and evaluation of proposals will require time as would discussion and negotiation with a potential interjurisdictional partner. In addition, the Council recently discussed the possibility of extending the Kitchen/Café at the Library as a possible service opportunity for a new vendor. This option may be appealing to a vendor that provides catering services as a part of its event management services. However, it would not be attractive to a vendor that does not.

POLICY FOCUS

Policy focus should be on the intent of maintaining facility rentals and event management services for facilities at Holbrook-Palmer Park and process by which the Council would like to obtain such services.

FISCAL IMPACT

Due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, rental revenue is limited at this time. Costs associated with event management are management services are currently based on a revenue sharing model. Costs related to preparation and distribution of an RFP are limited.

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 provides (water, power, and sewer), and regional elected officials.

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)
- ___ Tree Committee (meets each month)

ATTACHMENTS

None.