



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

### **CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT – REGULAR AGENDA**

**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL**

**THROUGH: ROBERT OVADIA/ PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR**

**FROM: BEN TALAVERA, MANAGEMENT ANALYST**

**DATE: MARCH 19, 2025**

**SUBJECT: DISCUSSION AND DIRECTION REGARDING ATHERTON ARTS  
FOUNDATION PROPOSAL FOR MAIN HOUSE**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Council provide feedback and guidance to staff on the Atherton Arts Foundation's Proposal for Upstairs Main House Art and proposed revisions to the Park Use (facility rental) Agreement to include provisions related to the artwork in the Main House.

### **BACKGROUND**

The Atherton Arts Foundation (AAF) is a designated group recognized by the City Council. The Foundation has displayed artwork upstairs in the Main House. The art displays were placed and maintained by AAF without any formal agreement. Town staff recently installed gallery art hanging systems upstairs in the Main House to facilitate art installations and displays. Recent renters in the Main House have removed art from the walls and/or leaned items against the artwork causing potential damage.

At the February 05, 2025, Park & Recreation Committee meeting, the Atherton Arts Foundation (AAF) presented a proposal to install and display artwork upstairs in the Main House (rental areas), as outlined in the attached proposal (Attachment 1). The proposal from the Atherton Arts Foundation aims to:

- Enhance the look and feel of the rental space
- Improve the wall displays throughout the upstairs area
- Create engaging conversation topics for viewers
- Highlight aspects of the Town's history
- Showcase the creativity of Town and local community artists through mini shows

The AAF proposal formally authorizes the Atherton Arts Foundation to continue displaying artwork in the Main House, while also enabling the Town to oversee the displayed works.

Additionally, the proposal aims to protect the artwork by including artist statements to clearly identify the pieces as art and to safeguard the artwork through amendments to the Town's Park Use (facility rental) Agreement.

During the Park & Recreation Committee meeting, the AAF mentioned that pieces with historical relevance to the Town would be given priority and approved art will be displayed in a permanent format. The AAF would retain ownership of all the artwork they collect and contribute, while the artwork donated specifically to the Town will be noted and remain property of the Town of Atherton. The Town may reject any piece of artwork deemed inappropriate. The Atherton Arts Foundation will facilitate the installation of additional artwork so as to minimize impact to Town staff.

The AAF also proposes to invite artists to show their work through "mini art shows", hosted by the AAF, that would take in the Main House and be open to the community. The AAF will notify the Town and reserve the space in advance of the intended dates of the show. Town events, activities, and space rental shall have priority use.

During the Committee meeting, the Committee members reviewed and discussed the proposal. Throughout the discussion, several points were raised, including:

- The duration of the proposed art display
- The process for reviewing and selecting the artwork
- The design and placement of artist statements next to relevant pieces
- The types of art prioritized for display
- Ownership of all artwork displayed
- The details of mini-shows, including frequency, process, and coordination with Town staff to organize such events
- Changes to the Town's current Park Use Agreement

The Atherton Arts Foundation brought the proposal to their Board. The Board members have voted on and approved the proposal.

The Park & Recreation Committee recommended that the proposal from the Atherton Art Foundation be forwarded to the City Council for approval.

## **ANALYSIS**

The Atherton Arts Foundation is a designated group recognized by the City Council, and has displayed art in the upstairs area of the Main House without a formal agreement. A formal agreement allowing for the permanent display is recommended by staff to better outline responsibilities. Art should be hung using the art gallery system, or other means that do not damage walls, similar to how art is displayed at the Town Center. As the displays are intended to be permanent, modification of the Park Use (facility rental) Agreement is recommended to make renters aware of the artwork and outline parameters to respect the artwork during their use of facilities.

As a Designated Group, fees are not charged for facility use, however groups are obligated to pay any direct Town costs associated with their events. All event organizers are required to complete event applications stating the details of the proposed events for review by the City Manager and events must meet insurance requirements as determined by the City Manager and the Town's Risk Liability Insurance Carrier. Provided that the mini-shows meet the requirements as outlined in the Designated Group Policy and do not interfere with paid rentals and Town use and needs, staff has no objection to the hosing of "mini-shows".

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

None at this time.

### **GOAL ALIGNMENT**

This Report and its contents are in alignment with the following Council Policy Goals:

- Goal Area B – Preserve Small Town Character and Quality of Life
- Goal Area E – Strengthen Community Engagement and Transparency
- Goal Area F – Be Forward-Thinking, Well-Managed, and Well-Planned

### **POLICY FOCUS**

The policy focus for this item is regarding Council direction on the Atherton Art Foundation Proposal for Upstairs Main House Art and updating the Town's existing Park Use Agreement.

### **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 Protection District, service providers (water, power, and sewer), and regional elected officials.

### **COMMISSION/COMMITTEE FEEDBACK/REFERRAL**

Park and Recreation Committee (meets each month)

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1 – Atherton Art Foundation (AAF) Proposal for Upstairs Main House Art

Attachment 2 – Park Use Agreement Proposed Permanent Artwork at Main House

Attachment 3 – Proposed Permanent Artwork at Main House

Attachment 4 – Designated Groups Policy