



Item No. 3

Town of Atherton

STAFF REPORT – REGULAR AGENDA

TO: HONORABLE CHAIR AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

FROM: RACHAEL LONDER, MANAGEMENT ANALYST II

DATE: NOVEMBER 16, 2023

**SUBJECT: DISCUSSION ON COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND
OUTREACH ACTIVITIES**

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Environmental Programs Committee discuss community engagement and outreach activities.

BACKGROUND

During the July 20, 2023 meeting of the EPC, Committee Members prioritized education and outreach activities for the remainder of 2023 and into early 2024. Full plan is available in Attachment 1. High priority activities included:

- Education and resources to promote proper **recycling** of tricky plastics, including medication bottles (raised by Committee Member Loew)
- Environmental **movie nights** in collaboration with the library and local documentary producers (raised by Committee Member Farrell)
- **Community workshops** on green outdoor topics including composting, bees, and supporting biodiversity (raised by Committee Member Frederick)

EPC Members discussed next steps and divided up tasks. Progress on planning these activities has happened outside of the EPC Regular Meetings. Updates include:

- **Recycling:** GreenWaste's operations team confirmed that most prescription/over-the-counter bottles and their lids are usually made of plastics #1 through #7. The best way to recycle is to empty the contents inside of the medication bottles and keep the lid on and disposing it inside the blue bin, where we can recycle the empty medication bottles at the Materials Recovery Facility in San Jose. GreenWaste also shared another option through Med- Project which offers free mail-back programs and drop-off kiosks at Walgreens, CVS, Kaiser and select hospitals.
- **Movie Night:** Chair Farrell met with the Redford Center on November 7 to tour Town facilities for a screening.
- **Community Workshops:** Staff scheduled a home composting workshop for Tuesday, November 14. There are 26 registered for the free event hosted in the Council Chambers. All attendees will get to choose either a free worm bin or backyard bin to get started turning food and yard waste into a nutrient rich material at home. More research is

needed to host a bee and biodiversity program. Committee Member Frederick provided considerations for a program on owl boxes, anecdotally, noting that populations may be down locally due to downed trees from storm and increased construction. Promoting owl habitat may reduce number of rodents and use of poisons. Learning more about ecological benefits of owl and owl boxes may be of interest to Atherton residents.

ANALYSIS

The EPC has an opportunity to discuss how it would like to proceed with the outreach and education activities. The EPC may want to consider each activity's environmental value, the Committee's role, and the next steps for proceeding. In order to best determine alignment with the Council's priorities and environmental benefit, the Committee may consider the 2023 Climate Action Plan adopted by the Council on October 4, 2023. The Plan may be reviewed at the dashboard link in Attachment 3. Staff note that priority education and outreach efforts in alignment with the CAP that are not currently included in the EPC's work plan include encouraging building electrification and awareness of emission reducing actions that individuals, families, and institutions in Town can take to support achieving the newly established goal of carbon neutrality.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no Fiscal Impact. Activities would be offered leveraging existing community resources including regional organizations and agencies, non-profits, and volunteers.

GOAL ALIGNMENT: Strengthen Community Engagement and Transparency

POLICY FOCUS

The voluntary participation of Atherton's citizens in the operation of the Town government is critical to the City Council's and the Town staff's success in serving the community. The City Council has established several citizen advisory bodies composed mainly of volunteers. Volunteers to specific bodies are appointed by the City Council and charged with the responsibilities of gathering, synthesizing, and analyzing the information relevant to their areas of responsibility and providing the City Council and Town staff with advice and recommendations. The Council and staff rely on this advice for the development and execution of Town policies. The EPC shall have the following powers and duties:

- Make recommendations (programmatic and legislative) to the City Council upon request on all matters pertaining to the Town's natural and built environment and the Town's regional role and responsibilities as one of the communities on the San Francisco Bay Peninsula.
- Create pro-active community engagement programs for residents, commercial and public enterprises active within the Town's jurisdiction for presentation to and consideration and approval by, the City Council.

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

This item has not been before a Town Committee or Commission

ATTACHMENTS

1. Community Outreach and Education Plan
2. Med-Project Resource Links
3. Town's Climate Action Plan Dashboard: climateaction.ci.atherton.ca.us