



Item No. 13 Town of Atherton

CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT – REGULAR AGENDA

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

FROM: ROBERT OVADIA, PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR

DATE: JUNE 19, 2024

**SUBJECT: EVENT MANAGEMENT SERVICES AT HOLBROOK-PALMER
PARK**

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council provide feedback and direction regarding the provision of event management services at Holbrook-Palmer Park.

BACKGROUND

Catered Too, Inc. had been providing event management services for the Town since September 2021. The services contract was for an initial term of three (3) years, with a 30-day termination clause. Catered Too's compensation was based on revenue generated through catering services associated with events at the park. On November 1, 2023, Catered Too advised the Town that they would stop providing event management services starting December 31, 2023. They stated in their letter that since COVID-19, they have not seen the volume of business at the park needed for profitability.

Following the departure of Catered Too, staff has been utilizing temporary staffing services to assist the coordination of events at Holbrook-Palmer Park, including responding to customer inquiries, providing tours and showing available facilities, scheduling and booking events, coordinating payments and reporting on activities. While the use of temporary services fills the gap, such services can be transitory and unpredictable with respect to consistent personnel. Each change in personnel requires Town staff to regroup and retrain new personnel.

At its February 21, 2024, meeting, the City Council reviewed a Request for Proposals for Event Management Services (RFP) and authorized release of the Request for Proposals.

ANALYSIS

The Request for Proposals was released on February 27, 2024, with a due date of May 7, 2024. The RFP included flexibility in staffing and allowed respondents to propose a compensation arrangement that could include exclusive catering services or a percentage of booking revenues,

such has been done with prior vendors. The RFP also included a pre-proposal site walk-through to provide potential vendors an opportunity to view the park and facilities that would be able to for events and rentals.

Unfortunately, we did not receive any inquiries prior to the date of the site walk-through nor did we receive any attendees on the date of the walk-through. Staff reached out to a vendor that had expressed interest in the previous RFP release, vendors suggested by the temporary staff person managing event rentals at the time, as well as to local Chambers of Commerce and event management organizations. Ultimately, we did not receive any responses to the RFP.

Staff shared the previously released RFP with the current temporary event coordinator seeking input on areas of potential improvement as well as additional means of generating potential vendors. The feedback was that the RFP provided a good outline of our service needs and that we could go through our previous booking for additional leads. The lack of response could be associated with the economy, the drop in the number and type of events that people are having, and concerns regarding the ability to book events and generate revenue.

An interested member of the public indicated that they would share the RFP to a potential vendor or two for feedback and suggestions to improve the RFP or otherwise provide suggestions on developing more interest. Separately, staff has been in contact with Sodexo, which assisted in booking the food trucks for Earth Day and provides catering service to Menlo College. Though Sodexo expressed some interest, they have not yet submitted a proposal.

Staff is seeking feedback and direction regarding the potential release of an updated Request for Proposals for Event Management Services. The most recent RFP is attached for reference.

FISCAL IMPACT

The costs related to preparation and distribution of an RFP are limited. The Town continues to pay for temporary staffing while we seek a permanent vendor.

GOAL ALIGNMENT

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

- Goal Area A – Maintain Fiscal Responsibility
- Goal Area B – Preserve Small Town Character and Quality of Life
- Goal Area F – Be Forward-Thinking, Well-Managed, and Well-Planned

POLICY FOCUS

Policy focus should be on the intent of maintaining facility rentals and event management services for facilities at Holbrook-Palmer Park.

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. Request for Proposals for Event Management Services, Dated February 27, 2024