



MENLO CIRCUS CLUB

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July 26, 2023

Via Email: Council@ci.atherton.ca.us

Atherton City Council
80 Fair Oaks Lane
Atherton, CA 94027

Dear Atherton City Council Members,

We were surprised to learn that at the July 19 Atherton City Council meeting, the Council voted to add the Menlo Circus Club as a potential site for inclusion in the City's CEQA study as part of the ongoing development of the City's "Housing Element Plan" for the State of California. As we are sure you are all aware, the Menlo Circus Club is a private, member-owned, family social club.

The Club is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year, and is proud to be regarded as an iconic Atherton institution. Many of our members are Atherton residents and the Club has a long history of giving back to the community by hosting events in support of local charities, non-profits and schools.

We appreciate that the current debate surrounding affordable housing in Atherton is complex and empathize with the difficult task of coming up with a plan that will satisfy the current "Regional Housing Needs Allocation" requirements from the State of California.

Although we applaud all of your hard work on this issue to date, we are writing to notify you that, on behalf of our members, the Menlo Circus Club unequivocally objects to being included as a potential site in the CEQA study, whether as part of a "POS Zoning District" or otherwise.

The Club's property and facilities are distinct and uniquely important in creating our member experience. We do care deeply about our staff, many of whom have been with us for more than 20, 30, 40 and even 50 years, and we in fact currently provide housing for several employees and their family members on Club property.

We do not, however, have the ability to build additional structures as we can no longer add impermeable surfaces due to maximum hardscape limits within our existing footprint. With nearly 450 member-owners, it is also safe to say that there would never be a consensus to agree to sub-divide any portion of our property for a potential sale to a developer, even in the unlikely event that a developer would be prepared to pay fair market value for the property.

Our property is therefore simply non-developable and as such, looking further down the road, it would be misleading to suggest or imply to the State of California that the Club could be part of the solution in Atherton's Housing Element Plan. Under the circumstances, we ask that the Club be removed from potential consideration as a site on the CEQA list prior to the Council's Regular Meeting on September 20.

Please confirm receipt of this letter with our General Manager, Dirk Zander, at gm@menlocircusclub.com. Please also feel free to contact any of the undersigned with any questions that you may have (each of whom can be reached through Mr. Zander).

Sincerely yours,

Menlo Circus Club Board of Directors,
Dan Mummery, President
Robert Mullin, Jr., Vice President
Bracken Richardson, Treasurer
Ann McPherson, Secretary
Kathleen Castaillac, Assistant Secretary
Joan Cronin
Dr. Jason Lee
Steve Seabolt
Betsy Tripaldi