



**AGENDA**  
**Town of Atherton**  
**Environmental Programs Committee**  
**MAY 18, 2023**  
**COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**1:00 PM**  
***Council Chambers***  
***80 Fair Oaks Lane, Atherton, CA 9402***

**REGULAR MEETING**

**ROLL CALL**

**Committee Members:** Chair Farrell, Frederick, Loew (All Present)

**Council Liaison:** Lewis

**Staff:** Rachael Londer, Management Analyst II, Anthony Suber, City Clerk

**There were no public comments.**

**REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS**

**1. Establishing Quorum per AB 2449 & AB 361**

Committee member Loew participating remotely from 255 Polhemus Avenue due to just cause. Chair Farrell motioned to allow Loew to participate. Committee member Frederick seconded.

**2. Approve Committee Minutes for November 17, 2022 (Regular Meeting) and December 15, 2022 (Special Meeting)**

Committee member Frederick made a motion to pass the minutes, Chair Farrell second, and Council member Lewis moved to approve.

**AYES:** Chair Farrell, Committee member Frederick, Chair Farrell, and Committee member Loew

**3. Review the Battery and Electric Landscaping Training with the American Green Zone Alliance (3/29/2023)**

Staff reviewed the day of details from the staff report and then invited the Electric Landscaping Tools Subcommittee to share what worked well and what could be improved for future events and efforts.

Committee member Frederick shared feedback based on audiences that attended:

A) The Gardening/Landscaping Companies:

- They were the targeted audience & a weekday afternoon was chosen based on informal surveys of a variety of local gardeners
  - 1) It turns out that there are many more independent gardeners than anticipated & the average number of employees per company is small
- Small teams cannot afford to miss any time at work & ½ day absence is very difficult
  - 2) Larger teams were able to send one or two representatives
- B) Private Companies with large landscaping areas
  - The most obvious was the Circus Club & they had the Director of Landscaping attend
- C) Atherton residents:
  - Those that attended learned quite a lot and gained new insights as to the scope of the issue
  - However, if we want greater attendance from residents, we should schedule such sessions either after work (6:00pm?) or on a Saturday
- D) Highlights:
  - 1) Attendees learned & actively asked questions concerning:
    - The latest advances in handheld equipment (trimmers, edger's, blowers, saws, etc.)
    - The "logistics" and management of the battery charging/swapping systems
    - The total economics of transitioning to 100% battery operated systems
    - The application of robotic lawnmowers to residential landscaping
    - The current & potential subsidies/rebates were discussed in detail
  - 2) The Concept of the Town providing a training/information opportunity to residents that could save them significant personal time & money and lead to a better decision was well received
    - The use of an "Outside Expert" in the topic is very useful & adds credibility as a subject expert
    - Although the concept is popular, the execution details require "fine tuning"
- E) Limitations:
  - 1) For a town with ~ 2,500 homes, we should be able to attract more attendees
    - As always, obtaining resident involvement is the challenge
    - Most of the residents do not yet understand the impending changes on gasoline powered equipment, or realized the economic benefit of some new technologies
    - However, we must continue to engage residents at every opportunity
  - 2) The best timeframes for gardeners & for residents do not appear to match & we will have to better target the time to the audience
    - In either case, a ½ day session is probably too long & we should plan a limit of ~ 2 hours in the future

Farrell shared that the biggest takeaway from the training was that residents must partner with their landscapers to make the transition from gas equipment to electric due to the

limitations of batteries. For example, the homeowner must provide their own batteries, place to charge, or arrange a set-up with landscaper in order for them to complete their tasks without running out of charge.

Farrell would like to focus on more educational events on a variety of different topics with homeowners as audience, and then they can think of how they partner with their landscapers or other crews.

Suber added that we should focus on what we can implement and impact. The Town has effective channels to communicate with homeowners and we could create a resource list to share with homeowners. The committee could also consider recommending additional policies.

Council member Lewis shared that the training highlighted how every property is going to be treated the same and the homeowners need to be aware. Outreach goes hand in hand with policy where we offer both incentives and regulations. Opportunities to share alternatives to gas equipment with residents.

Farrell offered social media as a strategy for spreading the word to homeowners. Londer reminded the committee of Council's approved rebate.

Farrell suggested a case study may be helpful looking at schools and institutions that have made the switch already.

Staff recommended that we move to the next item to stay on schedule. A discussion on future activities related to landscaping will occur during the May 25 Special Meeting of the EPC.

### **3. Review the Love Our Earth Festival (4/22/2023)**

Staff reviewed the day of details included in the Staff Report.

Farrell expressed gratitude to the Town Staff and the volunteers sharing that the festival would not have been as large and successful without all of the different contributors including neighboring jurisdictions, Town Staff, community-based organizations, and volunteers. For example, the plant-based food marketplace was entirely organized with the expertise of Acterra. If we want to expose our attendees to all that the event had, we need a pretty big team. It's a popular day and event – the dealers and vendors will go where they think they will see the most people. Another example was that one volunteer from Menlo Park coordinated the entire Clean Vehicle Showcase.

Farrell shared challenges with parking which were echoed by the committee

Frederick was impressed by students and by Menlo College, and shared that the event was well organized and if the goal of Earth Day is to build a regional understanding, then the event achieved that goal. It was smoothly organized. Another option could be to host the

event on Santa Cruz Avenue.

Council member Lewis shared a perception that not a lot of Atherton residents came and that it is a lot of work to host these events. An event could be hosted at Holbrook-Palmer Park next year when the circulation project has been completed.

Farrell shared that the main goal for Atherton this year was to involve students.

Frederick expressed interest in hosting again at Menlo-Atherton High School  
Loew also expressed an interest in hosting again at Menlo-Atherton High School  
Lewis offered an idea for engaging students with a challenge and having them present their results at the event

Farrell mentioned the challenges with engaging students during AP exams. She recommended the potential to survey Town residents to see what they would like to get out of the event.

Loew agreed that it is hard to do educate everyone on everything in one day and there could be multiple touchpoints and events.

Action item for staff to send out a survey to residents for what they would like to see next year.

Committee to vote during a future meeting on what direction they'd recommend to Council for 2024.

#### 4. **Review the Climate Action Plan Priorities and KLA Community Dashboard**

Staff recommendation is that the EPC discusses the priorities in the Climate Action Plan and provides feedback on the KLA Dashboard to help engage residents on Climate Action Plan priorities. Staff reviewed 2023 CAP actions that will be presented to the City Council on June 21 including measures to reduce emissions from energy, transportation, waste, and water to achieve statewide 2030 and 2045 climate goals.

Farrell requested that the plan include actions around reducing emissions from commercial vehicles doing work in and through Atherton. Frederick recommended adding consumption based actions.

As the plan comes together, staff would like to update the Climate Action Plan website to include an interactive dashboard that allows residents and community members to see where progress has been made, where efforts are needed, provide feedback, ask questions, and find resources to make behavioral and lifestyle changes. One such example of a dashboard comes from KLA Associates. Staff shared the City of Sunnyvale's dashboard hosted by KLA here: <https://sunnyvaleclimateaction.org/>.

Kim Lundgren from KLA attended to share more about the dashboard and her experience.

Staff requested that the committee share initial reactions to a tool, any feedback on how a tool could be configured, and if any committee members would like to join the Website Subcommittee to further explore this initiative.

Frederick asked for costs and staff shared a ballpark of \$10,000. Frederick and Farrell expressed that it was a good idea. Farrell offered that there may be other vendors worth exploring.

Council member Lewis offered that this idea could be presented to the Council as she found value in it.

Action item for staff to further research and create a proposal for a climate action dashboard.

**5. Discussion on Recruitment Strategies and Menlo College Student Involvement (end by 3:00 PM)**

Frederick requested confirmation of the requirements for serving on the committee. Staff confirmed that committee members must be residents and registered voters. Those who do not meet those requirements can attend the meetings as members of the public and can participate through public comment.

Staff recommended this discussion be continued during the May 25 Special Meeting.

## **FUTURE AGENDA TOPICS**

1. Approve minutes from May 18, 2023 Meeting
2. Decide whether to make a recommendation to Council to collaborate for the 2024 Earth Day celebration
3. Discuss Future Community Engagement Activities
4. Review of Subcommittees - Oral Reports Only
  - Electric Landscaping Tools / Sustainable Landscaping Technology (Formerly Leaf Blower) – Frederick & Farrell
  - Reach Codes – Home Electrification – Farrell
  - Water Conservation – Frederick & Farrell
  - Earth Day – Farrell
  - Sustainability Website – Vacant
5. Discussion on Recruitment Strategies

## **NEXT MEETING DATE CONFIRMATION**

The next meeting of the Environmental Programs Committee will be on Thursday, May 25 at 2:00 PM

## **ADJOURN**

The meeting adjourned at 3:05 PM.