



## **Item No. 1 Town of Atherton**

### **CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT – STUDY SESSION**

**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL**

**FROM: RACHAEL LONDER, MANAGEMENT ANALYST II**

**DATE: DECEMBER 7, 2022**

**SUBJECT: DISCUSSION AND DIRECTION REGARDING THE 2023 EARTH DAY EVENT**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Council discuss and provide direction on whether the 2023 Earth Day Event shall be held in partnership with neighboring jurisdictions and community-based organizations.

### **BACKGROUND**

Every year in April, the Town comes together to honor Earth Day. The Environmental Programs Committee (EPC) assists staff in planning and facilitating an Earth Day Event designed to engage and educate the community on sustainability and climate-related topics as well as promote the goals of the Town's Climate Action Plan (CAP). In 2020 and 2021, the EPC decided not to host an in-person Earth Day Event due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In 2022, the EPC hosted an Earth Day Event at Holbrook-Palmer Park that included 35 vendors and over 300 attendees. Additionally, neighboring jurisdictions came together to host a We Love Earth Festival in Menlo Park which included similar activities and vendors as Atherton's Earth Day Event.

For 2023, the Town was invited to participate in coordinating a collaborative event between neighboring jurisdictions and community-based organizations. During their EPC meeting on November 17, 2022, the Earth Day Subcommittee of the EPC discussed approaches for the 2023 Earth Day Event including the potential for a collaborative event that would leverage resources, volunteers, and staff to improve event coordination and the experience for the community. Members of the City of Menlo Park's Environmental Quality Commission and a local climate action organization, 350 Silicon Valley attended to share their interest in partnering with the Town to host one collaborative Earth Day Event.

### **ANALYSIS**

The EPC determined that there would be value in collaborating with neighboring jurisdictions and community-based organizations to provide an engaging event for Atherton community members;

but, before moving forward, the EPC wanted to first check in with the City Council to determine if this was a direction the Council wanted to support. As the Council is aware, the EPC typically presents a plan for Earth Day to the City Council for approval prior to the City Council authorizing the event each year. A joint event would provide additional staffing, volunteers, budget, and a larger selection of family-friendly activities; but, such an event would also mean that the Town would need to commit to participation before having a complete event plan.

The Town budgets \$5,000 for Earth Day Event activities which can be used to participate in a collaborative event. If the Town were to do an Atherton-only event, the event would likely need to be scaled down as last year's exceeded the budget costing a total of \$7,547.42; however, a large part of the extra cost related to a Special Edition Athertonian Newsletter. The Council approved the additional budget in 2022.

If the Town were to move forward with the collaborative approach, staff and the EPC would need to commit to collaborative efforts, and it would not be practical to return to the Council along the way for preliminary approval. It is recommended that if the Council supports a collaborative event, staff take the lead on the 2023 Event and work with the EPC and neighboring jurisdictions on a collaborative Earth Day event for 2023 that stays within the Town's \$5,000 budget.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

The Fiscal Year 2022/23 Budget includes funding for an Earth Day event in the amount of \$5,000.

Any materials, efforts, or staffing resources associated with an Earth Day event that exceed this existing \$5,000 budget would need to be authorized by the Town Council.

### **GOAL ALIGNMENT**

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

- Goal Area F – Be Forward-Thinking, Well-Managed, and Well-Planned

### **POLICY FOCUS**

The EPC is charged under Resolution 2018-11 to “provide the City Council with recommendations, outreach programs, and education on environmental issues facing the Town's natural and built environment.” Acting in an advisory capacity, the EPC has the following powers and duties:

- a. Upon request, make recommendations (programmatic and legislative) to the City Council 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.
- b. Pursuant to established City Council programs and policy, assist staff in the creation of proactive community engagement programs for residents, commercial and public enterprises active within the Town's jurisdiction.

Historically, the Town's EPC has been the primary body in creating and supporting an annual Earth Day event for the Town, as approved by the Council. Considering costs, staff time, and vacancies on the EPC and in the Committee's advisory role, the EPC is proposing a collaborative approach to celebrating Earth Day with an event by building off partnerships and successes from the 2022 Earth Day Event. Further, as an advisory Committee, the EPC would only be allowed up to \$5,000 as budgeted for Fiscal Year 2022/23, with those funds disbursed through staff. As a policy matter, it would be appropriate for the Council to review and provide direction on the Earth Day Event and use of the \$5,000 budget.

### **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. 350 Silicon Valley Link - [www.350siliconvalley.org](http://www.350siliconvalley.org)