

10. REVIEW OF CHARTER FOR AN ATHERTON YOUTH ADVISORY GROUP AND PROVIDE DIRECTION TO STAFF

Report: Recommendation: It is recommended that the Council review the draft Charter for an Atherton Youth Advisory Group and provide direction to staff to continue engage with the Group and incorporate the Group into relevant projects and activities.

Description:



Item No. 10

Town of Atherton

CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT – REGULAR AGENDA

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: GEORGE RODERICKS, CITY MANAGER

DATE: NOVEMBER 15, 2023

SUBJECT: Review of Charter for an Atherton Youth Advisory Group and Provide Direction to Staff

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council review the draft Charter for an Atherton Youth Advisory Group and provide direction to staff to continue engage with the Group and incorporate the Group into relevant projects and activities.

BACKGROUND

Fiona Lempres, a student at Sacred Heart Schools, approached the Town with an idea to create a Youth Advisory Group to provide input and advice to the City Council, Town Committee and staff on issues and projects that may be of importance to the local youth community. Ms. Lempres met with the Mayor and received additional input regarding the potential role of a Youth Advisory Group, formation of a Charter, potential membership, and activities that might be of interest.

Following that meeting, Ms. Lempres created a draft Charter for consideration by the Town.

ANALYSIS

Attached to this Staff Report is a draft Atherton Youth Advisory Group Charter created by Ms. Lempres. The goal of the Group would be to provide input and advice to the City Council, Town Committees, and staff on issues or projects that may be of importance to the local youth community. The Charter lays out the purpose of the Group to assist with Town events, provide input as requested, create a forum for discussions of teen issues, plan and implement at least one youth project a year making a unique contribution to the Town, and participating as guests at at least one Council meeting per year where an issue of interest is being discussed.

The Group would consist of at least 6 members with an intent to have at least two members from each of the three high schools in Town. The Group would meet on a periodic basis during the academic year, generally September 1 through April 30. At this time, Ms. Lempres has gathered a group of 5 Atherton teens and may have the commitment of one or two more. The Group has had one organizational meeting. Members of the Group may be present this evening and can be

introduced by Ms. Lempres.

The Youth Advisory Group would not be a formal Town Committee or Commission, nor would the Charter be formally approved by the City Council. Either of these actions would transform the Group into a formal Brown Act governed body. However, the Council can officially recognize the Group and direct staff to engage with the Group where and when appropriate. In addition, as the Council looks to make revisions to the Town's Committee Resolution in January/February 2024, the Council can direct changes to the Charters of appropriate Committees to solicit ex-officio representation from a member of the Youth Advisory Group, when possible.

Ms. Lempres has advised that while the Group's main focus is to learn and support the community in Town, there are some specific activities that the Group may focus upon for youth participation. These include:

- Community Building Events, such as the Annual Easter Egg Hunt
- Earth Day and Other Environmental Issues
- Voter Registration Drives aimed at young voters
- School-Route Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact.

GOAL ALIGNMENT

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

- Goal Area E – Strengthen Community Engagement and Transparency

POLICY FOCUS

The Council's Policy Focus on this issue revolves around the benefits of engaging the local youth community in decision-making and community activities and whether the proposed Youth Advisory Group is the proper forum.

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. Draft Charter for the Youth Advisory Group created by Fiona Lempres

Atherton Youth Advisory Group

Atherton has nine schools in town¹. The combined student population is over 7,000 students. This is approximately the same as the Town's population. The Town has nearly as many high school students (4,500) as registered voters (5,000). The students have no targeted representation in the Town's governance. The Town Council would benefit from hearing the students' voice and perspective on issues affecting youth in the Town.

The Atherton Youth Advisory Group's goal is to provide input and advice to the City Council, Committees, and Staff on issues and projects important to youth and to provide a higher level of civic involvement by youth in Atherton.

The Youth Advisory Group's purpose is to:

- Assist at Town events in the role of student organizers and volunteers;
- Provide input as requested by the City Council, Committees or Staff;
- Create a forum for the discussion of teen issues;
- Plan and implement at least one youth project annually that makes a unique contribution to the Atherton community;
- Help improve Youth understanding of the role and responsibilities of local government by; and
- Participate as guests in at least one City Council meeting where an issue of interest to the Youth Advisory Group is discussed.

The Advisory Group will consist of at least 6 members. The intent to is have two members from each of the three high schools in Town². The group would meet on a periodic basis during the academic year (generally September 1 – April 30).

¹ Sacred Heart Schools, Atherton operates three separate schools: an elementary; middle and high school.

² Menlo-Atherton High School, Menlo School, and Sacred Heart Preparatory, Atherton