

Atherton Civic Center design development phase halfway done, says city manager

Once completed, the next step will be producing construction drawings



John Orr / Daily News A Caltrain speeds past the Atherton Town Center on Wednesday, May 20, 2015. At left is the small building that houses the Atherton Police Department, the town administration offices and a U.S. Postal Service office. At right is the permit department, housed in deteriorating portable buildings that are literally falling apart from dry rot and other problems.

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The Atherton Civic Center project has reached the halfway point in its design development phase, City Manager George Rodericks said Tuesday in a press release.

Plan sets, he said, “are being scoured to identify necessary changes, adjustments and improvements.”

The cost of the new town administration and police department buildings has been reduced from earlier estimates by trimming the size of the

buildings, according to Rodericks.

“In May 2016, the gross square footage for the building was 33,299 square feet with a construction cost estimate of nearly \$19.1 million,” said Rodericks. “The building was reduced in overall gross square footage by 4,735 square feet to 28,564, with a new construction cost estimate of \$16.8 million.”

By comparison, Rodericks noted, the existing Civic Center — a rag-tag collection of old buildings and old “temporary” structures — adds up to a net square footage of about 17,000 to 18,000 square feet. The new building will have 18,394 square feet of actual office and working space. The other 10,000 square feet of the new facility is accounted for in such new spaces as a larger lobby than the existing closet-size lobby, an elevator, stairwells and hallways.

Town planners, including the Civic Center Advisory Committee, have already been through the master plan, conceptual, and schematic design phases. The design development phase includes such questions as where to put the offices, bathrooms and closets. Once design development is completed, Rodericks said, then the actual construction drawings can be created, and the project put out to bid.

Rodericks said the town has set up three display cases outside in the existing Civic Center to show residents what the new buildings will look like.

The town must “primarily” use private donations to design and build the Civic Center, thanks to Measure L, passed by voters in 2012. The Atherton Now committee was set up to solicit donations, and at the moment is working to fulfill a \$1 million challenge grant that was offered by an anonymous donor.

Didi Fisher and Beverly Lenihan of Atherton Now said on Oct. 6 that Atherton Now has raised \$5,681,577 so far and has given \$958,165 to the town in cash grants. That cash has mostly been spent on paying the architectural design firm, WRNS Studio, to develop schematics for the new facility, under the direction of the town’s Civic Center Advisory Committee.



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