

# Atherton residents may see a cut in refuse collection rates

City Council to consider the issue at meeting on Wednesday



Sign in front of Atherton City Council Chambers, Nov. 29, 2016. (John Orr / Daily News)

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The Atherton City Council on Wednesday, March 15, will consider dropping the rates residents pay for refuse collection.

City Manager George Rodericks explained that a council subcommittee of Bill Widmer and Cary Wiest had looked at the way the town billed for the service, and realized there was a surplus.

“We have a rates stabilization fund,” said Rodericks, “meant to keep the rates consistent for residents. We’ve tweaked the rates over time. Over the years, there has been an accumulation in the fund.

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“We took a look at the fund, what the costs were, projecting out to the end of the Recology franchise, and figured we would need to zero that out.”

Which means, maybe, a reduction in rates, if the council approves on Wednesday.

Also to be considered at the Wednesday meeting, which starts at 7 p.m. in the Council Chambers at 94 Ashfield Road, are approval of arguments for the June ballot measure that asks residents for their advice about funding the new Town Center.

The ballot question is “Should the Town of Atherton supplement private donations with available non-dedicated General Funds to meet the funding shortfall, where one exists, for construction of the new Town Center?”

On Wednesday, the council will review arguments for and against that measure to be placed on the mail-in ballot. The town has announced that it will pick up the cost of mailing the ballots — no stamps required.

No vote required either, really, since it is advisory only, and the City Council has already agreed that the town must make up the budget shortfall to get the Town Center built, and can do so without levying new taxes.

Also on the Wednesday agenda is a report on the phasing plan for building the Town Center, and the hiring of someone to implement the plan.

Rodericks said this week that it is likely that the police department can remain where it is while its new building is under construction. The town administration offices may move into a new temporary building near the existing location of the public works department.

Late in the construction progress, the administration and other town offices would be able to move into the new building, then the temporary buildings would be removed, and carpools and other parking would be built in that space for the police department.

The phasing plan has been developed by WRNS Studio, which is the key architect for the Town Center. The administration of the job may be assigned to InterWest, the company that provides Atherton with its city engineers.



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