

# Three cities' closed meeting questioned

**BY EMILY MIBACH**

Daily Post Correspondent

City officials from Menlo Park, Redwood City and Atherton met behind closed doors to discuss transportation and large developments in Menlo Park and Redwood City, Atherton City Manager George Rodericks said yesterday.

The lack of notification irked local government watchdog Jim Lewis, who said the fact that the officials met Wednesday behind closed doors at Atherton Town Hall did not sit well with him.

## 'What do they have to hide?'

"Frankly, one-on-one meetings go on all the time PRIVATELY, and that is OK; however, when high officials in this quantity meet, being the city manager and the mayor, and perhaps others, it felt like a return of the old boys club, with secret meetings going on behind closed doors. After all, what do they have to hide?" Lewis said in an email.

The public wasn't notified of the meeting because, Rodericks said, there was no quorum of elected officials from any of the cities in attendance. He also said since it was not a regularly scheduled meeting for any of the councils, notification was not needed.

But Lewis said "simply having observers ... can do little harm. If transparency is to have meaning, then open up the meetings."

Rodericks said Atherton's council had expressed concerns about some of the large projects occurring in its neighboring cities, which is why the meeting was held. He mentioned Facebook's expansions, Greenheart at 1300 El Camino Real in Menlo Park and Stanford's new campus being built at Broadway and Douglas Avenue in Redwood City. The group also discussed looking at water drainage issues and linking up bicycle and pedestrian projects, Rodericks said.

## Regular gatherings possible

Some of the meeting's attendees suggested the three cities should gather regularly for public meetings, Rodericks said.

From Redwood City, City Manager Melissa Stevenson Diaz, Assistant City Manager Aaron Ankin, Mayor John Seybert and Vice Mayor Ian Bain attended the meeting.

From Menlo Park, City Manager Alex McIntyre, Assistant City Manager Chip Taylor, Mayor Kirsten Keith and Vice Mayor Peter Ohtaki attended. From Atherton, Rodericks, Mayor Michael Lempres and Vice Mayor Cary Wiest attended.