



Item No. 20 Town of Atherton

CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT – REGULAR AGENDA

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: GEORGE RODERICKS, CITY MANAGER

DATE: SEPTEMBER 16, 2020

SUBJECT: DIRECTION ON MILLION-DOLLAR DONOR NAMING REQUESTS

RECOMMENDATION

Provide direction regarding naming requests from the million-dollar donors.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

At prior meetings, the City Council discussed naming opportunities and options for the three \$1 million donors and asked that a member of the Council reach out to Atherton Now to assist with a determination of acceptance. Mayor DeGolia has served as the primary point of contact to Atherton Now on behalf of the Town.

Following a Council discussion in May regarding the naming requests of the three \$1 million donors, the Council directed follow up with correspondence to Atherton Now of various options. This correspondence was sent to Co-Chair Sandy Levison with copies to Co-Chair Didi Fisher and Atherton Now Legal Counsel Brendan Cullen. The correspondence was sent on July 14, 2020. A copy of that email from the Mayor is attached as Attachment 1.

A response was received from Co-Chair Levison on July 14 advising that she would be talking with Co-Chair Fisher and Counsel Cullen and would circle back. A copy of that response is included within Attachment 3.

On July 17, an email was received from Co-Chairs Levison and Fisher (Attachment 2) advising of the commitment made by Atherton Now to the three donors for naming opportunities. The email lists the promised naming opportunities.

On August 16, a follow-up email was sent to Atherton Now from the Mayor. A copy of that follow-up email is included as Attachment 3.

On August 23, another follow-up email was sent regarding the issues and on August 24, an email was sent by Co-Chair Fisher advising that they (Atherton Now) will have more later.

As of the writing of this staff report, there has been no additional information received.

Specific direction from the Council with respect to desired naming requests is required.

FISCAL IMPACT

None.

POLICY FOCUS

Approval of naming requests rest with the City Council as a policy decision.

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 District, service provides (water, power, and sewer), and regional elected officials.

COMMISSION/COMMITTEE FEEDBACK/REFERRAL

This item ___ has or X has not been before a Town Committee or Commission.

- Audit/Finance Committee (meets every other month)
- Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee (meets as needed)
- Civic Center Advisory Committee (meets as needed)
- Environmental Programs Committee (meets every other month)
- Park and Recreation Committee (meets each month)
- Planning Commission (meets each month)
- Rail Committee (meets every other month)
- Transportation Committee (meets every other month)

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 – July 14 Email
- Attachment 2 – July 17 Email
- Attachment 3 – Follow-up Email(s)

From: **Rick DeGolia** [REDACTED]
Date: Tue, Jul 14, 2020 at 4:01 PM
Subject: Proposed Solution for the Three Lead Donors
To: Sandy Levison [REDACTED]
Cc: George Rodericks [REDACTED], Didi Fisher [REDACTED], Brendan P. Cullen [REDACTED]

Dear Sandy:

I am so sorry. I thought that I had sent this email to you a month ago immediately after our Council discussion, but in the course of looking at my email for your response, I discovered that it was stuck in my drafts file, so for some reason it didn't send. I really apologize for not getting this to you sooner. Please let me know your thoughts on this as soon as possible.

As you know from attending the Council meeting in June, the Council approved a proposed solution for the three lead \$1m donors which offers them a choice between two options. We are happy to go with whichever Option the donors select as their preference. The options are set forth below. George and I are available to speak with them and answer any questions that any of them may have.

Option 1) Each donor would have a separate outdoor court named as they wish. Each court would be commemorated with a plaque recognizing the donor. There would be (A) a reduced Civic Court outside the lobby of the Admin/Police building, (B) a Council Court (in front of the new council chambers) and (C) a Historic Council Court (in front of the historic town hall). Attached is a rough diagram with each of these proposed courts colored in a different color. The dimensions are not exact, but this is a good description of what we are offering.

Please note that there are a couple of other naming items that will be in this general area: there is a fountain outside the library which will have a plaque naming that item as directed by Steve Dostart and we expect to offer donors bricks in the pathway connecting the historic council chambers with the new council chambers. These bricks will honor the Atherton Now commitment to name bricks as directed by each donor who donates at least \$4,000 to the Town Center Project. Finally, there may be benches or trees or other naming opportunities offered, but that hasn't been decided.

Option 2) Option two is to put a plaque or tripod structure in a central spot, probably within the Civic Court, that would specifically acknowledge each of these three donors as the lead private donors for the Town Center Project. The idea was to create a three sided tripod, stone or plaque memorial with each side honoring one of the three lead donors. There will also be a memorial somewhere in the project that identifies the taxpayers as the principal contributors to the Town Center Project.

Please let us know which of these two options are preferred by the donors. We would like to resolve this ASAP and will not accept a Naming Opportunity donation for the Civic Court over the next 30 days in order to give the donors time to make this decision.

Again, I apologize for the delay in getting this to you.

Thanks, Rick
Rick DeGolia
Mayor, Town of Atherton
Atherton, CA 94027 650.793.2800 (m)

From: Didi Fisher [REDACTED]
Date: July 17, 2020 at 1:45:36 PM PDT
To: Rick DeGolia [REDACTED]
Cc: Elizabeth Lewis [REDACTED], Cary Wiest [REDACTED], Mike Lempres [REDACTED], Bill Widmer [REDACTED]
Subject: Naming opportunity

Dear Rick ,

The three donors have already agreed to the naming options that were offered by Atherton NOW. WE are unwilling to rescind those offers and do not believe the choices the council has presented are acceptable, especially given the fact that we both know money is not the issue. They have asked for the following:

Ned Spieker- entry lobby

Tod Spieker- Historic council chambers

George Roberts-the courtyard by the PD, old Council chambers and new council chambers

Let's do right by these donors and their generous gifts by giving them the naming opportunities they are already expecting.

Sandy and Didi



From: Rick DeGolia [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Proposed Solution for the Three Lead Donors
Date: August 16, 2020 at 9:09 AM
To: Sandy Levison [REDACTED]
Cc: George Rodericks [REDACTED], Bill Widmer [REDACTED]

[The e-mail below is from an external source. Please do not open attachments or click links from an unknown or suspicious origin.]

Hi Sandy:

Just checking in with you. We currently have this issue targeted for our September agenda, but that agenda is a four hour agenda, so I'm pushing some things off to October. This is one that I'd like to get resolved, although I don't see any urgency, so it could wait until October; however, I'm just checking in to see if you've talked to the donors to see which option that they would prefer.

Thanks, Rick

Rick DeGolia

Mayor, Town of Atherton
Atherton, CA 94027
650.793.2800 (m)

On Tue, Jul 14, 2020 at 9:34 PM Sandy Levison [REDACTED] wrote:

Hi Rick,

I'm out of town but will be back on Monday. Let me talk to Didi and Brendan. I understand you would like it resolved. I will make sure to stay on this but I anticipate some discussion. I hope you and Karen are enjoying summer.

Best,
Sandy

On Jul 14, 2020, at 4:02 PM, Rick DeGolia [REDACTED] wrote:

Dear Sandy:

I am so sorry. I thought that I had sent this email to you a month ago immediately after our Council discussion, but in the course of looking at my email for your response, I discovered that it was stuck in my drafts file, so for some reason it didn't send. I really apologize for not getting this to you sooner. Please let me know your thoughts on this as soon as possible.

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Rick DeGolia

Mayor, Town of Atherton
Atherton, CA 94027
650.793.2800 (m)

<Naming Opportunities 3 \$1m donors (3).pdf>