



**Town of Atherton
Office of the Mayor
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March 15, 2017

Peter Carpenter, President
Menlo Park Fire Protection District
170 Middlefield Road
Menlo Park, CA 94025

SUBJECT: CITYGATE REPORT

Dear Mr. Carpenter:

In December 2016, the Town and Fire District held its Annual Joint Council/Board Meeting. The purpose of that meeting was discussion of issues of joint concern. During that meeting, the Fire Chief advised the group that the District was taking its 2015 Standards of Cover Analysis and updating it for essential fire station locations, primarily Stations #3, #4, and #5 which had never been evaluated.

The Council expressed keen interest in the Report and its analysis, particularly as it relates to Station #3, the only fire station in Atherton. Obviously, any decision about the future of that fire station directly affects the Town of Atherton and service delivery, and the Council asked to be specifically involved. Further, the Council reiterated its desire for the District to reconsider expanded service delivery options as part of Atherton's new Civic Center Project. At the meeting, the District committed to involving the Town and seeking input as much as possible as the Report develops.

However, the Atherton Council Liaison attended the February 21, 2017 District Board Meeting and found that the Citygate Report had been completed without seeking or considering any input from the Town. Instead, the Citygate Report was recommended for acceptance by the Board, together with an updated Station and land acquisition plan to come – directly affecting the Town, its residents and its emergency responders. For some reason, the Report answered a question about the Atherton Civic Center that the Town had not asked. Presumably answering a question that the Fire District posed, the Report concluded that an added engine station at the Atherton Civic Center is not recommended. Atherton had reached this same conclusion previously and instead the Town requested an emergency medical response unit, participation in the EOC, or planning for future growth to expand services to residents. The Citygate Report does not respond to the requests for services that Atherton asked to be included in its Civic Center. In response to Atherton's request for additional fire district presence in Atherton, the study requested by the Fire District concludes that Station #3 should be relocated **out of Town**.

This is exactly the type of discussion in which the Council specifically requested an opportunity to participate given its potential impact on Atherton residents. While the Fire District is indeed a separate legal entity, we share a common interest in jurisdiction. It is that jurisdiction that prompts

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the Town's active involvement in discussions that affect our local residents. The District's blatant lack of regard for that concern is disheartening and counterproductive.

After learning of the February 21 Report, the City Manager specifically requested a Report-Out from the District on the item at an upcoming Council Meeting to allow the Council to be a part of the conversation. The Chief reported that the District was not willing to participate in such a public discussion with the Council. That response is also disheartening and dismissive of the interests of Atherton, its public safety officers and its residents.

The District frequently requests collaboration and cooperation from the Town. Such collaboration and cooperation is appropriate and important. Indeed a collaborative and cooperative relationship amongst the various service providers is fundamental to the successful delivery of quality services at the local level. The District is a partner agency to the Town in the delivery of vital services. Successful agency relationships require a partner agency to at least engage in a productive conversation before a study is completed. This enhances the opportunity for input and will lead to a better, more informed decision.

We hope that our agencies can return to a more open, cooperative and collaborative relationship. Accordingly, the Town asks for the District's active commitment to engage not only the community, but the Town itself in the pre-decision conversations around local fire service delivery where it affects Atherton. Specifically, we ask for greater outreach to the community about the issues and options being discussed; we invite and request that you or your designee make a presentation before the City Council on the issues and options; and we request an invitation for the Council to be an active part of the final decision-making.

The Town awaits your response.

Sincerely,

Mike Lempres, Mayor

cc: City Council | Correspondence Archive