



**Locals face mandatory 35 percent
cut in water use | Page 7**

The Almanac

THE HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER FOR MENLO PARK, ATHERTON, PORTOLA VALLEY AND WOODSIDE

APRIL 15, 2015 | VOL. 50 NO. 32



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Photo by Joan Dolan

This Menlo Park garden, except for the low-water-use dwarf fescue lawn, has no irrigation system and is watered only once a month with a sprinkler in spring and summer. It contains Washington thorn, purple flowering plum and Valencia orange trees; nandina, ceanothus, Irish yew, agapanthus and quince shrubs and miscanthus grass.

Talk on water-wise gardening

Atherton will celebrate Earth Day on Tuesday, April 21, with special events, including a talk on "Water Wise Gardening," starting at 7 p.m. in the Jennings Pavilion at Holbrook-Palmer Park, 150 Watkins Ave.

Julie Montanari, a master gardener and landscape designer, will talk about sustainable and water-wise landscape practices. A representative from the California Water Service Company will talk about the governor's

recent order restricting water use. Refreshments will be provided and drought-tolerant plants will be raffled.

Ms. Montanari says she has a passion for water-wise landscapes. Her garden designs use California natives and other low-water-using plants. As a master gardener, she educates home gardeners about low-water-using plants and sustainable gardening practices. She co-chaired three master gardener

tours of water-wise gardens on the Peninsula and her home garden has been featured on several garden tours.

Ms. Montanari, who lives in San Mateo, has a bachelor's degree in mathematics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and spent 15 years in the financial services industry before becoming a horticulturist. She has a certificate in environmental horticulture from Foothill College. ■

— Barbara Wood

Flowers repurposed to spread cheer

By Kate Daly
Special to the Almanac

A new nonprofit is starting to bloom here, based on the idea of collecting free flowers and giving them to people to cheer them up.

The warehouse space at 3501 Edison Way in North Fair Oaks is the fourth location for Random Acts of Flowers. Started seven years ago in Tennessee, the nonprofit has expanded to Florida and Chicago, delivering more than 66,000 bouquets to date.

Right now RAF Silicon Valley is ramping up to get ready for its open house on April 30 from 4

to 7 p.m.

The nonprofit's slogan, "Recycling flowers ... Delivering smiles," has a back-story. Founder Larsen Jay ended up in the hospital for weeks after falling off a ladder. He received so many get-well bouquets he decided to roll around the halls in his wheelchair and share them with other patients. Their warm smiles spurred him on to find a way to repeat that experience on a broader scale.

The first step has been collecting gently used flowers from local sources such as event planners involved with weddings, parties and funerals. Vendors

such as J Floral Art, Costco, Whole Foods Market and California Flower Shippers have committed to donating their surplus flowers, as well.

Donated vases and baskets are rolling in. Oak Knoll Elementary School is hosting a vase drive in Menlo Park.

Volunteers are being trained on how to deconstruct and rearrange bouquets so they are ready to be delivered by volunteer drivers to hospitals and senior care facilities in southern San Mateo County and northern Santa Clara County.

Executive Director Linda Plount says the group works

See **FLOWERS**, page 12

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Local News

MENLO PARK | AHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY

Major construction planned at school, library

■ Both neighboring Woodside School and Woodside Library will be under construction this summer.

By Barbara Wood
Almanac Staff Writer

■ WOODSIDE

June 12 is the last day of school at Woodside Elementary School. On June 13, workers will begin preparing the campus for construction — a lot of it.

The entire campus, except for the school office and the tennis courts, will be fenced off and closed to the public for the summer. That means no adult summer softball league (which will be at Barkley Field), no use of the playing fields or playgrounds, no summer camp or class activities, no parking for the public and no farmers' market.

At the same time, construction is scheduled to begin on a remodel of the Woodside Library, located right across Woodside Road from the school. That project hasn't received final approval, but the tentative schedule is to have the library close on June 15 with construction starting on July 2 and expected to continue through February 2015.

Parking in the area, always tight, will be even tighter during construction with the lots at the school and the library closed. The lots are used after hours and on weekends by

visitors who come to Woodside to hike, bike or walk their dogs; and on Sundays by churchgoers.

During the summer, according to Mike Wassermann, a vice president with Capital Program Management, which is managing the school construction, work will start on three major projects at the school: a new preschool, a new design lab, and a new multi-purpose auditorium.

Mr. Wassermann said the school should also complete several renovation projects during the summer including roof replacements, drainage improvements and work on underground utilities.

The school construction is funded by a \$13.5 million bond measure passed by the voters in June 2014 and by donations raised by a Woodside School Foundation capital campaign.

Most of the school campus will reopen on Aug. 19 when teachers return to get ready for the Aug. 25 start of school. The preschool is scheduled to be completed by Sept. 15; the design lab by Sept. 29; and the new auditorium by March 15, 2016.



Drawing by WRNS Studios.

The biggest part of the construction that will start at Woodside Elementary School in June is a new multi-purpose auditorium that will replace Sellman Auditorium, shown here as seen from the school parking lot.

During the summer, the school office will be open from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. from June 15 to 30, and from Aug. 3 to 19, but will be open in July by appointment only, by calling 851-1571.

Mr. Wassermann said the school will abide by the town's regulations that allow construction only from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30

p.m. Monday through Friday, and from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday.

Woodside's deputy town manager and town engineer Paul Nagengast said the town is not yet sure when the library parking lot will be closed for construction. The town may loosen restrictions on Woodside Road park-

ing for special events, he said. Albion Avenue, which has restricted parking near Woodside Road, could also be used if additional parking is required, he said.

Go to tinyurl.com/wes411 for construction updates.

Email MeasureD@WoodsideSchool.us to direct questions or complaints to the school. ■

Portola Valley takes pass on license-plate-reading cameras

By Dave Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

Costs to the Portola Valley's pocketbook and to its collective privacy have led the Town Council to look for alternatives to the idea of license-plate-reading cameras at fixed locations as a crime-fighting tool.

After two community forums and several presentations on the idea of the cameras mounted at the town's key entrances and exits, the council on April 8 chose to wait and see. Other Peninsula communities may install fixed cameras and the results may be useful in determining whether the cameras are

instrumental in reducing crime, council members said.

The idea had been endorsed by the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office as a tool for fighting property crime in town. The Northern California Regional Intelligence Center gave the council a presentation on the value of having a record of license plates when looking for suspects in crimes such as burglaries and kidnappings.

Council member concerns included the estimated cost of at least \$172,000, the length of time the license plate data would be retained, privacy in an era of surveillance, and options that have not been explored, such as more frequent patrols by deputies.

Council members expressed concerns about privacy in an era of surveillance.

To go ahead with the cameras, the town would need infrastructure in the form of three light poles with arms extending out over the road to serve as camera mounting points, Town Manager Nick Pegueros said. The cost to buy and install the poles: about \$75,000.

The cameras themselves are around \$14,000 each, and the annual maintenance about

\$12,000, plus unknown costs, Mr. Pegueros said.

A few members of the public attended the council meeting, but no one spoke on this item. At the two community forums, residents in favor of the cameras were more vocal than opponents. Town Hall has since received two emails opposing the cameras.

Traditional methods

There are many ways other than cameras to spend \$172,000 of the public's money to fight crime, and council members said they will be looking at them. They settled on revisiting the cameras question in a year, barring a notable increase in

criminal activity.

The fixed cameras "may be a little premature," Councilwoman Ann Wengert said. "I might take some of that \$172,000 and put it into increased local patrols, perhaps at the neighborhood level."

Councilman John Richards acknowledged an uptick of crime, but said he was skeptical of the effectiveness of fixed versus mobile cameras, and of whether the technology was appropriate for Portola Valley.

It's another form of government surveillance, he added. It looks benign, but "may morph into something a little less benign as time goes by," he said.

See **CAMERAS**, page 6

Council budgets \$1.3 million for city hall remodel

By Sandy Brundage
Almanac Staff Writer

How much it should cost Menlo Park taxpayers to remodel city hall remains a source of contention, although during the April 7 council meeting the dissatisfaction came from the council, not the public.

The council voted 3-0-1 to cap the budget for the project at \$1.3 million as part of approving a financial work

plan. The approved plan also includes adding eight full-time staff positions related to project review; converting seven temporary positions to permanent ones; and spending \$204,000 to increase salaries for engineers, building inspectors and planners by 5 to 7 percent.

Finally, the vote gave City Manager Alex McIntyre the go-ahead to hire a consultant for up to \$90,000 to analyze the city's compensation and job classifica-

tion structure.

Altogether, the changes will cost the city \$2.1 million, which will be met through a combination of one-time property tax reimbursement from the county as well as the city's general and possibly reserve funds.

Councilman Ray Mueller abstained from the vote, and Vice Mayor Rich Cline was absent due to business travel.

The idea of adding staff and raising salaries for hard-to-hire

positions met with approval from all four council members at the meeting.

Councilman Peter Ohtaki said the existing planning and public works departments are swamped, thanks to a surge in project applications. Retention has been a problem. "We've seen a rotating door, effectively ... we are winding up paying for training for inspectors who wind up taking a job with another city," he said. Development fees are expected to cover 50 to 80 percent of the cost of the proposed changes, he noted. "So the net cost to taxpayers is minimal."

The city hall remodel inspired some debate. In 2014, the council initially approved spending \$300,000 on the project, which would rearrange workspace to accommodate more employees within the facility, and improve customer service by adding features such as kiosks. The 15-year-old carpet (about 30,000 square feet) would also be replaced for \$400,000.

Last July, the council approved one design option on a 4-1 vote, with Councilwoman Kirsten Keith dissenting, but asked for more data to support the cost. At that point the estimated total budget had grown from \$700,000 to \$1.2 million. According to the staff, a large portion of the expense comes from the plan to carry out the renovation work at night to keep city hall open for business during the day.

However, the requested additional data was not in evidence on Tuesday night. Meanwhile, the budget cap grew again, this time to \$1.3 million.

Mayor Cat Carlton noted that the council asked staff to figure out how to make it cost less. "I think everyone's uncomfortable with how expensive it is," she said, "and it is shocking how much carpet costs."

City Manager Alex McIntyre said the city's contract with the architectural firm hired to come up with new designs ran out, so further analysis of the cost and

options couldn't proceed until more money was appropriated.

"It's a Catch-22. We will never have the construction costs until the design is done, and we can't do the design until the council decides," he said. Any contracts and designs will come back to the council for approval, he said. "You're not giving me \$1.3 million to start writing checks."

After looking at how much other communities have budgeted for similar projects, Ms. Keith said she now thought the price tag was not astronomical and that the city's need to hire more staff meant that the remodel needed to move forward.

She also asked to look at more cost-effective flooring; Mr. McIntyre said he'd be happy to, but he thought the carpeting proposal was still the least expensive and most easily maintained option.

Mr. Mueller asked to hold a separate vote on the remodel budget, given the lack of analysis in the staff report, but his motion failed without a second.

Mr. Ohtaki made a motion to approve all the items, with the \$1.3 million appropriation for the renovation made contingent upon the council approving the final design and any contracts — which would be the usual process anyway.

The architectural firm's amended contract will be brought back to council next week, according to the city manager.

Mr. Mueller said after the meeting that he was disappointed that his colleagues refused to allow a separate vote on the remodel, thus forcing him to abstain from voting on the entire financial work plan.

"Substantively, I refuse to appropriate \$1.3 million of taxpayer money for a remodel of city hall based on a deficient staff report containing three paragraphs of analysis, when the cost for the project continues to rise in each request and questions still haven't been answered about the project that were posed many months ago," he said. ■



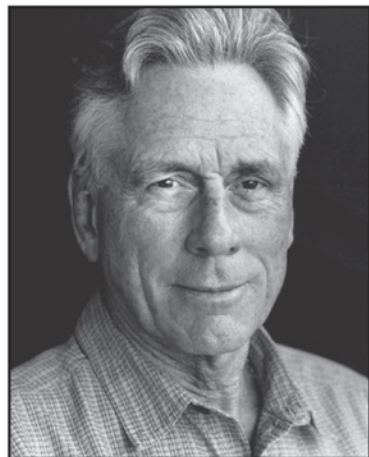
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CAMERAS

continued from page 5

"I think we have let ourselves in very deep with an over-sensitivity to security in this whole country."

Councilwoman Maryann Derwin said that use of the license-plate data is not subject to sufficient independent oversight. She, too, acknowledged concern about crime in town, but laid the blame on an economy that is not benefiting people of low and middle incomes.

Agreeing with a comment by

Town Manager Nick Pegueros, Ms. Derwin said that the cameras could also create a false sense of security for residents who might see themselves as living in "a little fortress" and thus safe.

The redistribution of former state prison inmates into county jails was another factor, she said. The 2011 "realignment" initiated by Gov. Jerry Brown has been gradually transferring prisoners convicted of "non-violent, non-serious and non-sex-related" crimes to county jails from state prisons. ■

Portola Valley 'up against a wall' as it faces big cuts in water use

By Dave Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

The water reduction mandates ordered by Gov. Jerry Brown and what they will mean to residents of Portola Valley drew the attention of the Town Council at its April 8 meeting.

The town has been identified as a community that "has had the luxury of having more space, more vegetation, etc. etc, so it's payback time to some degree," said Councilwoman Ann Wengert. "We're up against the wall."

Portola Valley is part of the Bear Gulch Water District, which may be ordered to cut water use by 35 percent from levels in 2013.

Dramatic cuts in irrigation are all but certain for the town's playing fields, but it's less clear what the town will do to get residents to reduce their water use.

At an average of 305 gallons per person per day, Portola Valley was a big consumer in 2013 when compared to the Bay Area

'It's payback time to some degree.'

COUNCILWOMAN ANN WENGERT

daily per-person average of 79 gallons, according to data from the California Water Service Company and the Bay Area Water Supply and Conservation Agency.

The town's Water Conservation Committee is assembling a package of conservation recommendations for residents, Brandi de Garneau, the town's sustainability and special projects manager, told the council.

Councilwoman Maryann Derwin asked the committee to be bold, to consider recommending that the council require all new construction projects to include rainwater catchment systems, recycling systems for dishwasher and shower water, and no lawns.

Councilwoman Wengert said she agrees "100 percent" with Ms. Derwin, but that the first priority is educating residents.

"This isn't something any of us up here would have chosen to do," she said. "It's something the governor has said we all need to do."

"Tiered pricing will not do it," Ms. Wengert added. "It will not do it. We have to come up with ways to change behavior."

Portola Valley has been building its own little Rancho Mirage, said Judy Murphy of the Conservation Committee, referring to a well-irrigated desert resort near Los Angeles. "We have a chance of letting (Portola Valley) be," she said. "We can still have an enormously beautiful community."

She suggested that the town hold a water summit.

In addition to Portola Valley, the Bear Gulch Water District includes Woodside, Atherton and parts of Menlo Park and Redwood City.

Portola Valley is not alone in its high water use. Woodside residents were averaging 421 gallons per person per day, and Atherton residents, 480 gallons, according to the Cal Water figures for 2013. ■

Locals face 35% cuts in water use

By Dave Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

Residents of the San Francisco Bay Area used an average of 85 gallons of water per person per day in September 2014, according to a report from the state Water Resources Control Board. In that same month, residents of Atherton, Woodside, Portola Valley and parts of Menlo Park and Redwood City — the Bear Gulch water district — used an average of 228 gallons of water per person.

That behavior has landed the Bear Gulch district of the California Water Service Company in the top tier of water users around the state and may require cuts in water use by an aggregate of 35 percent from levels in 2013. How those cuts will be achieved and how they will be allocated among users have not announced. Cal Water has not yet responded to an interview request.

The state water board issued a draft "proposed regulatory framework" on April 7, assigning each of the state's 411 water authorities to one of four conservation tiers. Assigned cutbacks would be 10, 20, 25 or 35 percent, based on per capita water consumption in September 2014.

To be assigned a 35 percent

How to reduce water use

Go to calwater.com/conservation for tips on conserving water.

Go to tinyurl.com/water413 to alert Cal Water to the following situations: leaking or defective irrigation systems; someone washing a vehicle without a shut-off nozzle; water running into gutters or streets; washing of hard surfaces such as driveways and sidewalks; using fountains that do not recirculate water; filling or refilling a swimming pool.

cutback, a district must have used more than 165 gallons on average per person per day. Of the 135 districts in this tier, the highest average was 584 gallons in Rancho Santa Fe in San Diego County.

The proposed cuts are not as stark for Menlo Park users who receive their water from the Menlo Park Municipal Water District, where the September 2014 average was 68 gallons per person per day. A 20 percent aggregate cut from 2013 levels is proposed for these customers.

The Bear Gulch district has a record of high consumption. Dur-

The Menlo Park Municipal Water District faces 20% cuts in water use.

ing 2013, a year in which the Bay Area average was 79 gallons per person per day, data showed Portola Valley averaging 305 gallons per person; Woodside, 421 gallons; and Atherton, 480 gallons, according to data from Cal Water and the Bay Area Water Supply and Conservation Agency.

Although parts of Menlo Park are served by Cal Water, figures for 2013 were not available. Cal Water releases water use figures only when asked by a government official.

The water board sought comments on its draft framework until April 13, and is expected to finalize its plan in early May. Regulations could be in place by June 1.

The governor's April 1 order was to the state water board, which regulates public water agencies. Private companies such as Cal Water report to the California Public Utilities Commission, which says it will follow the water board's lead in establishing regulations. ■

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Commission likes option to add bicycle lanes along El Camino Real

By Sandy Brundage
Almanac Staff Writer

Given a choice of three options or leaving El Camino Real alone, the Menlo Park Planning Commission gave a unanimous thumbs up to one design that would create buffered bike lanes along the city's main corridor — as long as trees at its intersection with Ravenswood Avenue are left alone.

Consultants W-Trans has been carrying out a \$459,713 contract to analyze ways to improve travel along El Camino Real for bicyclists, pedestrians and vehicles.

During a study session on Monday, April 6, the seven planning commissioners supported the second option given in the staff report. With that design, bike lanes would be added on El Camino Real in both directions by narrowing the existing vehicle lanes by 1 to 3 feet, and getting rid of street parking along the road north of Roble Avenue. An additional 3-foot bike buffer would be created with paint.

While that option also called for removing 11 heritage trees and seven street trees to widen Ravenswood Avenue, the commissioners nixed that idea, noting that the trees provide a key visual landmark. Commissioner John Kadwany said it's "one of the best-looking places we have on El Camino Real," even though he's "not a tree hugger."

Chair Ben Eiref noted that the chosen design would not reduce the road's capacity to handle motor vehicle and bicycle traffic flow; instead, capacity would be shifted away from parking. Travel times are

estimated to increase going north on El Camino (from Sand Hill Road to Encinal Avenue) to 4.6 minutes from 4.1 minutes under the recommended option even though capacity would increase, according to the report — a finding that "kind of blows my mind," Mr. Eiref said.

Not everyone was thrilled about the commission's recommendation. Menlo Park Fire Protection District Chief Harold Schapelhouman spoke during public comment about the potential impacts on emergency response, which he pointed out were not analyzed as part of the

W-Trans study. The fire district, given the lack of data, prefers the option of creating three vehicle lanes in each direction on El Camino between Encinal and Roble avenues.

He also raised safety concerns about encouraging bicyclists to travel along El Camino. "I know you could do it; the question is why would you do it?" Chief Schapelhouman said, adding

that towns such as Los Altos have created a network of bike paths through parks, school grounds and other routes that see less vehicle traffic than busy streets.

Commissioner John Onken, who said he bikes along El Camino every night, suggested that the real danger to cyclists is not speeding cars, but cars turning in front of the bike or a door of a parked car opening. Therefore he didn't support the option for three vehicle lanes in each direction.

The City Council will make the final choice of a design option after considering the recommendations of the planning, bicycle and transportation commissions. ▀

The real danger to cyclists is not speeding cars, but cars turning in front of the bike.

COMMISSIONER
JOHN ONKEN

Little House holds open House

Bring your dancing shoes ... and a yoga mat and some workout clothes, if you drop by the annual open house at Little House this year.

Demonstrations of dance, exercise, music, ceramics and watercolor art will be on hand, along with lessons in how

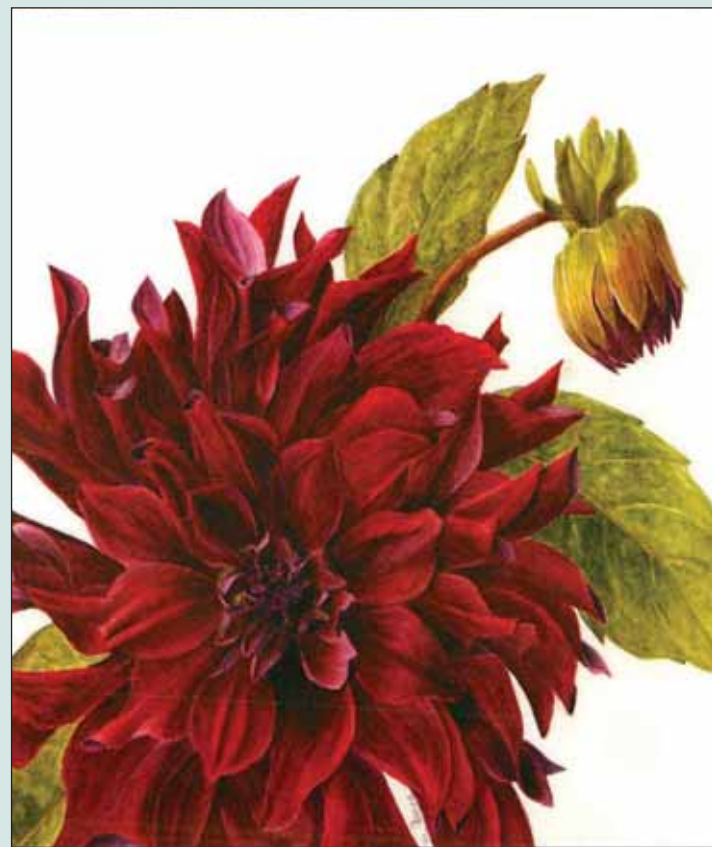
to use Microsoft Word and Skype. The facility will also hold a ribbon-cutting for its renovated courtyard.

The event starts at 10 a.m. on Saturday, April 25. Little House is located at 800 Middle Ave. in Menlo Park.

Drawing by Pria Graves

Botanical art exhibit

Artist Pria Graves, whose work "Dahlia 'Prince Noir'" is shown here, is among several artists participating in a botanical art exhibit at the Jennings Pavilion in Atherton's Holbrook-Palmer Park (150 Watkins Ave. in Atherton) on Friday, April 17, from 4 to 7:30 p.m. The event is free and refreshments will be served. There will be works in pen and ink, watercolor, graphite, and colored pencil by artists such as Nina Antze, Catherine Dellar, Maria Cecilia Freeman and Pria Graves.



Trial set over lawsuit involving driver who struck horse on Interstate 280

By Dave Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

A jury trial is set for April 27 on a lawsuit brought by a Menlo Park physician who was seriously injured in December 2012 when the Mercedes Benz she was driving struck an injured horse lying in an Interstate 280 traffic lane in the early morning darkness. The car, traveling north on I-280, became airborne, collided with a cyclone fence and came to rest off the freeway, Dr. Jean W. Gillon says in her lawsuit.

The defendants are Webb Ranch, Stanford University and San Mateo County. In the early hours of Dec. 29,

2012, three horses managed to escape the paddock at Webb Ranch, according to Tom Hubbard, president of Webb Ranch, which is located on Stanford property.

According to the California Highway Patrol, all three horses were running loose in the I-280 traffic lanes and were struck and killed shortly before 5 a.m. by "passing motorists."

In her suit, Dr. Gillon accuses the defendants of negligence. She says a San Mateo County sheriff's deputy directed her into a lane where a horse was lying.

Dr. Gillon, who was 61 at the time of the accident and a vas-

cular surgeon with a practice in Redwood City, is seeking compensation for lost wages, lost earning capacity, pain and suffering, medical expenses and property damage. She also seeks compensatory damages. She is represented by San Francisco attorney Anthony L. Label.

In their responses, the defendants say the negligence was Dr. Gillon's. The county claims immunity from liability and Stanford asserts that the incident was due to the acts of persons or entities other than itself, as does Webb Ranch.

The case will be heard in San Mateo County Superior Court. ▀

Woodside volunteer 'Nancy' Gonzalez dies at 84

OBITUARY

Obituaries are based on information provided by the family.

Mary Catherine "Nancy" Gonzalez, a Woodside resident instrumental in organizing town cleanup days, died March 27 in Burlingame after a short illness. She was 84.

Growing up in Palo Alto, she attended Palo Alto High School and the Convent of the Sacred Heart. She met Richard Gonzalez at the University of Colorado and they married in 1945.

The couple settled in Woodside, where they raised four children. Dr. Gonzalez died in 1993.

Ms. Gonzalez actively participated in conservation efforts in Woodside, including helping to organize the town's cleanup

days. In the wake of the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, she was "the first person" in Northern California to adopt a highway through the California Transportation Department's program, according to her family.

She raised funds to install two tennis courts at Woodside Elementary School for the use of students and the public. The loves of her life included her family, her dogs, her art, her books and her friends. "She was always ready to laugh," family members said.

Ms. Gonzalez was generous in her support of San Francisco public broadcasting station KQED and the Cantor Arts Center at Stanford University.

She is survived by daughters Leah Leavy of Burlingame and Catherine O'Brien of Pals, Spain; sons Steven of Omaha, Nebraska, and Victor of San Francisco; eight grandchildren; four great grandchildren; and brother William of Phoenix.

There are no plans for services. In lieu of flowers, the family is asking that donations be made in Ms. Gonzalez's name to the Woodside Community Landscaping Foundation, P.O. Box 620404 in Woodside, 94062.

Woodside council may block construction of 'super basements'

■ Moratorium would give the town time to study the problem and adopt regulations.

Construction of super-sized basements in Woodside in recent years has been disrupting land formations, drainage and ground water patterns, as well as neighborhoods, according to Town Manager Kevin Bryant.

The Town Council met Tuesday, April 14, to hold a study session and consider a moratorium on these basements.

Go to AlmanacNews.com for updates on this topic. The meeting was held after the Almanac's print deadline.

An urgency ordinance enacting the moratorium would give the council, in consultation with the community, the time to consider the issue and come up with new policies, he said.

Go to AlmanacNews.com for updates. This meeting occurred after the Almanac's press deadline.

The moratorium would apply to applications for basements submitted after April 15 and would still allow conventional one-story basements to be approved, Mr. Bryant said.

A council subcommittee has examined limitations on a basement's size and depth, its setback from property lines, what it can be used for, and whether it could extend beyond the footprint of the house above.

Public comment is invited by the council and town staff. They are particularly interested in hearing from residents with plans to build basements and/or residents affected by neighbors' basement construction. ■

Surf Air adds 31 flights into San Carlos Airport

Surf Air, the commuter airline that has been barraged with demands to reduce aircraft noise over the Midpeninsula, announced April 13 that it will add 31 weekly flights into the San Carlos Airport.

Five of those flights will be added each weekday and three on each weekend day (Saturday and Sunday), spokeswoman Courtney Lis confirmed. That makes a total of 19 flights each weekday and eight on each

weekend day. An equal number of Surf Air flights depart from San Carlos Airport.

Surf Air offers members unlimited flights for a monthly fee, and with the expansion will now fly to Santa Rosa, Monterey, Sacramento and Palm Springs. The airline's current destinations are Oakland, San Carlos, Truckee, Hawthorne, Santa Barbara, Burbank and Las Vegas. ■

— Barbara Wood

Tour: Gardening with less water

A free "Going Native Garden Tour" will be held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday, April 19, at gardens in Portola Valley, Woodside, Menlo Park, Redwood City, Palo Alto, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills and Mountain View.

The tour, which will show neighbors how to create gardens using less water, is sponsored by the California Native Plant Society (Santa Clara Valley Chapter) and UC Master Gardeners. Registration is required.

Go to <http://gngt.org> to register online and get a map.

Tuolumne film

Menlo Park resident Leah Rogers, who volunteers with the Tuolumne River Trust, will

debut a documentary about the river on Tuesday, April 21.

"Tuolumne To All of You" includes interviews with Peter Drekmeier, policy director for the trust; Dr. Brian Von Herzen of the Climate Foundation; and Robert Righter, historian and professor at Southern Methodist University.

The event starts at 6:30 p.m. at the Menlo-Atherton High School Performing Arts Center at 555 Middlefield Road in Atherton. Go to tuolumne.org to register. Tickets are \$8 for senior citizens and students under 18, and \$12 for everyone else.



Photo by Richard Hine/The Almanac

Touring Facebook

Menlo Park Chamber of Commerce members were invited on Saturday (April 11) to tour the new Facebook building designed by world-renowned architect Frank Gehry. Here the guests visit the Zen garden on the roof of the 433,555-square-foot building, located across the street from the east campus at Bayfront Expressway and Willow Road.

Why town might leave library system

By Barbara Wood
Almanac Staff Writer

■ ATHERTON

Atherton's City Council is considering adopting a set of "talking points" that make it clear that unless a number of concessions are made, Atherton will consider leaving the county library system before the town will share the library tax funds it generates.

The matter will be discussed at the council meeting on Wednesday, April 15, starting at 7 p.m. in the council chambers at 94 Ashfield Road.

At an April 1 study session, council members discussed changes in the joint powers agreement being considered by the county library system's governing board. The changes could mean that property tax funds that now go to Atherton, Woodside and Portola Valley for library use in those towns be shared with the rest of the county libraries.

The first of the proposed talking points says that if the library tax fund issue "cannot be resolved in a reasonable way, the town will be forced to consider withdrawing from the library JPA to protect its fiduciary responsibility to local taxpayers."

Among other things, the talking points listed in a staff report

ask that the town get written assurance that the library tax money the town has already accumulated can go to a new library. The document asks that other changes be made in the current joint power agreement to make it easier for Atherton to leave the system without a financial penalty, and that the town be allowed to spend all the library tax money it generates on its own library before it shares any with the rest of the system.

Go to tinyurl.com/fund203 to see the staff report.

El Camino stoplight

In other business, the council may approve a contract to design a pedestrian-controlled stoplight on El Camino Real at Alameda Avenue, the site of a fatal pedestrian accident in July 2014.

The proposal from engineering firm Stantec Consulting Services Inc. says the town intends to start installing the stoplight by fall.

The light would remain dark unless turned on by a pedestrian or bicyclist. The controls could be over-ridden by fire and other emergency vehicles.

City Manager George Rod-

ericks said this project is moving much faster than plans to install pedestrian-controlled stoplights at the Isabella Avenue and Alejandra Avenue intersections with El Camino Real. The reason: the town is paying for and managing the installation of the Alameda stoplight while Caltrans will pay for and install the other two lights. They aren't expected to be ready until 2017.

Trailer park

The council will also consider what to do about four portable buildings, housing the town's building and planning offices, that the town staff says are cramped and unsafe.

The town is getting ready to build a new civic center, but the portable buildings won't last another winter, says Community Services Director Michael Kashiwagi. The trailers provide offices and storage for building, planning, public works, code enforcement and town arborist activities.

The report recommends renting new portables and moving them to Holbrook-Palmer Park where the permit center could continue to operate while the new civic center is being built.

The council will also discuss the town budget for the fiscal year starting July 1, 2015. ■

Dance documentary 'Capturing Grace' to be screened at Stanford

By Renee Batti
Almanac Associate Editor

It took top audience awards at film festivals in Denver, Sedona and other cities, but if you weren't able to travel to see "Capturing Grace" by Menlo Park resident Dave Iverson, all is not lost: The documentary is being screened in your backyard this weekend.

The film and post-screening panel discussions will be spotlighted on Friday and Saturday, April 17 and 18, at Stanford University, sponsored by the university's dance division of the Department of Theater and Performance Studies and the San Francisco Dance Film Festival.

Filmed over the course of a year and premiered in October at the Mill Valley Film Festival, "Capturing Grace" documents an innovative project partnering two disparate groups of people: dancers with the internationally acclaimed Mark Morris Dance Group, and people with Parkinson's disease.

Before making the film, Mr. Iverson produced a short piece for the PBS NewsHour on the Morris group's dance thera-



Menlo Park filmmaker Dave Iverson draws parallels between the demands placed on body and mind by both dance performance and living with Parkinson's disease.

py program for Parkinson's patients in Brooklyn. In an interview with the Almanac last fall, Mr. Iverson said he had been so impressed by what he learned about the program he was determined to document it in a film.

In the documentary, professional dancers work with Parkinson's patients in a project that culminates in a public performance. The film includes poignant scenes of dance sessions in which Parkinson's suf-

ferers seem transformed as they engage with the dance; it also features interviews with both professional and amateur dancers in the program. One interviewee with Parkinson's notes: "When the class is going on, there are no patients. There are only dancers."

Mr. Iverson, who grew up in Menlo Park and graduated from Stanford, has a personal as well as a professional interest in Parkinson's: He was diagnosed with the disease in 2004, and his father and brother suffer from it as well.

The filmmaker draws parallels between the demands placed on body and mind by both dance performance and living with Parkinson's. He concludes: "It's grace that's hard-won."

Gia Kourlas wrote of the film in the New York Times: "It's moving to witness the power of choreography — the way tremors recede in the studio, the way the performers rediscover what they thought they had lost — but to Mr. Iverson's credit, the bravery of the participants is neither sensationalized nor sugarcoated, even when what they're sharing is nothing short

of remarkable."

The two-day Stanford event kicks off at 1:15 p.m. Friday with a presentation by Mr. Iverson and David Leventhal, a former principal dancer with the Mark Morris Dance Group who now leads the dance program, called Dance for PD. Film clips will be shown, and there will be a discussion on "the power of art and the intersection between dance and health," according to event organizers. The presentation will be in Pigott Theater in Stanford's Memorial Auditorium.

The film will be screened at 7 p.m. Friday in Stanford's Cubberley Auditorium. It will be fol-

lowed by a panel discussion and Q&A session with Mr. Iverson and Mr. Leventhal, as well as Dr. Helen Bronte-Stewart, director of the Stanford Comprehensive Movement Disorders Center. Dr. Maren Grainger-Monsen of the Stanford Center for Biomedical Ethics, who is also a filmmaker, will moderate.

The film will be screened again on Saturday at 1:30 p.m. in Stanford's Cemex Auditorium, followed by a panel discussion and Q&A session.

Go to sfdancefilmfest.org/capturinggrace for more information and to buy tickets to the screenings. ■

FLOWERS

continued from page 3

closely with caregivers to identify appropriate recipients.

"I am so excited by the reaction we are getting in the community with all the high-tech businesses in the area," she says. "I hear people say, 'It's just so simple, I can get behind this.'"

The organization calls itself

a "green" charity because floral supplies, such as ribbons, are reused and even rejected flowers are composted.

Local board members include President Gillian Growdon, Camille Kennedy and Sandy McNamara of Menlo Park; Stephie Johnson of Atherton; and Dan Francis of Woodside.

Go to tinycl.com/flowers410 for more information. ■

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POLICE CALLS

This information is based on reports from the Menlo Park Police Department and the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office. Under the law, people charged with offenses are considered innocent unless convicted. Police received the reports on the dates shown.

PORTOLA VALLEY

Traffic accidents:

■ A woman was driving east on Alpine Road when she fell asleep. Her vehicle left the road, took out 44 feet of fence and came to rest against a tree. Medics took the driver to Stanford Hospital with injuries, and the vehicle was towed away with major damage. March 26.

■ A cyclist was riding north on the southbound shoulder of Portola Road when he maneuvered his bike off the pavement to accommodate a southbound cyclist. Shortly thereafter, he lost control of his bike and collided with the front bumper of a stopped vehicle. His

injuries included scrapes on his leg and a broken arm. March 27.

Fraud: Someone stole the personal information of residents of Santa Maria Avenue and attempted to obtain a mortgage using their information. No losses. March 30.

WEST MENLO PARK

Thefts:

■ Someone stole a bike parked in the backyard of a house on Mills Avenue. Estimated loss: \$4,000. March 31.

■ A thief stole money from a metal box stored in a file cabinet in an office at a school. Estimated loss: \$1,500. March 31.

Fraud: A resident of the 2100 block of Santa Cruz Avenue told deputies she received a \$1,778 refund from state Franchise Tax Board when she had yet to file her tax return. April 1.

MENLO PARK

Auto burglaries:

■ A burglar entered a locked vehicle parked on San Antonio Street by

unknown means, tried unsuccessfully to steal an in-dash radio/CD player, but did steal two debit cards, a driver's license and a gift card from the center console. Estimated loss: \$95. April 8.

■ Someone stole a ham radio from a vehicle parked on Sharon Road after smashing a window. Estimated loss: \$40. April 5.

Thefts:

■ A minor traffic accident occurred between two vehicles on Hedge Road, with one vehicle emerging from the accident with a broken tail-light. Someone associated with the damaged vehicle offered the woman driving the other vehicle a chance to settle the matter with a \$3,000 cash payment. The two drove to the woman's home so she could get her check book. She made the payment and later discovered checks missing. April 3.

■ Someone stole an unlocked bike from the front porch of a house on Sherman Avenue. Estimated loss: \$2,000. April 9.

■ A locked bike was stolen from in front of an office building in the 2400 block of Sand Hill Road. Estimated loss: \$700. April 8.

Frauds:

■ A resident of the 1600 block of El Camino Real wired \$200 after a stranger called her and told her she

would receive \$9,000 in exchange. A Western Union receipt indicated that the caller was based in India. April 10.

■ Someone stole several checks from a locked office while the office occupant was on vacation. The checks were made out to "various people" and cashed. April 8.

TOWN OF WOODSIDE

2955 WOODSIDE ROAD
WOODSIDE, CA 94062

INVITES APPLICATIONS
FOR ARCHITECTURAL
AND SITE REVIEW BOARD

The Architectural and Site Review Board reviews and makes recommendations to the Planning Director regarding community character, site planning, building design and landscape elements on residential and commercial applications.

Meetings are held on the first and third Monday of each month, 4:30 p.m. Appointments are for a four-year term.

Interested residents may request information and applications Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m.-12 noon and 1-5:00 p.m., from the Town Clerk's Office at Town Hall, 2955 Woodside Road, or telephone (650) 851-6790, or through the Town's web site at www.woodsidetown.org, Residents, Volunteer Opportunities. Applications will be accepted until appointment is filled.

One cart, 17 bottles of booze, three arrests

Three people allegedly loaded a shopping cart at Safeway in Sharon Heights with bottles of alcohol and walked out without stopping by the checkout stand first, according to Menlo Park police, who arrested the trio for burglary on Saturday, April 11.

Store employees called police and a Menlo Park officer caught up with the suspects

around 3:50 p.m. after they loaded 15 bottles of champagne and two bottles of wine into a 1998 white Volkswagen Cabrio and drove away, police said.

The driver, Nicole Rangel, 18, of San Francisco, was also booked for alleged false identification, driving without a license and conspiracy to commit a crime, police said. She

had a \$35,000 arrest warrant for burglary in Belmont, and a \$5,000 warrant for shoplifting in Marin County.

Passenger Mekias Andualem, 19, of San Francisco allegedly gave a false name to police, as well. Suspect Jose Jimenez, 18, of San Francisco, did not, police said. All three were booked into San Mateo County Jail.

— Sandy Brundage



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- Chicago Tribune



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WHAT'S YOUR VIEW?

All letters must include a home address and contact phone number. Published letters will also appear on the web site, www.TheAlmanacOnline.com, and occasionally on the Town Square forum.

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Viewpoint

IDEAS, THOUGHTS AND OPINIONS ABOUT LOCAL ISSUES

Water: Let's focus on the rest of the iceberg

By R. Todd Johnson

The Almanac's April 7 editorial, "Increase the pressure on water wasters," only touches the tip of the iceberg when it concludes with the following:

"Cal Water, which provides water to Portola Valley, Woodside, Atherton and parts of Menlo Park, has been unwilling to provide 2014 water-consumption figures for its client towns unless the information is specifically requested by an individual town. The logic behind keeping that information from the public at large is murky at best. Water is a shared, vital resource, with all residents in the state affected by the behavior of those who won't do their part to conserve. The public has the right to demand water-usage data and hold public water agencies' as well as private water companies' feet to the fire to put in place serious penalties for irresponsible water wasters."

I agree completely with this conclusion about transparency of water-usage numbers from Cal Water. Local residents have a right to know how water is being used locally. But let me also encourage the Almanac to consider ways in which it can help residents locally to understand the bigger water picture during our historic drought.

As a start, I'd recommend that we focus less on average local water use (what the Cal Water numbers reveal), and much, much more on individual water footprints. Here's why: The editorial notes that average daily water use per capita in the Bay Area is 79 gallons, ignoring the individual's average daily water footprint in the Bay Area, which is more likely 1,500 gallons per day.

Most Californians express shock when they learn that individual/household usage only accounts for about 4 percent of an individual's overall water footprint. In contrast, nearly 80

percent of an individual's water footprint in California is derived from our consumption of agricultural products, and "[a]lmost half of the average Californian's water footprint is associated with the consumption of meat and dairy products, according to the Pacific Institute's 2012 report "California's Water Footprint."

As eloquently put in the Daily Kos recently: "Climate deniers have their heads in the sand, but we consumers also do our best to deny the connection between our consumption and the climate crisis."

To put that comment in perspective, consider the following:

- The average Bay Area resident uses 28,835 gallons of water per year for household use (toilet, lawn watering, showers, drinking, hand washing, etc.).

- The average Bay Area resident has an additional water footprint of 518,665 gallons per year, mostly for agricultural production to feed themselves, with about 273,750 of

those gallons used annually for the beef and dairy production needed for their personal average consumption.

- These numbers suggest that the average Bay Area resident who forgoes meat and dairy products for just over one month, would conserve a full year's worth of their personal water use.

Numbers like these provide perspective around the issue of "household water wasters." For example, in the Almanac's April 7 news article on the same topic, 2013 average water usage numbers were reported, suggesting that Menlo Park residents used (on average) 32,303 gallons of water in 2013 for personal use, whereas Atherton residents used (on average) 175,200 gallons of water for personal use in 2013. Setting aside for a moment the variances (other than wasting water) responsible for such drastically different numbers (such as lot size), it seems useful to note that, if the average

Atherton resident were a vegan and the Menlo Park resident were not, it would represent a 273,750-gallon annual swing in consumption in the other direction.

So what should we do? For one thing, the editorial board of local newspapers (like the Almanac) can help educate local residents. Certainly, personal responsibility around personal water use is an important start. Transparent access to water usage data is also helpful. But the focus on the numbers sought from Cal Water (just like California's #EveryDropCounts conservation effort) addresses the proverbial tip of the iceberg by focusing on 4 percent of the problem.

Instead, we must all consider creative and innovative ways for engaging locally in discussions about the other 96 percent of our water consumption footprint, which requires personal responsibility at a consumer level that the Cal Water numbers will never address. Such grassroots engagement and education, educating local residents around the state, might present a force countering the agricultural lobby that holds a powerful grip on many politicians in Sacramento.

And an informed local population might also consider the Change.org petition from Truth or Drought, which asks California to begin encouraging (not forcing) residents to make more plant-based food choices while reducing or eliminating animal-based food choices.

Californians need the information from Cal Water, but they need information regarding the other 96 percent of their water footprint in order to make informed decisions about personal consumption affecting water resources. Consider this my challenge for the Almanac editorial board to play the important role locally in providing that information as well.

R. Todd Johnson lives in Menlo Park and is an attorney with a focus on the renewable energy and sustainability sectors.



LETTERS

Our readers write

Removing Searsville Dam would be 'beyond insane'

Editor:

With regard to the Searsville Dam, it is beyond insane in a time of extreme drought to even consider demolishing it. We need more dams and more reservoirs, not fewer; more water storage, not less.

Every drop of fresh water that ends up in the ocean is a failure of engineering and a disservice to the people of California.

*Brian Schar
Laurel Avenue, Menlo Park*

Write us: Tell us what's on your mind by sending your letters to letters@AlmanacNews.com. Or snail-mail them to: The Almanac, 450 Cambridge Ave., Palo Alto, CA 94306.



Menlo Park Historical Association

Looking back

The postmistress was a certain Miss Loveland when this building near Merrill Street and Santa Cruz Avenue housed the post office serving residents in the area, according to "Under the Oaks: Two Hundred Years in Atherton," by Pamela Gullard and Nancy Lund. The photo is from the late 1800s.

Should we encourage bicyclists to ride on El Camino Real?

By Dana Hendrickson

Imagine you're driving south on El Camino and about to turn right onto Santa Cruz Avenue, and during the approach you share a short section of the highway with cyclists who must leave a well-marked bike lane. You pass two riders spaced about 50 feet apart and traveling in the same direction at different speeds. The light is green and you do not know their intentions, or whether they see your car. At the intersection several pedestrians are about to enter the Santa Cruz crosswalk. What do you do? What will happen?

This situation will soon be common if Menlo Park decides to add either bike lanes or separate bike paths to this heavily traveled highway. Our city is currently studying alternatives and trade-offs, and the idea to add "bike facilities" has significant momentum, largely due to the vigorous advocacy of the city's Bicycle Commission and avid cyclists coupled with the absence of effective critical voices in the planning process.

I strongly believe this is a bad idea because, ironically, more pedestrians, motorists and bike riders would be endangered if more bike riders were attracted to El Camino by new bike safety measures. Since this decision will have a major impact on all Menlo Park residents, I encourage them to form their own positions and make their preferences count before it is too late.

Who stands to gain the most from bike facilities on El Camino? Most likely cyclists who have the experience, skills, and awareness to minimize dangerous encounters with motor vehicles that cross their paths at both street intersections and at mid-block public driveways at places like Ducky's and Safeway, and who prize the possibility of shaving several minutes off travel times. For cyclists, the 60 vehicle-bike crossing points on El Camino will guarantee that riding remains an anxiety-filled challenge, but at least the bike lanes would make motorists generally more aware of them. Fewer than fifty cyclists appear to now ride daily on this highway, and a city-commissioned study has not estimated the number of cyclists who would prefer a modified El Camino rather than alternative bike routes.

The number of residents who stand to lose the

most from adding bike facilities is much larger than the cyclist community, and includes bike riders, motorists and pedestrians. Bike riders — think school children and adults who are comfortable riding on residential streets — are generally ill-equipped to handle the demands and dangers of riding on El Camino, and ironically, the existence of either bike lanes or paths would encourage more to do so by creating the illusion of safety.

Motorists would also be exposed to a higher number of potential bike collisions and accidents, and would regularly face delays wherever and whenever they cross paths and merge with bike riders. Pedestrians would also be endangered by mixing with bike riders at busy intersections regardless of how crosswalks are marked. Inevitably, there would be confusion, angry exchanges and accidents.

Finally, the Menlo Park Fire Protection District has told the Planning Commission about its two major concerns. It expects bikes riders would increase the response times of ambulances and fire trucks heading to emergencies in Menlo Park and, as backup, to Palo Alto because El Camino is its most critical primary route. The fire district chief also believes encouraging more bike riders on El Camino would generate more medical emergencies.

So what do I recommend? First, the City Council should hire a bike network design specialist to evaluate not only the absolute safety of adding either bike lanes or bike paths to El Camino, but also the relative safety and convenience of the many alternative bike routes available in the Menlo Park bicycle network and nearby residential streets. Next, residents should communicate their concerns and preferences to our City Council at city.council@menlopark.org. The welfare of all residents, including bike riders, is clearly at stake so all voices should be heard.

You can learn more about the ECR Corridor Study and read my analyses at bit.ly/ECRcorridorstudy.

Dana Hendrickson is a 30-year resident of Menlo Park, an avid cyclist and the editor of the Re-Imagine Menlo Park website and forum at bit.ly/reimagineinp.



GUEST
OPINION

Be a part of the celebration at
Adolescent Counseling Services'
Spring Sounds!

Saturday, May 2, 2015, 6:30 – 11:00 PM
Oshman Family JCC

1975
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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Atherton Planning Commission will hold a public hearing to review an amendment to Atherton Municipal Code Section 17.44 to modify the basement regulations.

The zoning code amendment is exempt from further review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to section 15305, minor alternation in land use limitation.

NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that said item is set for hearing by the Planning Commission at its regular meeting on April 22, 2015 at 6:00 P.M. in the Town Hall of the Town of Atherton, at which time and place all persons interested may appear and show cause, if they have any, why the code amendment should or should not be adopted.

IF YOU CHALLENGE the code amendment in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the public hearing described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered to the Planning Commission at, or prior to, the public hearing.

Any attendee who wishes accommodation for a disability should contact the City Clerk at (650) 752-0529 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting. For additional information please contact Lisa Costa Sanders, Town Planner at 650-333-0248 or lcostasanders@ci.atherton.ca.us.

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