

# Town of Atherton

Compiled by the Town of Atherton City Clerk Ms. Theresa DellaSanta

## Measure F

“Should the Town of Atherton construct a new library in Holbrook-Palmer Park using funds dedicated for Library purposes only, by replacing the Main House and some surrounding patios and walkways?”

### Impartial Analysis of Measure F

The Atherton Library resides in a former home constructed in the 1920s. It does not meet current seismic codes, and is not a modern facility. The City Council has determined that a new library should be constructed, and suggested that a location in Holbrook-Palmer Park where the current Main House exists would be the preferred site. The decision to construct this facility in this Park resulted in serious public controversy, and an Environmental Impact Report was required. That EIR examined the potential environmental impacts that might result from placing the library in the park as well as several other locations near the Town Center.

The Council now submits the question to the citizens of Atherton as to: (1) should a new library be constructed in Holbrook-Palmer Park, (2) using special tax funds that can only be used for library purposes and which have already been collected, and (3) only in a site in the park that will replace the current Main House and some surrounding patios and walkways?

If approved, this would permit the City Council to direct that the Main House be demolished and a new library be constructed on that site, including the area where some surrounding improvements (sidewalks, patios, and the like) currently exist. There would be no reduction in existing parkland or open space, and the library could only be constructed in the Park at this specific location—in the area of the current Main House—and nowhere else in the Park.

If rejected by the voters, this measure will not prohibit construction of a new library in other locations and will not impact the ability to use the dedicated special tax funds for library uses for this purpose.”

/s/ **William B. Connors**, City Attorney

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Arguments in support of or in opposition to the proposed laws are the opinions of the authors.

| Argument in Favor of Measure F  | Rebuttal to Argument in Favor of Measure F  |
|---|---|
| <p>Vote Yes on Measure F for a new Atherton library in Holbrook-Palmer Park that is already funded by the Atherton Library Fund.</p> <p>Your yes vote is only to approve the location of our new library and will require no new taxes from Atherton taxpayers.</p> <p>Existing funds are already designated solely for library purposes including construction, operating expenses, programs and book and media collections. Building a new library in Holbrook-Palmer Park is the best use of Town library resources. It connects a place for learning with outdoor recreation and cultural activities.</p> <p>By voting Yes on Measure F and building the new library in the park, Atherton will gain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A seismically safe, state-of-the-art, green-energy facility, with adequate parking, in a beautiful park setting. This location would be further removed from the rail than the existing location and will allow library users a quiet space and added pedestrian safety.</li> <li>- Up-to-date books, computer networks and lifelong learning programs.</li> <li>- A well maintained park with enhanced open space. Funds for the new library will contribute to park improvements. Tennis courts, sports fields and playgrounds will not be affected.</li> <li>- Better traffic safety. Existing library funds can pay for traffic-light improvements at Watkins Avenue and Middlefield Road.</li> <li>- Budget savings. Atherton has lost money renting and maintaining the park’s Main House. Replacing it with the new library will save Atherton taxpayer dollars.</li> <li>- A park that brings together our Town’s recreational, social, educational and cultural activities – all in one convenient, pleasant, family-friendly location.</li> </ul> <p>This library site is recommended by numerous environmental studies, a majority of the City Council, independent consultants, community leaders and the Atherton Library Committee. An extensive two-year-long public process yielded this recommendation.</p> <p>Please join us. Vote Yes on Measure F to improve Atherton’s library, park and quality of life.</p> | <p>Proponents argue benefits of locating the Library in Holbrook-Palmer Park that have nothing to do with the Park. A State-of-the Art Library can be established <i>elsewhere</i> with the same benefits, without destroying the Park and adding budget costs to Atherton.</p> <p><b>DO NOT BE FOOLED:</b></p> <p>Proponents imply the Atherton Library Fund may be used to improve Holbrook-Palmer Park. No, this Library Fund can only be used for improving the Library, <i>not</i> for Park improvements.</p> <p>No Environmental Reports “recommend” placing the Library in the Park. Quite the opposite! The Environmental Report says a traffic light will be needed on Middlefield, and Watkins/ El Camino traffic will be impacted. Atherton does not have the authority to place a traffic light at this critical intersection. And Library Funds cannot pay for traffic mitigation.</p> <p>The “Public Library Process” focused on facility, NOT on location. Not one public meeting was held to obtain public input on <i>where</i> to place the Library. The Council majority relented only after 2 years of citizen objections.</p> <p>The proposed program does not adequately account for the Art Center, Park offices and storage presently in the Main Building. A comprehensive <i>Town Master Plan</i> is needed.</p> <p>Budget losses on top of costs: Town budgets have included event revenues from the Main Building, which will be eliminated by the new Library.</p> <p>The new Library is sized to serve a regional population of 16,000+ persons. Atherton will lose control of the Park to the County Library Joint Powers Authority.</p> |
| <p>/s/ <b>William R (Bill) Widmer</b> August 15, 2012<br/>Mayor</p> <p>/s/ <b>Kathy McKeithen</b> August 15, 2012<br/>Council member</p> <p>/s/ <b>Howard (Sandy) Crittenden</b> August 15, 2012<br/>Member, Atherton Library Building Steering Committee</p> <p>/s/ <b>John Lillie</b> August 15, 2012</p> <p>/s/ <b>Daryl Lillie</b> August 15, 2012</p>  | <p>Vote <b>NO</b> on Measure F.</p> <p>/s/ <b>Paul Tonelli</b> August 22, 2012<br/>Former Commissioner Atherton Parks and Rec. Comm.</p> <p>/s/ <b>Alain Enthoven</b> August 23, 2012<br/>Member Finance Committee</p> <p>/s/ <b>Herman Christensen Jr</b> August 23, 2012<br/>Chairman, Atherton Planning Commission</p> <p>/s/ <b>Jim Massey</b> August 23, 2012<br/>Member Finance Comm</p> <p>/s/ <b>Rose Hau</b> August 23, 2012<br/>Former Atherton Planning Commissioner</p>   |

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| Argument Against Measure F  | Rebuttal to Argument Against Measure F  |
|---|---|
| <p>Vote <b>NO</b> on Measure F to preserve Holbrook-Palmer Park as open space dedicated to Atherton recreational use.</p> <p><b>WHITE ELEPHANT?</b><br/>The proposed Library in Holbrook-Palmer Park requires demolishing the 3,500 square feet Main Building, and replacing 6,500 sq.ft. of patio and open space to accommodate a <b>10,000</b> sq.ft. building footprint. With a second floor, the Library could reach <b>20,000</b> sq.ft.</p> <p><b>INSUFFICIENT DATA</b><br/>Atherton’s existing Library is 4,800 square feet. There is insufficient data to justify spending \$8 million taxpayer funds on a new 10-20,000 sq.ft. Library. Menlo Park and Redwood City Libraries are nearby.</p> <p><b>TRAFFIC IMPACTS:</b><br/>Increased traffic on Watkins/Middlefield. A costly traffic light possibly required.<br/>“Significant” traffic impacts at Watkins/El Camino.<br/>Increased <i>foot</i> traffic, <i>auto</i> traffic and insufficient <i>parking</i> in the Park, especially during peak Library hours.</p> <p><b>BUDGET LOSS</b><br/>\$90,000 in annual rental revenues lost by demolishing Main House. Un-estimable increase in Police costs to patrol, close Park, and deal with vagrants.</p> <p><b>SECURITY:</b><br/>Park closes at sundown. Library closes at 8PM; Atherton PD currently maintains Park security. Atherton PD hours and costs increase materially. Park security may decrease tragically.</p> <p><b>ALTERNATIVES:</b><br/>Use library funds to upgrade existing Library or build a more moderate size Library in existing Library area to preserve the Park.<br/><br/>Atherton does not need a massive new Library that changes the character and disrupts the tranquility of Holbrook-Palmer Park. The proposed Library competes with the intended use of the Park as a recreational area. The added parking and traffic issues cannot be mitigated without severe measures, and with certain issues cannot be mitigated at all. The Town will lose control of the Park.<br/><br/>By voting <b>NO</b> on Measure F you will help preserve the only Park in Town and prevent the construction of a WHITE ELEPHANT with its many problems.</p> <p>/s/ <b>Dianne M. Fisher</b> August 15, 2012<br/>Former Mayor</p> <p>/s/ <b>John A. Fisher</b> August 15, 2012<br/>Former Mayor</p> <p>/s/ <b>Malcolm Dudley</b> August 11, 2012<br/>Former Mayor</p> <p>/s/ <b>James Janz</b> August 14, 2012<br/>Former Mayor</p> <p>/s/ <b>Jerome Carlson</b> August 15, 2012<br/>Former Mayor</p> | <p>Focus on the facts. YES on Measure F provides a versatile, secure asset for the community and enhances Holbrook-Palmer Park.</p> <p><b>VERSATILITY</b><br/>The Environmental Impact Report (EIR), prepared by a reputable firm, approved by Town Staff and your Council, recommends a Library of 10,000 square feet as the environmentally superior alternative. While still conceptual, this is the preferred size.</p> <p><b>TWO YEARS OF STUDY</b><br/>The Library Committee conducted nearly 125 public meetings, a dozen community workshops, and consulted with the County’s leading library experts to determine needs and location.</p> <p><b>TRAFFIC IMPACTS</b><br/>The EIR concludes there are NO traffic impacts that cannot be mitigated except pre-existing issues at the El Camino intersection.</p> <p><b>STOPS TAXPAYER LOSS</b><br/>The Park has been losing taxpayer dollars on rentals for years, per a staff report last October. Regardless, this project does not impact rentals of the pavilion which is the primary source of income.</p> <p><b>SECURITY</b><br/>The Atherton Police Chief indicates no greater policing is foreseen with a new Library in the Park. A Library in the Park could actually <b>IMPROVE</b> security at the Park which already has numerous activities after sunset.</p> <p><b>ALTERNATIVES</b><br/>The EIR concluded the Park is the environmentally superior location of ALL alternatives. The proposed Library enhances the recreational uses at the Park and furthers the will of the property donor. The Library will be a Town-owned building and by law the Town will continue to control the Park.</p> <p>Know the facts. Let’s make Atherton and our Park a better place.</p> <p>Vote YES on F</p> <p>/s/ <b>W.R. (Bill) Widmer</b> August 22, 2012<br/>Mayor, Town of Atherton</p> <p>/s/ <b>Kathy McKeithen</b> August 21, 2012<br/>Councilmember</p> <p>/s/ <b>Sandy Crittenden</b> August 21, 2012</p> <p>/s/ <b>John Lillie</b> August 21, 2012</p> <p>/s/ <b>Daryl Lillie</b> August 21, 2012</p> |