

RESOLUTION NO. 22 -28

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF ATHERTON IN
SUPPORT OF REOPENING THE MACK E. MICKELSON ARTHRITIS AND
REHABILITATION CENTER THERAPY POOL LOCATED AT THE MILLS
HEALTH CENTER IN SAN MATEO CALIFORNIA**

WHEREAS, the Mack E. Mickelson Therapy Pool ("Mickelson") is an ADA-accessible warm water therapy pool located in San Mateo, California at Mills Health Center, which is operated by Sutter Health; and

WHEREAS, Mickelson was constructed over 25 years ago using charitable contributions from residents of San Mateo County; and

WHEREAS, for over 25 years, thousands of residents of San Mateo County who suffered from health issues including permanent disabilities, debilitating injuries, autoimmune disorders, surgery, and mobility impairments, as well as pregnant women, used Mickelson to exercise, rehabilitate health issues and mitigate physical decline; and

WHEREAS, both intervention and prevention are equally critical components of an equitable and effective healthcare system; and

WHEREAS, Mickelson's ability to provide both preventative and interventionist therapies to residents of San Mateo community suffering from health issues makes it an asset to the community at large and even more so to elderly residents and residents with mobility impairments; and

WHEREAS, notwithstanding the COVID-19 pandemic, Sutter Health, its subsidiaries, and its employees receive significant financial benefits for providing healthcare services in San Mateo County from both public and private contracts; and

WHEREAS, in January 2020, Sutter Health substantially decreased the hours during which Mickelson was accessible to community members who relied upon its availability to maintain their health; and

WHEREAS, in March 2020, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, Sutter Health ceased operating the Mickelson therapy pool; and

WHEREAS, in June 2021, Sutter Health publicly announced its intent to permanently close Mickelson; and

WHEREAS, as a direct result of Sutter Health's decision to close Mickelson, residents of San Mateo County who previously relied upon Mickelson to treat and prevent significant health issues are now suffering from acute and chronic physical pain and mental anguish which, in turn, decreases the independence of those residents and impacts their ability to live with dignity; and

WHEREAS, over 4,800 patients, caregivers, and community members have signed a petition to reopen Mickelson to increase the health, independence, and dignity of those residents who rely upon it; and

WHEREAS, there is also an apparent and growing need for the Mickelson therapy pool and the services it provides due to San Mateo County's rapidly increasing number of elderly residents who are highly likely to suffer from the health issues noted above, among others; and

WHEREAS, there are no comparable warm water therapy pools that can adequately accommodate the residents of San Mateo County who previously relied upon Mickelson; and

WHEREAS, any temporary plan to route former Mickelson users to another warm water therapy pool outside of San Mateo County will not benefit a significant number of former users with significant mobility impairments that limit those users' abilities to travel; and

WHEREAS, estimates provided by Sutter Health suggest that reopening Mickelson with any required repairs or upgrades would cost approximately \$250,000.00; and

WHEREAS, warm water therapy pools in the region can and do operate profitably and safely under relevant COVID-19 regulations; and

WHEREAS, Peninsula Health Care District, Sequoia Healthcare District, and the County of San Mateo have expressed willingness to assist with the cost of restoring and operating the Mickelson Pool for the benefit of their residents; and

WHEREAS, Sutter Health received \$853 million in federal funding under the CARES Act, one purpose of which was for “retrofitting facilities” such as the Mickelson Therapy Pool, as well as staffing; and


WHEREAS, it has been affirmed by the San Mateo County Environmental Health Department that “Therapeutic pools were exempt from any closures... [and] have been allowed to provide access during COVID and the present”; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the Town of Atherton that: promptly reopening the Mack E. Mickelson Arthritis and Rehabilitation Center therapy pool for community use with the same open access hours that it had prior to January 2020, is the most prudent option to preserve and improve the health of residents in the Town of Atherton who now rely upon, or who will rely upon, warm water therapy to maintain their health, independence, and dignity.


I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was duly and regularly passed and adopted by the City Council of the Town of Atherton at a REGULAR meeting thereof held on this 21st day of December, 2022, by the following vote:

AYES: 5 COUNCILMEMBERS: Holland, DeGolia, Lewis, Vice Mayor Hawkins-Manuelian, Mayor Widmer
NOES: 0 COUNCILMEMBERS:
ABSENT: 0 COUNCILMEMBERS:
ABSTAIN: 0 COUNCILMEMBERS:

ATTEST:



Anthony Suber, City Clerk



Bill Widmer, MAYOR
TOWN OF ATHERTON

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



Mona G. Ebrahimi, City Attorney