

RESOLUTION NO. 2023 - 7549

RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF WOODSIDE 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 Arthritis and Rehabilitation Center Therapy Pool ("Mickelson Therapy Pool") is an Americans With Disabilities Act-accessible warm water therapy pool operated by Sutter Health and located at the Mills Health Center, in San Mateo, California; and

WHEREAS, the Mickelson Therapy Pool 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, and many who continue to suffer, from health issues including permanent disabilities, debilitating injuries, autoimmune disorders, surgery, and mobility impairments, as well as pregnant women, used the Mickelson Therapy Pool 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 Therapy Pool'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 the Mickelson Therapy Pool 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 the Mickelson Therapy Pool; and

WHEREAS, as a direct result of Sutter Health's decision to close the Mickelson Therapy Pool, residents of San Mateo County who previously relied upon the Mickelson Therapy Pool 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 the Mickelson Therapy Pool 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 the Mickelson Therapy Pool; and

WHEREAS, any temporary plan to route former Mickelson Therapy Pool 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 the Mickelson Therapy Pool with any required repairs or upgrades would cost approximately \$250,000.00;

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" [<https://calhospital.org/faqs-federal-funding-general/>] such as the Mickelson Therapy Pool, as well as staffing, but claimed that financial considerations and COVID in general justified the facility closure; 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".

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council of the Town of Woodside hereby calls upon Sutter Health to promptly reopen the Mack. E. Mickelson Arthritis and Rehabilitation Center Therapy Pool for those community members who have historically relied upon and benefited from

the warm water therapy it provided so that they may continue to live health, vibrant, and independent lives.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Council of the Town of Woodside urges Sutter Health to take advantage of the offer from the Peninsula Health Care District, Sequoia Healthcare District, and the County of San Mateo to engage in meaningful dialogue regarding funding for repairs and operations so that the pool may be reopened at the earliest possible date.

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Passed and adopted by the Town Council of the Town of Woodside, California, at a meeting thereof held on the 10th day of January, 2023, by the following vote of the members thereof:

- AYES, and in favor thereof, Councilmembers: Brown, Dombkowski, Fluett, Wall, and Mayor Shaw
- NOES, Councilmembers:
- ABSENT, Councilmembers:
- ABSTAIN, Councilmember: Goeld

Mayor of the Town of Woodside

ATTEST:

Clerk of the Town of Woodside