



# CITY OF HOLLISTER

375 FIFTH • HOLLISTER, CA 95023-3876

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **City of Hollister Provides Clarification Regarding Helen M. Ross Trust Funds**

HOLLISTER - At its January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017 City Council meeting, the City of Hollister adopted Resolution #2017-5 which authorized the acceptance of a \$375,000 restricted donation from the Helen M. Ross Living Trust (Trust) and the creation of a Fiduciary Fund (Helen M. Ross Fund) for the City to hold the initial and subsequent donations from the Trust. In addition to the initial donation, the City of Hollister received a 16.67% ownership interest in the Ross Building at 345 Fifth Street in Hollister.

The Hollister Police Department and the Hollister Animal Care and Services Bureau were honored for over thirteen years with the volunteer service of Helen M. Ross. Ms. Ross was constantly at the shelter, tirelessly helping the shelter run as efficiently as possible. She was often at the shelter answering phone calls, bottle feeding abandoned shelter kittens and puppies, and preparing dog license statements for mailing. Ms. Ross also donated a laptop, created the donation tree on the wall at the shelter, and purchased smocks for staff and other volunteers at the shelter.

Sadly, Ms. Ross passed away in 2015, but she wanted to continue giving to the animals of our community and wanted to continue to advocate for the shelter staff and the animals. Ms. Ross created a living trust and among her wishes when she passed away was for a donation to be left for the Hollister Animal Shelter.

In her Trust it states, *"This distribution shall be for the benefit of the Hollister Animal Shelter and its successors-in-interest, only. This distribution shall not be comingled with the general funds of the City of Hollister. The funds shall be used exclusively for the care and feeding of animals housed at the shelter."*

Last week, the City of Hollister responded to a request for public records regarding the use of the \$375,000 restricted donation received from the Trust. In addition to the initial donation, the City receives its share of the distribution of revenue from the Ross Building LLC on a quarterly basis. At a past City Council meeting, staff discussed using the funds to construct a veterinary clinic in one of the existing buildings at Vista Park Hill. Unfortunately, this building ultimately was demolished as it was inhabitable. As of June 30, 2022, the interest bearing Helen M. Ross Fund had a balance of \$463,952. To



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date, these funds have not been allocated to a specific project or used to increase staff salaries. Furthermore, these funds cannot be used for any services to be provided outside of the Hollister Animal Shelter.

City of Hollister staff plans to provide funding recommendations for the Helen M. Ross Fund that will lead to long lasting multigenerational impacts. A Study Session focused on the Hollister Animal Shelter was recently requested to be scheduled by the City Council. This Study Session will allow the City Council to engage in an in depth discussion with staff and receive public input. The Study Session will provide valuable input to staff as they begin their work to prepare and recommend the City's Fiscal Year 2023-24 Annual Budget to the City Council.

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