



City of Santa Barbara
Parks and Recreation Department

Memorandum

Date: August 26, 2009
To: Park and Recreation Commission
From: Tim Downey, Urban Forest Superintendent
Subject: Street Tree Advisory Committee Composition

Recommendation:

That the Commission approve changes to the composition of the Street Tree Advisory Committee (STAC), including increasing the number of regular voting members from three to five, and eliminating the two alternate member positions.

Discussion:

The STAC is made up of three voting members and two alternate members. Alternates become voting members if a regular member is not present. STAC members are generally professionals involved in tree selection and care outside their role as appointed City officials. In recent months, the STAC members raised concerns regarding their ability to discuss tree issues as professionals without violating the Brown Act. Under Brown Act rules the term "meeting" includes any congregation of a majority of the members of a legislative body at the same time and place to hear, discuss, or deliberate upon any matter which is under the subject matter jurisdiction of the agency. Since the current STAC voting membership is three, two members constitutes a quorum. Currently if two members have a normal business conversation regarding City owned or regulated trees, it could constitute a Brown Act violation.

The STAC discussed potential changes to its membership on May 5, 2009, and July 2, 2009, and voted to recommend that the Park and Recreation Commission increase the voting membership from three to five and eliminate the alternate members. Increasing the voting membership to at least five would allow for normal business conversations between two members without constituting a quorum. At the same time, increasing the voting membership to five requires that at least three members, instead of two, be present for the STAC to take action on tree removal requests. Since the STAC regularly has at least two voting members and one alternate member at each meeting, it is anticipated that the STAC will be able to maintain a quorum for its meetings. In the event that a quorum is not present, the Commission would have to consider tree removal requests without STAC recommendations.

Recommendation

Staff recommends the Commission approve changes to the composition of the STAC. To implement this recommendation immediately, Staff also recommends that the Commission convert the existing two alternate positions to regular voting positions with terms that would expire on December 31, 2009. The three current voting members have terms that expire on December 31, 2010. Staff is not proposing any changes to the existing voting member terms. This would achieve staggered terms and ensure some Committee member consistency from year to year. Current membership and terms are outlined below.

Alternate Voting Members

Ricardo Castelanos, term expires on December 31, 2009

Karen Christman, term expires to December 31, 2010

Regular Voting Members – All have terms that expire on December 31, 2010

Maury Treman

Carol Bornstein

Bob Cunningham

PREPARED BY: Tim Downey, Urban Forest Superintendent

SUBMITTED BY: Jill E. Zachary, Assistant Parks & Recreation Director

APPROVED BY: Nancy L. Rapp, Parks & Recreation Director