



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA
PARK & RECREATION COMMISSION REPORT

AGENDA DATE: January 27, 2010
TO: Parks and Recreation Commission
FROM: Parks Division, Parks and Recreation Department
SUBJECT: Residency Requirement for Street Tree Advisory Committee

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Commission review the request by the Street Tree Advisory Committee (STAC), and determine whether to change the residency requirement for STAC membership.

DISCUSSION:

The purpose of this staff report is to provide the Commission with background information on the composition and residency requirement to be eligible to serve on the STAC, and to assist the Commission in determining whether to change the requirement, as requested by the Committee. A letter from Carol Bornstein, Chair of the Committee, is included as Attachment 1.

Background

The STAC was established by the Park Commission on December 20, 1979, to advise the Commission on tree removals and planting. The three-member Committee was chaired by a member of the Park Commission with two other members appointed by the Commission. The membership was modified by the Park Commission on December 16, 1998, to establish three voting members with two-year terms, and to require that members reside within the City of Santa Barbara, and have interest and technical knowledge of trees and tree care issues. Park Commission members were made non-voting members, and the City Arborist was made non-voting staff liaison. The membership was again modified September 22, 1999, to add two alternate members. The alternate members were added so that if regular members were not in attendance, the alternates could be appointed to vote and a quorum could be maintained. The most recent modification was made on August 26, 2009, when the Parks and Recreation Commission voted to make the alternate members regular voting members at the request of STAC, bringing the STAC membership up to 5 voting members. The staff report for the August 26, 2009, Commission meeting is included as Attachment 2. Currently, the Commission also has one non-voting liaison to the Committee.

STAC Discussion

At the November 5, 2009, STAC meeting, the Committee discussed whether to request that the Parks and Recreation Commission expand the opportunity for membership to residents outside City limits. In addition to the considerations outlined in the letter from Carol Bornstein, Committee members expressed concern that when members, due to personal circumstances, move outside of the City while serving, they are required to resign. This occurred in 2006 and may occur again. The STAC also expressed concern that the residency requirement could limit the success of future recruitments, and that there are well-qualified candidates currently not eligible to apply due their residency.

Recommendation

Although staff appreciates the concerns of the STAC, staff does not support changing the residency requirement. Despite some prior recruitment challenges, there has been ample interest in the Committee in recent years. There is heightened community awareness about trees and, as a result, urban forest issues are gaining importance. As a result, staff is confident that vacant positions on the Committee can be filled by City residents. Lastly, from a citywide perspective, since all members of City Boards, Commissions, and Committees serve as appointed City officials, membership opportunities for residents outside the City have been the exception.

ATTACHMENTS: 1. Carol Bornstein Letter dated November 10, 2009
2. August 26, 2009, Parks and Recreation Commission Staff Report, Street Tree Advisory Committee Composition

SUBMITTED BY: Tim Downey, Urban Forest Superintendent

REVIEWED BY: Jill E. Zachary, Assistant Park & Recreation Director

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