



## CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

### PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION REPORT

**AGENDA DATE:** October 26, 2011

**TO:** Parks and Recreation Commission

**FROM:** Recreation Division, Parks and Recreation Department

**SUBJECT:** Proposal to Formally Establish the Santa Barbara Youth Council as a City Advisory Committee

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Commission approve the Proposal to Formally Establish the Santa Barbara Youth Council as a City Advisory Committee.

#### **DISCUSSION:**

The Santa Barbara Youth Council has served in an advisory role to the Park and Recreation Commission and City Council for over 17 years. A review of City documents shows the Youth Council was never formally adopted by City Resolution as a City Advisory Committee as other advisory boards and commissions were. To preserve the intent of the Youth Council to represent youth voice in government and to establish a youth advisory board consistent with the City Charter, the Parks and Recreation Commission formed a sub-committee to develop a proposal whereby City Council would formally establish the Youth Council as a City Advisory Committee. The sub-committee included representatives from the Commission, Youth Council and Neighborhood Advisory Council, and Parks and Recreation staff. The sub-committee draft Proposal to Formally Establish the Santa Barbara Youth Council as a City Advisory Committee has been approved by the Youth Council. If approved by the Commission, the proposal will be forwarded to City Council for consideration.

#### **Youth Council Background**

Over the last several years, Youth boards, commissions or councils have grown in popularity in cities across the nation. The National League of Cities lists over 140 local youth councils throughout the nation. Adult change makers have found these boards or councils are effective ways to involve youth in shaping policy, improving services, and developing youth leaders. The City of Santa Barbara has also utilized youth leaders in such service.

In 1991, the City Council created a Youth Task Force in response to heightened concerns about the needs of youth. Out of the discussions from this Youth Task Force was a recommendation, among others, to provide a means for young people to have a voice in government through a Youth Council, town meetings, or youth representation on city boards and commissions. In 1994, the City created the United Youth Empowered (UYE), a

youth leadership group, which functioned as a voice for teens by facilitating youth forums, publishing a youth magazine, and assisting with the planning of teen activities.

In 1997, UYE began to be identified as the Santa Barbara Youth Council, functioning as an advisory board for Teen Programs and actively participating in the development of public policy by working with City Council and other local officials. The Youth Council has continued to function as an advisory board to the City Council, the Parks and Recreation Commission and other boards and commissions in the City. The Youth Council was instrumental in helping draft policy for a social host ordinance adopted by local jurisdictions including the City of Santa Barbara, conducting youth forums on issues such as graffiti, teen rights, and bullying, and assisting in the development of the City's skate park and Twelve35 teen center.

### **Sub-Committee to Formally Establish the Youth Council**

In reviewing past City documents, it was noted that the UYE or the Youth Council was never officially adopted by City Resolution as a formal advisory committee as other City advisory boards and commissions are. To preserve the intent of having a youth voice in government and to establish a youth advisory board consistent with the City Charter, the Parks and Recreation Commission established a sub-committee to develop a recommendation to City Council which would formally establish the Santa Barbara Youth Council.

The sub-committee included two representatives from the Parks and Recreation Commission, one representative from the Neighborhood Advisory Council, two representatives from the Youth Council, and staff.

#### Sub-committee members:

Lesley Wiscomb, Chair, Parks and Recreation Commission  
Rocky Jacobson, Commissioner, Parks and Recreation Commission  
Cesar Trujillo, Member, Neighborhood Advisory Council  
Morgan Lunt, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair, Santa Barbara Youth Council  
Carole Green, Parliamentarian, Santa Barbara Youth Council  
Ivette Gil, Member, Santa Barbara Youth Council (alternate)  
Sarah Hanna, Programs Manager, Parks and Recreation Department  
Susan Young, Neighborhood and Outreach Services Supervisor and Staff Advisor  
to the  
Santa Barbara Youth Council

The sub-committee was charged with reviewing and establishing the purpose, duties, and format of the Youth Council which would be forwarded to the Youth Council, Parks and Recreation Commission and to the City Council for consideration. Over six meetings the

sub-committee finalized the draft Proposal to Formally Establish the Santa Barbara Youth Council as a City Council Advisory Committee which addresses purpose, duties, membership, appointments, organization, terms and administration of the Youth Council. The Youth Council was updated periodically regarding the progress of the sub-committee and offered their feedback and suggestions.

**Summary of Proposed Changes**

The essential purpose and duties of the Youth Council are not proposed to change in any significant way. The key changes as proposed include the following:

Membership	Reduced from 17 to 15 members. To encourage diversity and expand leadership opportunities, member composition was expanded to include alternative, community and continuation high schools, and the requirement that 8 of the 15 be City residents.
Application, Interview, and Appointments	Application, interview and appointments of new Youth Council members shifted from Youth Council to City Council. See Youth Council Appointment Process below.
Meetings	Changed from holding at least two regular meetings per month to a minimum of once per month, plus any additional meetings as determined by Youth Council action.
Term	Currently, Youth Council members serve from time of appointment until resignation, removal or graduation from 12 <sup>th</sup> grade. Proposed that members will serve a two-year term, and may be appointed to multiple terms.

**Youth Council Appointment Process**

During the sub-committee meetings, the group spent considerable time on the membership and appointment process. Currently the Youth Council conducts interview and appointment of potential members separate from any other City process. Under the City Council Advisory Committee recruitment and appointment process, potential candidates apply through the City Clerk’s Office, and are interviewed by City Council prior to City Council appointment. The sub-committee wanted to ensure that the makeup of the Youth Council reflected the diversity of the city’s youth and to maintain the Youth Council’s input as it relates to appointments. Under the draft proposal, Youth Council appointments

would be incorporated into the semi-annual City Council Advisory Committee recruitment and appointment process. However, as part of the process, Youth Council candidates would first be interviewed by the Youth Council with the Youth Council forwarding their recommendations to the City Council. Youth Council candidates will also be interviewed by City Council consistent with other City boards and commissions.

### **Recommended Transition to New Membership**

The sub-committee did not discuss the transition in membership between the current Youth Council members and the new proposed Santa Barbara Youth Council should the draft proposal be approved. Staff will work with the City Clerk's Office and the City Attorney to address timing, the transition of the current 17-member body to a 15-member body, and the appointment of currently serving Youth Council members to the new Council. A recommendation on these issues will be included with the staff report to City Council. Currently five of the appointed 17 Youth Council members are high school seniors whose terms will end in June. This will provide some flexibility during the transition. The goal would be to have any vacancies be included in the Spring 2012 City Council Advisory Committee recruitment and appointment process.

### **Youth Council Recommendation**

At the October 10, 2011, special meeting, the Youth Council approved the draft Proposal to Formally Establish the Santa Barbara Youth Council as a City Advisory Committee.

### **Park and Recreation Commission Recommendation**

The sub-committee recommends the Parks and Recreation Commission approve the Proposal to Formally Establish the Santa Barbara Youth Council as a City Advisory Committee and forward it to City Council for consideration.

Staff would like to extend their appreciation and thanks to all the sub-committee members for their dedicated commitment and conscientious discussions during this process.

**ATTACHMENT:** Draft Proposal to Formally Establish the Santa Barbara Youth Council as a City Advisory Committee

**PREPARED BY:** Susan Young, Neighborhood and Outreach Services Supervisor

**SUBMITTED BY:** Sarah Hanna, Recreation Programs Manager

**APPROVED BY:** Nancy L. Rapp, Parks and Recreation Director