



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION REPORT

AGENDA DATE: March 23, 2011

TO: Parks and Recreation Commission

FROM: Recreation Division, Parks and Recreation Department

SUBJECT: Formation of Sub-committee to Draft a Proposal Which Would Formally Establish the Santa Barbara Youth Council

RECOMMENDATION: That the Commission:

- A. Establish a sub-committee that includes two Parks and Recreation Commissioners, two Youth Council members, and two Department staff to draft a proposal which would formally establish the Santa Barbara Youth Council; and
- B. Appoint two Commissioners to serve on the sub-committee.

DISCUSSION:

Although the Santa Barbara Youth Council has been a fully functioning body within the City of Santa Barbara government in one form or another since 1993, it has never been officially recognized as such through a City Council resolution similar to other boards and commissions. Given the role of the Youth Council in advising the Parks and Recreation Commission and City Council, and its many contributions over the years, it is time to complete the process for formal establishment of the Youth Council.

Background

The Youth Task Force (YTF) was created by City Council in 1991 following community reaction to the stabbing murder on State Street of Santa Barbara City College student Leonardo Dorantes. The two-year commission, representing youth, the Santa Barbara School Districts, Police, City government, and the community at large, was charged with studying the needs of minority and at-risk youth. In their final report to City Council, the YTF found that an underlying problem of the findings focused on the lack of opportunity for youth to be heard on issues affecting and of concern to them. Believing that young people have the most vital role to play in public youth policy-making, the YTF recommended creation of a youth advisory committee which subsequently named itself United Youth Empowered (UYE).

In November 1993, as part of the City Council Goals, the UYE transitioned into an advisory body under the Parks and Recreation Department Teen Programs, and began to meet more regularly. Since 1999 the name Santa Barbara Youth Council (YC) was used and the group was set up similar to other department advisory bodies including purpose, duties, membership representation, and organizational structure; however, it was never formally established through a resolution adopted by City Council.

Over the years, the YC has been very active and effective in moving forward policies which support positive teen behaviors, and completing projects that benefit the teens of Santa Barbara. They have been outspoken advocates for teen issues and interests playing a significant role in speaking and working with the Department staff, Parks and Recreation Commission, and City Council. Some of their accomplishments include the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention (ADAP) program, the City's Social Host Ordinance, Youth Speak Outs on a variety of topics effecting teens, Teen Leadership Banquet, and the creation of Skater's Point and Twelve35 Teen Center. They have also attended and presented conference sessions on a local, state and national level representing the City of Santa Barbara.

Sub-Committee to Draft Proposal for Formal Establishment

It is proposed that the Parks and Recreation Commission establish a sub-committee comprised of two commissioners, two Youth Council representatives and staff to develop a proposal which would go to City Council to formally establish the Santa Barbara Youth Council. Similar to the development of the Neighborhood Advisory Council, the sub-committee would meet four to six times to discuss and determine a YC description including: purpose, duties (these have changed over the years), member representation (City of Santa Barbara's youth verses the entire South Coast), appointment process (currently the YC appoints their own new members), term and organizational structure. Since advisory bodies make recommendations on the use of City funds and advise City staff, commissions and boards, it is important to define how the YC would best serve the City as advocates for the City of Santa Barbara's youth. The sub-committee draft proposal would come to the Youth Council and the Commission for review and recommendation prior to going to City Council for consideration.

ATTACHMENT: Santa Barbara Youth Council Membership Current Guidelines

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