



**City of Santa Barbara
PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT**

**NEIGHBORHOOD ADVISORY COUNCIL
SPECIAL Meeting**

Wednesday, June 19, 2013

Minutes

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:06pm by Chair Sally Kingston

ROLL CALL

Advisory Council Members Present

Aldana, Sebastian

Cavazos, Ed

Foxen, Sally

Greene, Naomi

Kingston, Sally

Limón, Javier

Peña, Theresa

Rution, Joe

Soto, Ana

Staff Present

Neighborhood & Outreach Services Senior Supervisor Mark Alvarado

Administrative Specialist Jessica Martinez

Liaisons Present

Beebe Longstreet – Parks and Recreation Commission

Megan Diaz Alley – Parks and Recreation Commission

Bendy White – City Council

Cathy Murillo – City Council

Advisory Council Members Absent

Trujillo, Cesar

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

None

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

NEW BUSINESS

1. Purpose and Role of the Neighborhood Advisory Council – **For Information and Discussion**

Discussion will include Mayor and City Administrator.

Mayor Schneider thanked the Neighborhood Advisory Council for the invitation to speak and commented the following regarding the N.A.C.'s efforts thus far:

- Last 2 ½ years of work have been tremendous
- The focus had been on the under-represented areas as well as on city-wide issues
- The most valuable thing the N.A.C. does is help with the CDBG – Human Services grant process
- The N.A.C. is the only advisory group within the City structure that gives advice to a fund-giving group (CDBG)
- The community activism that followed the death of a teen on Milpas street has led to:
 - Milpas street improvements
 - Eastside Traffic Management Plan
- This has helped cause a policy and safety shift in the Eastside Neighborhood

Mayor Schneider commented the following regarding current suggestions for the N.A.C.:

- Health Fair on September 14
 - Opportunity for the N.A.C. to assist with the organization of the event
 - Opportunity to reach out to the community, have a booth, ask questions
- The budget allows for the N.A.C. to give Micro-grants to community organizations to do neighborhood improvements

Mayor Schneider commented the following regarding authority/decision-making power of the N.A.C.:

- Does not agree with idea that the N.A.C. needs more authority/decision-making power
- The N.A.C. is an advisory committee – The advisory capacity helps the City shape policy
- The N.A.C.'s job is very valuable – Some examples include:
 - Work done to get Montecito lighting improvements on Eastside
 - Work done to get Marijuana dispensaries removed in Eastside

Mayor Schneider commented the following regarding inclusion of N.A.C. on important City issues:

- The prioritization of one-time funds for Capital improvements should get N.A.C. input
- The N.A.C. should receive a presentation of the benefits of the City's new trash contract so that they can then share the information with neighbors

City Administrator Armstrong made the following comments regarding the state of the City as it relates to neighborhood groups:

- The conditions of neighborhoods in the City of Santa Barbara 12 years ago was surprising
 - Illegal dumping
 - No one was really complaining
 - Poor maintenance of railroad, sidewalks
 - City was not doing anything to address the issues
- A Neighborhood Improvement Task Force was formed (Staff organization)
 - Task Force started process of cleaning up
 - Developed capital projects
 - Still, there was the issue of no community involvement
- Community Advisory Committees started

- Noticed issues and created wish lists of work to be done
- No prioritization of tasks
- Parks & Recreation dept developed Neighborhood and Outreach Services section
- Neighborhood Advisory Council was then created
 - Merged advisory committees

City Administrator Armstrong made the following comments regarding the N.A.C.'s efforts thus far:

- The Neighborhood Advisory Council is a work in progress, it is not perfect
- It is a new committee and role-clarification is an issue as with all new committees
- The primary job of the N.A.C. is to represent under-represented neighborhoods
- Other duties of the N.A.C include:
 - Gathering information to share with the neighborhoods
 - How the Police Department works
 - What the decision-making process is for getting stop signs installed
 - Provide advice to City Council on the needs of the neighborhoods
 - Advise Parks & Recreation Commission on issues pertaining to Parks and Recreation, and Neighborhood & Outreach Services
 - Weigh in on key issues throughout the City
 - Assist with the CDBG application process
 - Get the word out to the community about the N.A.C. itself
 - Be a resource for neighbors
 - Give advice on Neighborhood Centers (how they are run etc.)
 - Develop emerging leaders

City Administrator Armstrong made the following comments regarding the N.A.C.'s challenges:

- The N.A.C. is a new committee and thus still clarifying their role
- City departments are still getting used to the N.A.C. (Sometimes they get it wrong)
- There are overlapping duties with other committees and commissions
- Representation vs. Outreach (N.A.C. should be doing a little of both)
- Identifying problems vs. Trying to solve problems
- Overall economic resources – never enough money
- When to weigh in on certain issues
- Lack of resources
- City Administrator Armstrong made the following comments regarding the N.A.C.'s challenges:

City Administrator Armstrong made the following comments regarding the N.A.C. overall:

- City Administrator is optimistic about the N.A.C
- N.A.C. involvement has helped to make some projects happen very fast
- Encourages the N.A.C. to:
 - Create a calendar to lay out the year
 - Continue working with staff

In response to the Mayor and City Administrator's comments:

- The Neighborhood Advisory Council suggests an annual meeting with the Mayor and City Administrator

- Member Rution noted that a 'Proactive' approach to neighborhoods was the idea behind City Council's appointing of the Neighborhood Advisory Council
 - After 2 ½ years, the N.A.C. has fallen short
 - Annual Report does not show the N.A.C. as providing a substantive benefit to neighborhoods
 - A vague enumeration of duties and purposes as well as a narrow scope of focus creates a structural problem for the N.A.C.
- Member Limón noted that:
 - Some departments have difficulty understanding the N.A.C.'s role (how is that addressed?)
- In response to Member Limón, City Administrator noted the following:
 - City Council has to make the N.A.C. a part of the process
 - The City has to institutionalize the N.A.C.'s role
 - The City has to remind departments to go to the N.A.C. (it is a process)
 - Progress is being made
- Councilmember Murillo noted that she is positive about the N.A.C.
 - Encourages the N.A.C. to help people on a human/neighborhood level
- Member Greene noted that there seems to be tension within the committee and feels as if it might be due to the attention on the Eastside
- In response to Member Greene, the Mayor noted the following:
 - Focus happened on the Eastside because of a tragedy
 - Let's focus on the neighborhoods before another tragedy happens
 - The Council Liaisons could possibly make it their job to get a list of upcoming items from City Council to N.A.C.
- Member Foxen noted that she has asked for a calendar of events in the past and thanked the Mayor for informing the N.A.C. on the upcoming Health fair
- Member Aldana asked how the N.A.C. should have participated in the Eastside Transportation Management Plan
- In response to Member Aldana, the Mayor noted the following:
 - N.A.C. can outreach and get people to come to the meetings (great response for 1st meeting, not for 2nd)
 - Act as ambassadors, learn the processes and rules and be able to explain to community members
- Liaison Diaz-Alley urged the N.A.C. to remember the following:
 - What got them inspired to join
 - This is a working group
 - It is the N.A.C.'s job to take our talents, bring them together to fill in the gap between neighbors and the City
 - It is the N.A.C.'s job to get people engaged, readjust thinking, find their identity
 - It is the N.A.C.'s job to really work within neighborhoods and be the voice of the neighbors, encourage them to attend meetings
- Member Cavazos noted that he feels the N.A.C. is generally moving in the right direction and that most of the frustration is going away
- Councilmember White noted that the Neighborhood Advisory Council IS the City
 - Welcome to the Big picture
 - City government is investing in the N.A.C., Real commitment is being made to ask the N.A.C. for input on issues
 - Discussion about blight ended after the presentation

- Would like to see N.A.C. move energy from frustration about an issue into making something better happen each year
- Member Kingston noted that she appreciates and is excited about being a part of the N.A.C.
 - Let's not underestimate working with the needy, talking to people
 - Feels that the N.A.C. does not feel positive about themselves (as a committee)
 - Feels good about growth, teams take awhile to develop
 - Let's not discredit what we've done, let us move forward
 - Creating an annual calendar will be a priority
- It was established that the reasoning behind assigning 'Public At-Large' members was to be inclusive and get perspectives from all around the city concerning issues that affect the city as a whole. These members can be from any area of the city.

ADJOURNMENT: It was moved and seconded by Advisory Council Members Peña and Limón respectively, to adjourn the meeting. Meeting was adjourned at 7:55pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Jessica Martinez
NOS Administrative Specialist