



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA
PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION REPORT

AGENDA DATE: January 23, 2008
TO: Park and Recreation Commission
FROM: Administration Division, Parks and Recreation Department
SUBJECT: Change in Membership of Park and Recreation Commission

RECOMMENDATION: That the Commission:

- A. Discuss increasing the membership of the Park and Recreation Commission from five to seven; and
- B. Provide direction to staff regarding how to proceed in the matter.

DISCUSSION:

At the December 12, 2007, meeting, Chair Conner asked staff to place the matter of increasing the Park and Recreation Commission from five to seven members on the Commission's agenda for discussion.

Background

The City Charter requires that the Board of Park Commissioners and the Recreation Commission each have 5 members. Resolution 79-113, now rescinded, allowed for 3 of the 5 members to serve on both commissions. When the Commissions met jointly each month, the joint Park and Recreation Commissions meeting consisted of 7 members. Each meeting day included 3 separate meetings: Park Commission, joint meeting, and Recreation Commission. The majority of all business and matters of both commissions were scheduled on the joint meeting agenda on a monthly basis.

While this appointment structure was efficient to deal with overlapping functions of both commissions, it was confusing to the public. In January 2003, City Council concurred with the recommendation submitted by the Park and Recreation Commissions to appoint the same 5 people to both commissions in order to facilitate 1 monthly joint meeting with the same 5 people serving as Commissioners. Council adopted Resolution 03-006 specifying concurrent appointment of 5 individuals to serve on the Board of Park Commissioners and the Recreation Commission. Over the past 5 years, this format has worked well for the public, the Commission and staff.

Proposal to Expand Membership

Reducing the Commission from 7 to 5 members has worked fairly well over the years. However, achieving a quorum for meetings has been an occasional problem. One of the other challenges has been the number of required commissioner liaison commitments. The Department has 16 advisory committees, and a number of City subcommittees have occasionally requested a liaison from the Park and Recreation Commission (i.e., Upper State Street Study, De la Guerra Plaza, etc.). Commissioners have expressed concerns about the difficulty of attending so many meetings, both from a scheduling and time commitment standpoint, in order to stay abreast of the work of the various committees or subcommittees.

Most of the other boards or commissions established through the City Charter have 7 members. Should the Commission recommend that the body be expanded from 5 to 7 members, a recommendation will go forward to City Council to enact the change. Appointments would most likely be made through the next semi-annual City advisory committee recruitment process.

At some time in the future, the City may be taking various changes to the City Charter to the electorate for approval. At that time, the Department would propose that the Charter language related to the Park and Recreation Commission be updated to reflect the current configuration and membership.

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