



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

PARK & RECREATION COMMISSION REPORT

AGENDA DATE: August 26, 2009

TO: Park and Recreation Commission

FROM: Administrative Division, Parks and Recreation Department

SUBJECT: Recommended Changes to Park and Recreation Commission Advisory Committees

RECOMMENDATION: That the Commission review Park and Recreation Commission Advisory Committees and determine whether certain committees should be modified or dissolved.

DISCUSSION:

The Park and Recreation Commission has 17 advisory committees whose role is to provide the Commission with comments and recommendations on community park and recreation concerns, department services and programs, and fees and charges. Of the 17 committees, 4 are appointed by City Council, and 13 are appointed by the Commission. All committees are operated under the Brown Act regulations. Each has a department staff liaison, generally a manager or supervisor, and clerical support.

While the Department values the work of the advisory committees, their effectiveness varies. Some committees meet regularly and are productive; others have not met over the past 1-2 years due to a lack of interest, members, or quorum. Over the years, various Park and Recreation Commissioners, as well as City Council members, have questioned the need for so many advisory committees, particularly noting the staff support required for each committee in the face of declining budgets. Since each advisory committee has a Commission liaison, Commissioners have also expressed concern for the number of committee meetings which they are responsible to attend.

Staff support for the 17 committees is a growing issue for the Department. The Parks and Recreation Department has been reducing its budget over the past few years to compensate for funding challenges with the City's General Fund. The FY 2010 budget reduction was over \$1.5M, which when adopted decreased the Department workforce by 14%, or the equivalent of nearly 19 full time positions. With City revenues continuing to come in under budget, additional FY 2010 reductions will go into effect at mid-year. Preliminary reduction targets for the FY 2011 General Fund have been developed, with the Parks and Recreation Department most likely to face another \$1.3M in cuts.

As the FY 2010 budget was developed, the Department recommended that the Commission consider reducing the number of its advisory committees as a mitigation for staff reductions. The amount of staff support varies by committee, based on the

frequency of meetings, depth of agenda items discussed, and complexity of meeting minutes. Workload impact can be anywhere between 5 to 80 hours per month, depending on the committee.

To assist the Commission, the attached table provides an overview of each committee, including whether the committee is appointed by the Council or Commission, number of designated and current members, meeting schedule and current meeting status, and a staff recommendation to continue with no changes or convert to an Ad Hoc committee that can meet to provide input as specific issues or needs develop. Two committees, Adapted and Tennis, are proposed to change from a Commission appointed committee to an informal staff working group, providing information to staff. As significant issues arise, the Commission may appoint an Ad Hoc committee. To summarize the report, 1 committee has been previously suspended by the Commission, 6 committees are proposed to convert to an Ad Hoc committee status, and no changes are proposed for 10 committees.

Current Status is Suspended

Franceschi Park (action previously taken by the Commission 1/09)

Recommendation to Dissolve as a Standing Committee and Meet on an Ad Hoc Basis as Needs or Issues are Identified

Active Adults

Adapted Recreation Programs

Aquatics

Douglas Family Preserve Technical

Skater's Point

Tennis

Advisory Committees with No Change Recommended

Front Country Trails Multi-Jurisdictional Task Force

Golf Course

Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

Street Tree

Youth Council

Santa Barbara Arts and Crafts Show

Creek Restoration & Water Quality Improvement Program (Creeks)

Franklin Neighborhood*

Westside Community Center*

Lower Westside Community Center*

*No changes at this time pending recommendations associated with Neighborhood and Outreach Services.

Advisory Committee Consideration

Staff reviewed its recommendations with the two of the three active Advisory Committees that are proposed to change to Ad Hoc Committees, including the Adapted Advisory Committee and the Douglas Family Preserve Technical Advisory Committee and the Tennis Advisory Committee. The Adapted Advisory Committee supported the proposed change. Members of the Douglas Family Preserve Technical Advisory Committee expressed a preference to remain active despite the lack of staff resources and long-term funding. Committee members suggested meeting less frequently, such as every six months. The Tennis Advisory Committee has not reviewed these recommendations since a meeting of the committee has not been held.

Action Minutes

One other proposal that the Commission may want to consider is having the Commission and Creeks Advisory Committee meeting minutes be prepared as action minutes versus fully transcribed minutes, similar to City Council practices. In each case, meetings are televised, with up to 2 years of meeting history available through the City's internet video streaming process. This has the potential of reducing staff workload between 16 – 24 hours each month or more depending on the length of the meeting.

ATTACHMENT: Parks and Recreation Commission Advisory Committees

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