



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION REPORT

AGENDA DATE: September 22, 2010

TO: Parks and Recreation Commission

FROM: Recreation Division, Parks and Recreation Department

SUBJECT: Restructured Neighborhood and Outreach Services Advisory Committees

RECOMMENDATION: That the Commission:

- A. Approve the proposal to create the Neighborhood Advisory Council and forward to City Council for consideration, and
- B. Provide a recommendation to City Council on how to proceed with Neighborhood Advisory Council member recruitment.

DISCUSSION:

Executive Summary

Over the last several years, a significant focus for the community and City organization has been the increase in youth violence, and the social and economic factors affecting families and neighborhoods. There has been a need for better collaboration and improved delivery of programs and services for underserved youth and families, and improved connections with neighborhoods to facilitate effective prioritization and delivery of City resources.

To support improved resident voice and services, the Parks and Recreation Commission appointed a sub-committee to look at restructuring the work of the three community center advisory committees into one joint committee to represent the underserved neighborhoods. This sub-committee met many times over the last year to develop a proposal for a new "Neighborhood Advisory Council" for consideration by the Commission and City Council. The proposal includes recommendations on the proposed Neighborhood Advisory Council purpose, duties, membership, term, organization and administration, and how to proceed with member recruitment. With approval by the Commission, the proposal will be forwarded to City Council.

Background

During development of the Fiscal Year 2010 budget, with the support of City Council and the Parks and Recreation Commission, staff created a new work unit, Neighborhood and Outreach Services, by merging Community Services and Teen Programs. The mission of

the newly formed unit was to provide programs and outreach services to strengthen families, improve outcomes for children and youth, enhance neighborhoods and create stronger communities. The unit also works closely with the Neighborhood Improvement Task Force, local non-profits, and the Community Development and Human Services Commission, and focuses on building community networks and collaborations to increase delivery of necessary services to the target neighborhoods: Eastside, Lower Eastside, Laguna, West Downtown, Westside, and Lower Westside.

Historically, the three community center advisory committees, Westside, Franklin, and Lower Westside, were established to provide recommendations to Parks and Recreation Department staff, the Parks and Recreation Commission, and City Council on community center programs and services. Over the last several years, each committee has broadened their focus to address growing neighborhood concerns, such as deteriorating neighborhood conditions, youth violence, and social service needs. When addressing the concerns, the three committees often replicated each others' efforts since the neighborhoods shared similar challenges and concerns.

As part of the program merger, it was recommended to restructure the three advisory committees into one joint council, shifting focus from community center-based recommendations to neighborhood-based representation and resident advocacy. It was also recommended to add a formal neighborhood youth voice, increase committee outreach and improve resident participation, and strengthen the purpose as a City vehicle for resolution of neighborhood issues. The idea was embraced by the City Council, the Parks and Recreation Commission, Youth Council, and the three advisory committees.

Neighborhood and Outreach Services (NOS) Sub-Committee

In order to facilitate the change from three advisory committees, the Parks and Recreation Commission established a sub-committee that would develop recommendations on a new neighborhood council format. The sub-committee included two representatives from the Parks and Recreation Commission, Franklin, Westside, and Lower Westside Advisory Committees, and the Youth Council. The sub-committee was charged with developing a new structure and recommendations which would be forwarded to each of the bodies and the City Council for review.

Sub-committee members:

Beebe Longstreet, Chair, Parks and Recreation Commission
Daraka Laramore-Hall, Parks and Recreation Commission
Raquel Mendoza, Westside Community Center Advisory Committee
Rosalina Palacios, Westside Community Center Advisory Committee
Theresa Pena, Franklin Neighborhood Center Advisory Committee
Ana Soto, Franklin Neighborhood Center Advisory Committee
Nick Ferrara, Jr., Lower Westside Center Advisory Committee

Elvira, Quirgoa, Lower Westside Center Advisory Committee
Pepe Gil, Santa Barbara Youth Council
Chloe Hunt, Santa Barbara Youth Council

Sub-Committee Meetings

The sub-committee was asked to address several areas in a proposal for Parks and Recreation Commission and City Council consideration. The areas included name, purpose, duties, member representation, how to incorporate youth voice, committee and town hall meeting frequency, and the role and interaction with other groups including the Neighborhood Improvement Task Force and Community Development and Human Services Commission.

The sub-committee met six times since their appointment last fall. Additionally, representatives from the community center advisory committees met separately throughout the process to discuss options in more detail and returned to the sub-committee with feedback and ideas. Since the goal was to improve neighborhood voice, the sub-committee also solicited input from residents and community partners through meetings held on the Eastside and Westside.

During the sub-committee meetings, there was considerable discussion on all areas. Several areas including purpose, duties, membership, and to “whom” the new advisory council would report, were discussed at length. Throughout the process, draft proposals were shared with respective advisory committees and the Youth Council for comments and recommendations, and on September 9, 2010, the sub-committee unanimously approved a draft proposal for the new “Neighborhood Advisory Council” (NAC), including name, purpose, duties, membership, organization, terms, and administration, and recommended the proposal go to the Parks and Recreation Commission for approval.

Neighborhood Advisory Council Proposal

As mentioned, community center advisory committees were previously charged with the responsibility to oversee City services provided at community centers. The reformation into a Neighborhood Advisory Council (NAC) will allow a shift in representation to resident advocacy for underserved neighborhoods within the City. Key changes are outlined below:

	Community Center Advisory Committees	Neighborhood Advisory Council
General Functions	Advise Council and staff on maintenance, operation, management and use policies of the center, and other matters upon request	Not applicable

Purpose	Not specified	Advocacy for residents, vehicle for community input, assist in mobilization of resources to support needs
Duties	Not specified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Represent residents to insure their concerns are addressed • Advise City Council, P&R Commission, and staff on services, needs, and priorities • Establish neighborhood priorities • Receive reports on service outcomes • Advise staff on outreach, participation, and projects • Advise staff on operation of centers • Outreach and facilitate resident voice • Appoint sub-committees to address specific concerns
Membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 members each on 3 separate committees; 4 from census tracts, 3 members at large (21 total members) • Must work or live in the neighborhood • Qualified elector not required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 members total - 8 members from 6 neighborhoods: Westside, Lower Westside, West Downtown, Eastside, Lower Eastside, and Laguna, and 5 members at large • No more than 3 members from a single neighborhood • Up to 3 youth members • Must be a City resident • Qualified elector not required
Liaisons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 City Councilmember • 1 P&R Commissioner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 City Councilmember • 1 P&R Commissioner • 1 CD and Human Services Committee member • 1 Youth Council member • Others liaison appointed as needed
Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meets once a month • Brown Act 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meets once a month • Brown Act • 3 unexcused absences within

		12 months results in removal • Special or town hall meetings to address neighborhood or special concerns
Length of Term	Four years, staggered, serve until successors are appointed	Four years, staggered, may be appointed to multiple terms
Applicant Interviews	Scheduled at regular or special meeting of 3 Council members	Scheduled at regular or special meeting of 3 Council members
Administration	Not specified	Annual and periodic reports to Council and P&R Commission

Neighborhood Advisory Council Appointments

The sub-committee discussed the transition of membership between the current committees and the new proposed NAC should the recommendations be approved by the Parks and Recreation Commission and City Council. Two issues need to be addressed, including whether to recruit and interview for all thirteen NAC committee member positions or to allow existing community center advisory committee members to transition to the newly formed NAC. Secondly, how the initial NAC recruitment and appointment will coincide with the timing of the semi-annual City Council advisory committee recruitment process (interview dates in the upcoming annual recruitment are scheduled in November).

All current community center advisory committee members were contacted regarding their interest in serving on the proposed NAC and only two expressed a desire to step down. With that, staff looked at member representation and term expirations, and found that current advisory member representation would fit the new member representation in the proposed NAC guidelines, and terms of current members were evenly staggered.

The sub-committee discussed options on dissolving the current advisory committees and appointment of members to the proposed NAC. After review with the City Attorney's and City Clerk's office, two options emerged:

1. Conduct a full application and interview process for all 13 members following the current City Council advisory committee interview process guidelines. Conduct a lottery to stagger terms.
2. Allow nine current community center advisory committee members to continue on the NAC and conduct an application and interview process for the four vacancies (two created by December 31, 2010 term expirations and two from members that have declined to continue). In order to stagger terms, by lottery, one member would be selected to expire after one year, and three members would expire in 2014. The nine continuing members would serve until their current term expirations.

The sub-committee weighed several considerations while discussing the options including: experience on advisory committees, honoring the dedicated service of interested members, “starting fresh” to provide equal opportunities, a desire to include youth voice, attendance of current members, natural attrition, opportunity for community outreach and publicity on formation of new advisory council, equity of reappointment, “what is fair”, and timeline of process. The sub-committee was divided on which option to choose, and chose to defer to the Parks and Recreation Commission to make a recommendation to City Council on the appointment process going forward.

The NOS sub-committee does recommend that the initial application process be handled outside of the current City Council advisory committee recruitment process, so there is sufficient time to inform the public of the new NAC, the purpose and importance of the change, and to conduct adequate outreach to community members through several media avenues. Staff has consulted with the City Attorney and City Clerk’s office and confirmed that a separate recruitment, interview and appointment process can be conducted. If the draft proposal is approved by City Council, dates for the recruitment process would be set at that time.

In summary, the sub-committee recommends that the Parks and Recreation Commission approve the proposal to create the Neighborhood Advisory Council, provide a recommendation on how to proceed with Neighborhood Advisory Council member recruitment, and forward to City Council for consideration.

Staff would like to extend their appreciation and thanks to the Westside, Franklin, and Lower Westside Advisory Committees, Youth Council, and the NOS sub-committee for their dedicated commitment and conscientious discussions during this process.

ATTACHMENT: 1. Neighborhood Advisory Council Description
 2. Member Representation Chart

SUBMITTED BY: Sarah Hanna, Recreation Programs Manager

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