



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

AGENDA DATE: March 16, 2010

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: Recreation Division, Parks and Recreation Department

SUBJECT: Introduction Of Ordinance Establishing Procedures For Appointment And Service Of Youth Member To Parks And Recreation Commission

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council introduce and subsequently adopt, by reading of title only, An Ordinance of the Council of the City of Santa Barbara Amending Section 2.08.020 of the Santa Barbara Municipal Code and Establishing Procedures for the Appointment and Service of a Youth Member to the Parks and Recreation Commission.

DISCUSSION:

Background

Over the years, teens have played an important role as advocates of teen programming, community leadership, and service in our community. They were instrumental in advocating for and garnering public support to create Skaters Point Skateboard Park and Twelve35 Teen Center. Through the Santa Barbara Youth Council, teens have played an important advisory role to the City Council and the Parks and Recreation Commission. In 1995, by Council resolution, the City Youth Intern Program was created so that applicants, interviewed and approved by the Mayor, could be appointed to serve on various City Charter Boards and Commissions. Since 1995, a Youth Intern has been appointed to serve on the Parks and Recreation Commission as a non-voting member.

In May 2008, the Council Committee on Youth and Children (the "Council Committee") discussed how the youth leadership experience through the Youth Intern Program might be enhanced by, among other things, elevating the youth voice on the Parks and Recreation Commission to a more formal level that would include voting. The Council Committee established a sub-committee (the "Subcommittee") with representatives from the Council Committee, the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Youth Council, and staff, to review the intern program and develop options. The Subcommittee made a number of recommendations to enhance the youth intern program overall. In order to give

youth a formal vote on the Parks and Recreation Commission, rather than a mock vote, a Charter amendment would be needed, so that recommendation was tabled until such time as Charter amendments were being considered. On June 23, 2009 the City Council moved forward with including a number of charter amendments on the ballot, including an amendment that would provide the City Council the option to officially appoint a youth as a voting member of the Parks and Recreation Commission (Measure C).

Charter Amendment Approved by Voters

On November 3, 2009, voters of the City of Santa Barbara overwhelmingly approved Measure C. The ballot measure amends language in the City Charter in order to form a new combined City "Parks and Recreation Commission" with seven members. The powers and duties of the new Commission will be the same as that of the former separate Park and Recreation commissions, except that the amendment grants the new Commission authority to advise the City Council on matters concerning creeks within the City, since the Department has oversight and responsibility for the Creek Restoration and Clean Water Program.

The measure also authorizes, but does not require, the City Council to appoint a youth member, 16 years of age or older, who resides within the City, to serve on the Parks and Recreation Commission. The manner of appointing the youth member and the term of office for the youth member are to be established by an Ordinance of the City Council.

A new Subcommittee of two Parks and Recreation Commissioners and two Youth Council members (the "Appointment Subcommittee") was formed at the November 18, 2009, Parks and Recreation Commission meeting to develop recommendations for City Council on both the appointment and term of the youth member.

Subcommittee Recommendations

On January 11, 2010, the Appointment Subcommittee met to review the current guidelines for all City advisory committees including recruitment, eligibility, appointment process, and term. The "Guidelines for the City of Santa Barbara Advisory Groups" and a draft ordinance provided by the City Attorney were shared with the Subcommittee. The Subcommittee determined that the manner of appointment and service of a youth member should follow the process of appointment and service of other members of the Parks and Recreation Commission. For example, applicants must follow instructions to submit an application through the City Clerk's Office and appear for an interview before Council.

The Appointment Subcommittee identified additional issues related to appointing a youth member that were addressed as follows:

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- Should the member serve a four-year term or something shorter? If a four-year term was decided upon, would youth be dissuaded from applying, knowing they may not be able to fulfill the full term? – There was significant discussion on this issue. The Subcommittee eventually supported the full four-year term for several reasons: a youth resignation would be no different than an adult resignation, there is a process in place to fill vacancies, and a shorter term might be equated with a less important role for the youth member. Ideas were also discussed on ways to encourage applicants including outreach and recruitment through the Youth Council and other community leadership programs. The Guidelines for City Advisory Groups, including service and term, could be shared with interested applicants. The Parks and Recreation Director also explained that she meets with each applicant to explain the role of commissioners and to understand their personal interests in the position. These talks provide a good opportunity to answer questions that a youth applicant may have, including ability to fulfill a four-year term.
- What criteria would be used to select a youth member if there were several youth applicants? - Commissioners are interviewed and appointed by City Council, and though decisions may be difficult, it is the Council's responsibility to select the best candidate. The Council utilizes a list of questions (which are also supplied to the applicant) for the interview process. The Subcommittee recommends that an interview question on youth issues be added to the suggested questions that Council may use when interviewing all potential Parks and Recreation Commissioner applicants to assist Council in their decision-making.
- Does the term "youth member" imply a designated commission member category similar to other boards and commissions which have designated representation such as an architect or background in environmental land use planning? - The Subcommittee discussed whether the "youth member" should be a dedicated "youth" representation, meaning that this appointee would specifically represent the youth voice or perspective. The Subcommittee did not interpret previous discussions at the Commission or City Council as direction to create a designated "youth" member position on the Commission. Rather, the intent was to allow a youth the opportunity to serve as a full voting member of the Commission, understanding that the youth would bring a youth perspective to the discussions similar to how other commissioners bring their backgrounds and experience to the position.
- Applicants to City boards and commissions are required to be "qualified electors" in the City of Santa Barbara. A "qualified elector" is a United States citizen, 18 years of age or older and living within the City limits of the City of Santa Barbara. What happens when the youth turns 18 years old? Are they then disqualified from service? Would the "youth" commissioner have to register to vote at age 18 to fulfill the "qualified elector" requirement? The City Attorney added provisions to the draft ordinance that succinctly reflect what happens when a youth reaches 18 years of age, saying that "reaching the age of eighteen (18) should not disqualify a youth applicant who is appointed to the Parks and Recreation Commission from continuing

to serve the balance of his or her term of office.” Reasons for disqualification would not deviate from the current guidelines for advisory group members. The youth applicant would be required to live within the City of Santa Barbara.

Youth Council Recommendation

At the January 19, 2010, meeting of the Youth Council, the draft ordinance was approved with a recommendation to forward it to the Parks and Recreation Commission and City Council.

Parks and Recreation Commission Recommendation

At the January 27, 2010, meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission, the draft ordinance was approved with a recommendation to forward it to the Ordinance Committee and City Council.

Ordinance Committee Recommendation

At the February 23, 2010, meeting, the Ordinance Committee heard a staff presentation on the proposed appointment and service of a youth member. The Committee voted to forward the proposed ordinance amendment to City Council for introduction and adoption.

During the discussion, the question was raised whether a Youth Intern would continue to be appointed to the Parks and Recreation Commission if a youth member was appointed as a commissioner. Staff indicated that the Parks and Recreation Commission discussed this and affirmed their interest in continuing to have a Youth Intern appointed to serve with the Commission. The Committee was also divided on the length of term, 2 years or 4 years, but did not recommend a change to the draft ordinance.

PREPARED BY: Sarah Hanna, Recreation Programs Manager

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

APPROVED BY: City Administrator's Office