



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

AGENDA DATE: March 27, 2012

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: Recreation Division, Parks and Recreation Department

SUBJECT: Proposal To Formally Establish The Santa Barbara Youth Council As A City Advisory Committee

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council formally establish the Santa Barbara Youth Council as a City Advisory Committee through the adoption of, by reading of title only, A Resolution of the Council of the City of Santa Barbara Establishing the Santa Barbara Youth Council.

DISCUSSION:

The Santa Barbara Youth Council has served in an advisory role to the Parks and Recreation Commission and City Council for over 17 years. A review of City documents shows the Youth Council was never formally adopted by City Resolution as a City Advisory Committee as other advisory boards and commissions have been.

A stakeholder group was formed to review the purpose of the Youth Council and to develop recommendations whereby the City Council would formally establish the Youth Council as a youth advisory board consistent with the City Charter. The stakeholders included:

- Lesley Wiscomb, Chair, Parks and Recreation Commission
- Rocky Jacobson, Commissioner, Parks and Recreation Commission
- Cesar Trujillo, Member, Neighborhood Advisory Council
- Morgan Lunt, 2nd Vice Chair, Santa Barbara Youth Council (2011)
- Carole Green, Parliamentarian, Santa Barbara Youth Council (2011)
- Ivette Gil, Chair, Santa Barbara Youth Council (alternate) (2012)
- Sarah Hanna, Programs Manager, Parks and Recreation Department
- Susan Young, Neighborhood and Outreach Services Supervisor and Staff Advisor to the Santa Barbara Youth Council

The stakeholders' draft Proposal to Formally Establish the Santa Barbara Youth Council as a City Advisory Committee was approved by the Youth Council and the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Youth Council Background

Over the last several years, youth boards, commissions or councils (hereinafter collectively referred to as "youth councils") have grown in popularity in cities across the nation. The National League of Cities lists over 140 local youth councils throughout the nation. Adult decision makers have found these councils to be an effective way to involve youth in shaping policy, improving services, and developing youth leaders. The City of Santa Barbara has also utilized youth leaders in such service.

In 1991, the City Council created a Youth Task Force in response to heightened concerns about the needs of youth. The Youth Task Force recommended, among others things, that the City establish a way for young people to have a voice in government through a Youth Council, town meetings, or youth representation on City boards and commissions. In 1994, the City created the United Youth Empowered (UYE), a youth leadership group, which functioned as a voice for teens by facilitating youth forums, publishing a youth magazine, and assisting with the planning of teen activities.

In 1997, UYE began to be identified as the Santa Barbara Youth Council, functioning as an advisory board for the Parks and Recreation Department's Teen Programs and actively participating in the development of public policy by working with City Council and other local officials. The Youth Council has continued to function as an advisory board to the City Council, the Parks and Recreation Commission, and other boards and commissions in the City. The Youth Council was instrumental in helping draft policy for a social host ordinance adopted by local jurisdictions including the City of Santa Barbara, conducting youth forums on issues such as graffiti, teen rights, and bullying, and assisting in the development of the City's skate park and Twelve35 teen center.

Proposal to Formally Establish the Youth Council

Over six meetings, the stakeholders finalized the Proposal to Formally Establish the Santa Barbara Youth Council as a City Council Advisory Committee. The stakeholders were charged with reviewing and establishing the purpose, duties, membership, appointments, organization, terms and format of the Youth Council, which would be forwarded to the Youth Council, Parks and Recreation Commission and to the City Council for consideration.

Summary of Proposed Changes

The essential purpose and duties of the Youth Council are not proposed to change in any significant way. The key changes as proposed include the following:

Membership	Reduced from 17 to 15 members. To encourage diversity and expand leadership opportunities, member composition was expanded to include alternative, community and continuation high schools. In addition, eight of the 15 members are required to be City residents.
Application, Interview, and Appointments	Application, interview and appointments of new Youth Council members shifted from Youth Council to City Council. See Youth Council Appointment Process below.
Meetings	Changed from holding at least two regular meetings per month to a minimum of one per month, plus any additional meetings as determined by Youth Council action.
Term	Currently, Youth Council members serve from time of appointment until resignation, removal or graduation from 12 th grade. Proposed that members will serve a two-year term, and may be appointed to multiple terms.

Youth Council Appointment Process

During the stakeholder meetings, the group spent considerable time on the membership and appointment process. Currently, the Youth Council conducts interview and appointment of potential members separate from any other City process. Under the City Council Advisory Committee recruitment and appointment process, potential candidates apply through the City Clerk's Office, and are interviewed by City Council prior to City Council appointment. The stakeholders wanted to ensure that the makeup of the Youth Council reflected the diversity of the City's youth and to maintain the Youth Council's input as it relates to appointments. Under the draft proposal, Youth Council appointments would be incorporated into the semi-annual City Council Advisory Committee recruitment and appointment process. However, as part of the process, Youth Council candidates would first be interviewed by the Youth Council with the Youth Council forwarding their recommendations to the City Council. Youth Council candidates will also be interviewed by City Council consistent with other City boards and commissions.

Youth Council and Parks and Recreation Commission Recommendations

The Youth Council approved the Proposal to Formally Establish the Santa Barbara Youth Council as a City Advisory Committee at their October 10, 2011 special meeting. At their October 26, 2011 meeting, the Parks and Recreation Commission concurred and recommended the proposal be submitted to the City Council for consideration.

Transition to New Membership and Options

The stakeholders did not discuss the transition in membership between the current Youth Council members and the new proposed Santa Barbara Youth Council should the resolution be approved. Currently five of the 17 Youth Council members are high school seniors whose terms will end in June. There are 12 remaining members plus one alternate member; of these, five attend San Marcos High School, two attend Dos Pueblos High School, two attend Santa Barbara High School, and four attend private high schools. Of those 13, six members are City residents.

Given that the current make-up of the Youth Council does not easily transition to the new membership representation and residency, there are two options on how to proceed filling the membership.

Option 1 – The current Youth Council would be dissolved effective June 30, 2012, and an application and interview process for all 15 members would be conducted by the City Clerk's office this spring, with terms beginning July 1, 2012. The process would follow the current City Council advisory committee interview process guidelines, adding a recommendation from the current Youth Council as proposed in the draft resolution and a lottery to stagger member terms.

Option 2 – The seniors on the Youth Council would retire upon graduation. The rest of the current Youth Council would have their terms extended until June 30, 2013 with the current alternate member appointed as a thirteenth member through that date. Sufficient at-large members would be recruited during the 2012 recruitment process to achieve a membership of 15 members. New at-large members would be appointed without regard to their school or place of residence. The membership qualifications specified in the proposed resolution would start with the appointments for Fiscal Year 2014.

Youth Council Recommendation for Fiscal Year 2013 Transition

At their meeting of March 19, 2012, the Youth Council addressed the challenge of transitioning into the new membership configuration and recommended that City Council move forward with Option 2.

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