



City of Woodland

REPORT TO MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR
AND CITY COUNCIL

DATE: February 19, 2008

SUBJECT Youth Advisory Team (YCAT) Update and the formation of a Youth Commission

Report in Brief

Staff is providing the City Council with an update on the Youth Center Advisory Team (YCAT) and additional information regarding the formation of a Youth Commission. As the Council is aware, the YCAT was created to assist staff with the program development at the Youth Center. The YCAT has been an effective advocate for the Youth Center by providing program recommendations and volunteers to facilitate and support youth oriented events. The City Council has discussed the idea of the forming a Youth Commission and decided to delay action on this matter as staff continued to work with the YCAT during inaugural year of the Youth Center's operation. As the first anniversary of the Community & Senior Center approaches, staff presented an update regarding the YCAT and the idea of forming a Youth Commission to the Parks and Recreation Commission on Monday, January 28, 2008. The Commission discussed this matter and recommended that the YCAT continue in its current form and to cease further consideration of forming a Youth Commission at this time.

Staff recommends that the City Council support the continuation of the YCAT in its current state and cease further consideration of forming a Youth Commission at this time.

Background

At the September 2006 Council Meeting, the City Council asked that staff consider the development of a Youth Commission. Council members did express caution in this venture, stating that staff time and the amount of effort in creating a new commission are reasons to carefully evaluate the issue. After further discussion, staff was given direction to start a youth advisory body that dealt with youth center-related issues. This idea eventually evolved into the Youth Center Advisory Team in early 2007. The team met every other week to discuss the (then) upcoming youth center grand opening and planning activities for the summer.

The first YCAT was responsible for planning the youth center lock-in (an overnight activity that took place at the Community and Senior Center), dances (Summer Dance, Halloween Dance, and most recently the Valentine's Dance), and daily activities at the youth center. Because this YCAT started so late in the school year, the intention was that the participants would help into summer and form again when school starts again in the fall.

Since the inception of YCAT, staff has collaborated with the Woodland Coalition for Youth (WC4Y), a grant-based program headed by the Yolo Family Resource Center. This group brings together a network of professionals with interest in youth issues. It was the Woodland Coalition for Youth's (WC4Y's) goal to create a body of youth that had similar goals as the Youth Center Advisory Team created for the Youth Center.

YCAT in its current state provides advisory information and volunteers who facilitate and support youth oriented events. When staff needs assistance or ideas from students, items are brought to the attention of leadership classes at the middle schools. Information is gathered and assistance is provided by the leadership squads at both Lee and Douglass. Staff has formed a bond with leadership advisors at the middle schools, and each squad has assisted with dance ticket sales, youth center promotion, and some brief surveys on current teen trends. Staff hopes that further contact with the leadership squads will entice them to attend bi-weekly/monthly meetings at the youth center. Currently, the regularly scheduled Thursday evening meetings are not well attended.

Staff provided an update on the YCAT and presented the formation of a Youth Commission to the Parks and Recreation Commission on Monday, January 28, 2008. The Commission discussed this matter and concluded that the YCAT is meeting the need to provide staff with youth participation on youth related issues and recommended that the group continue in its current form and not transition into a Youth Commission.

Discussion

The Youth Center Advisory Team has been responsible for:

- planning contemporary youth center activities
- promoting activities for youth
- developing youth-friendly community events
- fostering youth volunteerism in Woodland
- representing the Youth Center and the City in a positive manner

Staff feels that with these goals in mind, YCAT has the ability to continue planning for effective youth programs, and even evolve into fundraising pursuits and other community-building activities.

Typically, a Youth Commission will follow a very structured agenda like any other commission. Staff feels that the goals of YCAT can be put into action without taking minutes and creating the

administrative structure required to support a Council appointed City commission. Staff believes the staff support required for a commission is critical; the time required to support Youth Commission would likely be reallocated from Youth Center programming activities. A Youth Commission would also be responsible for making recommendations on many policies that would affect youth, a task that is currently assigned to the Parks and Recreation Commission.

If the City Council directed staff to form a Youth Commission, there are at least two scenarios that could be considered. The first scenario would place the Youth Commission in a reporting relationship with the Park & Recreation Commission. The following information summarizes the advantages and disadvantages of this scenario:

Advantages:

- Would facilitate the P&R Commissioners additional involvement in Youth issues.
- P&R Commissioners would probably volunteer to supervise special event activities that the Youth Commission developed.
- P&R Commissioners could mentor Youth Commissioners

Disadvantages:

- Would add another project to the already busy agenda that the P&R Commissioners have in their work plan.
- Could create an additional organizational review level for YCAT activities prior to implementing programs and activities.
- Would add additional staff time for implementing programs and activities.

A second scenario would have the City Council appoint the members to the Youth Commission with a reporting relationship the same as other boards and commissions. The advantages and disadvantages of this scenario include:

Advantages:

- Would generate more City Council involvement in Youth issues.
- Council members could mentor Youth Commissioners

Disadvantages:

- Would add another project to the already busy agenda of the City Council.
- Could create an additional organization review level for YCAT activities prior implementing programs and activities.
- Would add additional staff time for implementing programs and activities.
- A formal structure may discourage youth from getting involved in developing programs and activities for other youth.

Fiscal Impact

There could be significant impact upon staff time (Recreation Superintendent and Youth Coordinator) if a Youth Commission was created. Commission Agenda packets (based on the Parks

& Recreation Agendas and reports) take approximately 15 – 35 staff hours per month depending on the size of the Agenda.

Public Contact

Posting of the City Council agenda and forwarding a copy of the report to the YCAT Team

Commission Recommendation

Staff presented to the Parks and Recreation Commission on Monday, January 28, 2008. Parks and Recreation Commission discussed it and unanimously recommended that the YCAT continue in its current form.

Alternative Courses of Action

1. Support the continuation of the YCAT in its current state and cease further consideration of forming a Youth Commission at this time
2. Direct staff to form a Youth Commission under the direction of the P&R Commission
3. Direct staff to form a Youth Commission under the direction of City Council

Recommendation for Action

Staff recommends that the City Council Approve Alternative No. 1.

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