

DATE ISSUED: January 29, 2003

REPORT NO. 03-016

ATTENTION: Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee
Agenda of February 5, 2003

SUBJECT: City of San Diego Youth Commission Update

SUMMARY

THIS IS AN INFORMATIONAL ITEM ONLY. NO ACTION IS REQUIRED ON THE PART OF THE COMMITTEE.

BACKGROUND

On October 25, 2001, Councilmember Brian Maienschein proposed the creation of a Youth Commission for the City of San Diego, in order to provide young adults an opportunity to play a vital role in the City's government process. During the April 15, 2002 meeting, the City Council voted to approve the establishment of the Youth Commission consisting of twenty-five appointees, representing all council districts. The process was completed with an ordinance being adopted and the swearing in of the Commissioners on June 20, 2002.

DISCUSSION

The Youth Commission has conducted six meetings since its inception last April, and the group is progressing through its formative stages very successfully. In the first meeting, staff facilitated a brainstorming session to identify several issues of interest among the Commissioners. Eight topics were identified, and the initial plan was to develop sub-committees to focus on each area. In the second meeting, however, the Commissioners decided that they could make a greater impact by focusing on one or two activities, and dedicating themselves toward those. Curbing underage drinking and graffiti prevention were two issues that surfaced as ones upon which the group felt they could have a positive affect.

Two activities, linked to these issues, were identified as potential projects that the Commissioners could support. "Every Fifteen Minutes" is a program designed to promote

awareness of the consequences associated with underage drinking, and is usually delivered to high school students late in the school year, before prom night. A local high school is planning an Every Fifteen Minutes event for their school this year, and Commissioners have expressed an interest in helping to coordinate this project. The City's Graffiti Control Program, in the Neighborhood Code Compliance Department, provided another option for participation. The program's Graffiti Prevention Curriculum will be delivered to several San Diego's "6 to 6" sites during the spring semester, culminating in clean-up projects in each site's neighborhood. Commissioners will help to organize these community service events, acting as positive role models for the younger students.

In early October, four Commissioners were given the opportunity to participate in the California League of Cities' "Strength in Unity" Conference in Long Beach. The conference included a "youth track" in which several workshops, geared toward young people involved in municipal government, were conducted among representatives of youth advisory groups throughout the state. The conference provided these four Commissioners an opportunity to meet others involved in similar efforts, learn from groups that have more experience, and hear about youth activities in other California cities.

To facilitate the process of developing a comfort level among the Commissioners themselves, the Commission elected to hold monthly meetings, and sponsor a "retreat" that was held on January 11, 2003. This retreat included team-building activities designed to build a mission statement and job descriptions for key leadership positions. Representatives of the Commission have also volunteered to participate in the process of evaluating Community Development Block Grant applications in the youth services category. The Commission is well on its way toward making a positive impact on the City's youth related programs and policies.

Respectfully Submitted,

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