




MEETING DATE: 9-6-05
ITEM NO. 16

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

DATE: September 1, 2005
TO: MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL
FROM: DEBRA J. FIGONE, TOWN MANAGER 
SUBJECT: UPDATE ON FIRST YEAR OF YOUTH COMMISSION AND PLANS FOR
FY 2005-06

RECOMMENDATION:

Accept report on update on first year of Youth Commission and plans for FY 2005-06.

BACKGROUND:

The Youth Commission is comprised of 15 youth and 5 alternates representing Los Gatos youth in grades 8-12. Upon Council appointment in June 2004, the new commissioners participated in an orientation session in August 2004 and began their terms in September 2004. By resolution, the terms were established equally among the members, by lot, as either one or two year terms. At the end of the first year, 7 of the commissioners ended their terms and new commissioners were appointed, or one-year term commissioners were reappointed. The purpose of the commission is to provide a voice for youth of Los Gatos. Upon its creation, the Town Council directed that the work of the commission be evaluated after the first year. This report summarizes the key activities of this first year and provides staff's plans for the second year of the commission.

DISCUSSION:

On May 10, 2005, the first year of the Town's Youth Commission with 15 youth commissioners and 5 alternates came to a close with the commissioners serving the youth of Los Gatos as an entity officially established by the Town Council.



PREPARED BY: SCOTT R. SEAMAN
CHIEF OF POLICE

Reviewed by: PSS Assistant Town Manager OK Town Attorney _____ Clerk Administrator
SC Finance _____ Community Development Revised: 9/1/05 3:48 pm

Reformatted: 5/30/02

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Wm. J. Brown

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First Year Activities

The first year work of the commission was a blend of learning, creating structure, mastering processes, strategic planning, visiting other commissions, soliciting community input, providing input to Council and staff and planning specific activities. The August orientation session set the foundation for learning and the first several months of the commission's work built upon this base. A chair and vice chair were elected at the first meeting and a schedule of meetings was established. Within the first three months, the commission developed a work plan for the first year and ongoing years with the understanding that the work plan would be modified throughout the year and beyond. A copy of the original work plan is attached (Attachment 1).

Visits were made to local youth commissions following commission research into the work of neighboring commissions. Reports were made to the commission on those visits and generally indicated that the Los Gatos Youth Commission had established itself with an appropriately broad purpose and was being initially effective in addressing issues.

The commission educated itself on issues relating to teens, youth, the police department, the town and the community. Presentations were made on the following issues and topics and feedback to the presenters was provided: Proposition 1A and public funding issues, the overall Town financial position, the skate park design and planning process, the development plans for the Town's website, Community Unity, Youth Party Guidelines, the Town needs assessment by the Community Services Commission, the community bus program and plans for increased use of A Place for Teens. As a point of interest, one of the youth commissioners was the winner of the contest to rename A Place for Teens as "The Venue"

Several committees were formed to carry out the work of the commission. They included a publicity/website committee, a survey committee, and a Teen Music/Movie Night - Day on the Green committee. The website committee worked to create a visible presence of the commission on the Town's website. The survey committee developed and implemented an issues and activities survey to Los Gatos teens and the results of that survey are attached (Attachment 2 and 3). The Music on the Green committee worked to create an introductory event for youth in Los Gatos centered around music. This event was presented on May 21, 2005 and was generally seen as successful for a first time event. In addition, the commission sponsored a summer film series at The Venue in partnership with the LGS Recreation Department. Members of the Youth Commission participated in a community service project under Community Unity and formally adopted a planter on North Santa Cruz Avenue. Among other efforts and strategies to make youth aware of the commission, the commissioners created pens for giveaway and t-shirts to wear at commission events. Throughout the year, the commissioners engaged in various announcements and information sharing with their peers such as classroom presentations and school announcements. They solicited and received coverage in local media for their formation and work.

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An important element of the commission's work is the survey which the commission conducted. This will be used to guide future planning and emphasis of the commission and may be refined and built upon in future years. The commission took the work of the sub-committee, discussed the survey in its open meeting and drew upon staff to refine and produce the final product. From a process perspective, the commission extensively considered how to format the survey so that it would provide information central to the commission's charter of addressing important youth issues, in addition to desired information about the interests of youth for activities and events.

On March 8, 2005, the commission hosted a youth forum. Unfortunately, this forum was poorly attended despite active solicitation and outreach by commissioners. This forum was a legitimate effort by the commission to inform the community of their existence, solicit ideas and issues of importance to youth and become better informed for the setting of priorities as a commission. Staff believes that this forum should be held again and will work with the commission to enhance the effectiveness of the outreach. Following the youth forum and the compilation of the survey results, the Youth Commission presented a summary of their work to the Council at the annual Council/Commission retreat. From that presentation, Council provided direction to the commission in the following areas:

- Conduct outreach to youth not attending Los Gatos schools in such a way that they feel included and welcome to participate
- Participate in activities such as the National League of Cities conference or the Youth Leadership Institute
- Focus on the original mission of the commission specifically to include addressing issues important to youth and advising Council on those issues
- Additional input included:
 - Concentrate on the relationship between youth and the police department
 - Work with the other commissions, such as the Park Commission and the Transportation and Parking Commission
 - Become involved with the business community on youth related issues

Subsequent to this Council/Commission retreat and the youth forum, the commission has received input from students at Fisher Middle School which will be added to the body of information brought to the new commission in the second year.

A number of lessons have been learned during this first year, both by the commissioners and the staff.

- As expected, the first year's work was developmental and involved significant learning for both the commissioners and staff. Future years will build upon that learning and are expected to focus even more on the identification and response to issues important to youth or of interest to Council/Town Administration by referral or request.

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- There is a value to maintaining a blend of work between issues and activities. While the charter of the commission is clearly to serve as a voice of youth to the Council, involvement or sponsorship of activities helps the commission make others aware of their existence and creates opportunities for the solicitation of issues.
- The commitment of staff time to the commission is significant. The first year required the involvement of four principal members of the police department, specifically the Chief of Police, a captain, a sergeant and the Chief's Executive Assistant. The Chief's Executive Assistant spent a great deal of time communicating and coordinating with the large number of commissioners and supporting the work of the commission. The police department held monthly meetings with the chair and vice-chair in advance of commission meetings. Several times during the year, staff limited its involvement with the commission due to workload issues and competing priorities. The work to support this commission is acknowledged to be in addition to the existing workload of the department during a time of reductions in staffing.
- Members of the Town's Executive Team have also made significant investments of time to the commission to help the commission be successful. Department heads have been present for each of the first two commission orientations and for individual commission meetings to present information.
- Outreach and communication is important both from staff to the commissioners and from the commissioners to the community. This is time intensive and most frequently requires the close involvement of staff. Staff recognizes that youth are less experienced in issues of process and outreach and, therefore, staff oversight is important to minimize confusion and misdirection. As a related example, staff from the police department and Community Development met with members of the commission, who were working on the Under 21 Club project, to educate them about planning and zoning issues so that they could better understand what governmental or legal issues must be addressed when trying to implement an idea in the community.
- Engaging the full commission on commission sponsored activities was challenging. While members of the commission were very committed to meetings and discussion, some activities only drew the direct involvement of a few members. School and extra curricular activities of some commission members limited their involvement.
- Work on substantive issues either for youth or the Town can be time intensive and require staff time outside of commission meetings for education and guidance, coordination, or direct provision of services.
- Staff was unable to follow through on all ideas or interests for the commission. Suggestions such as having commissioners attend a state or national conference have been deferred to the second year. Certain elements of the original work plan were purposefully deferred as well.

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Fiscal Year 2005/06 Plans

For the second year of the commission, staff has already held a commission orientation for returning and new commissioners. Staff intends to follow a similar process as used the first year, of education and integration of the commissioners and discussion/formulation of a work plan for the year. Additionally, informative presentations that were not included in the first year will be brought forward. These may include issues related to parking, parks and recreational activities, land use processes, and business attraction, among others, including those recommended by Council. Staff will work with returning commissioners to help develop and mentor first year commissioners. Emphasis will be placed on the identification of and response to issues important to youth or to the Town with a specific focus on work to improve the relationship of police and youth. Staff is aware of interest for the Youth Commission to be well known and accessible to youth in the community, including those youth who attend schools outside of the immediate Los Gatos area. Staff will support the commission to enhance these efforts. In addition, the City of Monte Sereno has recently formed its own youth commission. The police department will work, as appropriate, to create connections between the commissions to leverage their effectiveness on common issues.

The relationship with the LGS Recreation Department, specifically Mr. Mike Loya, will be continued. Mr. Loya directly participated in the second year orientation.

Staff is making plans for commissioners to attend the League of California Cities conference in San Francisco and will explore opportunities to participate in the National League of Cities conference or the Youth Leadership Institute.

Additionally, staff understands Council's interest to create a process for a periodic check-in with the commission during the year so that Council can stay connected to the commission. Based on staff's interpretation, Council's past practice of using an ad hoc meeting structure involving the Mayor and Vice Mayor as initiated by the Mayor would be used as a vehicle for periodic check in with the Commission. It is envisioned that these meetings would occur approximately two or three times per year, not including the annual council retreat. If this interpretation is incorrect, Council direction to staff is requested.

CONCLUSION:

The first year of the Youth Commission met the expectations of staff and followed the direction of Council with the understanding that it entailed a combination of formation, structure building, learning and action on both issues and activities. Council and staff have completed the process of selecting the Youth Commission members for the upcoming year, working specifically to develop the diversity of the commission. Plans are underway to integrate and educate new members of the

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commission and to build upon the learning and activities of the first year. Staff from the police department will continue to serve as the liaison department to the Youth Commission and will work to focus the commission on increasingly tangible issues and activities of importance to youth, as identified by youth or as referred by Council or others.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT:

Is not a project defined under CEQA, and no further action is required.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Funding of the Youth Commission is covered generally within the Police Department's budget however staff of the youth commission does use existing capacity that is not thus available for other department work (see bullet on page 3). Expenses associated with the first year of the commission are less than \$2,000.00. Second year expenses are expected to be greater, particularly if youth commissioners travel to attend a state or national conference. These costs will be paid for by the department's existing budget as well. For future years, the department will specifically identify funding for the Youth Commission.

Attachments:

- 1) Youth Commission 2004/2005 Key Projects/Activities/Issues
- 2) Los Gatos Youth Survey
- 3) Youth Survey Results

Distribution:

Steve Rauwolf/Mike Loya - LGS Recreation Department

YOUTH COMMISSION - 2004/2005
Key Projects/Activities/Issues

DATE: 5/10/2005

Area of Interest	Description/Details	Outcome/Action <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Presentation/Briefing/Update •Create Sub-Committee •Identify Liaison •Research/Survey •Commission Open Forum •Other 	Timeline
Town Projects in Process			
Skate Park	Council approved initial design.		November-04
Sports Fields	Issue is under consideration by council.	Update to Commission following Council consideration.	January-05
Youth Commission Website	Hosted under Town website.	Presentation to Commission. •Identify sub-committee	November-04
Sidewalks & Traffic Issues	Sidewalks (Shannon)	Presentation on status of improvements.	2005
Alternative Parking Ideas		•Presentation to Commission on current program and issues. •Provide input to Traffic & Parking Commission.	December-04
After School Site for Teens	Assist in Development of activities/ location.	Update from Mike Loya 10/2004. Community Services Commission 11/04	On-Going
Youth Activites			
Teen Music Events	Individual or series of events.	Commission discussion to develop details/issues •Appoint sub-committee •Presentation by Commission (Jacqui/ Forest)	November-04

YOUTH COMMISSION - 2004/2005
Key Projects/Activities/Issues

DATE: 5/10/2005

Area of Interest	Description/Details	<u>Outcome/Action</u> •Presentation/Briefing/Update •Create Sub-Committee •Identify Liaison •Research/Survey •Commission Open Forum •Other	Timeline
Teen Movies Friday at Theatre	Movie night at High School or A Place for Teens.	Commission discussion to develop details/issues •Appoint sub-committee •Presentation by Commission (Jourdan)	November-04
Outreach			
Youth Commission Link to Student Government			
Publicize Youth Commission to Teens	Strong desire to inform youth of commission's existence and work.	Commission Discussion	December-04
Survey of Teens	Conduct survey of Los Gatos teens for issues/ideas.	•Discussion by Commission •Report to Council at Council/Commission retreat.	November 2004 April 2005
Meetings in More Familiar/ Comfortable Place	Hold certain Commission meetings at LGHS, A Place for Teens or other location with notice to teens/public to attend.	Leave option open for alternate locations.	
Visit Other Youth Commissions	Visit 1-2 other Commissions, i.e. Cupertino, San Francisco.	Staff to present options and possible arrangements	November 2004
Outreach to Other Communities	Letting others know what Los Gatos is doing.		
New Projects/Issues			
Community Event (All Ages)			
Alternate Transportation to School		Defer	
Community Service/Participation Events			
Assist with Special Olympics			

Los Gatos Youth Survey

The Youth Commission is composed of a group of diverse teens from 8th – 12th grade who work to best serve the interests of Los Gatos youth. The Youth Commission consults with the Town Council to address your concerns. Therefore, we have decided to survey you, the youth of Los Gatos. Your ideas and comments are important to us and to our understanding of the matters that pertain to teens. Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts with us.

Grade: _____

What are the three most important issues that the Youth Commission should address?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

If you could change anything about the town of Los Gatos concerning youth, what would it be? _____

What do you like about Los Gatos that you would *not* want to change? _____

What are some of your interests/hobbies? What do you like to do for fun? _____

What do and don't you like about the events and activities in Los Gatos? _____

How aware are you of the events and activities available?

Unaware Somewhat aware Aware Very aware

How satisfied are you with the *quality* of events and activities?

Unsatisfied Somewhat satisfied Satisfied Very satisfied

How satisfied are you with the *number* of events and activities?

Unsatisfied Somewhat satisfied Satisfied Very satisfied

(continued on other side)

Los Gatos Youth Commission 2005 Survey Results

Free-Response

Most important issues

1. Parking (18)
2. Curfew (15)
3. Drug Abuse (14)
4. Police Presence (10)
5. Alcohol Abuse (6)
6. Quantity of Activities (6)
7. Quality of Movies (4)
8. Better food options at school (4)
 - less expensive
 - more healthy

Changes to Los Gatos

Need more:

1. Youth activities/events (32)*
2. Places to go (6)
3. Quality movies downtown (5)
4. Interesting events (4)
5. Friendly police involvement (3)
6. Publicized events (3)

*Some said that events are too expensive for them.

A few individuals brought up the idea of less formal dances.

Town Attributes to Preserve

1. Small-town atmosphere (13)
2. Safety (10)
3. Downtown (3)
4. Cleanliness (2)

Interests/ Hobbies

1. Sports (29)*
2. Music/Concerts (20)
3. Skateboarding (11)
4. Watching movies (10)
5. Shopping (6)
6. Dancing (4)

*The sports category includes people ranging from soccer players to crew members to dancers. Many also are already part of school or recreational teams.

Note: Most teens are interested in just "hanging out."

Events/Activities

Awareness

1. Somewhat aware (107)
2. Unaware (52)
3. Aware (43)
4. Very Aware (8)

Satisfaction with quantity

1. Somewhat satisfied (79)
2. Unsatisfied (62)
3. Satisfied (49)
4. Very satisfied (5)

Satisfaction with quality

1. Somewhat satisfied (75)
2. Satisfied (68)
3. Unsatisfied (47)
4. Very satisfied (7)

Type of events

1. Music concerts (153)
 2. Dances (123)
 3. Movie Nights (112)
 4. Bowling (84)
 5. Talent Show (67)
 6. Specialized classes (39)
- Other: festivals, sporting events

Timing of after-school events

1. Friday (128)
2. Thursday (65)
3. Wednesday (57)
4. Tuesday (41)
5. Monday (39)

Timing of evening events

1. Saturday (122)
2. Friday (111)
3. Sunday (51)
4. Thursday (35)
5. Wednesday (27)
6. Monday (21)
7. Tuesday (19)

After-School Programs/Activities**Suggestions**

1. Raise awareness of them (publicity) (3)
2. Create more programs/activities (1)
3. Have programs in a more familiar place (1)

Type of programs

- A. Tutoring (11)
- B. Specialized Classes
 1. Cooking (63)
 2. Sports games (59)
 3. Dance (58)
 4. Art (48)

5. Music (47)
6. Drama (30)
7. Improvisation (19)
8. Speech & Debate (17)

Best location for Youth Commission meetings

1. School (59)
2. A Place for Teens/ The Venue (46)
3. Town Council Chambers (37)

Best movie genre

1. Comedy (161)
 2. Horror (72)
 3. Drama (36)
- Other: Action (12), Classics (2)

Possible movies to show

- a. Meet the Parents
- b. Mrs. Doubtfire
- c. Monty Python and the Holy Grail
- d. Rush Hour 1, 2
- e. Ferris Beuler's Day Off
- f. Napoleon Dynamite
- g. Mean Girls
- h. Anchorman
- i. Matrix
- j. Harry Potter
- k. Lord of the Rings
- l. Star Wars
- m. Bourne Identity/ Bourne Supremacy

Additional Information

The survey was taken by around 400 students from Los Gatos High School and Fisher Middle School. Teachers handed the survey out to the students when there was extra class time. The survey was comprised of free-response questions that gave teens a chance to express the change that they wish to see in Los Gatos. The multiple choice section addressed both social outings, after-school programs, and Youth Commission meetings.

Number and type of classes involved in survey

Los Gatos High	7 history
	1 health/drivers ed.
Fisher Middle	8 English
Total	16 classrooms

