



City of Palo Alto

Policy and Services Committee Staff Report

(ID # 6040)

Report Type: Agenda Items

Meeting Date: 8/25/2015

Summary Title: City Engagement with Neighborhoods

Title: Discussion and Recommendations to City Council Regarding the Colleagues Memo on Strengthening City Engagement with Neighborhoods

From: City Manager

Lead Department: City Manager

Recommendation

Staff recommends the Policy & Services Committee discuss and provide direction on the following recommendations that begin to capture the intent of the Colleagues Memo and from discussions at the June 9, 2015 Committee meeting

1. Direct staff to begin ongoing town hall meetings on a quarterly basis, rotating throughout the City, to engage neighborhood associations on specific and city-wide issues, with two meetings to occur in 2015. (This recommendation would need to go to City Council straightaway to effectively schedule two meetings in 2015.)
2. Accept changes to the Know Your Neighbors Grant Program to provide neighborhood associations with resources to further develop their organization, and transfer \$25,000 from the City Council contingency account to the City Manager's Office to fund these requests for the remainder of the fiscal year.
3. Direct staff to return to Policy & Services with an update to the Community Services Department's Co-Sponsorship Agreement, to broaden the scope and allow for neighborhood associations to use city facilities for meetings at no charge, as well as options for waiving insurance fees for these meetings in City facilities.
4. Discuss the method of meeting with neighborhood leaders to further develop the City's Neighborhood Engagement initiative -- association definition, support models, communication, conflict resolution, ombudsman concept, City's website and social media for neighborhoods.

Background

On April 20, 2015, the City Council discussed a Colleagues' Memo from Mayor Holman, Vice Mayor Schmid, and Council Members Burt and Wolbach regarding Strengthening City

Engagement with Neighborhoods. The Colleagues' Memo had seven recommendations, listed below, which are narrowed into specific recommendations as mentioned above. On June 9, 2015, the Policy & Services discussed these items.

1. Recognize neighborhood associations and provide placement on the City Community Partners webpage, <http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/partners> with links to a map of the general neighborhood area and to the association website or other contact information. The City should review the process for recognition in consultation with neighborhoods and explore agreement on some basic standards and requirements regarding governance and association responsibilities for outreach and inclusion, as a recognized neighborhood association.
2. For recognized neighborhood associations, the City should explore guidelines and costs for providing periodic free use of available public facilities for public meetings and events as well as insurance coverage under the City's policy.
3. Provide small, one-time start-up grants for neighborhood associations to be used to attend the United Neighborhoods of Santa Clara County's Annual Conference and toward neighborhood association initiation activities.
4. Support neighborhood associations in distributing relevant City information to members, including information about upcoming community meetings or events, notification about proposed projects in their neighborhoods, City initiatives, emergency preparation events, County proposals, Public Works or Utilities projects, Caltrain, VTA or neighboring communities' plans.
5. Each neighborhood association will be encouraged to identify a designated "Communications Officer" as information liaison with the City.
6. Hold annual town hall-style meetings with City Council representatives and appropriate City staff and focused on different regions of Palo Alto. The meetings shall encourage both individual and neighborhood association participation.
7. Evaluate creation of an Ombudsperson program with the neighborhoods to follow up on neighborhood or resident issues and facilitate conflict resolution when needed.

The Committee asked staff to bring back specific recommendations to make to City Council which would advance the seven recommendations.

Discussion

At the June 9, 2015 Committee meeting, members highlighted that the most important element in engaging neighborhoods was to begin the town hall meetings. These meetings

would discuss items such as capital improvement projects, public safety, development, neighborhood trends, and city services. They would bring Council Members, Commissioners, neighborhood citizens, and city staff together for a brief presentation and a question and answer period.

The Committee discussed grouping the neighborhoods together for town hall meetings:

Downtown North University South Professorville	Crescent Park Community Center Duveneck/St. Francis	Old Palo Alto Leland Manor/Embarcadero Oaks/Garland Triple El
South Gate Evergreen Park College Terrace	Palo Alto Hills Esther Clark Park Greater Miranda	Barron Park Green Acres Palo Alto Orchards
Ventura Charleston Meadow Monroe Park	Midtown Palo Verde St. Claire Gardens South of Midtown	Adobe Meadow/Meadow Park Fair Meadow Greenmeadow Charleston Gardens The Greenhouse

Staff encourages the Committee to discuss the groupings. With the proposed alignments and quarterly town hall meetings it would take 2.25 years to cycle through the City.

Regarding Staff Recommendation No. 2 (Know Your Neighbor Grant Program Changes) attached are proposed revisions to the Know Your Neighbors Grant program guidelines. Staff believes that funding should not only target neighborhood association start-up costs but also enhance association governance structures as well as organizational development. Staff recommends the Committee review the proposed revisions and forward recommendations to City Council. Upon approval by Council, staff will publicize the new grant opportunities and can begin to accept requests from neighborhood associations.

Regarding Staff Recommendation No. 3 (Free Use of City Facilities) the Community Services Department currently has a Co-Sponsorship Policy which is specific for the use of the department's facilities. The policy currently allows neighborhood associations to use Community Service Department facilities without paying a rental fee, but it does not allow for the use of other City facilities such as libraries and City Hall. It also does not address the issue of insurance or custodial costs. Staff believes that broaden the scope of the policy would be the best vehicle to achieve the intent of the Colleagues Memo. Yet staff recommendation No. 4, specifically the definition of an association, should precede this item. (This recommendation is also related to the 'City Facility Fee' item pending on the Committee's agenda and should address that matter).

Regarding Staff Recommendation No. 4, the Committee recommended further dialogue with neighborhood leaders. This would result in more specific recommendations to address

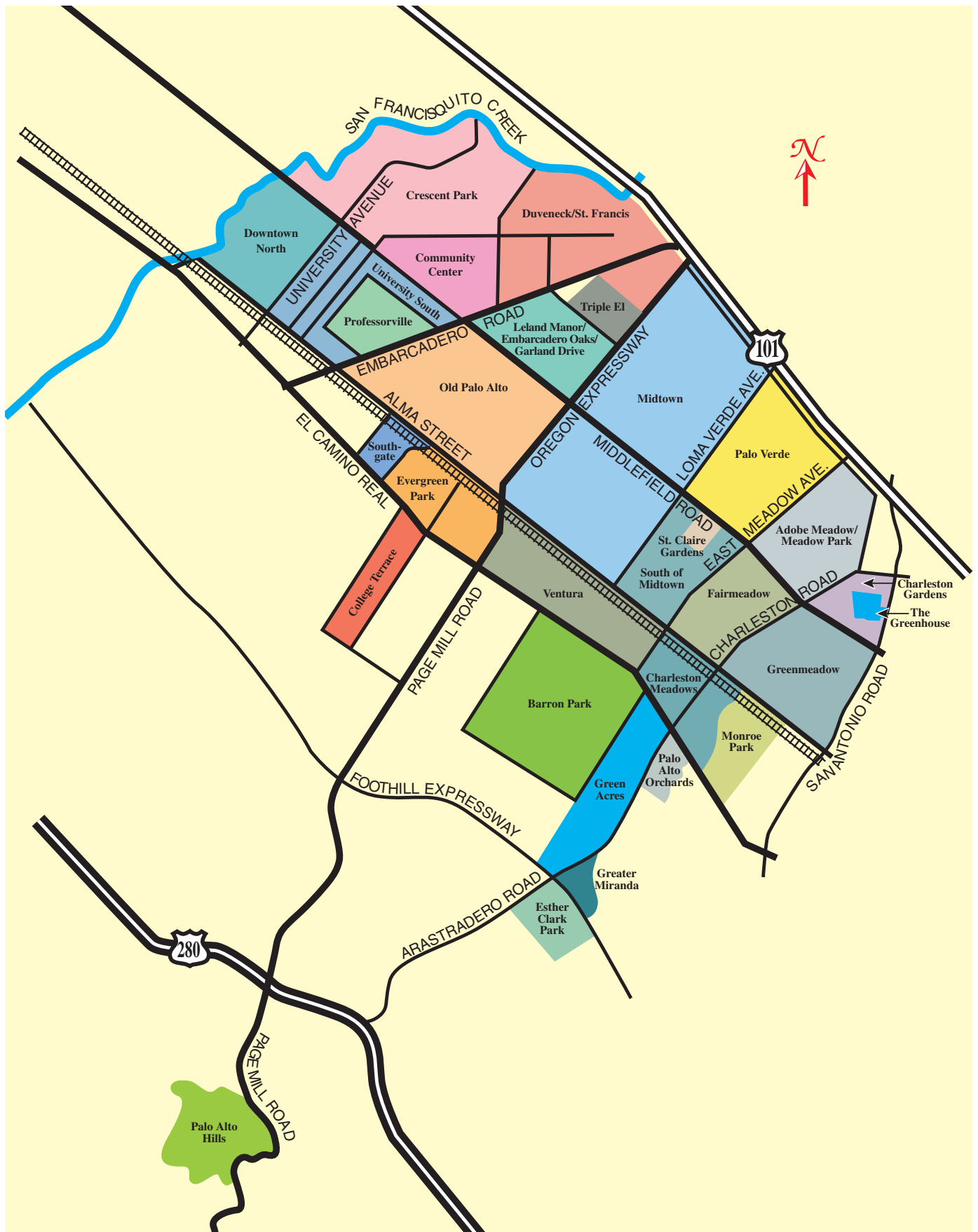
Colleagues Memo items No. 1, 4, 5 and 7. Staff is not in a position to make a recommendation as to how to best proceed but support further discussion at the Committee meeting.

Resource Impact

Council and staff time will be needed for preparation of the Town Hall meetings. Any outcome from the meetings could also potentially cause resource needs. For Staff Recommendation No. 2, a transfer from City Council contingency would be needed to add additional funds to Know Your Neighbors Grant program. There is adequate funding in the contingency for this action. Additionally, there will be financial impacts as the City waives fees for facility use. Staff will return to the Committee with those impacts as we redefine the Co-Sponsorship policy. Finally, as Staff Recommendation No. 4 is defined this could take significant Council and staff time causing an open ended impact to priorities.

Attachments:

- Attachment A - Neighborhood Map (PDF)
- Attachment B - Grant Guidelines - Revision Version (DOCX)
- Attachment C - Co-Sponsorship Agreement (PDF)
- Attachment D - 4-20-15 Colleagues Memo (PDF)
- Attachment E - 6-9-15 Staff Report (PDF)
- Attachment F - 9-23-14 Staff Report (PDF)
- Attachment G - 9-23-14 Minutes (PDF)





City of Palo Alto “Know Your Neighbors” Grant Program

“Know Your Neighbors” Grant Program

~~Do you know who lives next door or down the block?~~ The “Know Your Neighbors” Grant Program is designed to help neighbors better connect with each other while strengthening community and improving the quality of life and neighborhoods in Palo Alto. The goals of the Program are to:

1. Build sense of community.
2. Develop or renew neighborhood relationships.
- ~~3.~~ Encourage interaction between generations and cultures.
- ~~3-4.~~ Increase governance and organizational leadership of neighborhood associations.
- ~~4-5.~~ Develop collaborative partnerships between Palo Alto neighborhoods and the City.

Formatted: Not Expanded by / Condensed by

“Know Your Neighbors Grants” are small grants intended to facilitate people getting together and getting to know one another. ~~Neighbors~~ Citizens may apply for up to \$1000 grants for activities — such as block parties and picnics, event kick-off celebrations, ice cream socials, neighborhood — crime prevention and safety activities, or other functions and gatherings involving the building — of connections between neighbors. Know Your Neighbors Grants may be applied for at any time throughout the ~~2013~~ calendar year (at least one month prior to event date), and will be awarded on activities that meet eligibility requirements on a “first come, first served” basis until — the allocated funding is depleted.

Grant Guidelines & Eligibility Requirements

1. To be eligible for a Neighborhood Grant, the following criteria must be met: Applicants must be Palo Alto residents and may be representatives of a formal neighborhood association, neighborhood or community group, or informally associated neighbors. Activities must be neighborhood-focused, initiated and supported by residents living in the neighborhood, and have a well-developed ~~implementation~~ plan. Activities must benefit the neighborhood.
2. Activities must focus on one or more of the following areas:
 - a. Increase communication among neighbors.
 - b. Enhance neighborhood pride and identity.
 - c. Bring both longstanding and new neighbors (moved within last 5 years) together in their neighborhoods and seek to incorporate interaction between generations and cultures.
 - ~~d.~~ Create new and innovative ideas for neighborhood events.
 - ~~d-e.~~ Increase governance or organizational development of neighborhood association.

Formatted: Not Expanded by / Condensed by

3. To be eligible to apply, a group must not discriminate in membership decisions based on race, gender, religion, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation or any other status protected by law.
4. Events must be held within the Palo Alto City limits—E, except if request is for association training which is not within City limits.
5. Grant-supported events must be open to everyone who is eligible, without regard to race, gender, religion, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation or any other status protected by law.
6. Groups may not charge admission to grant-supported events.
7. The following types of expenses ARE eligible for reimbursement with grant funds: food, beverages (non-alcoholic), entertainment, facility and equipment rentals, hard cost of materials and supplies, advertising, and permit fees.
8. The following expenses ARE NOT eligible for reimbursement with grant funds: salaries or stipends for members of the sponsoring group, tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, out of City travel expenses, or any lodging/hotel expenses, private transportation expenses including mileage, gas, insurance, car rentals, restaurant/catered/food truck meals, routine operating —expenses and ongoing programs or services, supplies and materials that benefit an individual or homeowner versus a neighborhood, political campaigns, regular neighborhood association or homeowner meetings, items not specified in the grant application. Exceptions to travel expenses may be made for grants associated with neighborhood association training.
9. Projects may require permits depending upon the activity planned. The applicant is responsible for obtaining all applicable City permits that apply to the planned activityactivity.
10. Applicants must submit a completed and signed Neighborhood Grant Application to be considered.

Evaluation Criteria

Grant applications will be evaluated on the criteria listed below:

1. Does the activity/event focus on one or more of the following five four areas?
 - a. Increase communication among neighbors.
 - b. Enhance neighborhood pride and identity.
 - c. Bring both longstanding and new neighbors (moved within last 5 years) together in their neighborhoods and seek to incorporate interaction between generations and cultures.
 - d. Create new and innovative ideas for neighborhood events.
 - d.e. Increase governance or organizational development of neighborhood association.
2. Does the activity/event meet the eligibility requirements outlined above?

Formatted: Not Expanded by / Condensed by

3. Is the work plan well developed (clear tasks, adequate resources allocated, community or organization need addressed)?

Formatted: Not Expanded by / Condensed by

~~3.4.~~ If for neighborhood association training, how does training increase governance and organization leadership of your association?

Formatted: List Paragraph, Right: 0", No bullets or numbering, Tab stops: Not at 0.32"

Application Process

To apply for a grant, complete the attached application and submit to the following address:

Attention: City of Palo Alto, City Manager's Office, 250 Hamilton Avenue, Palo Alto, CA 94302 or email: kyngrantscityofpaloalto.org.

~~Creative ideas for neighborhood Activities are highly encouraged! The~~ City Manager's Office will review each application. Funding decisions will be made based on whether activities meet eligibility requirements and on a first come first serve basis. Each applicant will be notified of the result of the evaluation of their proposal.

The Neighborhood Grant is reimbursable; meaning that any approved funds must first be spent by the grantee and receipts/invoices showing payment submitted to the City of Palo Alto within 30 days of the Activities/event conclusion. Upon review of eligible receipts/invoices, the ~~City~~ City will send a reimbursement to the grantee. Allowable expenses may be eligible for a cash advance at the discretion of the City Manager's Office.

Neighborhood Grant Program funding will be determined by City Council during the adoption of the budget each year. If Council approves the funding, each neighborhood group is eligible to apply for and receive a grant of up to \$1,000. The City reserves the right to suspend or cancel the Neighborhood Grant Program at any time, at the City Manager's discretion, whether or not all allocated funds have been awarded or dispensed.

Neighborhood groups must complete their ~~a~~Activities/events within 6 months of receiving notification from the City of grant award. Activities may begin after grant approval and must be completed within twelve months. A follow up evaluation must be completed within 30 days of the activity/event conclusion providing photos and detailing how the activity helped strengthen the neighborhood, how many people were impacted, new ways neighbors worked to create a more connected community, if objectives were met, and if the project was successful.

For more information, please contact the City Manager's Office, at (650) 329-2452.

COMMUNITY SERVICES CO-SPONSORSHIP POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

This policy institutes a process that will provide appropriate support for nonprofit organizations that provide community service programs similar or related to those provided by the City's Department of Community Services for Palo Alto residents. The policy sets levels of support which the City will offer to groups seeking City co-sponsorship and establishes a process and criteria to be used by the Department of Community Services to identify when and how nonprofit groups are granted co-sponsorship for specific programs or events.

Implementation of this procedure is the responsibility of the Director of Community Services. Any exceptions to this policy must be approved by the City Manager or his/her designee.

PROCEDURE

A. Definition of Cosponsored Organizations

A group may request co-sponsorship by the City's Department of Community Services if it meets the following criteria:

1. The group has state certification as a nonprofit organization. A group may be a subgroup of a state or national nonprofit organization, provided that services are provided in Palo Alto.
2. Goals of the organization are aligned with those of the City's Department of Community Services, or with other City policies and objectives as stated in the City's budget document or Municipal Code, or as otherwise determined by the City Council.
3. The group provides programs which are compatible with those provided by the Community Services Department.

B. Requirements for All Cosponsored Organizations

1. The group must provide financial and all other applicable information documenting adherence to the co-sponsorship requirements on an annual basis.

2. All cosponsored programs or events must be open to the public and provide services without discrimination against any individual.
3. The majority of the funds, if any, raised by the group in the cosponsored event(s) must be used to support specific programs and events for residents of Palo Alto.
4. The group must provide all insurance coverage required by the City's Risk Manager.
5. In the use of City facilities and space in publications, cosponsored activities will not receive priority over those conducted by the City.

C. Levels of City Co-sponsorship of Nonprofit Groups

1. "A" Level Co-sponsorship
 - a. 75 percent or more of the group members and participants in specific programs and events are residents of the City of Palo Alto, or are enrolled in the Palo Alto Unified School District.
 - b. Human Services contract agencies must currently receive funding either from the City's General Fund or the Community Development Block Grant program.
2. "B" Level Co-sponsorship
 - a. 50 percent or more of the group members and participants in specific programs and events are residents of Palo Alto, or are enrolled in the Palo Alto Unified School District.

D. City Support Offered for Each Level of Co-sponsorship

It is important to emphasize that co-sponsorship does not involve any waiver of Municipal Code requirements or any other City policies or procedures. Furthermore, co-sponsorship does not imply the free use of other City services not specifically addressed in this policy.

1. "A" Level Co-sponsorship
 - a. The group's name and contact person may be listed in City publications including the ENJOY! Catalogue and promotional fliers.

- b. The group may request assistance in publicizing program information.
- c. Use of City facilities without payment of rental fee may be provided subject to availability of space.
- d. A City staff liaison person may be assigned to consult on special projects and to maintain ongoing communications at the discretion of the Director of Community Services.

2. “B” Level Co-sponsorship

- a. The group may request that its name and contact person be listed in certain City publications at no charge.
- b. Use of City facilities may be provided subject to availability of space at free or reduced rates (pertains to rental fee only) on a third priority basis after City or paid rental use and “A” level co-sponsorship use.
- c. A City staff liaison person may be assigned to consult on special projects and to maintain ongoing communications at the discretion of the Director of Community Services.

NOTE: Questions and/or clarification of this policy should be directed to the Community Services Department.



CITY OF PALO ALTO OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

April 20, 2015

**The Honorable City Council
Palo Alto, California**

Colleagues' Memo From Mayor Holman, Council Members Burt, Schmid, and Wolbach Regarding Strengthening City Engagement with Neighborhoods (Continued from March 16, 2015)

GOAL

Palo Alto residents are engaged and care deeply about proposals that enhance or may harm our quality of life. To further support strong neighborhood participation in civic affairs, we propose initiating several actions to better integrate the understanding, consideration, and actions of our City government with neighborhoods' interests and concerns.

BACKGROUND

The City has made great strides in making information available including the very informative Development Services Construction Updates and the Open Data Portal. Use of various social media channels such as Facebook, Twitter, and Next Door have enhanced City outreach and communication with citizens and neighborhoods. This memo seeks to build on those accomplishments with additional focus on communication with neighborhoods, adding much more face-to-face contact.

Palo Alto is comprised of 37 neighborhoods, each impacted by decisions that are considered or made by City government. Whether the event is led or supported by City planners, Public Works, Utilities, the City Manager's Office, outside agencies such as VTA, Caltrans, or even developments in another community, it is incumbent on the City to make best efforts to inform its citizens. Further, the neighborhoods often have very different characteristics and interests from one another as acknowledged in our Comprehensive Plan Goal L-3: "Safe, attractive residential neighborhoods, each with its own distinct character and within walking distance of shopping, services, schools and/or other gathering places".

The current "Know Your Neighbors" Grant Program provides grants for promoting neighbors getting to know one other. While this program has been very popular, frequent comments about the program include that the grant money is spent on permits for use of public facilities or street closure permits for block parties, leaving little funding for the event itself. The proposed programs below would be the City's first comprehensive neighborhood engagement initiative.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on research of other cities' programs and community members' comments, we recommend that the following proposed City actions be referred to the Policy and Services

Committee:

1. Recognize neighborhood associations and provide placement on the City Community Partners webpage, <http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/partners> with links to a map of the general neighborhood area and to the association website or other contact information. The City should review the process for recognition in consultation with neighborhoods and explore agreement on some basic standards and requirements regarding governance and association responsibilities for outreach and inclusion, as a recognized neighborhood association.
2. For recognized neighborhood associations, the City should explore guidelines and costs for providing periodic free use of available public facilities for public meetings and events as well as insurance coverage under the City's policy.
3. Provide small, one-time start-up grants for neighborhood associations to be used to attend the United Neighborhoods of Santa Clara County's Annual Conference and toward neighborhood association initiation activities.
4. Support neighborhood associations in distributing relevant City information to members, including information about upcoming community meetings or events, notification about proposed projects in their neighborhoods, City initiatives, emergency preparation events, County proposals, Public Works or Utilities projects, Caltrain, VTA or neighboring communities' plans.
5. Each neighborhood association will be encouraged to identify a designated "Communications Officer" as information liaison with the City.
6. Hold annual town hall-style meetings with City Council representatives and appropriate City staff and focused on different regions of Palo Alto. The meetings shall encourage both individual and neighborhood association participation.
7. Evaluate creation of an Ombudsperson program with the neighborhoods to follow up on neighborhood or resident issues and facilitate conflict resolution when needed.

DISCUSSION:

Certain of these proposals may be adopted and implemented ahead of others. It is our intention that the town hall-style meetings would commence early this year, and the Ombudsman program would likely take more time and possibly need to be considered in the budget cycle.

STAFF IMPACT:

Staff impact and resources necessary to support this program may be significant, depending on the scope of the program components ultimately adopted. Research and discussion regarding impacts of the program will be necessary, including legal and risk implications along with staffing and funding aspects. These need not be deterrents to proceeding, just

acknowledgment that a more formal and interlinked relationship will also require some more explicit standards and monitoring and reporting. The most effective city neighborhood programs are formalized in this regard. Staff acknowledges that this discussion can first take place during the Policy and Services referral and discussion.

Department Head: Beth Minor, Acting City Clerk



City of Palo Alto

Policy and Services Committee Staff Report

(ID # 5858)

Report Type: Agenda Items

Meeting Date: 6/9/2015

Summary Title: Strengthening City Engagement with Neighborhoods

Title: Referral of Colleagues Memo Regarding Strengthening City Engagement with Neighborhoods

From: City Manager

Lead Department: City Manager

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Policy & Services Committee discuss the seven actions outlined in the Colleagues Memo, provide further direction, and refer the item to the City Council.

Background

On April 20, 2015, the City Council took up a Colleagues' Memo from Mayor Holman, Council Members Burt, Schmid, and Wolbach regarding Strengthening City Engagement with Neighborhoods. The Council referred to the Memo to the Policy & Services Committee.

The memorandum seeks to build on existing engagement platforms and add more face-to-face contact with neighborhood organizations. The authors suggest seven actions to achieve this goal.

Discussion

The seven points, listed in bold, are outlined below accompanied by the staff response. Staff has provided recommendations, suggestions and some clarifying questions to further develop and address the various issues that have been raised.

Potential Program Components:

- 1. Recognize neighborhood associations and provide placement on the City Community Partners webpage, <http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/partners> with links to a map of the general neighborhood area and to the association website or other contact information. The City should review the process for recognition in consultation with neighborhoods and explore agreement on some basic standards and requirements regarding governance and association responsibilities for outreach and inclusion, as a recognized neighborhood association.**

Staff acknowledges that the City's Community Partners website lacks information and links to neighborhood associations, maps, and contact information. The City's website does have a map of neighborhoods and it is attached for the Committee to review. The existing map identifies 30 neighborhoods (not 37 as indicated in the Colleagues Memo).

Recognizing the potential for disagreements over the organization, boundaries, and other descriptions of a neighborhood, staff agrees that thought should be given to how neighborhood recognition is granted. Specifically, staff would like to research other municipalities as well as state and national neighborhood associations. Options for recognition could range from a laissez-faire approach to a formal process with specific criteria leading to City Council approval. In order to determine an approach that is likely to fit current Palo Alto needs, a small advisory group of existing neighborhood leaders could be formed to work with staff on identifying key requirements. Minimum standards should be developed, including a commitment to free and open membership, non-discrimination, and transparency of operations.

- 2. For recognized neighborhood associations, the City should explore guidelines and costs for providing periodic free use of available public facilities for public meetings and events as well as insurance coverage under the City's policy.**

Staff recommends that a survey of existing neighborhood associations be conducted to determine the scale and scope of intended use. Factors such as number of uses per year, duration, types of events, fee or non-fee events, and whether alcohol is desired would impact the financial analysis of this action. Alternatively, the Committee could make recommendations that set boundaries for such free use and staff can conduct the analysis with those boundaries. Staff has also included the Fiscal Year 2015 Community Service Department's (CSD) Municipal Fee Chapter to provide the Committee with facility rental fees. Additionally, as the Committee is aware, a pending item on the Committee's schedule of items is the discussion about CSD facility rental fees.

- 3. Provide small, one-time start-up grants for neighborhood associations to be used to attend the United Neighborhoods of Santa Clara County's Annual Conference and toward neighborhood association initiation activities.**

Staff believes that start-up support and/or governance training funds for neighborhood associations would be a nominal investment in starting and maintaining productive associations. Staff recommends that either as part of a survey or through the advisory group, association leaders be polled about the specific types of training needed for their nonprofit administration and governance. At the time of this report's publication, details about the cost of attending the United Neighborhoods of Santa Clara County's Annual Conference (UNSCC) was not available. Staff has contacted the organization to learn more about this particular

group and the conference costs. The UNSCC annual membership for each neighborhood association is \$200 per the organization's website. Additionally the City offers the Know Your Neighbors Grant Program which provides citizens, homeowner association's or neighborhood association's grants for up to \$1,000. The Committee could look at expanding the scope and budget of this program. The program is currently funded annually with \$25,000.

- 4. Support neighborhood associations in distributing relevant City information to members, including information about upcoming community meetings or events, notification about proposed projects in their neighborhoods, City initiatives, emergency preparation events, County proposals, Public Works or Utilities projects, Caltrain, VTA or neighboring communities' plans.**

Staff is unclear about the specific nature of this request. It appears that neighborhood associations would be asked to distribute City information; however, existing channels are available to meet informal notification needs. For formal notification needs, such as for development proposals, it is unclear to what extent neighborhood associations could satisfy notification requirements. If the suggestion is that the City distributes literature and announcements through USPS mail for the associations, expectations of the magnitude of this service would be needed. Staff seeks further direction from the Committee with regard to this action. A primary existing neighborhood association resource is to utilize the social media site Nextdoor.com. Also, residents and other interested parties can sign up for the City's numerous social media sites and email distribution lists:

Social Media: www.cityofpaloalto.org/socialmedia

Email Distribution List: www.cityofpaloalto.org/gov/depts/cou.

- 5. Each neighborhood association will be encouraged to identify a designated "Communications Officer" as information liaison with the City.**

Staff believes that a Communication Officer within each association could add value to strengthen engagement with the City, if serving as a consistent means of connecting neighbors that are not currently reached. As mentioned in #4, the officer could assist the association leader by ensuring that citizens are connected to the City's social media sites and email lists. Additionally the officer could email or post messages on neighborhood Nextdoor groups, potentially extending the reach of messages from the City. Further details about the duties of this volunteer position can be discussed vetted through the advisory group, if recommended by the Committee.

- 6. Hold annual town hall-style meetings with City Council representatives and appropriate City staff and focused on different regions of Palo Alto. The meetings shall encourage both individual and neighborhood association participation.**

Staff seeks further direction from the Committee with regards to the town hall-style meetings. Specifically: how many regions does the Committee consider appropriate; would these be full Council meetings compliant with the Brown Act, or limited to less than a quorum of Council; would the meetings occur at community centers, citizen's homes, school sites, parks, or churches; on weekends, weekdays, afternoons, or evenings; what is the ideal duration; and any specific scope. How do members see these as different as the outreach being conducted for Our Palo Alto? While a valuable means of communication with neighborhoods, this could also require significant resources to implement citywide.

7. Evaluate creation of an Ombudsperson program with the neighborhoods to follow up on neighborhood or resident issues and facilitate conflict resolution when needed.

Staff recommends that in the short term, neighborhood association leaders begin to promote the use the PaloAlto311 app. The app allows residents to submit maintenance issues 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In the longer term, and as the Committee provides direction, staff believes the development of a Communications Liaison discussed in #5 could provide support in this area as well. Staff seeks direction from the Committee with regards to conflict resolution. Specifically, who is the conflict between, neighbors, citizens and the City? The City currently supports the Palo Alto Mediation Program annually with a \$65,000 contribution. The organization provides services for neighbors, tenants, landlords, employers, co-workers, local businesses, or other persons or organizations in the community. This information can be shared with citizens immediately: www.paloaltomediation.com.

The Committee may wish to advance some of these potential components ahead of others that will take more time to develop.

Resource Impact

As indicated in the memo, staff time and resources to support this program may be significant depending on scope and program components. At this stage, in forwarding the memo for initial discussion, staff is not ready to make a recommendation on staffing and budgetary needs. To conduct the basic scope of outreach necessary to solicit input and evaluate the elements described above, staff anticipates a work effort of 80 hours or more over a period of 30-60 days. This would be prioritized among other work plan elements.

Staff would like to engage in a detailed discussion with the Committee to further understand the expectations and then build a work plan and budget for City Council review.

Attachments:

- April 20, 2015 Colleagues Memorandum (PDF)
- Neighborhood Map from City Website (PDF)
- Fiscal Year 2015 Municipal Fee Schedule - Community Services Department (PDF)



City of Palo Alto

(ID # 5117)

Policy and Services Committee Staff Report

Report Type: Agenda Items

Meeting Date: 9/23/2014

Summary Title: Alma Plaza Use Fees

Title: Recommendation To Council On Fees and Fee Exemptions for the Alma Plaza Community Room and Other Community Services Department Facilities

From: City Manager

Lead Department: Community Services

Recommended Motion

The Policy and Services Committee recommends that Council consider the following motion: Retain current policies, procedures and fees related to the reservation and use of the Alma Plaza Community Room and other Community Services Department facilities, as per the Fiscal Year 2015 Adopted Municipal Fee Schedule.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Policy and Services Committee recommend to Council the retention of current policies, procedures and fees related to the reservation and use of the Alma Plaza Community Room and other Community Services Department facilities, as per the Fiscal Year 2015 Adopted Municipal Fee Schedule. This recommendation treats the Alma Plaza Community room exactly like other City facilities. Staff would think that any change in policy related to the Alma Plaza Community room would need to be applied to all City facilities, to be fair to all Palo Altans.

Background

On May 29, 2014, during the Finance Committee review of the draft Fiscal Year 2015 Budget and Municipal Fee Schedule (Attachment B; Minutes), Committee Member Karen Holman questioned the appropriateness of the rental fees for the Alma Plaza Community Room as listed in the Community Services Department, Rental and Reservations (Attachment A; Page 8-2). Council Member Holman said it was her understanding that since the Community Room was privately built and provided as a "public benefit" as a condition of the Alma Plaza development, the City should not charge fees for the use of this particular facility.

Community Services Department Assistant Director Rob De Geus responded by saying the Community Services Department could and does provide room space for community

meetings and neighborhood groups through the City's existing Co-Sponsorship Policy. The interested group needs to complete a form to have the fee waived by the Department Director.

On Monday, June 9, 2014, during the Public Hearing on the City FY2015 budget, Council Member Holman again asked that charging fees for the Alma Plaza Community Room be further investigated.

Community Services Department Director Greg Betts responded to the question and explained to Council that fees are charged for the reservation and management of the room for private and exclusive use activities. In accordance with the Classification of Use and Fees listed at the beginning of the Rental and Reservations section of the Municipal Fee Schedule (page 8-1), those activities and rentals that qualify as a "Class I – City Use and City-Sponsored Activities," as per City Policy 1-29 (Community Services Co-Sponsorship Policy; Attachment D), *"no charge for facility rental for events or activities, however, fees for attendants, equipment rental, and special use fees may apply. Note: City facility use for City co-sponsored groups will be considered on a case by case basis."*ⁱ

Council Member Holman moved, seconded by Council Member Schmid, that the matter of the utilization and associated fees for use of Alma Plaza Community Room, as public benefit of the PC [*Planned Community*], be sent to Policy and Services Committee for vetting. The motion (amendment to the Budget motion) passed 8-0; Scharff absent.

Discussion

Co-Sponsorship Policy:

Through the application of the City's Community Services Co-Sponsorship Policy (City Policy 1-29; Attachment D), the Department has the ability to provide neighborhood associations, partnership agencies, non-profits and civic associations with the free use of meeting rooms and other facilities for programs, classes and events that are open to the public without charge and that further the mission, services or programs of the City of Palo Alto. This policy applies to the Alma Plaza Community Room and most other rentable facilities at City community centers, museums, nature centers and at City Hall.

For example, if the Midtown Residents Association wished to offer an educational presentation on emergency and disaster preparedness, and the program was advertised to the community without fee, the City could 'co-sponsor' the event since emergency preparedness is consistent with goals of the City's Office of Emergency Services. The neighborhood association would not pay a rental fee but may be asked to leave a refundable cleaning or security deposit, depending on the details of the proposed event.

On the other hand, if the non-profit agency Acterra wanted to reserve the room for a private fundraising event for which a fee or ticket was required for entrance or participation, the agency would be required to pay regular Council-adopted rental fees

since the event is considered "exclusive" to those participants who paid the agency to participate.

Use Agreement:

Under the terms of the Alma Plaza Use Agreement Summary (Attachment C), which were negotiated by Planning Department staff and ratified by Council on October 29, 2009, the city is permitted to book classes, workshops and share the space with the public during the hours of 8:00 am and 1:00 pm on weekdays; between 1:00 pm and 4:00 pm for small classes and activities with fewer than 20 participants; and after 6:30 pm on weekdays. The City is permitted to use the room between the hours of 8:00 am and 11:00 am, and after 6:00 pm on weekends. During other hours of the day, and when the City does not have a reserved use of the room, the room is available to be used by the tenants and residents of the Alma Plaza development.

Under the terms of Sections 4.2 (Operating Expenses) and 7.2 (City Obligations), the City is responsible for cleaning and maintaining the facility at its own expense. The agreement says: "Costs to operate, repair, replace and maintain the interior of the Premises in a neat, clean and good order and condition and to supply utility and telephone service to the Premises shall be paid by City." Since the room at Alma Plaza does not have closet or storage space on-site, cleaning equipment, supplies, tables and special equipment for the class or activity must be transported to the Community Room from the Mitchell Park or Cubberley Community Center by City staff.

The Agreement also presupposes the room would be sublet by the City to public and private groups for activities, events and parties. Section 12 of the Agreement (Assignment and Subletting) says, "...the Premises may be made available for the exclusive use of persons and groups consistent with city code and regulation requirements subject to the issuance of a permit by the City Director of Community Services and subject to the payment of fees therefor as provided in the Palo Alto Municipal Fee Schedule."

Facility Uses:

The City is able to provide additional classes and programs in this area of Palo Alto by having this extra space for which the City does not need to pay for operational overhead. The City is able to offer classes and program space at high demand times when facilities at other community centers (Mitchell and Cubberley) are in use. This facility has also provided a public benefit by being available for programs and classes while the new Mitchell Park Community Center has been under construction. Revenue from exclusive use rentals (family events, birthday parties, private parties, sales events, etc.) supplements Recreation Division revenue while the auditoriums at Cubberley and the Art Center have been used as temporary branch libraries.

Logistically, if a group wishes to use the Alma Plaza Community Room, a representative of the group would contact the City's Recreation Division. Staff from the Mitchell Park

Community Center manages this satellite facility since there is no "office" at the Alma Plaza Center. A standard City Facility Use Reservation form is completed with details of the event, class or activity. Staff determines the nature of the event, whether the activity is open to the public, whether fees are to be charged by the group, how long the room is needed, and what special equipment or staffing is needed for the event. Staff uses the Municipal Fee Schedule to determine standard fees for the event. If the group wishes to seek a waiver of the standard fees as a City "co-sponsored" event, the representative is asked to complete an application for co-sponsorship, as per the guidelines of the City's Co-sponsorship Policy (Attachment D). The application is reviewed by the Department Director and a determination is made within five business days whether the event qualifies as co-sponsored. If the group wishes to reserve multiple rooms, or multiple dates for a series of related events, only one co-sponsorship application is required. The co-sponsorship discount of fees would apply consistently at the Alma Plaza Center and other City facilities.

During Fiscal year 2014, approximately 30 reservations City-wide at all of our available locations were provided for free or at significantly discounted fees under the terms of the City's Co-sponsorship Policy. In the past, groups have included environmental organizations, scout groups, school clubs, neighborhood associations and non-profit agencies.

Resource Impact

Staff estimates that under the provisions of the City's Co-sponsorship Policy, approximately \$9,100 in rental and use fees were waived for qualifying groups and agencies in FY 2014.

If fees were waived for all non-profit and Co-Sponsored group facility rentals, the cost for waived fees would conservatively be \$82,000 annually.

Policy Implications

Free and discounted use of City facilities is consistent with the terms of the Municipal Fee Schedule, and City Policy 1-29 (Community Services Co-Sponsorship Policy). The sharing of City facilities for co-sponsored activities furthers Policy C-1.3 of the Community Services Element of the Draft Comprehensive Plan: "The City's community services should be a catalyst in creating a culture of health, well-being, and active living in our community. It shall contribute to the intellectual physical and social health of the community by providing opportunities for learning, expression, and social interaction for all ages at our libraries, community facilities, parks, and cultural centers."

Environmental Review

This report is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act; therefore, an environmental review is not required.

Attachments

Attachment A: Fiscal Year 2015 Municipal Fee Schedule – Adopted

Attachment B: Finance Committee Minutes; Municipal Fee Schedule Review – May 29, 2014

Attachment C: Alma Plaza Use Agreement Summary and Use Agreement

Attachment D: City Police 1-29: Community Services Co-sponsorship Policy

Attachments:

- Attachment A - Municipal Fee Schedule - Community Services Section (PDF)
- Attachment B - Finance Committee Minutes - May 29 (PDF)
- Attachment C - Alma Plaza Use Agreement (PDF)
- Attachment D -Policy 1-29 Co-sponsorship Policy (PDF)

i

In addition to Class I fees, the Fee Schedule also lists these three other Fee Class categories:

Class II - 501(c)3 Non-Profit Organizations: IRS recognized non-profit 501(c)3 organizations may receive a 50% reduction on basic facility rental rates upon verification. Only facility rental rates may be reduced and all other fees, such as staffing and equipment, are charged at the full rate. Nonprofit organizations charging or collecting fees or raising funds are not eligible for reduced rates and basic fees will apply. This does not apply to class registration fees.

Class III - Individuals, Groups, Organizations, and Businesses not charging fees: Basic rental fees apply.

Class IV - Business or Commercial Use: Individuals, groups, organizations, and businesses charging, collecting, or raising funds may rent facilities and equipment at the basic rate plus 75%. The Art Center is not available for CLASS IV usage.

MINUTES

~~Ms. Richardson believed Audit Staff working directly with Departments along with the City Manager's encouragement for Departments to complete recommendations were responsible for the positive report.~~

~~**MOTION:** Council Member Schmid moved, seconded by Council Member Klein to recommend to the City Council acceptance of the Status of Audit Recommendations Report as of June 30, 2014.~~

~~Council Member Schmid encouraged the City Auditor to continue including detailed actions taken in the report.~~

~~Council Member Scharff could support the Motion if Item Number 14 was revised to explain actions to be taken in the update section or to modify the target date. Without that information, the report was not complete.~~

~~Mr. Keene remarked that the City Auditor focused on practical recommendations and discerned recommendations that provided a greater return on investment. That would result in greater efficiency for completing recommendations and a more trusting relationship between the Audit Staff and Departments.~~

~~**MOTION PASSED:** 4-0~~

~~**MOTION:** Council Member Scharff moved, seconded by Council Member Schmid to take up Agenda Item Number 3 before Agenda Item Number 2.~~

~~**MOTION PASSED:** 4-0~~

3. Recommendation to Council On Fees and Fee Exemptions for the Alma Plaza Community Room and Other Community Services Department Facilities.

Greg Betts, Community Services Director, reported Council Member Holman questioned the reason for charging a fee for the Alma Plaza Community Room when the Community Room was provided as a public benefit of the development. Staff believed the Co-Sponsorship Policy was working well and allowed groups to utilize facilities. Staff recommended the Municipal Fee Schedule remain the same as passed by the Council in June 2014. Fees charged for use of a facility were divided into four classes as noted in Attachment A. Class 1 pertained to City use and City sponsored or co-sponsored activities. There was no charge for Class 1 activities. The Community Services Department recognized 100 co-sponsored activities.

MINUTES

Class 2 pertained to nonprofit organizations or 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organizations. Fees were reduced by 50 percent for Class 2 organizations. If the City co-sponsored an event with a nonprofit organization, no fee would be charged. Class 3 pertained to family events, commonly called exclusive use because the public was not invited. Full fees were charged for Class 3 activities. Class 4 pertained to activities for which fees were charged or which resulted in a profit for the user. The full fee plus 70 percent was charged for Class 4 activities. The City Council approved a use agreement for the Alma Plaza Community Room that included the City's right to charge fees for use of the Community Room. Use of the Community Room would incur charges as outlined in the four classes. Many uses of the Community Room fell into Class 1 or Class 2. The City charged fees for use of the Community Room because Staff scheduled events, provided a key, notified Alma Plaza for security, and cleaned the facility. Fees were based on square footage and intended to cover costs. Fees charged for the Alma Plaza Community Room were less than fees charged for the Jewish Community Center (JCC), the Elks Club, and the Women's Club of Palo Alto. Staff worked with City co-sponsors to provide publicity and to help in other ways.

Council Member Scharff asked if events co-sponsored by the City were free.

Mr. Betts replied yes.

Council Member Scharff inquired whether a neighborhood association meeting would provide a community benefit.

Mr. Betts answered yes. Sheri Furman of Midtown Residents questioned whether Midtown Residents could use the facility; Midtown Residents had previously utilized Community Services facilities at no charge.

Council Member Scharff inquired whether a Boy Scout event open only to the Scout troop would fall under Class 2.

Mr. Betts responded yes.

Council Member Scharff asked if a lecture on climate change that was open to the public would be charged full price.

Mr. Betts advised that the City partnered with the Bay Area Bird Photographers to offer a free photography class, and the City charged no fee for use of the Nature Center. The group used the Nature Center; the City received the group's expertise; the public received a good, professional class.

MINUTES

Council Member Scharff inquired whether pricing encouraged high use of facilities while covering costs.

Mr. Betts indicated fees were reasonable and provided value to users of the facilities. Staff did not deny many applications. Use of community centers was approximately 80 percent.

Council Member Scharff recalled Mr. Betts stated applications were submitted at Cubberley and asked if Staff was moving to online applications.

Mr. Betts reported Staff was testing new software for online registration for five facilities.

Council Member Schmid inquired about the frequency of use of the Alma Plaza Community Room.

Mr. Betts remarked that use was somewhat limited because of the hours it could be utilized. The Homeowners Association utilized the room nights and early mornings. Community use was limited to afternoons and early evenings. In the last year, 30 classes and individual rentals occupied the Community Room.

Council Member Schmid felt that was not frequent usage.

Mr. Betts clarified that some of the classes were held weekly at the Community Room.

Council Member Schmid noted the Community Room was somewhat isolated and parking was a problem. The developer provided the Community Room as a public benefit to offset the loss of a community center. Most public benefits were open to the public; yet, the City charged a fee for the Community Room. The Community Room was 20 percent more expensive than the Fireside Room at Lucie Stern.

Mr. Betts advised that the Community Room contained 1,100 square feet.

Council Member Schmid asked if there was a need for incentives to make the public aware of the Community Room.

Mr. Betts commented that the new Mitchell Park Library would provide the public with one-stop shopping of all facilities.

Council Member Schmid asked if alternative uses could increase the flow of people to the Community Room. Perhaps an afterschool tutoring or music program could use the facility.

MINUTES

Mr. Betts indicated a music program was held at the Community Room. He would consider possible uses and provide suggestions.

Council Member Schmid suggested a community work space could be a possibility. Perhaps Staff could change fees, change uses, or obtain a partner to utilize the space regularly.

Mr. Betts reported that those types of activities occurred at the Ventura auditorium. The only problem would be maintaining security during use of the Community Room.

Council Member Schmid commented that volunteers with the user could provide security.

Council Member Klein inquired about the number of hours per year the Community Room was utilized in comparison to other facilities. While 30 users appeared to be a small number, the actual number of meetings or classes was considerably larger.

Mr. Betts would provide that information in the Staff Report to the Council.

Council Member Klein did not believe the Community Room should be distinguished from other City facilities simply because it was provided through a public benefit. The goal was to maximize its use. He questioned whether pricing should be the same for all facilities. The City could charge reduced fees for underutilized facilities. The email from Norman Beamer appeared to contradict Mr. Betts' statements.

Mr. Betts was reviewing Mr. Beamer's assertions. There had not been a change in policy. A neighborhood association was not required to have nonprofit status.

Council Member Klein asked if Mr. Betts would respond to Mr. Beamer.

Mr. Betts replied yes.

Mark Weiss suggested Staff scrutinize use of the Community Room. The City should charge market rate for the facility.

Council Member Scharff requested Staff also respond to Ms. Furman.

Mr. Betts would do so.

Council Member Scharff concurred with Council Member Klein that the Community Room should not be distinguished because it was a public benefit. He too was interested in utilization of all City facilities.

MINUTES

Fred Balin related the history of the development of Alma Plaza. The public benefit disappeared over time.

Chair Price recalled that fees were charged to cover City costs.

Mr. Betts reported direct and overhead costs determined the amount of fees charged.

Chair Price remarked that lower fees would not recover costs related to administration and maintenance.

Mr. Betts concurred.

Chair Price assumed Staff would address marketing efforts if the Policy and Services Committee (Committee) recommended approval of the item. She inquired about the length of time the facility had been available.

Mr. Betts recalled that the Council approved the use agreement with the developer in 2009. He seemed to recall the Community Room opened in 2010. He would confirm that information and provide it in the Staff Report.

Chair Price asked if usage had increased over the past few years.

Mr. Betts responded yes.

Chair Price felt Staff should increase efforts to heighten community awareness of the facility.

Council Member Scharff inquired whether it was necessary to forward the Item to the Council if the Committee recommended the policy remain the same. He wanted Staff to return to the Committee with additional information he and Council Member Klein discussed.

James Keene, City Manager, believed an informational item could be presented to the Council if the Committee approved the Staff recommendation.

Molly Stump, City Attorney, reported a response to the Council was not required unless the Council's Motion directed a response. She did not recall a direction for a response.

Council Member Scharff indicated the referral was an Amendment to a Budget Ordinance.

Chair Price understood the Committee's practice was to respond to the Council.

MINUTES

Mr. Keene advised that that was the usual procedure when the Council was required to act. The referral did not require the Item to return to the Council for authorization. Staff could share information with the Council in public.

MOTION: Council Member Scharff moved, seconded by Council Member Klein to have Staff return to the Policy and Services Committee with utilization information, options to adjust fees based on usage, and costs associated with the room. Additionally, confirm that the City does not charge Neighborhood Associations, Community Services Use Fees, regardless of an Association's incorporation status.

Council Member Klein wished to broaden the information requested. The Agenda Item included fees and fee exemptions for all Community Services Department facilities. That allowed the Committee to discuss market pricing for the Community Room and to calculate costs. Hopefully Staff could return the following month with requested information.

Chair Price asked if the Municipal Fee Study included the basis for rental fees.

Lam Do, Senior Management Analyst, reported the Cost of Services Study included rental fees for facilities as a group rather than individually.

Council Member Schmid inquired whether the Motion directed Staff to provide the hours of use of the Community Room, utilization rates of other public spaces, and possible alternate pricing and uses of the Community Room.

Mr. Keene asked if all facilities would be compared to the Community Room.

Council Member Schmid answered no.

Council Member Klein felt utilization rates could demonstrate one facility was operating at 105 percent capacity while other facilities were operating at 40 percent capacity.

Mr. Keene understood the discussion concerned the overall policy related to all facilities. Information could demonstrate that a facility was performing worse than the Community Room.

Council Member Scharff wanted to review all facilities.

Council Member Klein wanted to review meeting rooms only.

MINUTES

Chair Price noted different facilities had different markets which complicated matters.

Mr. Betts advised that the new Palo Alto Room at the Mitchell Park Community Center was designed to be a large ballroom for use by 300-500 people.

Council Member Klein suggested Staff include capacity information for each room. In analyzing the Community Room, he would consider facilities that were 500-1,500 square feet.

Chair Price inquired whether Staff understood the information requested.

Mr. Betts replied yes.

Council Member Scharff wanted to know when the Boardwalk at the Baylands Interpretive Center would be repaired.

Mr. Betts reported the Water Board had jurisdiction over those repairs. Repairs were located within the habitat of the endangered clapper rail.

Ms. Stump suggested repairs to the Boardwalk be agendized for another meeting.

MOTION PASSED: 4-0

- ~~2. Review and Recommend to City Council Changes to the Scheduled Release of Council Agenda Packets and Other Matters Related to Agendas, Reports and Minutes.~~

~~Donna Grider, City Clerk, advised that for the past year the Executive Leadership Team had discussed an early release of Council packets. Currently packets were released on Wednesday for the following Monday's meeting. Staff proposed transitioning early release over the Winter Break and implementing it in January 2015 with packets issued two weeks prior to the Council meeting. Under the current schedule, Agenda development and report writing typically began four to six weeks in advance of the Council meeting. Notice of a Public Hearing was submitted to the newspaper four to five weeks prior to the Council meeting. The public could be confused by having two packets available concurrently. Council Members should resist changing or adding to the packet because of the perception of having time to do so. Council Member questions should be submitted the Friday prior to the Council meeting rather than the Monday of the meeting to allow Staff more time to respond. A survey of surrounding cities revealed that the majority utilized action minutes.~~