



CITY OF PACIFIC GROVE
300 Forest Avenue, Pacific Grove, California 93950

AGENDA REPORT

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL
FROM: Councilmember Susan M. Goldbeck
MEETING DATE: March 15, 2006
SUBJECT: EVALUATION OF CITY'S BOARDS, COMMITTEES AND COMMISSION SYSTEM AND DISCUSSION ON HOW TO INCREASE THEIR EFFECTIVENESS AND IMPROVE THEIR COMMUNICATION WITH COUNCIL (*continued from the March 15, 2006 City Council meeting*)

RECOMMENDATION:

Direct Staff to Request that Each Committee Prepare a Presentation to Council on What they Believe their Role is, What they Would Recommend to Make their Committee more Effective and to Establish a Work Program with Reporting to Council at Least Twice a Year

DISCUSSION:

In the past year there has been much discussion of the City's committee system and the Council's treatment of committees. I think the problem lies in the failure of City Council's, including the present one, to make clear what the duties of the committees are and what the expectation of the Council is of each committee. Perhaps most important is making sure that the committee members understand what the committees role is and what they are expected to do.

There is clearly a need to communicate more frequently with our various committees and have more direct input from them. If the committees have a clearer idea of what their role is and what they are tasked to do, their job satisfaction and their contribution will be more valued and appreciated. This will prevent the misunderstandings that have surfaced in recent months. For example, we have seen resentment from committee members whose role is advisory to the Council when the advice is not a heeded or if the Council decides to go a different way. This resentment comes from a lack of understanding of the role of an advisory committee. It is to advise the Council not to make policy.

I would suggest that the Council ask each committee to make a presentation to the Council of how they view the role of their committee and give us suggestions as to how to increase the committee's effectiveness. Most important, the Council should ask each committee for a work plan and Council reporting schedule for the upcoming year.

Recently, when we took the time to give direction to the Natural Resources Committee, they presented us last month with a superlative report on the tide pool- docent-program issue.

As another example we may want to ask the City's Economic Advisory Committee to weigh in on such issues as potential revenue production ideas. What this important economic advisory group has to say about such things as raising TOT, even the wisdom or folly of putting in parking meters would be very helpful to the Council. This committee might have of been some assistance recently in gathering data about the economic benefits and burdens of special events.

We all appreciate that we have many good people on these committees we simply need to use their services more effectively.

Councilmember Cort last session expressed concern, after the recent heavy wind storms and tree damage, about our management of our forest in town. All of us agreed: Wouldn't an evaluation of potential solutions to this problem be a good project for the Natural Resources Committee?

It seems like that committee should have been tasked with taking an earlier look or monitoring the conditions in general at our Butterfly Sanctuary before it got to the sorry state it was in last June. I think the reason they did not was they were not asked to do so.

It has been suggested that perhaps some of the committees could be eliminated or combined with other committees. One suggestion was that the Golf Course Advisory Committee could be rejoined with the Recreation Board which is where it used to be. We have lost quite a few members with the elimination of free golf.

Perhaps some consideration should be given to having specially seated committees for special issues or projects if insufficient work is needed in one area or another to have a full-time committee. I for one would like to hear from the committee volunteers to see what their thoughts are.

Committee staffing and providing other services to facilitate these committee meetings is expensive. Even more important is that we all want to honor the service of our volunteers by making their service to the City more meaningful. The members of all of our committees have both the expertise and the willingness to really give us a hand up here and we can sure use the help.

The City Council takes the time every once in a while to hear from our City Department Heads and we are given very informative presentations as to what each department does for the City. I think something like this would be very important for the City Committees and the City Council to share.

An added benefit of these presentations, which of course would be televised as part of the regular televising of City Council meetings, is that a presentation of what each committee is doing may entice other volunteers to become involved.

We have a great deal of work to do in this City, limited resources to do it with and now more than ever we need the effective service of volunteers.

Recommendation: Ask staff to request that each committee prepare a presentation to the City Council of what they believe their role is, what they would recommend to make their committee more effective and to establish a work program with reporting to the Council at least twice a year. These presentations could be given at Council meetings on a staggered basis.

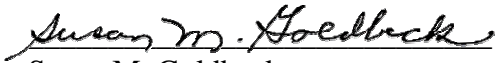
FISCAL IMPACT:

NONE

ATTACHMENTS:

NONE

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:



Susan M. Goldbeck
COUNCILMEMBER

