



**CITY OF LOS ALTOS
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
March 8, 2016**

DISCUSSION ITEM

Agenda Item # 5

SUBJECT: Approve recommendations related to the Senior Commission, and direct staff accordingly

BACKGROUND

On March 23, 2010, the City Council approved the charter and constitution of a pilot Senior Committee. The Committee was originally made up of nine individuals, six from Los Altos and three from Los Altos Hills.

On April 26, 2011, the Council approved establishing the Senior Committee as the Senior Commission. The Los Altos Municipal Code identifies the purpose of the Senior Commission including advising both Los Altos and Los Altos Hills City Councils on senior needs and issues.

On March 26, 2013, the number of members was reduced to seven, with five being appointed by Los Altos and two being appointed by Los Altos Hills.

EXISTING POLICY

LAMC 2.08.140 Powers and duties of the senior commission.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL CONSIDERATION

July 14, 2015; December 8, 2015 and January 26, 2016

DISCUSSION

During its short history, it has been difficult to recruit and retain Senior Commission members and therefore, there have been a number of changes in membership. Most recently in March 2015, there were four new Los Altos members appointed with only one incumbent, continuing Los Altos member. One Los Altos Hills resident was appointed in March 2015 after a long-standing vacancy, with the other Los Altos Hills member resigning in June 2015 prior to the end of her term creating a new vacancy that was filled in October 2015.

In July 2015 during the Council's mid-year retreat, the status of the Senior Commission and the extent to which the Senior Commission members were working effectively together was discussed. At that time, the Council requested an outside facilitator be secured to assist the group in developing meeting protocols and positive communication strategies. A facilitator worked with the commission on this endeavor and the meeting protocols were approved on September 14, 2015. Two of the newly appointed Los Altos members have since resigned their appointments effective September 15 and November 13, 2015 respectively, and a third Los Altos member resigned effective February 26, 2016.

On December 8, 2015, Council discussed the Charter and structure of the Senior Commission and decided to appoint an ad hoc committee of Mayor Bruins and Mayor Pro Tem Prochnow to host meetings with the Senior Commission and meetings at Hillview Community Center and Grant Park to assess the structure and Charter of the Senior Commission.

The ad hoc committee hosted community meetings at Grant Park on January 13, 2016 in the Multi-Purpose Room and at Hillview Community Center on January 15, 2016 in the Senior Program Room. These meetings were well attended, included seniors who are not current program participants, and focused on gathering input on what works well and what needs attention with respect to programs, facilities, and overall needs of senior members of the community. The input was captured and is summarized in Attachment A. Members of the Senior Commission and Los Altos Hills Mayor John Harpootlian were in attendance at each of these meetings.

The ad hoc committee met with the Senior Commission on February 1, 2016. The discussion focused on how Commissioners perceived the roles of the Commission, of the Chair and of staff.

On February 22, 2016, the ad hoc committee met with Los Altos Hills Mayor Harpootlian, Councilmember Corrigan, Town Manager Cahill and Los Altos City Manager Somers. Discussions focused on a review of findings, solicitation of feedback and collaborative development of draft recommendations. The group concurred with the following conclusions:

- Current programs offer a variety of benefits (recreational, educational, social) and are enjoyed and valued by participants
- Los Altos and Los Altos Hills should continue to work together at a staff level to provide a robust set of services and programs for seniors in our communities
- More direct participant input into program and service offerings would be beneficial
- Outreach to seniors needs to be reinvigorated, increasing awareness of programs and services offered directly by our cities and providing linkages to other local agencies serving seniors

PUBLIC CONTACT

A copy of this report was provided to the Senior Commission.

A copy of this report was provided to Los Altos Hills Town Manager. This matter is scheduled to be considered by the Los Altos Hills Town Council on March 21, 2016.

Posting of the meeting agenda serves as notice to the general public.

FISCAL/RESOURCE IMPACT

None

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Not applicable

Approve recommendations related to the Senior Commission, and direct staff accordingly

RECOMMENDATION

We believe that facilitating and expanding the opportunities for our senior community to provide input and ideas to our respective cities in a less structured form of communication and idea sharing will bring about a positive result for all and will enhance our collective commitment to serving our senior community. Therefore, we make the following recommendations:

- Replace the Senior Commission with “advisory forums” at each location where Senior programs are offered to:
 - Provide an opportunity for seniors to identify, share, and discuss ideas that pertain to City services and programs;
 - Provide an opportunity for staff to receive direct feedback on specific programs, projects and services as well as to keep seniors informed on topics relevant to them;
 - Forums to be hosted by staff, scheduled on a regular frequency, and encourage drop-in participation,
- Direct staff to reinvigorate outreach to seniors

We believe the benefits of this approach include:

- Increased responsiveness to senior needs and ideas
- More organic input that is unencumbered by Brown Act regulations
- A community engagement forum that provides for senior members of our communities to provide input before, during and after development of programs and services

ALTERNATIVES

Other alternatives are not being recommended

Prepared by: Mayor Jeannie Bruins and Mayor Pro Tem Mary Prochnow

ATTACHMENT:

1. Senior Conversation Meetings Summary

Approve recommendations related to the Senior Commission, and direct staff accordingly

Senior Conversation Meetings Summary

Categorized Notes

GRANT PARK COMMUNITY CENTER – January 13, 2016

LIKES

- I. Facilities
 - a. Smaller center makes it more personable
 - b. Location (Grant program)
 - c. Important to be able to walk/bike to the program
 - d. Open environment (All in one place) – Encourages interaction

- II. Programs
 - a. Exercise programs
 - b. Card playing/games
 - c. Access to speakers/lessons (Diversity of the programs and activities)
 - d. Program and activity costs are minimal and non-restrictive at Grant Senior Program
 - e. Snacks/food available
 - f. Appreciate heart of the volunteers
 - g. Grant Park Senior Program
 - h. Book Club
 - i. Diversity of classes
 - j. Conversations like this as a way to communicate to City Council

- III. Social
 - a. Support for each other
 - b. Community building that occurs as a result of the programs
 - c. Love the welcoming feeling at Grant Program
 - d. Encouraging volunteerism
 - e. Friendships
 - f. Seniors need a set plan/program available and these programs make this available

SUGGESTIONS

- IV. Facilities
 - a. Remember that we are talking about what works into the future not just today
 - b. Facility – Oven and acoustic improvements at Grant
 - c. City should consult the volunteers on facility improvements

- V. Programs
 - a. Establishing and maintaining a way seniors can communicate with Council on a regular basis (Increase communication)
 - b. Principles of independence, transparency/accountability (producing results) and simplicity (don't do in two steps what can be accomplished in one)
 - c. Lower costs to reduce the barriers to participation
 - d. Update the website
 - e. Don't duplicate programming
 - f. Carpool to take advantage of other programs
 - g. Growing in steps to accommodate more days and people
 - h. Child day care for seniors who take care of their grandchildren

- VI. Social
 - a. Transportation affects the closeness of the local community by spreading things out
 - b. Focus on needs of the individual neighborhood
 - c. Transportation – Expands social interaction of seniors

Attendance = 65

HILLVIEW COMMUNITY CENTER – January 15, 2016

LIKES

- I. Facilities
 - a. Hillview location
 - b. Smaller, more personable facility
 - c. Parking is flat

- II. Programs
 - a. Services such as Tax Prep and Smart Driver
 - b. Adult Ed/Rec Classes/Speakers
 - c. Bocce Ball
 - d. Exercise for all

- III. Social
 - a. Socialization
 - b. Communication
 - c. Women's and men's groups to discuss current affairs
 - d. Everyone gets to know you

SUGGESTIONS

- I. Facilities
 - a. Facility – Exercise opportunities in a mirrored room
 - b. Facility – Nature incorporated into the facility
 - i. Walking path
 - ii. Space for meditation
 - c. Facility – Address the parking situation with hiking groups
 - d. Facility – Level this building
 - e. Adult-sized toilets
 - f. Spruce up the Hillview Center
 - g. Improvements done at Hillview should be done at Grant if possible

- II. Programs
 - a. Pricing analysis/sensitivity
 - b. Dance programs
 - c. Shuttle service
 - d. Keeping cost minimal
 - e. Make refreshments available
 - f. More information on Senior Center

- g. Bring in teens to work with seniors for technology education
 - h. More interface with children (e.g. Mentor-tutor Connection)
 - i. Reduction of non-resident membership
 - j. Program descriptions in the Activity Guide needs improvement to make them more exciting
 - k. Put a link to the Spotlight in the Town Crier
 - l. Medical check-ups/screening
 - i. Blood Pressure
 - ii. Audiology
 - iii. Podiatry
 - m. LAHS Eagle Card equivalent for seniors
 - n. Automation of check-in/check out
- III. Social
- a. Awareness of volunteer opportunities
 - b. Warmth and relationships are important
 - c. Email to seniors regarding programs

Attendance = 46
