



CITY OF RANCHO PALOS VERDES

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR & CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

FROM: JOEL ROJAS, AICP, DIRECTOR OF PLANNING, BUILDING AND
CODE ENFORCEMENT

DATE: JULY 7, 2009

SUBJECT: PROPOSAL FOR RESTRUCTURING THE EQUESTRIAN
COMMITTEE.

REVIEWED: CAROLYN LEHR, CITY MANAGER

Project Manager: Leza Mikhail, Associate Planner

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Council: 1) sunset the present Equestrian Committee; 2) direct Staff to select three members for a new advisory ad-hoc committee from a list of volunteers obtained through a new open-recruitment process and advise the City Council of the identity of the individuals who have been selected; 3) transfer the permit review activity dictated by the Development Code from the current Equestrian Committee to the Planning Commission.

BACKGROUND

On June 30, 2009, the City Council passed a motion (4-0, with Councilmember Gardiner absent) adopting Staff's Recommendation including the appointment of three Committee Members to the Ad-Hoc Committee, with staff to return with a status update to Council in January 2010; and the appointments to be made at the July 7, 2009 Council Meeting.

DISCUSSION

As directed by the Council on June 30th, Staff anticipated bringing the list of Ad-Hoc Committee candidates back to the City Council on July 7, 2009 for the appointment of the new Equestrian Ad-Hoc Committee. However the City Attorney has raised legal issues regarding the structuring of said Ad-Hoc Committee. Specifically, the City Attorney believes that if it is the Council's intent to appoint a new committee to function on equestrian related issues on as-needed basis, it will be a formal City committee that is subject to the Brown Act. Staff believes that it is the City Council's intent that members of the City's equestrian community should be available to consult with Staff on an informal basis regarding issues

affecting equestrian's, such as the location of trails, as an example. Accordingly, Staff is recommending that the City Council modify the following directions, which were given at the City Council's June 30th meeting.

One, is to delete the requirement for a formal work plan, as was previously identified by Staff, because having a formal "work plan" without a sunset date for completion of the tasks, could create the impression that the committee is a formal "standing committee."

Two, the City Attorney is advising that the appointment of members to serve on the ad-hoc committee be done by Staff, rather than by the City Council. The reason for this recommendation is that appointment by the Council creates a City Committee, which requires formal noticed meetings in compliance with the Brown Act. Since the purpose of the Committee is to provide ad hoc advice and feedback to Staff on an as-needed basis, and not to make decisions on any policy or project, the City Attorney recommended that Staff select a three-person Committee from a list of volunteers. Staff also could replace a committee member from the list of volunteers, if the need arises. Staff will advise the City Council, as part of the weekly report, of the identity of the members of the Committee and of any replacements that occur.

On that note, since the list of current volunteers was obtained late last year, Staff is proposing that a new open-recruitment take place to try to get more volunteers to serve on this new staff-selected, committee.

Therefore, given the abovementioned issues raised by the City Attorney, Staff is recommending that the City Council adopt a new motion to supersede its previous June 30th motion on this matter. Specifically, Staff recommends that the City Council: 1) sunset the present Equestrian Committee; 2) direct Staff to select three members for a new advisory ad-hoc committee from a list of volunteers obtained through a new open-recruitment process, 3) transfer the large animal permit review process dictated by the Development Code from the current Equestrian Committee to the Planning Commission. Staff will advise the City Council in the weekly report of the names of the individuals who have been chosen by Staff to serve on the Committee and of any replacements that occur.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF EQUESTRIAN AD-HOC COMMITTEE

As discussed in the June 30th Staff Report, there are advantages to forming an Equestrian Advisory Ad-Hoc Committee in place of a City Council-standing Equestrian Committee. The most notable advantage is the ability to allow Staff to utilize an Ad-Hoc Committee on an as-needed basis for feedback on proposed public and private projects. In addition, an Ad-Hoc Committee format provides more flexibility for obtaining advice because it eliminates the need for formal noticed committee meetings and also eliminates the potential for Brown Act violations.

Creating an Equestrian Advisory Ad-Hoc Committee would maintain a significant equestrian stakeholder group to provide input to the City, which is advantageous for many public and private projects that fall under the purview of various City Departments, including the Department of Public Works, the Department of Recreation and Parks and

the Department of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement. The creation of an Equestrian Advisory Ad-Hoc Committee would require the collaboration of all departments within the City to proactively utilize the Equestrian Advisory Ad-Hoc Committee for input whenever a project is proposed where equestrian related land uses exist or are being considered.

Therefore, creating an Equestrian Ad-Hoc Committee from a list of volunteers selected by Staff through an open-recruitment best suits the current needs of the City, while continuing to maintain a significant stakeholder group with respect to Equestrian Districts, equestrian trails and the potential development of an equestrian facility within Gateway Park.