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Headline

Sierra Madre, CA – City Commissions and Committees Tackle Numerous Projects

The Sierra Madre City Council and its appointed commissions and committees are hard at work tackling numerous projects important to the residents of Sierra Madre. The following is a brief list of many of the commissions and committees, their current projects and meeting information. The meetings are open to the public, and the public is encouraged to attend. For more information on any of the following, please visit the City's website at www.cityofsierramadre.com or call 626-355-7135.

The City Council recently appointed three temporary Committees, the Utility Users Tax (UUT) Oversight Committee, the Canyon Zone Committee and the General Plan Update Committee.

UUT Oversight Committee – Advisory to the City Council

The Committee met on Oct 22 and reviewed the unaudited financial reports as they relate to the Utility User Tax collection and the Public Safety budget expenditures for FY 2008-09. At the meeting, the Committee gave its concurrence regarding the proper use of the new UUT revenues for the fiscal year that ended on June 30, 2009. This means that the Committee has preliminarily determined that the voter approved increase in the UUT was used in conformance with the voter approved advisory measure that specified the voters' preference that the increased UUT revenues be used for Public Safety Services. The Committee deferred issuing its final report until the City's audit report is completed. The next meeting is scheduled for January, the 28th at 6:30 pm. in the City Hall Council Chambers.

Canyon Zone Committee – Advisory to the Planning Commission and City Council

The Canyon Zone Committee is developing new zoning standards that would pertain to the Canyon area, thereby replacing the current R-1 zoning standards that currently apply. A construction moratorium is currently in place while the new zoning standards are being developed, due to concerns that development in the Canyon might not be complementary with the unique residential character and rustic setting of the Canyon. Issues such as building massing, lot coverage, building floor area, height, setbacks, and parking are being addressed. The Canyon Zone Committee is currently working on drafting the proposed new standards, and meets every 3rd Tuesday of the month, at 7:00 pm in the City Hall Council Chambers. In addition, a Community Input meeting is planned for January 2009.

General Plan Update Committee – Advisory to the Planning Commission and City Council

This Committee's role is to update the City's 1996 General Plan. The General Plan is a long-range planning document. It provides the City with a framework for action and the direction in which to focus that action. The General Plan is a visionary document and a road map for the next 10 to 20 years; it sets the policy agenda for land-use development, transportation, energy conservation, parks, public services, and shapes future budget decisions and allocation of City services. As possible tasks, the Committee will be asked to develop an overall vision for the future of Sierra Madre, priorities for development within the community, and other land use goals, policies, and objectives. The first meeting will be held on November 17, at 5:30 p.m. The regular meeting date will be determined in the near future, but is anticipated to occur on the first Tuesday of each month, at 6:30 pm in the City Hall Council Chambers.

In addition to the committee above, the City has a number of standing Commissions that are also busy tackling important community projects.

Planning Commission – *Advisory to the City Council*

This Commission is responsible for reviewing project applications regarding land use and zoning matters, i.e., variances, development plans, conditional use permits, historically significant homes and landmarks, and associated environmental documents such as environmental impact reports (EIRs), for their compliance with local zoning code and the City's General Plan. The Commission recently revised and updated the commercial zone, identifying the allowable uses and permit requirements for the downtown area. The Commission is currently updating the R-1 (single-family residential) zone, identifying current development standards that have been proven to be problematic or unclear, and amending such standards with the goals of improving the quality of life for Sierra Madre residents. The Planning Commission regularly meets every 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month at 7:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers.

Senior Community Commission – *Advisory to the City Council*

This Commission assists in identifying the need for services and amenities that will enrich the quality of life, provide information and education, and support the emotional and physical needs of seniors in Sierra Madre. The Commission has accomplished some of the goals in the 2007 Senior Master Plan through new exercise programs, organizing monthly excursions, hosting special luncheons and collaborating with local organizations for their Lunch & Learn series. The Senior Community Commission regularly meets on the 1st Thursday of every month at 3 pm in the City Hall Council Chambers.

Tree Advisory Commission – *Advisory to the City Council*

The Tree Advisory Commission conducts a monthly review of the City of Sierra Madre's Urban Forest and construction projects that may affect Sierra Madre's protected tree species. The Commission has also embarked on developing tree care educational materials for distribution throughout the community, and identifying street tree planting palettes for various Sierra Madre neighborhoods. A Commission sub-committee will soon be formed to evaluate and recommend amendments to the City's Tree Ordinance. The Tree Advisory Commission regularly meets the third Wednesday of the month at 7:00 pm in the City Hall Council Chambers.

Community Arts Commission – *Advisory to the City Council*

The Commission is charged with approving any public art through the Arts in Public Places Program. The Commission is currently focused on forming a "Friend of the Arts" group. The Commission regularly meets the second Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m.

Art Review Board – *Advisory to the Community Arts Commission*

The Art Review Board is responsible for reviewing artwork and making recommendations to the Community Arts Commission regarding the artwork to be included in public art displays in City Hall. The current exhibit, *Flowers*, is by local artists Igor de Kansky, Carolyn Gravatte, Myra Epstein, and Jane Sameth Fishman. This exhibition will run through November 13th. The next exhibit will be selected for January 2010. The exhibit is accessible for viewing during City Hall's regular business hours.

Friends of the Arts

The Friends of the Arts group is being created to promote the community's interest in, awareness of, and appreciation for the arts; to provide support and encouragement to artists living in the community; and to increase the community's participation in the arts. The Friends of the Arts group will host events such as the Open Studio Tour in June and the Jazz and Poetry appreciation events in April. The Arts Commission will be meeting to develop by-laws for this new group on November 19 at 7:00 p.m. in the Hart Park House.

Community Services Commission – *Advisory to the City Council*

The Community Services Commission is responsible for overseeing the City's recreation and community services programs. The Commission oversees the general use of park facilities and matters relating to the community's recreational and service needs. The Commission recently re-established a transportation ad-hoc committee, is working on water conservation awareness programs, approved a new Middle School Co-ed Intramural Sports Program, and approved concept plans for renovations of the Sierra Madre Room and Hart Park House. The Commission regularly meets the third Monday of the month at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers.

Transportation Ad-hoc Committee – *Advisory to the Community Services Commission*

The Transportation Ad-hoc Committee was recently reinstated by the Community Services Commission through a request by the Senior Community Commission. The Committee will review the City provided transit services, with an emphasis on the senior community. At its November 16, 2009 meeting, the Community Services Commission will define the scope of this committee and approve the process for appointment to the committee. The regular meeting date and time have not yet been determined.

SMTV3 / Cable Programming Committee – Advisory to the Community Services Commission

This Committee meets once a month to work with staff and the Community Media of the Foothills to provide informational, educational and enlightening programs to the City's Community Television Station. This year, the Committee was able to ramp up its efforts and was able to present rebroadcasts of the City's famed 4th of July Parade, Little League Championship and Closing Day Ceremonies, an overview of the City's weekly Farmer's Market, and the Arts Commission's Open Studio Tour. Plans are in the works to cover some of this year's holiday celebrations including an expanded documentary-style presentation on Sierra Madre's annual self-built Rose Parade Float entry. Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of the month at 7:30 am at the Community Recreation Center.

Mount Wilson Trail Race Committee – Advisory to the Community Services Commission

This Committee of close to 30 volunteers organizes one of the City's most popular annual events. Each year 325 runners race approximately 8.6 miles to Orchard Camp and back to Kersting Court. Other related race-day events include the Pasta Feed, Kids Race, Art Show, and Beer Garden. This year's race will take place on May 29, 2009. The Committee will begin their month meetings on November 17 at 7:00 pm in the Hart Park House.

Library Board of Trustees – Advisory to the City Council

The Library Board of Trustees is responsible for adopting policies that guide the delivery of quality public library services to the community. The collection development (the selection and de-selection of library materials) policy was recently approved by the Board of Trustees on September 23, 2009. Trustees participate in planning and implementing library programs and services on behalf of the community by monitoring the Library Strategic Plan. Beginning in January 2010, Trustees will work with library staff to develop new goals and objectives related to the service responses adopted in the Sierra Madre Public Library Strategic Plan. The Trustees regularly meet the 4th Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. in the City Hall Conference Room.

Friends of the Library

The Friends of the Sierra Madre Library provides essential extra funding to supplement any allocated tax support for the Sierra Madre Public Library. The money raised by the Friends each year through membership dues, Best Used Book Sales, Wine and Cuisine Tasting and Art Fair is used for relevant resources, technologies and programs. The garden in front of the Library is enjoyed by the community today because of the Friends' efforts and donations in 2007. *Friends Partners*, is a new fundraising effort for donors who are willing to commit to an annual gift of \$100 or more. *Friends Partners* and the *Mary Tumilty Endowment Fund* make special unfunded projects possible. The Friends of the Library have an annual meeting June of each year.

There are plenty of interesting opportunities to get involved. If any of the Commission or Committee activities are of interest, please attend a meeting, or call City Hall at 626-355-7135.

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