



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION REPORT

AGENDA DATE: April 23, 2008

TO: Parks and Recreation Commission

FROM: Teen Programs, Parks and Recreation Department

SUBJECT: Proposed Social Host Ordinance

RECOMMENDATION: That Commission hears a report from staff regarding a Proposed Social Host Ordinance under consideration by the City Council Ordinance Committee.

DISCUSSION:

The Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention (ADAP) Teen Coalition, in conjunction with Council on Drug and Alcohol (CADA) Fighting Back's Public Policy Task Force, Friday Night Live, Future Leaders of America, and the Santa Barbara Youth Council is advocating for passage of a Social Host Ordinance in the City of Santa Barbara.

Background and Accomplishments

The ADAP Teen Coalition, supported by a grant from the County of Santa Barbara Alcohol, Drug, and Mental Health Services for the past five years, has worked to reduce underage drinking in the City of Santa Barbara, generally through education and environmental prevention. Their focus has ranged from gathering local drug and alcohol data to youth access to alcohol in the retail environment. Currently, their focus has been on public policy.

As part of this focus, the ADAP Teen Coalition has partnered with several other agencies, including Fighting Back's Public Policy Task Force, Future Leaders of America, Friday Night Live/Club Live, the Santa Barbara Police Department, and the Santa Barbara Youth Council. With their partners, the ADAP Teen Coalition has performed an extensive review, conducted research, and gathered support for a Social Host Ordinance in the City of Santa Barbara. This research has included Peer Focus Groups conducted by ADAP Teen Coalition members at 4 middle and high schools. It was found that over 90% of the students said that 'home' was the number 1 place to get and consume alcohol, and 80% saw a direct connection between underage drinking and youth violence. The research also included gathering data from other cities and counties with existing ordinances, including the County of Ventura, and cities of Carpinteria and Santa Maria.

Underage drinking costs the nation at least \$53 billion a year, mostly because of traffic deaths and violent crimes, according to a 2003 report by the National Research Council's Institute of Medicine. The report, which urged communities to hold hosts

accountable for teen drinking, was a catalyst for many recent Social Host Ordinances. Most cities have focused on the civil liability and have been successful.

Social Host Ordinance

Purchase, possession, or consumption of alcohol by minors in public or commercial settings is already prohibited under state law. However, state law does not prohibit youth consumption of alcohol on private property. A Social Host Ordinance is a law that holds non-commercial individuals responsible for underage drinking at parties, on property they own, lease, or otherwise control. Establishing a Social Host Ordinance can fill the gap in the law by providing law enforcement a tool to help address the problem of underage drinking. It allows law enforcement to pro-actively look at underage drinking at private parties and allows an officer to cite responsible hosts before a party becomes unruly. This ordinance also gives the police an additional tool to remind "hosts" of the ramifications of underage drinking at their party. Currently, officers can only address parties that are unruly or violate the City's noise ordinance. Included in the ordinance, would be exceptions in any such ordinance to protect family, cultural, and religious events where parents or guardians give their permission for their children to take part in events which may involve the consumption of alcohol.

On November 5, 2007, the Santa Barbara Youth Council held a workshop on the Social Host Ordinance. It was the unanimous decision of the Youth Council to endorse the proposed Ordinance and join the ADAP Teen Coalition to recommend that this matter be submitted to the City's Ordinance Committee with the following recommendations:

- That there is an educational component to the ordinance in lieu of paying the fine.
- That a portion of any paid fine goes to supporting teen prevention programs and services
- That youth are intricately involved in the drafting of the ordinance and the educational component.
- That an awareness campaign is undertaken to educate the community about the new ordinance.

On April 8, 2008, Teen Programs, Santa Barbara Youth Council and ADAP gave a presentation to City Council regarding the Social Host Ordinance. The Council unanimously approved the recommendation to direct staff to submit a proposed Social Host Ordinance to the Ordinance Committee for consideration and return with a recommendation to Council. It was also recommended that a Santa Barbara Youth Council and ADAP member serve on the Ordinance Committee during meetings when the ordinance was being discussed. It is expected to take a few months to complete the draft ordinance.

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