
Citizens' Advisory Committee

Memo-24-23

Meeting SP 24-04

September 23, 2024

To: Citizens' Advisory Committee

From: Gavin Comstock, Volunteer Program Administrator

Subject: Citizens' Advisory Committee Outreach Training: Preparing Citizens' Advisory Committee Members to Engage a Diverse Public in Diverse Settings

REVENUE/COST

There is no cost associated with this informational item.

BACKGROUND

The Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) responded to the Volunteer Education and Training team (VETs) requests for outreach help this past summer and fall. CAC members were effective agency representatives for National Night Out, the Mid-Autumn Moon Festival at the Vietnamese American Services Center, and several Viva Parks summer events with the City of San José. The response to the agency's call to action contributed to the Authority's ability to reach more of the public than staff alone. This success is something staff want to build on, as outreach and engagement are central to the role the CAC are designed to play through their scope, outlined in the Board Policy BRD-022 - CAC Handbook of Guidelines and Responsibilities, for the organization.

DISCUSSION

The VETs team invites all members of the CAC to attend two enriching events this fall. On September 28, there is a Volunteer Appreciation event at Tilton Ranch from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and the Authority would love to see CAC members join staff. Second, the VETs team invites all members of the CAC to attend Interpretive Host Training on one of two upcoming dates this fall, towards the goal of being a well-known, publicly engaged organization. This training is designed to prepare all interested individuals to discuss the work, impact, and long-term goals of the Open Space Authority in a diverse array of settings, with equally diverse audiences.

Staff foresee an increased number of events in the coming years that will require a growing pool of informed and engaged volunteers to represent the Authority's work. The VETs team has active recruitment plans to attract new volunteers and prepare them to represent the agency in public. As part of the volunteer community, the CAC is an invaluable group of agency ambassadors that staff would like to prepare for active service at future outreach events.

The Interpretive Host Training is designed as the foundation for all volunteers. This 2.5-hour training, hosted at the Tilton Ranch complex, provides valuable interpretive skills and techniques to prepare

volunteers to adapt to their audience while sharing about agency work in public settings. This training will enable CAC members to create meaningful engagement opportunities that establish valuable emotional and intellectual connections to the agency's work with their audience. This training will take place on November 16, 2024, and again in January of 2025 (staff will confirm the date of training by the next CAC meeting in November) and all members of the CAC are cordially invited to attend. Staff have previously offered this training to all new field staff, board members, and new volunteers. All of them have shared their appreciation and vocalized that they feel much better equipped for public engagement after the training.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommend that Citizens' Advisory Committee members join either of the two upcoming trainings to learn valuable engagement strategies to help promote the Authority's mission.