



STAGE COACH EXPERES

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CITY COUNCIL SEEKS INPUT ON CITY CHARTER MEASURE

Over the past year, the City Council has studied whether to place a measure on the ballot to adopt a city charter. Before making a final decision, they have initiated a comprehensive public participation process to obtain as much public input as possible.

As a result, the City Council recently appointed an 11-member City Charter Advisory Committee to develop recommendations on what to include in a city charter and whether to proceed to place the measure on the ballot. The City Charter Advisory Committee began meeting in March.

In California, there are two types of cities – general law and charter. The authority of a general law city is derived entirely from powers granted to it by the State Legislature and the State Constitution. Arroyo Grande is currently a general law city.

A charter is a set of bylaws, which acts as a local constitution for the city. The California Constitution grants charter cities with authority over what are determined to be “municipal affairs,” thereby strengthening their home rule. A charter may only be adopted or changed by a majority vote at an election.

There are over 120 charter cities in California, which is more than 25%. More and more cities are pursuing charters given the financial challenges and actions by the State to usurp local control. It can help cities better manage their financial resources by providing increased local control from the State and the ability to establish local contracting and purchasing policies. Additional authority provided to the City is limited to those items set forth in the Charter, which is one of the reasons it is important for the public to be involved in the process so the charter reflects those areas determined appropriate by the community.

City Charter Advisory Committee meetings are open to the public. The City will also be utilizing social media, surveys and other opportunities to request feedback and opinions from the public. For information about meeting times and dates, please contact the City’s website at www.arroyogrande.org or call City Hall at 473-5400.

PUBLIC MEETINGS ONLINE

The City of Arroyo Grande has expanded its commitment to open government and transparency by implementing online video streaming for televised public meetings. Gavel-to-gavel coverage of regular City Council and Planning Commission meetings are now streamed live, archived online and available via on-demand playback on the City’s website.

This feature will also make it more convenient for the public to access discussion of specific items of interest. Meeting video can be viewed by agenda item by clicking on associated links without having to watch the entire meeting. To view meeting archives, visit www.arroyogrande.org/calendar/archives/. In addition, recorded meetings continue to be televised and replayed on Charter Communications Channel 20.

For further information, please contact the City Clerk’s Office at 473-5400.

AMGEN TOUR OF CALIFORNIA COMING TO ARROYO GRANDE

Local residents will have a unique opportunity to witness professional world class cycling up close. The Amgen Tour will be coming to Arroyo Grande on Thursday, May 16th. Riders will enter the City traveling north on Valley Road, will turn right on Fair Oaks Avenue in front of the Arroyo Grande High School, followed by a left turn on Traffic Way before turning right onto East Branch Street for an exciting sprint through the Village. The cyclists will then continue out of town on Route 227 and conclude that day of competition at Avila Beach. They are projected to enter the City as early as 2:37 p.m. and complete the route through Arroyo Grande no later than 3:03 p.m.

The Amgen Tour of California is America’s most successful professional cycling race, an eight-day event featuring elite professional teams and athletes from around the world. The overall race includes nearly 800 miles of scenic California highways and roadways. The event will be broadcast live in the United States and other countries.

The Village will also feature special activities and entertainment following the race. Therefore, please look for more details as the event approaches. You may contact the City at 473-5400 or visit the Village Improvement Association’s website for activity information at www.arroyograndevillage.org.



WATER CONSERVATION INCENTIVES

With the summer months approaching, it is a great time to implement water conservation measures in order to reduce your water costs. The City continues to offer a plumbing retrofit program for eligible homes, which includes installation of low-flow toilets, faucet aerators, shower heads and pressure regulators. Participants have been very pleased with the high quality fixtures. The City also provides smart irrigation controllers and rebates for washing machines and replacement of turf with drought tolerant landscaping. The program has saved over 159 acre feet of water per year!

Contact City Hall at 473-5400 for more information.



PREVENT BLOCKED SEWER LINES

Fats, oils, and grease (FOG) are comprised of animal and vegetable fats and oils that are used to cook and prepare food. Common sources include food scraps, meat fats, cooking oils, lard, baked goods, salad dressings, sauces, marinades, dairy products, shortening, butter, and margarine.

These products and foods should never be poured down the drain. FOG does not mix with water and solidifies and floats on top of the other liquid in the sewer pipes when it cools. The layer of FOG then sticks to the sewer pipes, which causes build-up in the sewer main lines or your sewer service lateral. This build-up requires pipes to be cleaned more frequently, causes pipes to be replaced sooner than expected, and causes blockages, which may result in a sewer overflow.

You can help prevent FOG build-up in the sewer by:

- Never pouring FOG down the sink;
- Pouring all FOG into a disposable, sealable container, such as a jar or coffee can, and disposing of it in the trash; and
- Dry wiping dishes with paper towels before washing them.

Contact the Public Works Department at 473-5460 with questions on FOG or sewer maintenance.

COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENT CUSTOMER SERVICE

The City is fortunate to have outstanding and dedicated employees, who are committed to providing the best possible service to the community. In response to the recent update of the City's Economic Development Element, the City is undertaking a comprehensive effort to further improve its customer service. The overall goals are to enhance the customer's experience, encourage investment, and to provide a level of service that can be marketed as a reason to do business in the City of Arroyo Grande.

All City Hall employees have been involved in a series of meetings to develop new ideas on how to meet these objectives and help ensure those visiting City Hall have a positive experience. Other City departments are also conducting similar efforts.

Processes and systems are being simplified and standardized. This assists applicants, while also reducing staff time and increasing efficiency. Codes, forms and regulations are being revised. Permit application tracking and the business license process are being automated. Staff coordination meetings have been increased to ensure timely and coordinated responses to plan check items. New equipment will be purchased to provide customers easy access to information at the public counter. Efforts are also under way to provide more remote access to important data.

Full implementation of the recommendations will take up to two years so the benefits of this effort will be an ongoing process. However, the City is confident that customers will already begin to see results.

In the meantime, please share your feedback and ideas. Customer service surveys are available at the City Hall counter. During the upcoming year, the City has proposed to initiate an annual citywide citizen survey to measure performance and seek citizen input on important issues. The City appreciates your input. City Hall can be contacted at 473-5400. You can also provide your feedback by sending an e-mail to agcity@arroyogrande.org.

SUMMER RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

The City is offering a wide variety of summer recreation programs for children and adults. Summer playground and daycare programs run June 12th through August 9th, including fun filled activities for children ages 5 to 13. Everyone is invited to attend the Annual Summer Carnival on Friday, August 9th from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Elm Street Park

Registration for adult softball runs through May 17th for returning teams and May 19th – 24th for new teams. Slow Pitch Men's, Women's, Church, and Coed divisions are being offered with games scheduled from June 3rd through the end of August. Registration for adult basketball will take place through May 10th for returning teams and May 13th – 17th for new teams. Games will be played May 27th – August 19th for men's Upper, Middle, Lower and Over 40 divisions.

The 14th annual Father/Daughter Date Night is scheduled for Friday, May 24th at the South County Regional Center. The evening includes dinner dancing, contests and crowning of king and princess awards. Tickets are \$45 per couple.

Contact the Recreation Services Department at 473-5474 for more information.



POLICE DEPARTMENT RECEIVES ANTI-HATE AWARD

The Arroyo Grande Police Department was selected to receive the prestigious *Helene & Joseph Sherwood Family Prize for Combating Hate* by the Anti-Defamation League at an awards ceremony held on March 12th at the Skirball Cultural Center in Los Angeles. The Police Department has been selected along with the San Luis Obispo County District Attorney's Office for the investigation and prosecution of the cross burning incident in 2011. They were selected from many nominations received throughout Southern California by the distinguished Sherwood Prize Selection Committee. The Sherwood Prize was created in 1996 by Joe and Helene Sherwood to recognize those in the law enforcement community that go above and beyond their job descriptions in combating extremism, bigotry and hatred.