

**MINUTES OF AN ADJOURNED REGULAR  
MEETING OF THE TORRANCE CITY COUNCIL**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Torrance City Council convened in a regular session at 7:07 p.m. on Tuesday, May 18, 1999, in the City Council Chambers at Torrance City Hall.

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Councilmembers Cribbs, Horwich, Lee, Messerlian, O'Donnell, Walker and Mayor Hardison.

Absent: None.

Also Present: City Manager Jackson, City Attorney Fellows, City Clerk Herbers, and other staff representatives.

**2. FLAG SALUTE/ INVOCATION**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Ruben Ordaz of Del Amo Homeowners Association.

Reverend Eric Hoey, South Bay Presbyterian Church, gave the invocation for the meeting.

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Mayor Hardison asked that the meeting be adjourned in memory of former Torrance Police Chief Walter R. Koenig, who headed the department from 1964 to 1969, and former Police Explorer Captain Deborah Swensson.

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**3. AFFIDAVIT OF POSTING/WAIVE FURTHER READING**

**MOTION:** Councilman Lee moved to accept and file the report of the City Clerk on the posting of the agenda for this meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Cribbs and, there being no objection, it was so ordered by Mayor Hardison.

**MOTION:** Councilman Lee moved that after the City Clerk has read aloud the number and title to any resolution or ordinance on the meeting agenda, the further reading thereof shall be waived, reserving and guaranteeing to each Councilmember the right to demand the reading of any such resolution or ordinance in regular order. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Cribbs and, there being no objection, it was so ordered by Mayor Hardison.

**4. WITHDRAWN/DEFERRED ITEMS**

None.

**5. COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**City Yard Open House**

Saturday, May 22, 1999, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.  
20500 Madrona Avenue  
Demonstrations, Displays, Refreshments, Giveaways

**Multicultural Celebration –“A Quilt of Many Colors”**

Saturday, May 22, 1999, 10:00a.m. – 4:00 p.m.  
Torrance Cultural Arts Center  
Cultural Displays, Live Entertainment

**Budget Workshop**

Wednesday, June 2, 1999, 5:30 p.m.  
Council Chambers – City Hall  
3031 Torrance Boulevard

Mayor Hardison announced that the Budget Workshop scheduled for May 26, 1999, had been postponed to June 2, 1999; that a second Budget Workshop will be held on June 8, 1999, 5:30 p.m.; and that Budget Hearings are scheduled for June 8 and June 15, 1999 as part of the regular City Council meetings.

**6. COMMUNITY MATTERS**

**6a. PROCLAMATION RE “NATIONAL PUBLIC WORKS WEEK**

Mayor Hardison presented a proclamation declaring the week of May 16 through May 22, 1999, as “Public Works Week” in the City of Torrance to Richard Burtt, Engineering Director; Brooks Bell, Street Services Director; and Gene Barnett, Parks and Recreation Director. Mr. Burtt invited everyone to attend the City Yard Open House on Saturday, May 22, 1999.

Mr. Alan Lee, President of AFSCME Local 1117, commented on those who staff public works positions.

**6b. PROCLAMATION RE “WORLD TRADE WEEK”**

Mayor Hardison presented a proclamation declaring the week of May 16 through May 22, 1999, as “World Trade Week” in the City of Torrance to MARRITTA FONG, Chair of the International Business Committee, Torrance Area Chamber of Commerce. Ms. Fong extended an invitation for residents to attend the Chamber of Commerce’s International Trade Exhibition and Reception on Wednesday, May 19, 1999, at the Torrance Marriott.

**7. CONSENT CALENDAR**

**7a. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – APRIL 20, 1999**

**7b. YOUTH COUNCIL DONATION RE “BEAT THE ODDS” SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

**Recommendation**

The Torrance Youth Council recommends that City Council approve a \$5,000 donation from the Youth Council Donation Fund to five “Beat the Odds” honorees and authorize the Finance Director to issue the warrants.

**7c. YOUTH COUNCIL DONATIONS RE YOUTH IN GOVERNMENT PROGRAM, COORDINATING COUNCIL, AND PALS THERAPEUTIC PROGRAM**

**Recommendation**

The Torrance Youth Council recommends that City Council approve a \$3,000 donation from the Torrance Youth Council Donation Fund in the following amounts:

- 1) \$1,000 to the YMCA Youth in Government Program;
- 2) \$1,000 to the Torrance Coordinating Council; and
- 3) \$1,000 to the PALS Therapeutic Recreation Program.

**7d. 1998 NON-PROFIT SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCY GRANT REPORTS**

**Recommendation**

The Community Services Commission and the Parks and Recreation Director recommend that City Council accept and file the Narrative and Financial Reports from Behavioral Health Services, Inc., Community Helpline, Inc., Enrichment Through Employment, My Handi-Capable Reporter, Retired & Senior Volunteer Program, South Bay Post-Polio Support Group, South Bay School for Autism, St. Paul’s United Methodist Church, AIDS Heartline, Torrance-Lomita Meals on Wheels, and the Volunteer Center South Bay/Harbor/Long Beach for grants received from the City’s 1998 Grant Program for Non-Profit Social Service Agencies.

**7e. CHANGE ORDER RE TREE REMOVAL AND PLANTING PURCHASE ORDER**

**Recommendation**

The Street Services Director recommends that City Council authorize a change order to Purchase Order #74793 with West Coast Arborists, Inc. for \$25,000 for tree removal through the end of August 1999.

**7f. PURCHASE ORDER RE CULTURAL ARTS CENTER CARPETING**

**Recommendation**

The General Services Director recommends that City Council award a purchase order in the amount of \$51,459.60 to Fred’s Rug Service for the purchase and installation of carpet at the City Yard Lunch Room, Telecommunications Center, Cultural Arts Center Theatre and Cultural Arts Center Meeting Hall.

**7g. CONTRACT RE CITY YARD SECURITY**

**Recommendation**

The General Services Director recommends that City Council award a contract to Wells Fargo Guard Services for a four-month period at a cost not to exceed \$28,000.

**MOTION:** Councilwoman O'Donnell moved for the approval of the Consent Calendar as written. The motion was seconded by Councilman Walker and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Referring to Consent Calendar Items 7b and 7c, Councilwoman O'Donnell called attention to the Youth Council's donations to the "Beat the Odds" Scholarship Program, YMCA Youth in Government Program, Torrance Coordination Council and PALS Therapeutic Recreation Program, noting that there are a lot of young people in the community doing wonderful things.

**9. PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**9a. VACATION OF SERVICE ROAD – SOUTH SIDE OF PACIFIC COAST HWY.**

**Recommendation**

The Engineering Director recommends that City Council approve and adopt a resolution declaring its intention to vacate a portion of the service road on the south side of Pacific Coast Highway east of Crenshaw Boulevard and setting July 13, 1999 as the date of the hearing thereon.

**RESOLUTION NO. 99-51**

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TORRANCE DECLARING ITS INTENTION TO VACATE A PORTION OF THE SERVICE ROAD ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY EAST OF CRENSHAW BOULEVARD IN THE CITY OF TORRANCE; FIXING A TIME AND PLACE FOR THE HEARING THEREON AND PROVIDING FOR THE PUBLICATION OF THIS RESOLUTION

**MOTION:** Councilman Messerlian moved for the adoption of Resolution No. 99-51. The motion was seconded by Councilman Horwich and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

**9b. PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS TO DEL AMO BOULEVARD**

**Recommendation**

The Planning Director recommends that City Council;

- 1) Deny a request to install a traffic signal at Wayne Ave. and Del Amo Blvd.;
- 2) Approve the modification of striping on Del Amo Blvd. to one lane in either direction with a bicycle lane;
- 3) Authorize the installation of a pedestrian cross-walk and traffic signal with pedestrian actuation at Del Amo Blvd. and Redbeam Ave.;
- 4) Install guardrail in the public right-of-way on the southwest corner of the intersection of Wayne Ave. and Del Amo Blvd.

Councilman Horwich announced that he would not be participating in consideration of this matter because he resides within 300 feet of the subject area and exited Council Chambers.

In a slide presentation, Traffic and Transportation Planning Manager Buchman provided background information, outlined the results of a traffic study conducted at Del Amo Boulevard and Wayne Avenue, and presented staff's recommendations for modifications to Del Amo Boulevard and their estimated cost.

Responding to Councilwoman Cribb's inquiry, Ms. Buchman confirmed that the traffic study was conducted during the summer, but advised that staff believes the additional traffic generated while school is in session would not reach a level that would justify the signalization of the intersection of Del Amo Boulevard and Wayne Avenue.

Mayor Hardison pointed out that a small stretch of Del Amo Boulevard before it reaches Prospect Avenue is in Redondo Beach and questioned if this section would remain four lanes. Ms. Buchman advised that the City of Redondo Beach was aware of the proposed restriping plan and should the plan be approved, an orderly transition would be worked out.

In response to Mayor Hardison's inquiry, Planning Director Gibson reported on the potential development of the oil site at Del Amo Boulevard and Redbeam Avenue.

Mayor Hardison expressed support for the installation of a guardrail on the southwest corner of Wayne Avenue and Del Amo Boulevard, noting the unfortunate accidents that had occurred at the intersection. She related her understanding that a safer way was needed for pedestrians to cross at Wayne Avenue and Del Amo Boulevard, stated that she did not believe that installing a traffic signal at Redbeam Avenue and Del Amo Boulevard would accomplish this goal, and requested information regarding the option of installing an enhanced pedestrian crosswalk at Wayne Avenue.

Ms. Buchman provided clarification of staff's rationale for recommending the installation of a signal at Redbeam Avenue.

Mr. Mark Miller, Vice President of Albert Grover & Associates, traffic consultants for the project, explained that the enhanced crosswalk referred to in the staff report utilizes flashing LED lights embedded in the pavement which are activated when a pedestrian steps onto the crosswalk and would cost approximately \$15,000.

Mayor Hardison invited public comment.

Ms. June Horwich, 5537 Michelle Drive, stated that the traffic study that was done is seriously flawed because much of the daily traffic involves children being taken, or driving themselves, to schools in the area, suggested that anyone making a decision regarding traffic on Del Amo Boulevard should observe it between 2:30 and 3:30 p.m., and noted the difficulty residents have turning onto Del Amo Boulevard from Wayne Avenue. Pointing out that the two serious accidents that precipitated the traffic study occurred in the early morning hours when there was almost no traffic, she maintained that the construction of a guardrail would be more effective in preventing this type of accident than the proposed restriping and that limiting traffic to one lane in each direction would result in traffic congestion rather than traffic calming. She expressed her opinion

that if a traffic signal is installed at Redbeam Avenue, pedestrians will still use Wayne Avenue to cross to Sunny Glen Park because it is more convenient.

Mr. Jon Ziegler, 19426 Mildred Avenue, voiced support for leaving Del Amo Boulevard as it is and enhancing the crosswalk at Wayne Avenue. He stated that narrowing the street to two lanes might actually increase accidents because of impatient drivers trying to turn onto Del Amo when there are no gaps in traffic and that he doubted residents would cross at Redbeam Avenue if a signal was installed there.

Mr. Al Hofer, 20013 Wayne Avenue, stated that the intersection of Wayne Avenue and Del Amo Boulevard is dangerous and a signal should be installed. He maintained that the modifications that were successfully implemented on Maple Avenue and 235<sup>th</sup> Street are not applicable to Del Amo Boulevard and it should remain a four-lane street.

Ms. Helen Horter, 20017 Wayne Avenue, estimated that the average speed on Del Amo Boulevard is close to 60 miles per hour and requested that the speed limit be lowered from 40 to 35 miles per hour and that a signal or a stop sign with a red blinking light be installed at the intersection of Del Amo Boulevard and Wayne Avenue. Mayor Hardison explained why the speed limit cannot be reduced.

Mr. James Clark, 19510 Tomlee Avenue, stated that staff had accurately concluded that the intersection of Wayne Avenue and Del Amo Boulevard was not an appropriate location for a traffic signal and expressed concerns that an enhanced crosswalk with flashing lights activated by pedestrians entering the crosswalk would not give motorists enough time to react and would give pedestrians a false sense of security. He voiced support for restriping Del Amo Boulevard for a six- to eight-month trial period with the option of returning the street to its prior configuration if at the end of that time, residents did not agree that the situation had improved. He related his understanding that the resident at the corner where the guardrail is to be installed would like it extended.

Mr. Walter Bacon, 20015 Redbeam Avenue, voiced his opposition to the staff recommendation. He commented on the difficulty he would have exiting his driveway should a traffic signal be installed at Redbeam Avenue and Del Amo Boulevard and related his observation that there is very little demand for a pedestrian crossing at that location.

Ms. Tillie Berger, 20109 Wayne Avenue, expressed support for installing a traffic signal at Wayne Avenue and Del Amo Boulevard and commented on traffic problems caused by sewer work currently underway on Del Amo Boulevard.

Mr. Jim Ecklund, 20124 Wayne Avenue, stated that he believes that safety should be the overriding consideration and that narrowing Del Amo Boulevard from two lanes to one would definitely slow traffic making it safer for everyone. He proposed implementing the restriping plan as soon as possible on a trial basis.

Ms. Frances Koo, 20114 Mildred Avenue, voiced concerns that allowing parking on Del Amo Boulevard would provide burglars with a convenient place to park getaway vehicles.

Mr. Keith Frazier, 19930 Mildred Avenue, stated that if Del Amo Boulevard is reduced to a single lane in each direction, a traffic light should be installed at Wayne Avenue because motorists will have a difficult time finding a gap in the traffic so they can turn onto Del Amo.

Ms. Jackie Caro, 20124 Wayne Avenue, submitted a petition in favor of the restriping plan, stating that she believes that speeding is a major problem in the neighborhood and that reducing the number of lanes will slow the flow of traffic.

Mr. Larry Nowak, 19902 Tomlee Avenue, agreed that speeding is a problem, voiced support for narrowing Del Amo Boulevard from four to two lanes, and suggested the possibility of creating dedicated merging lanes at the intersections of Wayne Avenue and Redbeam Avenue. He also suggested moving the entrance of Sunny Glen Park half a block for better visibility.

Mr. Ruben Ordaz, 2231 Del Amo Boulevard, stated that speeding is also a problem along his stretch of Del Amo Boulevard and asked that consideration be given to reducing it from four lanes to two from Van Ness to Western Avenue.

Addressing comments made by speakers, Ms. Buchman stated that it would be possible to modify the striping on Del Amo Boulevard on a trial basis, but indicated that a trial period of at least six months would be needed to accurately assess the situation; that a parking lane is not essential to the restriping plan and was not included in this presentation because of opposition voiced at the Traffic Commission meeting; that the traffic study was done in the summer because residents were adamant about wanting to expedite the process and the additional volume of school traffic was taken into consideration in the formulation of the traffic-calming strategy; and that staff was willing to explore the possibility of dedicated merging lanes.

Councilman Walker stated that he did not believe a valid comparison could be made with this area of Del Amo Boulevard and Maple Avenue/ 235<sup>th</sup> Street, although he has been pleasantly surprised at how well the restriping of that street has worked. Noting that several traffic signals have been installed in the City without meeting warrants, he voiced support for installing a signal at Wayne Avenue and Del Amo Boulevard and the guardrail at the southwest corner, and deferring action on the modification of the striping of Del Amo Boulevard until a later date.

**MOTION:** Councilman Walker moved to authorize the installation of a traffic signal at the intersection of Wayne Avenue and Del Amo Boulevard and a guardrail in the public right-of-way on the southwest corner of that intersection. The motion died for lack of a second.

A brief discussion ensued, and Councilmembers expressed their preference to authorize the installation of the guardrail immediately and to delay taking action on the rest of the recommendation until they receive additional information regarding the enhanced crosswalk with the imbedded flashing lights, the possibility of incorporating dedicated merging lanes into the restriping plan, and cost estimates and potential sources of funding. Mayor Hardison requested that another traffic study be conducted while school is still in session.

**MOTION:** Councilwoman Cribbs moved to authorize the installation of the guardrail in the public right-of-way on the southwest corner of the intersection of Wayne Avenue and Del Amo Boulevard. The motion was seconded by Councilman Messerlian and passed by unanimous roll call vote, with Councilman Horwich abstaining.

Mayor Hardison requested that staff confer with the residents of the home adjacent to the guardrail about its placement to ensure that their concerns are addressed.

The Council directed staff to return on June 22, 1999, with the requested information. Mayor Hardison announced that the item will not be readvertised.

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The Council recessed from 9:05 to 9:20 p.m., and Councilman Horwich returned to the dais.

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**10. PUBLIC SAFETY**

**10a. RENEWAL OF AMBULANCE SERVICE**

**Recommendation**

The Fire Chief recommends that City Council renew the City's ambulance service contract with Gerber Ambulance Service for an additional two years.

Councilwoman O'Donnell noted that she had had a recent experience involving Gerber Ambulance Service and was very pleased with the care rendered by attendants.

**MOTION:** Councilman Lee moved to concur with the staff recommendation. The motion was seconded by Councilman Walker and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

**11. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

**11a. TAXICAB ORDINANCE**

**Recommendation**

The Transportation Committee recommends that City Council adopt an ordinance repealing Article 17 of Chapter 3 of Division 3 of the Torrance Municipal Code relating to taxicabs and taxicab drivers, repealing Chapter 6 of Division 3 of the Torrance Municipal Code relating to taxicabs and other vehicles for hire, and adding a new Article 17 to Chapter 3 of Division 3 relating to taxicabs and vehicles for hire. The Transportation Committee further recommends that City Council approve the summary of the ordinance for publication.

**City Attorney Note**

The proposed ordinance refers to a fee resolution. The fee resolution will be brought forward at a later date, prior to the effective date of the ordinance.

Councilman Walker, Chair of the Transportation Committee, presented the Committee's recommendation and noted supplemental material available at the meeting consisting of an addendum to Section 3 of the proposed ordinance, a memo highlighting

the differences between the current taxi ordinance and the one proposed, and a table providing a comparison of taxi ordinances in several other municipalities.

In response to Mayor Hardison's inquiry, City Attorney Fellows provided clarification of the section in the proposed ordinance pertaining to the issuance of temporary permits following the expiration of the moratorium.

Mayor Hardison asked if the Committee had considered including in the ordinance a maximum number of taxis that may operate in the City at any one time, noting that a neighboring city had awarded the franchise to two different companies with a limit on the number of cabs each may operate. Councilman Walker explained that the Committee felt that the City's interests were best served by setting standards high enough so that only the best of the taxicab companies would be operating in the City and that the application process requires that companies demonstrate the need for additional taxicab service in the City.

Responding to questions from the Councilwoman Cribbs, Assistant Finance Director Flewellyn advised that he expects to have the permit fee structure in place within the next few weeks; that staff will be surveying fees in other cities and determining what job responsibilities are involved in administering the new licensing procedure; and that the fees will be the subject of a public hearing before they are enacted. Confirming that decals will be used to distinguish City-licensed taxis, he explained that the proposed ordinance requires that service operators provide maintenance records for their entire fleet, including Vehicle Identification Numbers (VIN) and license plate numbers, and that decals issued will be cross-referenced with this information.

Councilwoman Cribbs suggested factoring the cost of auditing and tracking decals, as well as spot-checking vehicles to ensure that they are properly equipped, into the permit fees.

City Attorney Fellows recommended that a random inspection provision be added to the ordinance.

For the benefit of the public, Councilwoman O'Donnell explained that the ordinance was revised to ensure that when residents call for taxi service, the taxis that respond are properly equipped and insured, and that the driver is appropriately licensed and has undergone a criminal background check.

Noting that the proposed ordinance increases the minimum fleet size from 15 to 50 taxicabs, Councilman Horwich questioned whether there would be a maximum fleet size. City Attorney Fellows stated that the increase in minimum fleet size was recommended because the Committee believed that larger service operators would probably have more sophisticated maintenance functions and dispatch centers, and would provide a higher quality of service. He noted that all 50 taxicabs would not have to be dedicated to Torrance.

Councilman Messerlian explained that it was the consensus of the Committee to allow the free market to determine what the appropriate number of taxicabs operating in the City should be.

In response to questions from the Council, City Attorney Fellows advised that a driver wishing to change the service operator with whom he is affiliated would be required to surrender his driver's permit and get a new one. He confirmed that the License Review Board's decision will be final unless appealed to the City Council.

Noting that his company is currently the only one licensed to operate in Torrance, Mr. Anthony Palmeri, General Manager of South Bay Yellow Cab, commended Councilman Walker and his Committee for drafting a very good ordinance. He stated, however, that he had two areas of concern: the provision for allowing temporary permits, pointing out that none of the local cities listed on the comparison chart offer temporary permits; and the absence of limitations on the total number of taxicabs that may operate in the City, citing Palm Springs and Atlanta, Georgia, as examples of cities where the free market system has not worked. He asked the Council to consider the welfare of the 150 taxicab drivers who now make their living in the City.

A discussion ensued regarding minimum/maximum fleet size, and Councilwoman O'Donnell entertained the idea of requiring companies to operate at least 15 taxicabs in the City, while Mayor Hardison expressed concerns about having too many taxicabs in the Torrance. The Council ultimately decided that they were comfortable with the ordinance as proposed.

Assistant Finance Director Flewellyn advised that only those vehicles in a service operator's fleet for which permit fees have been paid and decals issued will be allowed to operate in the City.

City Attorney Fellows offered clarification regarding temporary permits, explaining that only the three service operators with applications pending at the time the moratorium was first adopted in May of 1998 would be eligible to apply for temporary permits and that the permit would be good for 90 days while their applications for permanent permits are processed. Councilwoman Cribbs requested that a sunset clause be added to the ordinance placing a deadline on the time period during which an operator may apply for a temporary permit.

City Attorney recommended the following amendments to the proposed ordinance:

- 1) Section 3, add Subsection C, "Right of Appeal – Any interested person, applicant or permittee may seek review of any action on a temporary permit in accordance with the provisions of Section 11.5.1 of the Torrance Municipal Code."
- 2) Add to Section 3, Subsection A, 7(c) – "temporary service operator's permit is being issued for a period that will expire on \_\_\_\_ date." (date inserted will be 90 days from effective date of the ordinance)
- 3) 33.17.150, add Subsection T, "Permit any police officer of the City to inspect or thoroughly examine any taxicab or vehicle for hire at any time."

**MOTION:** Councilwoman O'Donnell moved for the approval of the Committee recommendation as amended, including the summary for publication. The motion was seconded by Councilman Walker and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

**ORDINANCE NO. 3470**

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TORRANCE REPEALING ARTICLE 17 OF CHAPTER 3 OF DIVISION 3 OF THE TORRANCE MUNICIPAL CODE RELATING TO TAXICABS AND TAXICAB DRIVERS, REPEALING CHAPTER 6 OF DIVISION 3 OF THE TORRANCE MUNICIPAL CODE RELATING TO TAXICABS AND OTHER VEHICLES FOR HIRE, AND ADDING A NEW ARTICLE 17 TO CHAPTER 3 OF DIVISION 3 RELATING TO TAXICABS AND VEHICLES FOR HIRE

**MOTION:** Councilman Messerlian moved for the approval of Ordinance No. 3470 as amended. The motion was seconded by Councilman Walker and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

**11b. MOBIL OIL PIPELINE FRANCHISE**

**Recommendation**

The City Manager recommends that City Council adopt an ordinance amending Ordinance No. 3351 that would impose a crude unit processing cap of 160 thousand barrels per day (TBDP) and institute a total refinery input limit, excluding external blend components, of 200 TBDP and apply State Fire Marshal standards to the M-70 pipeline operation, with both changes to be consistent with existing environmental assessments and emission limits. It is further recommended that City Council approve the summary of the Ordinance for publication.

Assistant to the City Manager Sunshine presented the staff report (per written material of record).

**ORDINANCE NO. 3471**

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TORRANCE REPEALING THE ADDITIONAL MITIGATION MEASURES SET FORTH IN EXHIBIT D TO ORDINANCE NO. 3351 GRANTING MOBIL OIL CORPORATION A FRANCHISE TO OPERATE PIPELINES FOR THE TRANSPORTATION OF CRUDE OIL IN THE CITY OF TORRANCE, AND REPLACING THEM WITH NEW MITIGATION MEASURES

**MOTION:** Councilman Messerlian moved for the approval of Ordinance No. 3471. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Cribbs and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

**MOTION:** Councilman Messerlian moved for the approval of the summary for publication. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Cribbs and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

**12. APPEALS**

**13a. WEST END RACQUET CLUB**

**Recommendation**

The License Review Board recommends that City Council deny the West End Racquet Club appeal and concur with the decision of the Board to deny West End Racquet Club's request for a dance permit and modification of their existing Entertainment Permit to include a disc jockey, amplified sound and live music.

Mayor Hardison announced that this was the time, date and place for a public hearing on this matter. City Clerk Herbers confirmed that the hearing had been properly advertised.

Assistant to the City Manager Sunshine, Chair of the License Review Board, presented the staff report (per written material of record), stating that the License Review Board had voted 2 – 1 to deny West End Racquet Club's application for a Dance Permit and modification of the existing Entertainment Permit because of their finding that the proposed use was not compatible with the neighborhood due to the racquet club's close proximity to a residential area. He noted that the appeal had been delayed in coming before the City Council in order to bring in a third party mediator to ascertain whether the problems could be resolved between West End Racquet Club and nearby residents, and that after two meetings, the mediator had determined that there was insufficient common ground to make further discussions worthwhile.

Mr. Philip Toomey, 3828 Carson Street, #2, representing West End Racquet Club, stated that the club has been in business for 21 years and that in the last two years, problems have developed as a result of the townhomes built on residential property adjacent to the club. He conceded that early on the club had made mistakes in dealing with neighbors, but noted that more recently they have made a concerted effort to mitigate the impact of club events and that they were willing to limit the type of events and restrict the hours of operation, in order to further improve the situation. He outlined the actions the club has taken to reduce the noise emanating from the building, such as installing soundproofing and placing a decibel-limiting device on speakers, as well as changes made in the parking lot to lessen the chance of noisy patrons disturbing residents. Referring to a sound monitoring report included in the supplemental material, he pointed out that sound levels were within acceptable limits and that there were no complaints from neighbors regarding the last event held at West End Racquet Club on February 13, 1999. He asked the Council to recognize the progress the club has made in addressing neighbors' concerns and to give them a chance to prove that they can be a good neighbor. He stated that mediation efforts failed because the meetings were sparsely attended by residents.

Responding to questions from the Council, Ms. Diane Katnic, banquet manager of West End Racquet Club, provided information concerning the club's hours of operation and banquet capacity.

Councilman Messerlian commented that he had visited the site the previous evening and found very few parking spaces available, and Mayor Hardison indicated that she had had a similar experience when she visited on a weekday afternoon.

Mr. Toomey stated that he was not aware of any concerns about parking at the February 13 event and that he would like the Council to use that event to determine the effectiveness of the club's remediation efforts.

Mr. Curtis Kamada, 4258 Spencer Street, pointed out that the appellant had failed to resolve noise problems during the two trial periods granted them by the License Review Board; expressed his opinion that one event within noise limitations offers no long-term proof that noise can be controlled; and indicated that he supported the License Review Board's recommendation to deny the application. Referring to the mediation meetings, he stated that residents had difficulty attending because they were held on weekdays during working hours.

Mr. Rong Ma, 4489 Spencer Street, #114, stated that he and his children have frequently had their sleep interrupted by loud music and noise in the parking lot. He asked that the Council deny West End Racquet Club's application for an Entertainment Permit.

Mayor Hardison offered clarification that the club's application is to modify an existing Entertainment Permit which allows for entertainment consisting of a guitar and electric piano and that the existing permit will remain in effect even if the modification is denied.

Quoting from a letter written in 1981 by a former Planning Commissioner, Ms. Hyo Lee Cha, 4489 Spencer Street, stated that it has long been recognized that expanding banquet operations at this location by allowing parties with the consumption of alcohol would be incompatible with the surrounding residential neighborhood. She expressed her opinion that the Planning Department had been short-sighted in allowing a commercial enterprise in a residential neighborhood and contended that West End's owners, who do not reside in Torrance, should not be allowed victimize their neighbors for the sake of financial gain.

Ms. Donna Baker, 4306 Spencer Street, stated that club members frequently park in spaces that are supposed to be reserved for her complex; that she is tired of being disturbed by noise from late-night parties; and that West End's promotion of a nightclub-type atmosphere is inappropriate for the neighborhood.

Ms. Diana Tomcsanyi, 4344 Spencer Street, voiced her opinion that allowing the modification of West End's Entertainment Permit would be destructive to the environmental quality of the neighborhood.

Mr. Jason Jem, 4489 Spencer Street, #112, representing Pacific Verdes Homeowner's Association, stated that West End's residential neighbors are entitled to peaceful enjoyment of their property and that the interests of two businessmen should not take precedence over those of more than one hundred taxpaying residents. He noted that the club had failed in two previous trial periods to resolve neighbors' concerns, and maintained that even if the club was able to control the music and the noise coming from the building, there would still be the problem of boisterous guests in the parking lot. He suggested that West End move their parties to the South End Racquet Club which is located in an industrial area.

Returning to the podium, Mr. Toomey advised that the South End facility functions independently and is already fully booked. He stated that residents had presented valid concerns about problems that occurred in the past but noted that no one had voiced complaints regarding the event that took place on February 13. Conceding that one event does not prove anything, he invited the Council to monitor events scheduled for May 29 and June 5 to confirm that West End has substantially modified their operations and can hold events without negatively impacting the neighborhood.

**MOTION:** Councilman Walker moved to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Cribbs and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Councilwoman O'Donnell expressed her opinion that the concerns of the residents far outweigh the financial interests of this business enterprise and that even if the club is able to control the noise within the complex, they will not be able to control the behavior of guests in the parking lot.

Commenting on the club's failure to effectively address the issues during the trial periods, Councilman Walker stated that he could not support the expansion of their Entertainment Permit. He suggested that West End Racquet Club work on developing a better relationship with their neighbors.

**MOTION:** Councilman Walker moved to deny the appeal and concur with the decision of the License Review Board. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman O'Donnell, and discussion continued.

While indicating that he would support the motion, Councilman Horwich expressed sympathy for the business owners, noting that residents knowingly moved in next to a parking lot and that it is unrealistic to believe that the area will be perfectly quiet.

Mayor Hardison echoed Councilman Horwich's sentiments and pointed out that the area is zoned for mixed use and is not strictly residential. She stated that due to the close proximity of the residences to the parking lot, she did not believe anything could be done to mitigate the situation; and explained that West End Racquet Club will continue to have certain rights under their existing Entertainment Permit and that neighbors should not assume that they are not going to hear any noise from a commercial use located right next door.

Stating that he did not wish to leave the wrong impression, Councilman Messerlian observed that the club will still have to abide by the rules and regulations of the City and must respect the rights of their neighbors.

The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

**15. OTHER**

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The Torrance Redevelopment Agency met from 11:38 p.m. to 11:39 p.m.

**15a. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

Councilwoman Cribbs thanked staff for their efforts for the Armed Forces Day Parade and events; and thanked City Manager Jackson for allowing the Friends of the Torrance Library to use the seminar room in the basement while the Civic Center Library is undergoing renovation.

Councilman Horwich echoed Councilwoman's O'Donnell's comments regarding the Youth Council donations.

Councilman Lee thanked all for their efforts for the Armed Forces Day Parade and events and noted it was his last parade as a councilmember.

Responding to Councilman Messerlian's question on the Civic Center parking lot, City Manager Jackson advised that due to some drainage problems, the street may need to be rebuilt, a project which will be brought forward to the Council for consideration.

Councilwoman O'Donnell noted that this was also her last parade as a councilmember, commented on how much she has enjoyed inviting young people to ride with her in the parade, and expressed the hope that whoever is elected to her position will continue the tradition.

Councilman Walker commented on the Armed Forces Day Parade.

Responding to concerns raised by Councilman Walker regarding children being dropped off at Riviera Lutheran School on Palos Verdes Boulevard, Police Chief Herren responded that enforcement and the Community Lead's Officers efforts will be stepped up.

Mayor Hardison thanked everyone for their efforts for the Armed Forces Day Parade, suggested that Councilmembers be consulted during debriefing, and expressed concerns about the military's participation in future parades.

AFSCME President Alan Lee clarified his understanding of the agenda process and stated that there is a high degree of frustration among the staff in the Water Department.

Mr. Kenneth Evans read a Resolution of Torrance Water Department Employees stating workers' feeling regarding vacant positions in the department.

City Manager Jackson stated that he would bring a report back to the Council within a week on the matter.

16. **ADJOURNMENT**

At 11:57 p.m., the meeting was adjourned to Tuesday, May 25, 1999, at 5:30 p.m. for an executive session with the regular meeting commencing at 7:00 p.m.

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***Adjourned in Memory of  
Former Police Chief Walter R. Koenig  
and  
Former Police Explorer Captain Deborah Swensson***

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Mayor of the City of Torrance

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk of the City of Torrance