

May 4, 2015

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF  
THE TORRANCE TRAFFIC COMMISSION**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Torrance Traffic Commission convened in a regular meeting at 7:02 p.m. on Monday, May 4, 2015 in the West Annex meeting room at Torrance City Hall.

**2. SALUTE TO THE FLAG**

Commissioner Bajaj led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3. ROLL CALL**

Present: Commissioners Bajaj, Furey, Habel, Siani, Thomas, and Chairperson Rudolph.

Absent: Commissioner Sargent.

Also Present: Engineering Manager Semaan, Associate Engineer Sedadi, Assistant Civil Engineer Gruezo, Torrance Police Captain Irvine, Torrance Police Lieutenant Underwood, Deputy City Attorney Sullivan, and Assistant to City Manager Chaparyan.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Siani moved to grant Commissioner Sargent an excused absence for the May 4, 2015 Commission meeting. Commissioner Thomas seconded the motion; a roll call vote reflected unanimous approval.

**4. AFFIDAVIT OF POSTING**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Siani moved to accept and file the report of the City Clerk on the posting of the agenda for this meeting. Commissioner Bajaj seconded the motion; a roll call vote reflected unanimous approval.

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**5a. MINUTES OF APRIL 6, 2015**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Thomas moved for the approval of the April 6, 2015 Commission meeting minutes as presented. Commissioner Siani seconded the motion; a roll call vote reflected unanimous approval (Commissioner Furey abstaining).

**6. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #1 – None.**

**7. ITEMS UNDER CONSIDERATION**

**7b. REVIEW OF CROSSING GUARD PROGRAM AND PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS**

Chairperson Rudolph explained the policies and procedures of the Traffic Commission, including the right to appeal decisions to City Council. He recommended and Commissioners concurred to take Item 7B out of order.

Engineering Manager Semaan provided background on the item, continued from the April 6, 2015 Traffic Commission meeting. He noted that the Crossing Supervision excerpt from Section 7D/02 of the California Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) was included in Attachment A. He stated that Attachment B consists of agenda material from the April 6 meeting, which includes Elementary School and Crossing Guard Overview Maps, Crossing Guard Summary and Recommendations Matrix, and Elementary School Area Zone Maps. He introduced staff members and representatives from Torrance Police Department. He pointed out that supplemental correspondence was available that was received after agenda packets were prepared.

At Chairperson Rudolph's suggestion, Lieutenant Underwood provided a brief overview of the Crossing Guard Program and justifications to support the proposed modifications. He stated that Police Department and Public Works staff took a clean slate approach and conducted a survey of the number of children crossing at each of the existing 29 Crossing Guard locations, at existing crosswalks located within the 500 foot safety zone, and of existing school area signage and markings. He stated that, upon review of the data, the Chief of Police and Public Works Director recommends continuing Crossing Guard coverage at 21 of the locations and relocating the remaining eight Crossing Guards to other locations.

Isaac Torres, Jacques Street, was informed that the reason for the review of the Crossing Guard Program was that City Council and its Employee Relations and Public Safety Committee directed them to review it to see if any changes should be considered.

Misa Higgins, Carson Street, stated that three of the eight proposed removals of Crossing Guards would directly affect Anza Elementary students. She noted that the removals would cut off Crossing Guard protection to all residences south of Carson Street as well as west of Palos Verdes Boulevard, requiring children to cross either Anza Avenue or Palos Verdes Boulevard without a Crossing Guard, both very busy streets. She expressed concern that few community members and Crossing Guards were aware of the proposed relocation. She urged them to reconsider the removal of all three proposed posts around Anza Elementary and noted that an additional Crossing Guard is needed at Lenore Street and Ellinwood Drive. She entered into record her letter, Crossing Supervision excerpt of the MUTCD, Torrance Police Department Community Notice regarding Temporary Use of Private Crossing Guards, and three petitions signed by residents opposing the recommendation to discontinue the posting of a Crossing Guard at Anza Avenue and Carson Street, Carson Street and Palos Verdes Boulevard, and Ruby Street and Palos Verdes Boulevard.

Sayward Daley, West 231<sup>st</sup> Street, expressed her opposition to the removal of the Crossing Guard at Lomita Boulevard and Kent Avenue, stating that it is the main artery to Arnold Elementary and Calle Mayor Middle School. She acknowledged that children could be directed to cross at Anza Avenue or Ocean Avenue but noted that they have high volumes of traffic with poor visibility. She pointed out that schools are encouraging students to walk to school and that the 4/23 pedestrian count does not reflect the actual number of children crossing at that intersection.

Lisa Wermers, Audrey Avenue, stated that it is important for Calle Mayor Middle School and Arnold Elementary students to have a Crossing Guard at Lomita Boulevard and Kent Avenue because of the high volume of traffic.

Cindy Wemers, Audrey Avenue, requested that the Crossing Guard at Calle Mayor and Carlow Road start earlier in the morning to ensure that students get to Calle Mayor Middle School safely. Referring to Lomita Boulevard and Kent Avenue, she maintained that children would continue to cross there even if the Crossing Guard and crosswalk markings are removed because it is the quickest route.

Zee, Del Amo Boulevard, recommending additional Crossing Guards around Victor Elementary, at Spencer Street and Victor Street where drivers are exiting West High School, as well as Spencer Street and Reynolds Drive. She requested that staff consider adding a left turn signal at Del Amo Boulevard and Victor Street due to traffic congestion.

Catherine Nkemnji, White Court, recommended adding a Crossing Guard at Spencer Street and Reynolds Drive, noting that she has witnessed several near misses. She suggested adding a No Left Turn between 8:00–9:00 a.m. for vehicles entering into the Victor Elementary parking lot from Spencer Street.

Angela Lichenstein, Lorna Street, stated that she has almost been hit twice in the intersection of Spencer Street and Victor Street and urged them to consider adding a Crossing Guard there.

Ms. Higgins shared information about an Anza Elementary 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade science project that determined that more drivers stopped at the stop sign at Palos Verdes Boulevard and Carson Street when there was a Crossing Guard present. She received clarification from staff that only elementary students were counted when collecting data.

Commissioner Habel explained how drivers turn left into the Victor Elementary parking lot but pointed out that it would be a problem with or without a Crossing Guard.

Commissioner Thomas thanked residents for speaking but noted that the Commission does not control the budget. In response to his inquiry, Lieutenant Underwood advised that drivers should call the Traffic Division to complain about drivers making rolling stops.

Commissioner Siani explained that pedestrians counts were accurate at the point of time they were taken and that the data will help show where any new Crossing Guards should be located. She explained the inherent dangers of mid block crosswalks and stated that it is preferable for children to cross at signalized intersections or where there is at least a four way stop.

Commissioner Furey explained that unprotected crosswalks give pedestrians a false sense of security and that pedestrians could be hit outside of school hours.

Debra Ain, Belmont Lane, Redondo Beach, Torrance Crossing Guard, urged the Commission to consider posting a Crossing Guard at Ruby Street and Palos Verdes Boulevard because of frequent rolling stops. She stated that she was pleased to hear that the crosswalk markings at 182<sup>nd</sup> Street and Bailey Drive have been enhanced.

Commissioner Furey received clarification that part of the Commission's recommendation could be to increase or decrease the number of Crossing Guards.

In response to Chairperson Rudolph's inquiry, Assistant to City Manager Chaparyan stated that he is staff liaison for City Council's Citizen Development and Enrichment Committee. He noted that Torrance Unified School District would be giving their input about the Crossing Guard Program at a joint meeting with them on May 7.

Referring to supplemental correspondence from Stacey Launius, Commissioner Siani received clarification from staff and Captain Irvine that volunteer Crossing Guards are not being considered at this time.

Chairperson Rudolph stated that safety is the Commission's number one concern and that it would not be his recommendation to relocate any Crossing Guard. When he expressed concern that there is only data from a single snapshot, Engineering Manager Semaan advised him that this is the typical way of collecting data.

Commissioner Habel inquired if the Program could be expanded based on need, and Engineering Manager Semaan stated that the Commission could make recommendations but that the budgetary element is not a part of its purview.

Commissioner Bajaj noted that staff did an excellent job of allocating and maximizing existing resources based on numbers.

Commissioner Furey raised the possibility of directing staff to come back with its recommendation for the best locations for additional Crossing Guards.

Chairperson Rudolph stated that taking one Crossing Guard and adding it to another is not the right approach. He asked that staff analyze the recommendation to add a second Crossing Guard at two intersections as opposed to keeping them at their current positions. He stated that historical data is important and that the Commission should determine how often the Crossing Guard Program should be reviewed.

Commissioner Siani stated that demographics change and just because there has always been a Crossing Guard at a site does not mean there should always be one.

Zee raised the possibility of utilizing one Crossing Guard at a location in the mornings and in a different location in the afternoons; Assistant to City Manager Chaparyan stated that Crossing Guards work four hours per day, two in the morning and two in the afternoon, but the possibility could be explored.

Commissioner Thomas questioned next steps if there is a Crossing Guard change, and Lieutenant Underwood stated that they hope to make changes by summer to give them sufficient time to educate before next school year starts.

Engineering Manager Semaan added that staff's recommendation is based on findings and that they have not found cause to change it. He stated that the Commission's recommendation would be forwarded to the Employee Relations and Public Safety Committee and that it would eventually make its way to City Council.

Chairperson Rudolph received clarification from Engineering Manager Semaan that the Crossing Guard Program is run and funded by the City and that there cannot be another one run by Torrance Unified School District.

Commissioner Habel stated that they need to expand the Program and recommended directing staff to seek additional funding to increase the number of Crossing Guards.

Engineering Manager Semaan reiterated that the funding component is not the Commission's purview and that staff is not asking the Commission to change the criteria. He noted that, if the Commission's recommendation differs from staff's recommendation, it should identify explicit locations where it wants changes to be made.

Commissioner Bajaj pointed out that data was not collected at Spencer Street and Reynolds Drive. In response to his request, Lieutenant Underwood explained the justification for recommending that two Guards be assigned at two singular locations.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Siani moved to concur with the recommendation of the Chief of Police and Public Works Director to: 1) Continue Crossing Guard coverage at 21 of the current 29 locations/posts; 2) Relocate the remaining eight Crossing Guard posts to new posts at crosswalks with higher school-aged pedestrian volumes or to adjacent crosswalks better suited for pedestrian crossings; 3) Recommend to City Council that it seek funding for additional Crossing Guards; 4) Direct staff to bring back in April or May 2016 its recommendation for any changes of Crossing Guards for the 2016-2017 school year; and 5) for the Commission to review the Crossing Guard Program every five years. Commissioner Thomas seconded the motion; the motion died on a 3-3 roll call vote (absent Commissioner Sargent).

Commissioner Furey explained that he voted "no" because he supports continuing Crossing Guard coverage at 21 locations but is in favor of relocating only the Crossing Guards at the three uncontrolled intersections.

Commissioner Habel stated that he voted "no" because he needed additional information.

Chairperson Rudolph stated that he feels rushed and voted "no" because he needs more time to review the data to determine where additional Crossing Guards are needed. He stated that he supports continuing coverage at 21 locations, wants City Council to seek funding for an additional eight Crossing Guards, and to reevaluate the relocation of eight Crossing Guards at a later time.

Following discussion, Engineering Manager Semaan related his understanding that the Commission is concurring with the existing 21 locations, three removals, five recommended relocations, and the addition of eight new Crossing Guards. It was decided to address the removal of uncontrolled crosswalks at a future meeting.

The Commission was in recess from 9:20 to 9:28 p.m. to formulate a motion.

Referring to the matrix, Captain Irvine confirmed that the Commission concurred with the 21 existing locations as well as locations #2, #17, and #29, adding eight new

locations that would require hiring eight additional Crossing Guards, and removing Crossing Guards at locations #3, #4, #10, #14, and #27.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Thomas moved to concur with the recommendation of the Chief of Police and Public Works Director to: 1) Continue Crossing Guard coverage at 21 of the current 29 locations/posts; 2) Relocate the remaining eight Crossing Guard posts to new posts at crosswalks with higher school-aged pedestrian volumes or to adjacent crosswalks better suited for pedestrian crossings; 3) Recommend additional Crossing Guards at Palos Verdes Boulevard and Carson Street, Torrance Boulevard and Crenshaw Boulevard, and 182nd Street and Yukon Avenue should funding be available; and 4) Direct staff to bring the item back in March or April 2016 to assess the effectiveness of the Crossing Guard Program. Commissioner Furey seconded the motion; a roll call vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Sargent).

Commissioner Thomas expressed his appreciation to staff and Torrance Police Department for all of their hard work.

**7a. NOMINATION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR**

Commissioner Furey nominated Chairperson Rudolph and Commissioner Siani nominated Commissioner Bajaj for Chairperson of the Traffic Commission. Chairperson Rudolph was reelected Chairperson of the Traffic Commission effective July 1, 2015 on a 4-1 roll call vote (absent Commissioner Sargent, Chairperson Rudolph abstaining).

Chairperson Rudolph nominated Commissioner Siani, Commissioner Habel nominated Commissioner Thomas, Commissioner Furey nominated Commissioner Bajaj, and Commissioner Bajaj nominated Commissioner Furey for Vice-Chairperson of the Traffic Commission. There was a tie between Commissioner Bajaj and Commissioner Thomas and a second vote was taken. Commissioner Bajaj was elected Vice-Chairperson of the Traffic Commission effective July 1, 2015 on a 4-2 roll call vote (absent Commissioner Sargent).

**8. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #2**

**8a.** Commissioner Siani requested an excused absence for the June 1, 2015 Commission meeting.

**8b.** Commissioner Habel asked staff to investigate left turn signal timing at Jefferson Street and Crenshaw Boulevard.

**8c.** Chairperson Rudolph asked staff to investigate the limit line on Hawthorne Boulevard at 177<sup>th</sup> Street. He stated that the line is so recessed that drivers are running over the island.

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

At 9:57 p.m., Chairperson Rudolph adjourned the meeting to June 1, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in the West Annex meeting room, Torrance City Hall and, hearing no objection, so ordered.

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SUBJECT TO APPROVAL