

Torrance, California
May 14, 1940

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING
OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE
CITY OF TORRANCE

The City Council of the City of Torrance convened in a Regular Meeting in the Council Chamber, City Hall, Torrance, California, on Tuesday evening, May 14, 1940 at 7:45 P.M.

Mayor McGuire called the meeting to order.

Clerk Bartlett called the roll, those answering present being Councilmen: Babcock, Hitchcock, Murray, Powell and McGuire. Absent: Councilmen: None.

Councilman Hitchcock moved that the minutes of a Regular Meeting held April 23, 1940 be approved as amended. Councilman Murray seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously. Councilman Hitchcock moved that the minutes of a Special Meeting held May 1, 1940 be approved. Councilman Murray seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

A communication was read from The Texas Company, enclosing check in the amount of \$82.49 in full payment of franchise earnings under Ordinances Nos. 117, 884, 1129 and 1377 for the period January 1, 1939 to December 31, 1939 inclusive.

A communication was read from the Shell Oil Company, enclosing check in the amount of \$193.76 covering franchise earnings under Ordinances Nos. 116, 121, 174, 1356 and 1502 for the period to December 31, 1939.

A communication was read from Mrs. A. H. Silligo, President of the Torrance Woman's Club, requesting permission to allow the club dance scheduled for Saturday, May 18, 1940 to run until 1:00 A.M. Attorney McCall advised that to grant this request would be in direct conflict with Ordinance No. 291 prohibiting Sunday dancing in the City of Torrance. Clerk Bartlett was instructed to notify Mrs. Silligo to this effect.

A communication was read from the Walteria Civic Organization, Objecting to the practice of the Quandt Pumping Station in digging up the public streets for the purpose of repairing water mains and leaving the street in a state of disrepair. It was suggested that Mr. Quandt be required to obtain permits for this type of work.

Mr. Young, City Engineer, advised that all the other water companies take out permits for excavating and asked for authorization to direct a letter to Mr. Quandt informing him of the necessity of obtaining permits whenever cuts are made in the public streets.

Councilman Hitchcock moved that the City Engineer be authorized to direct a letter to Mr. Quandt notifying him to obtain permits when it is necessary for him to dig up the public streets to repair water mains. Councilman Babcock seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

A communication was read from the Walteria Civic Association, together with a copy of a letter written by them to the Dicalite Company objecting to the dust and acid odor from the Dicalite Company plant, and requesting the Council to take some action thereon.

Councilman Hitchcock moved that the matter be referred to the Health Department for investigation. Councilman Murray seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

A communication was read from the Industrial Byproducts Specialties, requesting permission to operate a plant for the manufacture of Sulphate of Iron on property leased from Santa Fe Land Company, adjacent to the International Derrick Company.

Councilman Hitchcock moved that the matter be referred to the City Engineer for investigation and report at the next meeting. Councilman Babcock seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

A communication was read from the Division of Highways, enclosing check in the amount of \$892.97 to cover invoice of the City of Torrance for expenditures in connection with the improvement of State Highway VII-L.A-164 Torrance under the 1/4-cent gasoline tax allocation for state highways. Clerk Bartlett explained that the improvement was construction of a culvert at 236th Street and Hawthorne Avenue.

Insert****

A communication was read from the Torrance Chamber of Commerce, advising that in a recent conference with Mr. Fred W. Smith, Manager of the Southern California Telephone Company's district serving Torrance, the writer, Mr. Gilmeister, had been informed that approximately in September of this year a plan for extended telephone service will be put into operation, said extended area to embrace all the Harbor District section, including Torrance and Redondo Beach.

A communication was read from the County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors, advising that at a regular meeting of the Board held May 8, 1940, the resolution adopted by the Torrance City Council and forwarded to the Board requesting the County to deed back to the City a certain parcel of land for park purposes had been presented and the request granted by unanimous vote of the Board of Super-

visors.

Mayor McGuire stated that Supervisor Hauge had been in accord with this action some time ago.

Councilman Hitchcock moved the City Clerk be authorized to direct a letter of thanks to the Board of Supervisors for their cooperation in returning this parcel of land. Councilman Murray seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

A communication was read from Joel Hagberg, Walteria, objecting to the ordinance governing licensing of dogs in the City of Torrance, and demanding a meeting with the City Council for discussion of same.

A communication was read from Captain of Police G. M. Calder, tendering his resignation as Captain of Police of the City of Torrance, and expressing appreciation for having been given the opportunity of serving the community for the past fourteen years. He requested that action be taken not later than June 1, 1940 if possible.

Councilman Powell moved that the resignation of G. M. Calder as Captain of Police of the City of Torrance be accepted, effective June 1, 1940. Clerk Bartlett was instructed to extend to Mr. Calder the appreciation of the City Council for his past services to the City of Torrance. Councilman Hitchcock seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Babcock, Hitchcock, Murray, Powell and McGuire, NOES COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

A communication was read from J. E. McMaster, Fire Chief, recommending that a permit be granted the Bert S. Crossland Post #170 to sell fireworks as applied for at Carson & Cabrillo Avenue and at Arlington and Torrance Boulevard.

Councilman Hitchcock moved that Chief McMaster's recommendation be complied with and the permit be issued. Councilman Babcock seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

A communication was read from J. E. McMacter, Fire Chief, recommending that a permit be issued. Councilman Murray seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Regarding the request of Eugene H. Rosenthal for permit to operate an amusement parlor at 1601-03-04 Gramercy Avenue, Chief Stroh reported his investigation had revealed the amusement to be a miniature bowling alley, operated automatically.

Councilman Powell requested that, inasmuch as no recommendation for granting or denying the permit had been submitted the matter be deferred until the next meeting.

Clerk Bartlett presented and read title to:

RESOLUTION NO. 1387

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TORRANCE AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF DEED TO EDWARD G. NEESS COVERING LOTS 15 AND 16, BLOCK 52, TORRANCE TRACT IN THE CITY OF TORRANCE, COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, STATE OF CALIFORNIA.

Councilman Hitchcock moved that Resolution No. 1387 be adopted. Councilman Babcock seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Babcock, Hitchcock, Murray, Powell and McGuire. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

Engineer Young reported regarding the cost of constructing sidewalks on the west side of Arlington Avenue from Plaza del Amo to Santa Fe Street, the estimated cost being \$625.00.

Councilman Hitchcock suggested that the item be figures in the new 1940-41 budget, adding that he would be glad to have the work done immediately if funds were available. Councilman Powell urged that the work be commenced as soon as possible. Action deferred for the present time.

Engineer Young read a tabulation showing the apportionment of the April, 1940 quarterly payment of the 1/4-cent gas tax allocation under Section 194 of the Streets and Highways Code for expenditure on streets of major importance, the Torrance share being \$2,027.50.

Engineer Young read a communication from the Department of Public Works, Division of Highways, advising that revenue available from 1/4-cent gas tax funds for allocation to Streets of Major Importance within the City of Torrance for the fiscal year 1941 is estimated at \$8,170.00, to which amount may be added the unobligated balance of revenues at the end of the fiscal year of June 30, 1940 in the amount of \$12,418.05, making a grand total of \$20,588.05 available for programming at this time. It was requested that the City adopt a budget and submit project statements promptly.

Engineer Young reported that the W.P.A. sewer project in the Vista Highlands district had not been started yet, although it was scheduled to begin May 7, 1940. Mayor McGuire stated that the County Sanitation District had recently appropriated \$2500.00 for this project, which will probably start, he said, within a few days.

Councilman Powell asked Attorney McCall what action has taken place in the condemnation proceedings of the Pacific Electric Railway Company right of way on Cabrillo Avenue.

Attorney McCall replied that since the last meeting, he had conversed several times with attorneys of the Pacific Electric and advised them the City Council is not satisfied with the proposition of giving an easement as expressed in their agreement. Also, he said, he had expressed the desire to arrange a meeting date between Pacific Electric Railway Company officers (including engineers and attorneys) and the Torrance City Council at some time mutually agreeable.

Councilman McGuire said he felt the City Council should conform its time to the time of the Pacific Electric officials.

Councilman Murray said he was of the impression a friendly litigation and granting of a deed to the property by the Pacific Electric Railway Company to the City of Torrance would conclude the matter.

Attorney McCall said it is necessary to file a suit, but the Council is not satisfied with their proposal to give an easement instead of title. He said the Pacific Electric desires to meet all the requirements of the Council, but that the agreement they have is not as favorable to the City of Torrance as he thinks it can be made by conference.

Councilman Hitchcock said that he felt the curve on Cabrillo Avenue to Border Avenue should be included in the plan, the agreement, he said, not including this portion of the right of way. He added that he felt the request of the Pacific Electric Railway Company that the City of Torrance deliver the tracks and material to their shops after the City removes them is an unreasonable request. He said he felt they should be satisfied for the City to deliver the material to their (Pacific Electric Railway Company's) railroad cars.

Councilman Hitchcock offered to contact the Pacific Electric Railway Company officials next week, as, he said, he will be in the Pacific Electric office on other business.

Councilman Powell:

"I have some other business here - unpleasant business - to take up at this time. - In regards to our Police and City Judge Department. In order to familiarize the public and audience with regards to conditions surrounding this case, I have prepared a statement here in regards to some of the facts I have gathered. However, some people don't seem to agree with me on this, but nevertheless, we are elected to this office to protect the interests of the people. No matter how bitter the medicine might be, sometimes it is necessary to have to indulge.

About eight or nine months ago, I heard that there was a shortage in the Police Judge Department and I heard it had been paid back. Realizing that the Finance Committee had not seen fit to convey this information to the other members of the Council, I went to Mrs. Leech, the City Treasurer, to ask if there had been any unusual deposits to the treasury from that department. She said that as far as she knew everything was in order and that the City Clerk's department kept the books. I supposed that it was all just a false report and let it drop at the time. Nevertheless, that started me thinking about it. I contacted a person with auditing experience and in going back through the old budgets, we noticed that for several months there were no collections turned in from the Police Judge's department.

About four weeks ago I went to Mr. McGuire's house to have him call a meeting of the other members of the Council for the purpose of discussing this matter. I inquired of Mr. McGuire if he had noticed in the budget reports that some months showed no collections turned in by that department. He answered that he had and had wondered about it. I asked him if he knew that Judge Lessing was short in his accounts and he said yes he knew but didn't know how much and that Judge Lessing had made up the shortage. At a later meeting of the Council, Mr. Murray asked Mr. McGuire how much the Judge was short and Mr. McGuire answered he was short something over nine hundred dollars.

Last Saturday at the request of Mr. Murray, the Auditor, Mr. Rambo, met with the Councilmen and was asked just how much the shortage was. The auditor reported that it was something over twelve hundred dollars -- that he had found over four hundred in the Police Department and that the Judge's shortage was a little over seven hundred dollars -- but, that the shortage had been made good. I inquired of Mr. Rambo to whom he reported the shortage when he found it and he said that he reported it to Mr. Tolson, then Mayor, and later to the Finance Committee, but it seems that the Finance Committee didn't see fit to familiarize some of the other members of the Council in regards to this condition, and that being grounds, I claim, for removal from office, I move that Bob Lessing be removed from office as Police Judge.

Councilman Murray seconded the motion, the roll call vote being as follows: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Murray and Powell. NOES: COUNCILMEN: Babcock, Hitchcock and McGuire.

Councilman Powell moved that, owing to the discrepancy in the Police Department, Chief of Police, John Stroh also be removed from office. Councilman Murray seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Babcock, Murray and Powell. NOES: COUNCILMEN: Hitchcock and McGuire. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

Councilman Powell moved that Sergeant E. M. Ashton be made Chief of Police of the City of Torrance to become effective at once.

A discussion arose at this time regarding appointment of the Police Chief, Councilman Hitchcock questioning whether or not an appointment could be made without the recommendation of the Civil Service Board.

Mayor McGuire stated for the benefit of the audience that any member of the Police Department is eligible for appointment as Chief of Police, it not being necessary, according to the Civil Service Ordinance, to advance through the ranks to the position of Chief.

Councilman Powell maintained he was within his legal rights in proposing Mr. Ashton for the position at this time.

After considerable discussion, Mayor McGuire declared the motion to make Sergeant E. M. Ashton Chief of Police of the City of Torrance lost for want to a second.

Councilman Babcock asked Attorney McCall for a ruling regarding appointment of Chief of Police, as to whether the appointment could be made without recommendation of the Civil Service Board.

Attorney McCall advised that the Civil Service Ordinance states that when there is a vacancy to be filled that the Civil Service Board shall submit to the Council or appointing officers the three (3) highest students or officers who passed the examination for such appointment and the Council shall select any one of the three.

Councilman Powell questioned whether this applied to Chiefs of Police. Councilman Murray contended the Chief of Police is not under civil service, Councilman Powell agreeing with him. Councilman Babcock pointed out there is no examination given for the office of Chief of Police.

Councilman Babcock moved that Sergeant F. J. Schumacher be made Chief of Police of the City of Torrance, effective as of June 1, 1940. Councilman Hitchcock seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Babcock, Hitchcock, Murray and McGuire. NOES: COUNCILMEN: Powell. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

Councilman Murray: "It seems that we are rather inconsistent when we vote against dismissal of our Judge when we have evidence that \$800.00 is short in his account, while we vote to dismiss our Chief of Police who was only 50% as bad an offender. However, the motion has been made." - Matter of record.

Councilman Murray moved that an appropriation of not to exceed \$400.00 be made for showers, toilets and rest rooms at the ball park. Councilman Babcock seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Babcock, Hitchcock, Murray, Powell and McGuire. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

Councilman Murray requested that he and Councilman Powell be given keys to the City Hall door.

Mayor McGuire asked Councilman Murray if he had any reports to make regarding Factory Frolic plans, to which Councilman Murray replied in the negative.

Councilman Hitchcock moved that an appropriation of not to exceed \$238.20 be made for material for resurfacing Western Avenue south of Carson Street. Councilman Murray seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMAN: Babcock, Hitchcock, Murray, Powell and McGuire. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

Councilman Hitchcock moved that not to exceed \$174.58 be made for material for street repair. Councilman Babcock, seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Babcock, Hitchcock, Murray, Powell and McGuire. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

Councilman Hitchcock moved that an appropriation of not to exceed \$238.25, plus sales tax, be made for washroom facilities at the City Yard. Councilman Murray seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Babcock, Hitchcock, Murray, Powell and McGuire. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

Mayor McGuire moved that an appropriation of not to exceed \$55.00 be made for 1500 lumen lamps at the ball park. Councilman Hitchcock seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Babcock, Hitchcock, Murray, Powell and McGuire. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

Mayor McGuire moved that an appropriation of not to exceed \$146.93 be made for venetian blinds for the City Hall windows. Councilman Hitchcock seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Babcock, Hitchcock, Murray, Powell and McGuire. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

Councilman Powell moved that, due to the difficulties as presented and the disposition thereof, that the City Council go on record as requesting a Grand Jury Investigation into the Police Department's books and City Judge's books. Councilman Babcock seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Babcock, Murray, Powell and McGuire. NOES: COUNCILMEN: Hitchcock. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

Councilman Hitchcock said he cast a negative vote in the above action, because he feels the Judge is innocent of any charges of this nature brought against him. He said he had been told that unless the Judge were dismissed, a Grand Jury Investigation would be demanded. He said that if any individuals desired the Investigation, they could ask for it, but he felt the Council should not ask for such an investigation.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Klusman made a few remarks regarding the proposed Grand Jury Investigation.

A Mr. McCrome briefly outlined the plan for the proposed amusement parlor at 1603 Gramercy Avenue, advising that the miniature bowling alley game is being introduced to the west coast, Torrance having been selected as a suitable place to introduce it. He said the nearest operating game of this kind is in Chicago. Councilman Powell said an apartment house is located near the proposed amusement center and questioned the matter because of probable noise.

Mr. McCrome was advised that the matter had been deferred until the next meeting, but that if possible, a report will be made at the adjourned meeting scheduled for May 21, 1940.

Councilman Hitchcock moved all bills properly audited be paid. Councilman Murray seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Babcock, Hitchcock, Murray, Powell and McGuire. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

At 8:39 upon motion of Councilman Babcock, seconded by Councilman Hitchcock, the meeting adjourned to May 21, 1940 at 5:00 P.M.


City Clerk of the City of Torrance

Approved:


Mayor of the City of Torrance

**** A communication was read from the Torrance Chamber of Commerce, advising that the Factory Frolic activity has been scheduled for September 26, 27, 28, 1940 and requesting free use of the Torrance Civic Auditorium for one week beginning September 23, 1940 to allow ample time for arranging exhibits.
Councilman Hitchcock moved that the request be granted. Councilman Murray seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.