

Torrance, California
December 23, 1941

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, December 23, 1941 at 7:45 P.M.

Mayor McGuire called the meeting to order.

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

All persons present in the Council Chamber Saluted the Flag!

Councilman Hitchcock moved that the minutes of a Regular Meeting held December 9, 1941, of an Adjourned Regular Meeting held December 12, 1941 and of an Adjourned Regular Meeting held December 16, 1941 be approved as written. Councilman Powell seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

A communication was read from Kryne Van Den Akker requesting the Mayor to sign the enclosed complaint to quiet title to Lots 5 and 6, Block 90, Torrance Tract and stating that if quitclaim deeds were secured the complaint would not be filed.

Councilman Babcock moved that the Mayor be authorized to sign the complaint. Councilman Hitchcock seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

A communication signed by Carl D. Steele, Chairman of Selective Service Board No. 280 was read requesting temporary quarters in the Chamber of Commerce Building, their present building having been damaged by the earthquake of November 13, 1941 and now undergoing extensive repairs.

Councilman Babcock moved that the Council as a whole deliberate further on the request and report their conclusions to the Selective Service Board as soon as possible. Councilman Hitchcock seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

At this time Attorney McCall stated that the Advisory Board of the Selective Service System would be holding more frequent meetings until the registration of applicants had been concluded and requested permission to use the Auditorium or Council Chamber for said meetings. The Council informed him that either place would be available provided reservation dates did not conflict.

A communication from the California State Council of Defense was read advising change of permanent headquarters. Matter of record.

A communication was read from Chief John H. Stroh, Director of Civilian Defense for the City of Torrance, recommending that the Civic Auditorium be blacked out and available for a clearance house by all Civilian Defense Auxiliaries and American Red Cross; also requesting permission to purchase 50 barricades for defense purposes, the cost of which will be \$95.00, plus sales tax.

Councilman Babcock moved that \$95.00, plus sales tax, be appropriated for the purchase of 50 barricades. Councilman Hitchcock seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Babcock, Hitchcock, Kail, Powell and McGuire. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

A communication was read from Miss Vogleson, County Librarian, with reference to effective steps to be taken by branches of the Los Angeles County Library in cases of emergency, such as blackouts.

Councilman Hitchcock moved that the communication be considered further after the matter had been studied and recommendations made by Chief Stroh, Director of Civilian Defense. Councilman Kail seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Claim of Jean Ray was read for damages for injuries sustained by reason of a collision occurring on or about October 22, 1941 at the intersection of 190th Street and Vermont Avenue, Los Angeles between her automobile and a motor bus of the Torrance Municipal Bus Lines, in the total sum of \$1,670.00.

Attorney McCall was requested to investigate the claim and render his report at the next meeting.

Application of Frank C. Webb for position with the City was read.

Councilman Babcock moved that the communication be referred to the Secretary of the Civil Service Board. Councilman Hitchcock seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

A communication was read from L. D. Hagebush requesting execution of enclosed release of all claims against James Watkins dba Watkins Service and Augustine Williams, Jr., in connection with accident which occurred October 28, 1941 at intersection of 59th Street and Bonsallo Street, Los Angeles, in the sum of \$208.44.

Councilman Hitchcock moved that the Mayor be authorized to sign the above mentioned release. Councilman Powell seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

A communication was read from the California Municipal Utilities Association stating they had compiled an index of municipally owned utilities in the State of California and requesting the names of two City representatives whom they could contact in matters pertaining to adverse legislation.

Councilman Powell moved that City Engineer Jain and City Attorney McCall be designated as such representatives. Councilman Hitchcock seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

A communication signed by John Pierce, Unit Secretary of the National Supply Unit of The Oil Worker's International Union, Local 128, was read, stating that certain employees of the City of Torrance have been discriminated against because of Union activity, and that the Employees Association had prepared a resolution for presentation to the City Council for adoption as their future policy with respect to Labor relations.

After some discussion on the Wagner Labor Act, Councilman Powell stated that it is no concern of the members of the Council whether an employee belongs to the Employees Association or any other organization and did not believe anyone had been discriminated against because of membership in any organization.

Mr. I. J. Hallanger, President of the Torrance City Employees Association, addressed the Council for the purpose of explaining, to avoid misunderstanding, that there are two organizations, the Torrance City Employees Association and the State, County and Municipal Worker's Local of the C. I. O. and that the Torrance Employees Association has not prepared a resolution for presentation to the City Council.

Councilman Hitchcock moved that the communication be filed until its contents be clarified further. Councilman Babcock seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Three petitions signed by numerous taxpayers and business men of the City of Torrance were read, complaining against the manner in which the revised building ordinance is being administered, and recommending that a competent structural engineer be placed in charge of repair work to buildings damaged during the recent earthquake.

City Engineer Jain stated that the placing of a competent structural engineer in charge meant the hiring of an additional engineer. He explained the manner in which plans and specifications are submitted to the Engineer's office and that they are always taken up in the order filed. These plans and specifications are thoroughly checked and if incomplete they are returned showing omissions and corrections necessary or suggesting alternate method of making repairs and as soon as they are resubmitted they are again checked by the Engineering Department, all of which causes some delay.

Mr. Powell said that the petitions appear to accuse the City Engineer of slowness in approving plans and specifications for repairs to buildings, but he believed the City Engineer is doing the best he can under the ordinance and that if anyone is to be

blamed it is the City Council and not the Engineer.

Mr. Parks stated it was not the intention of the signers of said three petitions to blame Mr. Jain, but it is their desire to have the City furnish a competent engineer who would assist the owners of damaged buildings in working out plans which would expedite repairs to their buildings as promptly and as economically as possible.

Mr. Dalton did not blame the City Engineer but he believed that in many cases the Engineer could help eliminate expenses by personally investigating a building and verbally recommending suggestions for repairs without having to submit plans and specifications for approval, thereby eliminating delays and additional expense to the owner. A lengthy discussion between Councilman Powell and Mr. Dalton ensued on this point.

Mr. Guttenfelder said he was one of the circulators of the petitions but that he had no animosity toward Mr. Jain or Mr. Cannon. He contended, however, that a building of his kind, where little damage had been done by the earthquake, should only require inspection by a competent engineer, a contractor and himself who could all agree on the necessary plans for putting the building in good condition. He admitted there was a loose firewall and is willing to repair it promptly but did not believe it necessary to go to the expense of hiring a structural engineer. Mr. Guttenfelder said that someone desired to rent his building and asked the Council's permission to rent it. He believed his building was safe enough and stated that he knew of three instances where damaged buildings had been rented, and mentioned in particular a building owned by Rufus Page into which the Southern California Gas Company had moved.

Councilman Babcock asked Mr. Jain if other people had moved into damaged buildings. Mr. Jain replied he did not think so. Mr. Guttenfelder stated that there was a report in the Engineer's office on the damaged condition of the Page building, as he happened to be in the Engineer's office shortly after the earthquake when Mr. Page was there and asked to see the report.

Mayor McGuire asked Mr. Jain if he could go down and look over Mr. Guttenfelder's building. Mr. Jain informed the Mayor that Mr. Guttenfelder had not yet removed the damaged firewall and stated that he and Mr. Cannon had gone over the building. A lengthy discussion between City Engineer Jain and Mr. Guttenfelder followed.

Mr. Dalton said he was willing to cooperate with the City Engineer but he believed a property owner having a small building with only a few cracks in it should not be required to hire a man to make blue prints and then have to obtain the services of an engineer to approve them. Mr Dalton had a lengthy discussion with the City Engineer regarding repairs to his own building.

There was considerable discussion by the principal participants on the question of repairs to damaged buildings, City Engineer Jain reading excerpts from the Uniform Building Code.

Councilman Powell asked Engineer Jain if Mr. Guttenfelder repaired the loose firewall, would there be any reason why he could not be given a temporary permit to rent his building. Engineer Jain said he had discussed this matter with Mr. Cannon and suggested to the Council that they draw up a resolution or ordinance permitting the occupancy of damaged buildings on a temporary basis only until repaired and revokable at any time; also that a written statement should be signed by the owner releasing the City Council and City Engineer from any responsibility; and/or that the occupancy could be vacated within a specified time in accordance with instructions from the City Engineer if the repairs were not made within a reasonable time.

Councilman Powell moved that the City Engineer and the City Attorney be authorized to draft an ordinance to meet with the suggestions as set forth by Mr. Jain and present it to the Council at the next meeting.

It was suggested that a valuation be placed for the repairs necessary on a damaged building; that the City Engineer approve

such repairs without the necessity of employing a structural engineer; and that the owner be notified of such requirements.

Engineer Jain read from the Uniform Building Code regarding the Board of Examiners and Appeals. A lengthy discussion followed in which the City Attorney participated, who stated that he did not believe a temporary permit could be granted under the terms of this code.

Councilman Babcock moved that the Mayor appoint such a commission as defined in the Uniform Building Code.

Mr. Guttenfelder did not believe that a small community like this one required such a board.

Mr. Dalton approved the appointment of such a board.

Councilman Powell and Councilman Babcock each withdrew their motions.

Councilman Powell asked the City Engineer if Mr. Guttenfelder could not be granted a temporary permit to rent his building.

Engineer Jain asked Attorney McCall if it would be in order for the City Council to issue temporary occupancy permits. Attorney McCall said this could not be done. There followed a lengthy discussion on this point between the City Attorney, the Mayor and members of the audience.

The request of H. B. Schermerhom for permission to operate a retail ice cream, sandwich, pie and pop route was approved by Chief John H. Stroh, provided the route is limited to that section North of 190th Street and West to Prairie and Western Avenue on the East.

It was questioned whether the route could be limited under business license Ordinance No. 235. Attorney McCall did not believe this could be done.

The permit was withheld pending approval of the Health Department.

Clerk Bartlett presented and read title to:

RESOLUTION NO. 1512

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TORRANCE APPROVING PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS FOR REPAIR AND RECONSTRUCTION OF TORRANCE MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT NO. 1 BUILDING.

Councilman Hitchcock moved that Resolution No. 1512 be adopted. Councilman Babcock seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Babcock, Hitchcock, Kail, Powell and McGuire. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None.

Clerk Bartlett presented and read title to:

ORDINANCE NO. 333

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF TORRANCE RELATING TO AIR RAID PRECAUTIONS,

Councilman Hitchcock moved that further reading of Ordinance No. 333 be dispensed with. Councilman Babcock seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Councilman Babcock moved that Emergency Ordinance No. 333 be adopted for final reading. Councilman Kail seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Babcock, Hitchcock, Kail, Powell and McGuire. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

Councilman Powell asked Attorney McCall what information he could give the Council on priority numbers for property owners of Torrance.

Attorney McCall stated he had been advised in Washington that Torrance property owners did not require priority numbers in order to procure material for the repair of their damaged buildings caused by the recent earthquake, that the only requirement was an affidavit to this effect. This information was confirmed by the Los Angeles office.

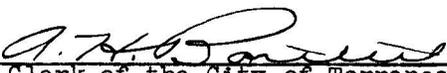
Councilman Powell requested Mr. Riley, Superintendent of Recreation to obtain estimates on heating, either by electricity or gas, the building back of the ball park.

Councilman Hitchcock inquired of Attorney McCall the status of the Perry Mutual Water Company in the North Torrance District. Attorney McCall informed the Council that the contract for the sale of this water had been drawn up, but as the company had not yet been organized there was no organization or entity with whom the city could deal.

Mayor McGuire suggested that the matter be considered further at the next meeting.

There being no oral communications, Councilman Babcock moved all bills properly audited be paid. Councilman Hitchcock seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Babcock, Hitchcock, Kail, Powell and McGuire. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

At 10:05 P.M., upon motion of Councilman Hitchcock, seconded by Councilman Babcock, the meeting adjourned to December 30, 1941 at 7:45 P.M.


City Clerk of the City of Torrance

APPROVED:


Mayor of the City of Torrance