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City Council - June 22, 1970

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Adjourned at 9:05 P.M.

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Ava Cripe
Minute Secretary

City Council
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MINUTES OF AN ADJOURNED REGULAR MEETING - TORRANCE CITY COUNCIL

OPENING CEREMONIES:

1. CALL TO ORDER:

The Torrance City Council convened in an Adjourned Regular Meeting on Monday,, June 22, 1970, at 6:00 P.M. in the Council Chambers at Torrance City Hall.

2. ROLL CALL:

Responding to roll call by City Clerk Coil were: Councilman Brewster, Johnson, Sciarrotta, Surber, Uerkwitz, Wilson, and Mayor Miller. Absent: None.

Also present: City Manager Ferraro, Assistant City Manager Scharfman, City Clerk Coil, City Treasurer Rupert, and Finance Director Dundore.

3. DISPENSATION WITH REGULAR ORDER OF BUSINESS:

Councilman Sciarrotta moved to dispense with the regular order of business. His motion was seconded by Councilman Surber, and there were no objections.

4. 1970-71 BUDGET:

City Manager Ferraro made formal presentation of the final version of the 1970-71 City Manager's Proposed Budget, accompanied by a report by Finance Director Dundore on the net results of the workshop sessions, the decisions reached, and the financial picture for the City of Torrance for the forthcoming year.

There was a further presentation by City Manager Ferraro as to the hoped for accomplishments by the City in the year ahead, as well as the aims and goals set.

The first public hearing on the 197-71 Budget has been scheduled for Tuesday, June 23rd, according to Mr. Ferraro -- with final adoption at the second public hearing on June 30th.

At 6:45 P.M. Mayor Miller ordered a recess until 7:00 P.M., at which time the Council will reconvene for the purpose of consideration of a Recreation Bond Issue.

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The Council reconvened at 7:00 P.M.

5. FLAG SALUTE:

At the request of Mayor Miller, Mr. G.W. Webb led in the salute to the flag.

6. RECREATION BOND ISSUE:- PUBLIC HEARING:

An Affidavit of Publication was presented by City Clerk Coil, and it was ordered filed, there being no objection.

Mayor Miller announced that this is the time and place for an informal public hearing to determine the feasibility of a General Obligation Bond Issue.

At the request of the Mayor, presentations were made by:

City Manager Ferraro relative to the purpose of this meeting;

Finance Director Dundore regarding the financial position of the City;

City Treasurer Rupert re: the status of the municipal bond market;

Budget Officer Ng re: the purpose of the Capital Improvement Program; and

Director of Recreation Van Bellehem describing the recreation program and needs of the City of Torrance, present and future.

Mayor Miller then invited those who wished to speak to do so at this time.

Representing the Torrance Police Officers Association, Lieutenant Charles Oates stated that many times in the past their organization has recommended that the City go to a bond issue for many of the capital improvement projects, and certainly they would be unanimously in favor of such a project for parks and recreation. It is just a matter of common sense, according to Lieutenant Oates, that the pay as you go situation that the City has been involved in for many years is fiscal irresponsibility -- the cost of equipment, labor, land, etc. has gone up ten times faster than the City's ability to save the money. The need is now, and TPOA will give whatever assistance it can to the City in passing a bond issue, adding that they would certainly agree that a consultant should be hired.

Mr. Dick Hall recalled his personal experience in working for the Library Bond Issue, and indicated that he will likewise work in this case. Mr. Hall noted that there are other needed improvements, but acknowledged that a parks and recreation bond would be more popular.

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Next to speak was Mrs. Jackie Andrews, 117 Via Pasqual, who indicated that the Torrance Tennis Club would be most happy to support the bond issue and work for its passage. In the opinion of Mrs. Andrews, a consultant is necessary. Also from the Torrance Tennis Club, Mrs. Joyce Bath, 5331 Linda Drive, requested clarification as to the amount of money and use involved in the proposed bond issue; City Manager Ferraro responded to her questions. Mrs. Bath was of the opinion that the bond would not be an easy accomplishment; approval of Mr. Average Homeowner will be difficult to obtain.

Mr. Guy Cobb, 1931 West 237th Street, stated that he felt the approach to the bond issue was pretty modest -- as a property owner in the City of Torrance, the increase in taxes represented by a bond issue would affect him directly; he personally would have no objection to having his taxes increased as much as 25% to see the bond issue go through. It is of no interest to Mr. Cobb what happens fifty years from now -- the improvements should be made NOW -- and he pledged his personal support and efforts for the successful passage of a sizable bond issue. To launch a bond issue in a small amount is without merit -- with the increases in construction costs slated to double in less than five years (per union contracts already signed). The bond issue should be large enough, Mr. Cobb concluded, to cover everything needed by the City right now -- buy the park land, widen the streets, increase City Hall facilities, etc.

Representing the New Horizon residents was Mr. Roland Levy, 23027-B Nadine Circle, who indicated their desire to go on record as supporting the bond issue, and the Civic Affairs Committee will work for same -- they further favor the employment of a consultant in this matter. It is felt that the bond issue is a logical, practical approach; to sell it on the basis of parks only in their particular area would be somewhat poor, it being recommended that it be sold on the overall basis of capital improvement.

Mr. Mark Petrie, 23930 Ocean Avenue, Apt. 252, representing the South High "Green Earth Movement", stated that their club would be willing to work for the bond issue -- it is their desire to improve the environmental conditions in Torrance and to keep teenagers off the street and out of juvenile courts. There is a need for a bike path in Torrance, according to Mr. Petrie.

Speaking at this time was Mr. Dick DeArmitt, 5102 Pacific Coast Highway, representing the Torrance Fire Fighters, who advised the Council that his organization would be more than happy to go door to door for an all-purpose bond issue -- needless to say, they would be more than happy if it included a fire station in North Torrance to better protect them. In the opinion of Mr. DeArmitt it would be possible to sell a 15 million dollar bond issue were the people told the truth, the facts were laid on the line, inasmuch as people do not mind paying for something if they receive what they are paying for; school bond issues have failed because of the troubles in the schools; further, State bond issues in recent years for recreation, waterway, or fire stations have passed. The need for a consultant is obvious, in the opinion of Captain DeArmitt.

Mr. Bill Carr, resident homeowner and business man in the City of Torrance, stated that a consultant is a good idea, and noted bond interest rates are higher today than they have ever been but the cost of construction, the cost of acquiring equipment, etc. will definitely be going up in the very near future. It would be his suggestion that there be a bond issue at this point in time to cover anything anticipated in the foreseeable future, rather than a series of bond issues to cover various needs, which will only waste the City's resources from the standpoint of people who are willing to go out and ring doorbells to bring about successful passage of the bond.

It was the further suggestion of Mr. Carr that it would be worthwhile to pay for those materials which might be necessary for an explanation (be it only one sheet) of the dollars and cents difference in the cost today vs the cost tomorrow to accomplish what is desired.

The president of the Torrance Craftsman's Guild, Mrs. Marjorie Skalach, indicated their heartfelt support of the proposed bond issue in view of the tremendous interest in recreation programs in Torrance -- the cultural activities are of great importance as well, as is a social program for senior citizens. There is a special need of providing activities for the working adult who in addition is a potential vote for the bond issue. Her group will do everything they possibly can to help -- a bond issue that fails costs money and is a very expensive overall undertaking. The consultant is favored as well by the Guild, and it is assumed that the consultant could furnish advice on ways to go about the bond issue campaign.

Mr. Adam Volker (?), 2602 West 162nd Street, asked that he be put down as a volunteer to assist in any way he might be of help. It was his suggestion that it might be possible to acquire surplus freeway land.

Mr. Brian Gauthier pointed out the need for information pertaining to the Supreme Court decision regarding the one-man one-vote situation; it could be very vital in regard to the passage of the subject bond. There is a real need for more parks, in his opinion, in that they are greatly overcrowded at the present time -- and now is the time, especially in view of the current ecology kick all over the country. Mr. Gauthier will seek the support of every member of the Parttime Employees Association, of which he is a member; he personally will help in any way he can.

Representing Little League, Mr. Vince Morretti, 1518 Amapola, described the situation and need of the Little League activities, along with future projections for participation in this popular activity, and the need for land by them.

Mrs. Louis Lanzer, League of Women Voters, reaffirmed their long time favor of the City purchasing more land for parks -- that is the League's priority, and any bond issue would have their support. They would also favor the hiring of a consultant in that the information he would provide would prove very valuable. The Citizens Committee, Mrs. Lanzer continued, is felt to be an excellent

manner of approaching the problem; they would suggest that a speakers' bureau be provided in view of the coverage and attention that can be obtained. There is also need for a public relations committee, an organizing committee, and probably a finance committee -- Mrs. Lanzer affirmed that League members would be interested in helping along these lines.

The president of the Torrance Jaycees, Mr. John Dunbar, 2823 Danaha, reported on the interest of his membership in the City of Torrance and what happens to it -- it is the general Jaycee philosophy that they look at the overall picture of the community, and it would seem that they would be behind a general bond -- there is a definite need for a consultant.

Mr. Chris Millson reiterated the eagerness of the residents in his neighborhood for a park -- it seems important to him that people be made aware of what they will not get without a bond issue.

Mr. Bob Hague, 2653 - 233rd Street, indicated his approval of the proposed bond issue, and will provide any support that he possibly can. In his job as Director of Community Services at El Camino College, he has first hand knowledge of the critical need for recreational facilities. Mr. Hague stated that he felt further that a consultant would be indispensable.

It was the comment of Councilman Wilson that the response at this meeting makes it quite evident that there is need for a general obligation bond election -- it is hoped that the enthusiasm of the large group present at this time could be captured and held and spread throughout all of Torrance. The proper timing must be a consideration, in Dr. Wilson's opinion, and it would seem a special election at an appropriate time would be the answer, with the chances of success appearing very likely.

Councilman Surber stated that he is extremely impressed with this group, and passage of such a bond appears assured. Mr. Surber would agree that a special election would be the better way; the costs for same were detailed by City Clerk Coil.

Councilman Johnson joined in commending the group who has turned out in this matter and the comments that have been made. Mr. Johnson recalled the few years past, when a bond issue failed, and had it been possible to buy the land at that time at that asking price, the City would now have its land bank and developing it; now land values have drastically increased, as have interest rates, etc.

The cry of the people for recreational facilities is well known to Councilman Johnson, and he would be concerned if too many extraneous items are incorporated in the proposed bond issue. In his opinion the first priority should be the buying of land and making it green. He would favor holding the bond issue down to a reasonable amount that will be palatable, directed particularly toward the park and recreation field.

Councilman Sciarrotta was in agreement that the speakers at this meeting have eloquently expressed themselves as to the direction the City should take.

In the opinion of Councilman Brewster there has been sufficient testimony to warrant moving ahead, the best possible use should be made of the next few months, while awaiting the product of the consultant, and a mechanism should be devised to launch this project.

Councilman Uerkwitz stated that the main considerations in a bond election are organization, education, and willing workers -- the support of the people in the Council Chambers is evident, but there is a need for commitment that tangible efforts will be made. Mr. Uerkwitz is thoroughly convinced that the idea of the consultant is a good one, but he reiterated the need for real momentum and inspiration.

Mayor Miller commented that it would be preferable to reserve judgment on certain specific questions such as: how much, methods of raising, etc.; there is a need for further meetings and the view of the consultant, in the event there is Council approval of such appointment.

It was the suggestion of the Mayor that there be approval of the allocation of funds for a consultant; it further seems to him that the Parks and Recreation Commission should properly spearhead this drive, along with them, and to maintain a proper perspective, that Council appoint seven lay citizens to work with the Commission, as an original committee -- the direction from that point to be decided by this group, with recommendations returned to the City Council as they progress. There should be meetings, Mayor Miller continued, by the Parks and Recreation Commission and this committee will meet with interested citizens.

Mayor Miller thereupon MOVED to approve the allocation of funds to hire a Consultant in connection with the proposed bond issue, with the following guidelines: the expenditure not to exceed \$13,000, with a report back should it be necessary. The motion was seconded by Councilman Sciarrotta, and roll call vote was unanimously favorable.

The chairman of the Parks and Recreation Commission, Mrs. Naomi McVey, confirmed the desire of the Commission to pursue a bond issue and of the leadership requested by the Mayor.

MOTION: Mayor Miller moved that a citizens committee be established, with each Councilman to submit one name at a future Council meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilman Uerkwitz, and roll call vote was unanimously favorable.

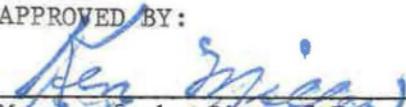
Mayor Miller expressed the appreciation of the Council to all in attendance for their interest and enthusiasm at this meeting.

The meeting was regularly adjourned at 9:05 P.M.

Ava Cripe
Minute Secretary

6. City Council
June 22, 1970

APPROVED BY:



Mayor of the City of Torrance



Vernon W. Coil, Clerk of the
City of Torrance, California