

September 19, 2006

**MINUTES OF A JOINT MEETING OF THE
TORRANCE LIBRARY COMMISSION AND THE
TORRANCE CITY COUNCIL**

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Torrance Library Commission convened in a joint meeting with Torrance City Council at 5:42 p.m. on Tuesday, September 19, 2006, at the Katy Geissert Civic Center Library.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners Botello*, Chappell, Grogan, Haig, Lang, Wang, and Chairperson Roberts**.

City Councilmembers Brewer, Drevno, McIntyre, Nowatka, Sutherland, Witkowsky, and Mayor Scotto.

Absent: None.

Also Present: City Librarian Weiner,
Library Services Manager Reeder,
Principal Librarian Theyer,
City Manager Jackson,
City Attorney Fellows,
City Clerk Herbers,
Assistant City Manager Giordano,
Community Services Director Barnett,
Recreation Services Manager Jones,
Community Development Director Gibson,
Finance Director Tsao,
Assistant to the City Manager Fulton, and
Management Associate Mukhim.

*Commissioner Botello arrived at 5:44 p.m.

**Chairperson Roberts arrived at 5:55 p.m.

III. FLAG SALUTE

City Attorney Fellows led the Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. AFFIDAVIT OF POSTING

MOTION: Councilmember Sutherland moved to accept and file the report of the City Clerk on the posting of the agenda for this meeting. Councilmember Nowatka seconded the motion and, hearing no objection, Mayor Scotto so ordered.

V. DISCUSSION OF LIBRARY OPERATIONS, FACILITIES, AND PROGRAMS

V - A. FRIENDS OF THE TORRANCE LIBRARY

Friends President Helen Ball reported that Friends has 30 volunteers and that its income comes from four book sales per year, table sales, and Internet book sales. She stated that last year Friends made over \$105,000 and has provided funding for the anime/manga collection, homework center, supported youth services and adult programming, audiovisual equipment at branch libraries, and Live Homework Help program. She announced a hardback book sale on October 20-21, 2006 and a networking meeting with Friends of other South Bay area libraries on October 29, 2006.

Responding to Councilmember Nowatka's inquiry, Ms. Ball stated that Friends prefers book donations but that they also accept audiovisual materials.

Councilmember Witkowsky congratulated and expressed appreciation to Friends for their continuing support and fundraising efforts.

V - C. PERCEPTIONS AND REALITIES: PUBLIC OPINION AND PUBLIC LIBRARY RESEARCH

This item was considered out of order.

City Librarian Weiner and Library Services Manager Reeder distributed handouts and provided a slide presentation on current research regarding perceptions of the public library based on three national studies conducted by the American Library Association, the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC), and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in association with Americans for Libraries Council. They presented responses to survey questions from the Gates Foundation study included in the material of record.

Library Services Manager Reeder concluded the presentation by stating that staff planned to use the results of the studies to establish specific goals for the Library with more involvement of the local community.

Commissioner Witkowsky initiated a brief discussion regarding the reinstatement of Sunday service.

Commissioner Haig stated that reopening the Library on Sundays was vital to the community, noting that it would cost approximately \$90,000 to open Katy Geissert from 1:00 to 5:00 for 32 Sundays per year.

City Manager Jackson advised that the City was in the second year of a two-year budget cycle and that they could not elaborate additional programs at this stage, but that funding for Sunday service could be considered for the next two-year budget cycle. He cautioned that there have been problems with employee labor negotiations in the past regarding Sunday service.

Community Services Director Barnett stated that different alternatives would be analyzed when the item is brought forward as part of the two-year budget process.

Mayor Scotto noted that Councilmembers appeared to be supportive of reopening at least one library on Sundays and directed staff to study options.

V - B. TORRANCE PUBLIC LIBRARY FOUNDATION

Treasurer Keri Gilbert stated that the Foundation was successful in raising funds to open a homework center at Southeast branch library and was in the process of planning support for projects that include Live Homework Help, remodel of Katy Geissert main level, and North Torrance branch library.

Chairperson Roberts thanked Helen Ball and Keri Gilbert and welcomed input from Commissioners.

Commissioner Chappell discussed the importance of the North Torrance Library project and the failure of the Bond Act to pass.

City Librarian Weiner mentioned that some agencies that have received grants have not been able to raise matching funds and expressed hope that the money will be reallocated to smaller local projects.

Responding to Councilmember Brewer's inquiry, City Librarian Weiner advised that City Council has put matching funds aside for the project.

Commissioner Lang discussed the importance of renovating the main level of Katy Geissert, not only to provide a more comfortable setting but for reasons of public safety, noting that the book stacks are not earthquake safe.

Councilmember Witkowsky noted that she brought up the issue two months ago and stressed the importance of finding funding to brace the stacks immediately.

City Manager Jackson stated that as the current budget and programs are being closed out, high priority capital projects would be reevaluated. He suggested that Councilmember Witkowsky ask under Orals at tonight's City Council meeting to have the item be considered as an urgency measure.

When City Librarian Weiner stated that it made sense to remodel at the same time as making the stacks earthquake safe, Councilmember Witkowsky responded that the stacks needed to be braced immediately and may have to be moved again during a remodel.

In response to Councilmember Brewer's inquiry, Library Services Manager Reeder stated that stacks at branch libraries were not earthquake safe, and that they are so old that they cannot be retrofitted for bracing.

Commissioner Wang discussed infrastructure needs at the aging branch libraries, noting that most restrooms are not ADA compliant. She stated that Henderson branch is in particular need of expansion and thanked City Council for implementing the Park Ranger program.

Commissioner Grogan discussed the closure of Hull Middle School and its potential impact on Southeast branch, noting that it is the only branch without a park. She stated that electrical upgrades for the branch were planned but that the current system will be able to support the homework center.

Commissioner Botello commended the joint programming that has occurred since consolidation that include Stories in Art, Works in Progress, Meet the Author, and Read the Book/See the Movie. She stated that the Library and Parks and Recreation Commission met on July 10, 2006 to explore other joint programming opportunities.

Chairperson Roberts requested that City Council consider increasing the material budget that has not been increased for five years, noting the popularity of DVDs and that the Library has had to reduce its standing orders and magazine subscriptions. She also noted that the Library Commission needed to increase its budget in order for Commissioners to attend Legislative Day, CLA, and CALTAC events.

Mayor Scotto noted that allocating funding for Commissions to cover specific travel expenses was being considered for the next budget cycle.

Responding to Councilmember Witkowsky suggestion that the possibility of having community members and companies donate periodical subscriptions and audiovisual materials, City Librarian Weiner noted that the Library has previously had a donor subscription program and that it could be worthwhile to explore the idea again.

Councilmember McIntyre asked staff to provide copies of the Gates Foundation study.

Councilmember Nowatka thanked Keri Gilbert for her involvement with the Foundation.

VI. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS / ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

At 6:53 p.m. City Council recessed to the City Council chambers for the regular meeting at 7:00 p.m.

The Library Commission adjourned to Monday, October 9, 2006 at 7:00 p.m. in the Katy Geissert Civic Center Library Meeting Room.

Approved as Submitted October 9, 2006 s/ Sue Herbers, City Clerk
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