

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF
THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND
ENERGY CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Torrance Environmental Quality and Energy Conservation Commission convened in a regular session at 7:03 p.m. on Thursday, May 7, 2009 in the West Annex meeting room at Torrance City Hall.

Due to the absences of Chairperson McCabe and Vice-Chairperson Reilly, Commissioner Watson led the meeting.

2. ROLL CALL:

Present: Commissioners Chim, Gobble, Griffiths, and Watson.

Absent: Commissioner Decker, Chairperson McCabe, and Vice-Chairperson Reilly.

Also Present: Deputy Community Development Director Cessna, Senior Environmental Quality Officer Jones, Environmental Quality Officer Duncan, Animal Control Administrative Assistant Wren, and Animal Control Supervisor D'Amico.

MOTION: Commissioner Chim moved to grant excused absences to Commissioner Decker, Vice-Chairperson Reilly, and Chairperson McCabe for the May 7, 2009 Commission meeting. Commissioner Griffiths seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

3. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Gobble.

4. POSTING OF THE AGENDA

MOTION: Commissioner Gobble, seconded by Commissioner Griffiths, moved to accept and file the report of the secretary on the posting of the agenda for this meeting; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

5. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – APRIL 2, 2009

Minutes were not available.

Items 9A and 9B were taken out of order.

9. NEW BUSINESS

9A. ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON AND VICE-CHAIRPERSON

MOTION: Commissioner Watson moved for a unanimous ballot to re-elect Chairperson McCabe for Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson Reilly for Vice-Chairperson of the Environmental Quality and Energy Conservation Commission for fiscal year 2009-2010. Commissioner Gobble seconded the motion; a roll call vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Decker, Chairperson McCabe, and Vice-Chairperson Reilly).

Deputy Director Cessna stated that she would verify that the Chairperson is allowed to serve again.

9B. LIBRARY COMMISSION INVITATION TO PARTNER IN A WATER CONSERVAION PROGRAM "ARE WE RUNNING DRY?"

Deputy Director Cessna noted that a draft flyer describing the June 27, 2009 water conservation event was included in agenda material. She stated that the Library Commission is inviting the Environmental Quality and Energy Conservation Commission to co-sponsor the event and requested that a representative or representatives attend.

MOTION: Commissioner Gobble moved to co-sponsor the June 27, 2009 "Are We Running Dry?" water conservation program with the Library Commission. Commissioner Griffiths seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioners Decker, McCabe, and Reilly).

7. ANIMAL MATTERS

7A. HEARING TO ALLOW PUBLIC COMMENTS ON A PROPOSAL TO SPAY/NEUTER ALL ANIMALS EXCEPT BREEDERS AND POLICE DOGS

Deputy Director Cessna stated that the purpose of this hearing was to take input from the public and that staff would bring back recommendations at the June or July 2009 Commission meeting. She distributed supplemental material, noted that "service animals" should be added to the item topic, and stated that the Commission would need to adjourn this meeting at 9:20 p.m. as a commissioner had to leave at that time and there would no longer be a quorum.

Sheila Kabirniya, Cabrillo Avenue, stated that she assisted with a rescue and spay/neuter effort of feral cats in old Torrance and that now the population is stable. She recommended mandatory spay/neuter and that the City partner with veterinary clinics to provide low cost spay/neuter.

Michael Frane, Ellinwood Drive, distributed position papers and stated that he is opposed to mandatory spay/neuter. He maintained that the decision needs to be based on science, not emotion, and that individual responsibility is most important.

Jeanne Young, West Carson Street, stated that she is in favor of mandatory spay/neuter but also to offer the public low-cost spay/neuter with monitoring.

Debra Corwin, West Bulova Street, Purrfect Partners, distributed information and May 7, 2009 correspondence from Assemblymember Lieu expressing his support for mandatory sterilization of cats and dogs. She discussed problems facing rescue groups and shelters and stated her support for a mandatory spay/neuter ordinance.

Diane Amendola, Anza Avenue, stated that passing an ordinance would not affect feral cats which is the primary problem. She said that spay/neuter laws passed by cities in California have not been successful and that sterilization is not healthy until animals are full-grown.

Ed Buck, Laurel Avenue, Social Compassion in Legislation, expressed support for SB 250 The Pet Responsibility Act and stated that a responsible pet spay/neuter law is effective and has been proven to work in cities throughout California.

Doris Tolone, West 175th Street, stated that an ordinance would not work because there are not enough Animal Control officers to enforce it.

Deborah Frane, Ellinwood Drive, distributed documentation and stated that behavior cannot be regulated and that the only people who would be affected are the responsible pet owners. She questioned how to define breeders, asked why show dogs are not included in the exception, and stated that there are long-term risks and effects from sterilization.

Haze Lynn, Hawthorne Boulevard, stated that Carson Animal Shelter is heart wrenching, that low-cost spay/neuter is available, and that if it is law people will comply.

Rosemarie Bailey, Avenida de Jose, Redondo Beach, Purrfect Partners, stated that you cannot leave it up to people to act responsibly, that low cost spay/neuter is available, that mandatory spay/neuter is successful, and that sterilization prevents many kinds of cancer.

Marion Bradshaw, Via la Selva, Palos Verdes Estates, stated that most cats that are euthanized are feral cats and distributed information about animal control services in Calgary, Canada.

Nina Dabbieri, Via el Chico, stated that it is irresponsible people who are wasting tax dollars and mandatory legislation would save tax dollars and provide a better quality of life for the citizens and animals of Torrance. She added that if abandoned animals cannot breed, it would make a major difference.

Shirley Russell, Date Avenue, concurred that feral animals are a problem but voiced opposition to mandatory spay/neuter. She said that altered dogs cannot participate in American Kennel Club world team events and that the later spay/neuter is done the better it is for a dog's health.

Wendy Aragon, East 10th Street, Long Beach, shared information about the Pet Assistance Foundation, stated that breeding is a privilege and not a right, and expressed support for legislation, public education, and low-cost sterilization.

Jennie Santos, Torrance Boulevard, stated that Yoga Fit supports a spay/neuter law and that the American Kennel Club should change its requirements.

Judy Taninies, Carol Drive, stated that her dogs would be unable to participate in dog competitions if they have been spayed or neutered.

Bonnie van Alphen, Normandie Avenue, stressed the importance of offering incentives to residents to spay/neuter their pets and discussed the differences in reproductive cycles of felines and canines.

Ann Patrick, Warner Avenue, Huntington Beach, stated that a proposed ordinance is ludicrous and that the City would be spending a lot of money to implement a law that cannot be enforced.

June Armstrong, West 186th Street, suggested that Commissioners visit the Carson shelter and that there should be a facility in Torrance.

Delores Rizzo, Santa Cruz Court, stated that the City's current "scoop" laws should be expanded to include cats.

Laurie Clark, Plaza del Amo, stated that a mandatory spay/neuter law has been needed for a long time and can go a lot further.

Amy Wagner, West 228th Street, stated that she is opposed to mandatory spay/neuter, that surgery can be dangerous, and that it is a decision best made between pet owners and veterinarians.

A member of the audience pointed out that feral cats originally came from both responsible and irresponsible homes and encouraged a visit to Carson shelter.

MOTION: At 8:20 p.m., Commissioner Gobble moved to close the public hearing. Commissioner Chim seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

Commissioner Gobble stated that he heard conflicting information about the best age for spaying and neutering and received input from several members of the audience.

Mary Zeitler, Calle de Andalucia, Redondo Beach, TLC Cat Adoptions, stated that they spay/neuter cats at nine weeks or two pounds.

Deputy Director Cessna stated that staff would review the information received, talk with Animal Control, look at practical applications, and come back with a range of ideas to consider at the June or July 2009 Commission meeting.

Commissioner Chim asked for a show of hands how many audience members were against mandatory spay/neuter legislation and approximately four people raised their hands.

Commissioner Watson thanked members of the audience for their passion, commitment, and level of information presented.

The Commission was in recess from 8:40 p.m. to 8:55 p.m.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

8A. UPDATE ON ENVIRONMENTAL FAIR

Deputy Director Cessna presented plans for the June 13, 2009 Environmental Fair at Madrona Marsh Preserve that include food vendors, Recycling, activities for youth, speakers, and displays of tankless water heaters, bio-diesel vehicles, solar tubes, and solar panels. She requested that the Commission be in charge of a Citizen Green Pledge.

Commissioner Gobble suggested providing composting bins and offered to try to provide ladybugs.

10. ORAL COMMUNICATION

10A. Commissioner Gobble distributed information about a Southern California Edison information session on June 25, 2009 regarding the California Solar Initiative and the incentives it offers.

10B. Commissioner Griffiths shared an Earth Day section from the Daily Breeze.

11. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: At 9:26 p.m., Commissioner Griffiths moved to adjourn the meeting to June 4, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. in the West Annex meeting room. Commissioner Gobble seconded the motion and, hearing no objection, Commission Watson so ordered.

Approved as Submitted July 2, 2009 s/ Sue Herbers, City Clerk
