

**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 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 3, 2014 in the West Annex meeting room at Torrance City Hall.

2. ROLL CALL:

Present: Commissioners Chim, Deemer, DeWitt, Martin, Montgomery, and Chairperson Gobble.

Absent: Commissioner Robbins.

Also Present: Senior Environmental Quality Officer Duncan, Senior Environmental Quality Officer Jones, Environmental Quality Officer Colclasure, and Environmental Quality Officer Travers.

MOTION: Commissioner Chim moved to grant Commissioner Robbins an excused absence for the April 3, 2014 Commission meeting. Commissioner DeWitt seconded the motion; a roll call vote reflected unanimous approval.

3. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Commissioner Montgomery led the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. POSTING OF THE AGENDA

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

5. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes were not available.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

7A. ZONING CODES REGARDING ELECTRONIC/VAPOR CIGARETTES

Senior Environmental Quality Officer Duncan, referring to the written report and correspondence in agenda packets, reported that the City Manager's office has asked staff to look at current codes regarding the use of electronic/vapor cigarettes (e-

cigarettes). She discussed regulations passed in other cities and pointed out that California Senate bill AB 648, passed in May 2013, prohibits the use of e-cigarettes in public buildings, schools and day care centers, and prohibits advertisement in the form of publications. She noted that the State code amendment excluded the prohibition of selling e-cigarettes to minors, and allows their use in hospital waiting rooms, bars, and restaurants. She stated that the Torrance Municipal Code does not address the use of e-cigarettes in workplaces, bars, restaurants, parks, or beach. She stated that most South Bay cities have not addressed e-cigarettes yet, that their use is becoming more popular and more readily available, and that there has been little conclusive research regarding health effects. She noted that there are proponents for and against e-cigarettes and briefly discussed some of the pros and cons regarding their use.

Jeffrey Neu, West 186th Street, stated that he was able to stop smoking by using e-cigarettes. He stated that e-cigarettes contain no tobacco or second hand smoke and that the liquid consists of propylene glycol, vegetable glycerin, and natural or artificial flavor extracts. He noted that, unlike traditional tobacco products, e-cigarettes have the ability to regulate the dosage of nicotine. He expressed his support for the use of e-cigarettes to help people to stop smoking.

At Commissioner Chim's request, he described different types of e-cigarettes that are available in the approximately 15 "Vapor" stores in the City, adding that they do not sell tobacco products. He stated that there is no nicotine in the vapor that is exhaled.

In response to Commissioner DeWitt's inquiry, Mr. Neu recommended banning sale of e-cigarettes to minors and their use anywhere that tobacco products are prohibited, adding that they should be allowed outdoors.

Commissioner Montgomery agreed that e-cigarettes benefit people who want to quit smoking; however, he voiced concern that they may become an entry vehicle. He stated that he would like to see more research in order to be able to craft a policy that allows the benefits but mitigates the risks. He stressed the importance of having complete knowledge of what by-products are in e-cigarettes.

Responding to Commissioner Deemer's inquiries, Mr. Neu discussed the history of e-cigarettes and estimated a 20-30% increase in the number of people who have switched from using tobacco products to e-cigarettes. He stated that the FDA has stated that propylene glycol and vegetable glycerin are safe but has not yet determined if additives present a health risk or not. He estimated that 40% of e-cigarette users have never used tobacco products and have taken it up as a fad.

When Commissioner DeWitt expressed concern about additives and questioned what the use might morph into, Mr. Neu stated that it is important that the FDA sets standards and regulates what ingredients can be added.

In response to Commissioner Martin's inquiry, Mr. Neu stated that he considers himself a former smoker and that he now uses zero milligrams of nicotine.

Chairperson Gobble questioned if THC is sometimes added to e-cigarettes, and Mr. Neu stated that he was unaware of this happening in South Bay shops.

Commissioner Chim raised the issue of banning the sale to minors and staff advised that most cities that they researched are classifying e-cigarettes as tobacco and that State law bans the sale of tobacco to minors.

In response to Chairperson Gobble's inquiry, Environmental Quality Officer Travers stated that when issuing business licenses vapor shops are considered tobacco

shops, that he is unaware of any near to a school, and that he has seen little advertising. He offered to forward a list of articles and websites regarding e-cigarettes to Commissioners.

MOTION: Commissioner Martin moved to direct staff to look at the impact of addressing e-cigarettes as tobacco. The motion died due to the lack of a second.

MOTION: Commissioner Deemer moved to direct staff to prepare a summary of current State and city restrictions on tobacco and e-cigarette usage as well as what ordinances Torrance would need to modify to parallel these restrictions. The motion died due to the lack of a second.

Environmental Quality Officer Travers summarized a list of topics and concerns that Commissioners raised at this meeting.

MOTION: Commissioner Chim moved to direct staff to conduct further research and outreach regarding the use of e-cigarettes. Commissioner Martin seconded the motion; a roll call vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Robbins).

8. NEW BUSINESS

8A. Senior Environmental Quality Officer Jones presented a tentative schedule for upcoming Commission meetings: overview of oil sites in May, Environmental Fair and overview of Environmental Quality Officers' duties in June, dark in July, and oil extensions in August.

Commissioner Deemer received clarification from staff that inactive oil wells have been capped and that current sites do not slant out into other cities.

9. ORAL COMMUNICATION

9A. Commissioner Martin announced a garden and native plant tour on April 5.

9B. Commissioner Martin stated that she attended the Old Torrance Homeowners Association meeting and noted that the proponents for allowing chickens and bees are organized.

9C. Commissioner Montgomery requested an excused absence for the May 1 Commission meeting.

MOTION: Commissioner Montgomery moved to grant Commissioner Montgomery an excused absence for the May 1, 2014 Commission meeting. Chairperson Gobble seconded the motion; a roll call vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Robbins).

9D. Commissioner Chim shared information about the "Grades of Green" recycling program in South Bay elementary schools.

9E. Commissioner DeWitt discussed a television documentary that he saw regarding the importance of bees.

9F. Chairperson Gobble reminded Commissioners about Commissioner Certification training on April 24.

9G. Chairperson Gobble relayed an invitation for Commissioners to participate in Library focus groups on April 28 and Commissioner Deemer expressed interest in participating.

9H. Commissioner Montgomery encouraged Commissioners to read the March 27 article “Buzz on Birds and Bees” in the Easy Reader.

10. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: At 8:22 p.m., Commissioner Martin moved to adjourn the meeting to May 1, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. in the West Annex meeting room. Commissioner DeWitt seconded the motion and, hearing no objection, Chairperson Gobble so ordered.

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Approved as submitted August 7, 2014 s/ Rebecca Poirier, City Clerk
