

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF
THE TORRANCE WATER COMMISSION**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Torrance Water Commission convened in a regular session at 7:04 p.m. on Thursday, January 18, 2007 in the West Annex meeting room at Torrance City Hall.

2. ROLL CALL:

Present: Commissioners Deemer, Lew, Rizzardi, See, Warner, White, and Chairperson Hoffman.

Absent: None.

Also Present: Deputy Public Works Director van der Linden, Senior Administrative Analyst Schaich, and Metropolitan Water District Director Wright.

3. FLAG SALUTE

Commissioner Rizzardi led the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. AFFIDAVIT OF POSTING

MOTION: Commissioner White moved to accept and file the report of the City Clerk on the posting of the agenda for this meeting. Commissioner Warner seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

Commissioners welcomed new Water Commissioner Alex See.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

5A. MINUTES FROM DECEMBER 21, 2006

Minutes were not available.

7. NEW BUSINESS

7A. PRESENTATION BY CALIFORNIA WATER SERVICES COMPANY (CWSC)

This item was considered out of order.

Deputy Public Works Director van der Linden introduced the item and welcomed representatives from the California Water Service Company, Rancho Dominguez District.

District Manager Terry Tamble introduced Engineering Manager John Foth, Assistant District Manager Dan Trejo, Water Quality Project Manager Phuong Ly, and Administrative Assistant Michael Duque.

With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation and material of record, District Manager Tamble provided an overview regarding California Water Services Company's (CWSC) facilities, service areas, activities and water programs within the City.

He provided information about the Rancho Dominguez District that serves 88,300 customers and employs 92 people. He discussed its four separate systems (Hermosa-Redondo, Palos Verdes, Hawthorne, and Dominguez) resulting from the Cal Water-Dominguez merger in the year 2000: He outlined the approximately 20% of the City located in Hollywood Riviera and northwest Torrance that the Rancho Dominguez District where water service is provided.

He reported that the Hermosa-Redondo system has 25,600 customers, 2,600 located in the Hollywood Riviera section of the City. He noted that the system has 211 miles of pipeline, 27 booster pumps, 18 storage tanks, three wellhead treatment facilities, seven pressure zones, and interconnections with Palos Verdes.

In response to Commissioner Lew's inquiry, District Manager Tamble explained that the system uses 85% imported water from Metropolitan Water District (MWD) and 15% local groundwater, and that all Hollywood Riviera customers receive imported water. He showed slides of Hermosa Redondo Reservoir 5 in Hollywood Riviera and Hermosa-Redondo Reservoir 8 off of Calle del Arboles.

He discussed the Palos Verdes system that serves 23,800 primarily residential customers, noting that there is no groundwater basin and that all water is imported from MWD. He stated that water must be pumped up the hill to customers, making the water rates higher than in other systems.

He reported that the Hawthorne system serves 6,100 customers and uses a combination of local groundwater and purchased water. He noted that CWSC signed a 15-year lease to maintain and operate the unregulated system in 1996 and that rates are set by the Hawthorne City Council.

In response to Commissioner White's inquiry, District Manager Tamble described some of its other unregulated operations that include billing as well as the operation and maintenance of recycling systems.

He reported that the Dominguez system serves 32,800 customers, approximately 7,400 in West Torrance, and uses a combination of groundwater and purchased water. He stated that there are five interconnections with Hermosa-Redondo and 14 wells throughout the service area, noting that the Brewer Desalter at the City Yard adds to the local supply. He stated that the Brewer Desalter has not had problems with chloride levels like the Goldsworthy Desalter has had.

He reviewed services in the City, noting that Torrance facilities include seven reservoirs with a capacity of 6.1 million gallons, three pump stations, and 14 booster pumps. He discussed water quality standards and regulations, noting that the District collects 90 monthly bacteriological samples throughout the systems.

Referring to fluoridation, District Manager Tamble advised that Hollywood Riviera customers would receive fluoride at optimum levels when MWD begins adding it to its water in July or August 2007. He noted that, as CWSC brings more wells and the Brewer Desalter online, the water supply in West Torrance would be monitored to determine the levels of fluoride resulting from the supply blend.

Senior Administrative Analyst Schaich noted that the fluoridation item would be going to City Council in one or two months following additional community outreach.

Responding to Chairperson Hoffman's inquiry regarding the July 2004 boil water order incident, District Manager Tamble stated that the District learned in debriefing that they should have gone to the Public Information Office rather than the Fire Department.

District Manager Tamble presented information on CWSC's focus on customer service and water conservation, noting that any programs through West Basin Water Association District are also available to their customers. He discussed appliance rebates, community involvement, school programs, and distribution of low-water-use devices. He noted they have applied to the California Public Utility Commission for a tiered-rate structure but that it has not been approved yet.

Chairperson Hoffman encouraged staff to follow CWSC's lead and also apply for a tiered-rate structure for Torrance customers as soon as possible.

District Manager Tamble concluded his presentation with an overview of CWSC's rate process, emergency response capabilities, and support to numerous Torrance organizations.

In response to Commissioner Deemer's inquiry, he stated that the saline plume has not reached the three wells in North Redondo.

The Commission was in recess from 8:15 to 8:24 p.m.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

6A. WATER COMMISSION INPUT ON CHAIRPERSON HOFFMAN'S PRESENTATION TO WATER COMMISSION REGARDING THE POSSIBILITY OF EXPANDING THE PURVIEW OF THE COMMISSION

Chairperson Hoffman reviewed his proposal presented at the December 21, 2006 Commission meeting to expand the purview of the Water Commission to include sewer services and refuse removal. He stated that Commission meetings primarily provide educational information to Commissioners and that the Commission's role should be to serve the community and advise City Council.

Commissioner White suggested that an ad hoc committee be created to put together a presentation to the Mayor and Council members.

Commissioner Lew expressed concern that under the proposed scope Commissioners would need to become more proficient at engineering, cost analysis, and nomenclature, adding that it was important to define the Commission's scope of responsibilities.

Chairperson Hoffman stated that the Commission was a citizen's board that needed to ask intelligent questions of staff.

MWD Director Wright suggested that the Commission might have the opportunity in the future to make recommendations to City Council regarding refuse removal.

Commissioner Warner concurred that the Commission was not acting in a position of making recommendations for the most part.

Deputy Public Works Director van der Linden recommended that the Commission get a go-ahead from Mayor Scotto before setting up an ad hoc committee.

Commissioner Warner stated that the proposed ad hoc committee should spend time preparing a cohesive thought before going to the Mayor or City Council.

Chairperson Hoffman requested that each Commissioner provide input and, following discussion, there was a general consensus among Commissioners that they were supportive of his proposal.

MWD Director Wright, with concurrence by Commissioner Warner, suggested that the Commission draw on the experience of another City that has a similar Commission structure.

Commissioner Rizzardi recommended studying the City's enterprise funds as well as looking at long range planning. He expressed concern that the City's Commissions do not work together, noting that the proposed expansion of the Commission's purview would create a more cohesive grouping that may overcome some of this.

Deputy Public Works Director van der Linden acknowledged that there has been a lull in activity for the past year and a half, but anticipated more Commission action in approximately six months. He requested that the Commission consider staff time that would be involved and how multi-Division items would be presented. He noted that it has been suggested that sanitation and refuse removal should be under the Environmental Quality and Energy Conservation Commission's purview. He recommended that the ad hoc committee meet with the City Attorney's office to determine legality and receive guidance regarding the Commission's purview.

MOTION: Commissioner White moved that Chairperson Hoffman appoint an ad hoc committee regarding the possibility of expanding the purview of the Water Commission. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Warner; a roll call vote reflected unanimous approval.

Chairperson Hoffman appointed Commissioners Rizzardi and White to serve on the ad hoc committee. Commissioner White declined, and Commissioner Lew was appointed. It was determined that Chairperson Hoffman to be the ad hoc committee chair.

8. WEST BASIN WATER ASSOCIATION REPORT

Deputy Public Works Director van der Linden reported that at the January 2, 2007 West Basin Water Association meeting the Department of Water Resources distributed their monthly water pumping report that showed an 8% decline in water pumped this year from last year due to water quality issues. He noted that there was a 2% increase in groundwater pumping in the Central Basin however. He stated that West Basin Municipal discussed water quality sampling testing and MWD's proposed rate increase.

He reported that the Water Replenishment District's Technical Advisory Committee is meeting on January 24, 2007 to develop an overall saline plume policy. He stated that the Goldsworthy Desalter Facility has been granted a six-month extension in operations and that the Orduna well site was tested and found to have low chloride levels.

He announced West Basin Water Association's quarterly dinner meeting on February 21, 2007 at 5:30 p.m.

In response to Commissioner Deemer's inquiry, Deputy Public Works Director van der Linden stated that there were no plans to build another desalter facility.

8. MONTHLY DEPARTMENT REPORT

Deputy Public Works Director van der Linden reported a total of 13 water main breaks recorded last month; however, there have been 21 main breaks since January 13, 2007 due to the cold spell. He reported a main break on January 18, 2007 at Crenshaw Boulevard and 230th Street and commended Field Operations for their response and hard work in making repairs.

Chairperson Hoffman suggested that staff be recognized at a City Council meeting and stated for the record that the Commission recognizes the hard work they do in the field.

Commissioner Rizzardi stated that he wished more citizens would commend employees at City Council meetings.

Responding to Commissioner Deemer's inquiry, Deputy Public Works Director van der Linden explained that the Walteria and Ben Haggott Reservoirs Rehabilitation was now a combined project and that part of it has been funded.

At Commissioner See's request, Deputy Public Works Director van der Linden explained reasons for meter replacements and rereads.

MOTION: Commissioner Rizzardi moved to accept and file the Deputy Public Works Director's Monthly Department Report as submitted. Commissioner Deemer seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

10. METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT DIRECTOR'S REPORT

MWD Director Wright distributed his January 16, 2007 report to Mayor and Council Members and reported that in February 2007 the MWD staff was going to propose a 6.9% increase in water rates. He stated that the increase was due to an increase in capital costs and the cost of power to bring water from Northern California. He reported that MWD was not supportive of the Governor's proposal to develop more surface storage because the water would need to go through the Delta but rather that MWD supported the development of conjunctive use to store water. He noted that a Senator has introduced legislation to build a canal around the Delta.

11. ORALS

11A. Commissioner Warner distributed information about a sprinkler system that he saw at Ewing.

11B. Commissioner Warner announced a film and panel discussion on the future of the Hetch Hetchy at the Gene Autry Museum on January 21, 2007.

11C. Commissioner White wished Commissioners and staff a happy New Year.

11D. Commissioner Deemer discussed the use of buffalo grass to reduce water consumption.

11E. Chairperson Hoffman relayed a resident's concern about landscaping being watered at commercial buildings while it is raining.

12. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: At 9:40 p.m., Commissioner Warner moved to adjourn the meeting to February 15, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. in the West Annex Commission meeting room. Commissioner Rizzardi seconded the motion and, hearing no objection, Chairperson Hoffman so ordered.

Approved as Submitted February 15, 2007 s/ Sue Herbers, City Clerk
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