

May 27, 2015

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

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Torrance Water Commission convened in a regular session at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 27, 2015 in the West Annex Meeting Room at Torrance City Hall.

**2. ROLL CALL:**

Present: Commissioners Craft, Marshall, McGee,  
See, and Chairperson Nishinaga.

Absent: Commissioner Kawai.

Also Present: Senior Administrative Analyst Schaich and  
Water Operations Superintendent Berndt.

**MOTION:** Commissioner McGee moved to grant Commissioner Kawai an excused absence for the May 27, 2015 Water Commission meeting. Commissioner Marshall seconded the motion; a roll call vote reflected unanimous approval.

**3. FLAG SALUTE**

Commissioner Craft led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**4. AFFIDAVIT OF POSTING**

**MOTION:** Commissioner See moved to accept and file the report of the City Clerk on the posting of the agenda for this meeting. Commissioner McGee seconded the motion; a roll call vote reflected unanimous approval.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Craft moved for Commissioners to begin sitting at the dais for Commission meetings starting next month. Commissioner Marshall seconded the motion.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Marshall moved to defer the motion until Item 12. Orals. Chairperson Nishinaga seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Minutes were not available.

**6. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM PUBLIC**

The Commission welcomed guest Raymond Jay from Metropolitan Water District's (MWD) Water Resources Management group, Charles Deemer, and Keith Montoya.

Charles Deemer, Talisman Avenue, distributed "Water, Water Everywhere" from the May 16, 2015 Science News.

Keith Montoya, Bernist Avenue, stated that he was here to discuss amendments to the Conservation Ordinance's Level 2 measures.

7. **OLD BUSINESS** – None.

8. **NEW BUSINESS**

8A. **REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION REGARDING PROPOSED CONSERVATION AND DROUGHT COMPLIANCE PROGRAM**

Senior Administrative Analyst Schaich provided a PowerPoint presentation "The California Drought and Initial Action Response Programs." He reported that there are two different benchmarks that the City needs to meet: Metropolitan Water District (MWD) goals and the Governor's Executive Order. He stated that tonight's presentation would focus on State regulations and that MWD and potential penalties would be discussed at a later meeting. He noted that he does not expect the State to hold the City to a specific number or penalize them as long as they are making progress.

He discussed Torrance Municipal Water's (TMW) major goals: water supply diversification, continuous reliability and sustainability, infrastructure replacement and modernization, water rate stability, continuous and accelerated conservation, enhanced local and regional partnerships, and to "drought proof the community." He noted that TMW has the lowest water rates in the area and that developing local groundwater supplies would help minimize rate increases in the future.

Chairperson Nishinaga noted the low groundwater production this year, and staff explained that both the Goldsworthy Desalter and Well #9 have experienced problems. He received clarification that the delay in constructing the new well field is not a staff issue but is because of design, utility easement, negotiations with the School District, the CEQA process, and other approvals that are needed. He stated that actual construction would be the fastest phase and that completion is expected late 2016 or early 2017.

Senior Administrative Analyst Schaich presented information regarding the Torrance Water Source Diversification Program. He stated that 80% of potable water is imported, while 12% is from Well #9 and 8% from the Desalter, noting that they hope to reduce imported water to 40% in the future. He indicated that total potable water use, 20,000 acre-feet per year, is expected to decrease to 18,000 acre-feet in the future. He discussed the four years of drought impacting 87% of the State, noting that Torrance is in the Exceptional Drought sector. He reviewed Water Supply Conditions as of May 3, noting that snowpacks in key northern California watersheds are less than 5% of normal.

He reported that on April 1 Governor Brown issued an Executive Order requiring mandatory Statewide reductions of 25% in potable water usage, and that the State Water Regional Control Board adopted it on May 5. He provided background on the City's Conservation Ordinance adopted in March 2009 that focuses on prohibiting wasteful uses of water. He noted that 40-50% of Torrance water use goes to landscape, and that the largest focus is now on outside watering. He informed them that MWD

recently appropriated \$350 million for its Turf Replacement program and that Southern California has invested \$12 billion in water reliability over the past 20 years.

Water Operations Superintendent Berndt reported that in March 2014 City Council approved enacting the Ordinance's Level 1 requirements, noting that they are still in effect today. He stated that Level 1 requirements apply only to potable water and call for a reduction of up to 15% of water use. He described permanent measures and Level 1 requirements that limit watering to three days per week and 15 minutes maximum per area. He stated that on April 14, 2015 City Council approved activation of Level 2. He stated that Level 2 calls for up to 30% water use reduction, no watering from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., watering limited to two days per week with 10 minutes maximum per area, fix all leaks within four days, and restrictions on ornamental ponds, pools, and spas. He noted that Level 2 also includes the addition of the Administrative Rule Provision

In response to Chairperson Nishinaga's inquiry regarding swimming pools, staff informed him that one foot of added water is allowed per day, and pool covers are encouraged whenever possible to mitigate evaporation.

Superintendent Berndt noted that in 2001 there was an average Citywide water usage of 174 gallons per capita per day and in 2014 that amount decreased to 128 gallons. He showed a chart of what a 20% reduction in water use looks like and shared information about the Turf Removal program, California friendly landscape classes, water use efficiency rebates and incentives, and new programs that include the Recycled Water Internal Hook Up Program, Public Agency Landscape Program, and Fitness Center Program..

Senior Administrative Analyst Schaich discussed increased outreach and communications in local newspapers, conservation brochures, City newsletters, bill inserts, posters in various public buildings and businesses, and a redesign of the website. He stated that there would be a new conservation hotline, recycled water signs in landscape sites, information display racks, messages on the City's new digital message board, participation in more community events, and presentations to civic, homeowners associations, and business groups.

Commissioner Craft suggested putting posters in school, Commissioner See raised the possibility of providing signs in different languages, and Commissioner Marshall recommended using Twitter and other social media.

Senior Administrative Analyst Schaich described how there are field audits of unusual water billing using a meter interrogation device that can be tracked for 90 days. He announced that the City won first place in the Wyland Foundation Mayor's Challenge and that one of the prizes given will be a free pilot program that compares a resident's water usage with neighbors and offers conservation tips. He stated that a consultant will train certain personnel to be water advisors to assist customers and that there are plans to set up an electronic self-guided water audit on the website.

In response to Commissioner Craft's inquiry, he discussed weather-based smart controllers that can reduce water use by 10-25%. He stated that all 32 City parks are currently using the controllers and next they plan to work with Streetscape to implement them in medians and parkways.

He presented potable water usage per acre-foot in March and April 2015, noting the 8.4 and 11.6 reductions as compared to the same time periods in 2013. He noted that TMW reduction is now at 25% of baseline calendar year 2013 and that the program is in effect June 2015 to February 2016. He stated that ExxonMobil is expected to go back on line in three to five months, and that 15% of potable water would go to them. He noted that if TMW meets the Governor's plan it would also meet MWD's goal. He explained that MWD has implemented its Water Supply Allocation Plan because of depleted storage reserves, noting that they are more concerned about penalties from MWD than the State.

Commissioner Marshall stated that he attended ExxonMobil's Community Advisory Panel meeting on May 27 and learned that they provide 10% of the gasoline supply in California. He offered to notify Commissioners when ExxonMobil gives a presentation to the Panel.

Responding to Commissioner Marshall's inquiry, Senior Administrative Analyst Schaich stated that they plan to have a low flow toilet distribution in the fall or next spring.

Commissioner See suggested forming a water conservation subcommittee and staff advised that they would put it on next month's agenda for consideration. He also suggested that staff give water conservation presentations to Neighborhood Watch meetings.

Senior Administrative Analyst Schaich explained that the conjunctive use program would allow them to put unused or excess storage rights into a storage account. He briefly discussed plans for four new wells and two more Desalter wells.

In response to their inquiries, he informed Commissioner Craft that ExxonMobil uses 90% or 6-7% of recycled water and to Commissioner See that there has to be a ten foot separation between potable and recycled water pipes.

Keith Montoya inquired about amendments to Level 2 and explained that he lives on a hill and would prefer to water four times per week for five minutes rather than two times a week for ten minutes. He recommended providing education to people who are removing their lawns just to receive rebates without knowing what they are doing.

Senior Administrative Analyst Schaich explained that the Administrative Rule Provision would allow for an equivalency factor, noting that the City is looking at the total amount of water applied to an area, not the frequency or duration. He explained that there are also concerns from 2,000 residents who live in the expansive soil area of the City.

Commissioner Marshall shared information about the Mayor's letter to the State Water Regional Control Board last month regarding flexibility on watering days.

## **9. METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Senior Administrative Analyst Schaich distributed a May 26 MWD News Release and provided additional information about MWD's Turf Removal Program. He reported

that MWD added \$350 million to its conservation budget to a new total of \$450 million over two years. He noted that MWD plans to intensify their public service announcements on commercial radio stations during the summer months.

**10. WEST BASIN WATER ASSOCIATION REPORT**

Senior Administrative Analyst Schaich reported that the Conjunctive Use Water Storage Panel has been working on rules to allow for groundwater storage. He stated that the rules should be approved next month and that the conjunctive use program would be operational in July 2016.

**11. MONTHLY DEPARTMENT REPORT**

Water Operations Superintendent Berndt noted that the Monthly Department Report for April 2015 was included in agenda packets. He reported that production of potable water for the month was 1,406.6 AF, a decrease of approximately 12.7% compared to April 2014. He noted that total potable water production on a year to date basis is 10.2% below last year. He stated that there were two water main breaks in April and that, on a cumulative basis, nine main breaks have occurred in 2015 year to date.

In response to Commissioner McGee's inquiry, staff discussed problems with the 14 year old Goldsworthy Desalter, noting that the facility was returned to active service this month. It was noted that, as part of the Desalter expansion project, there would be a complete rehabilitation or replacement of existing electrical and mechanical systems, with the goal of producing 150 acre-feet per month.

**12. ORALS**

**12A.** Chairperson Nishinaga expressed his appreciation to MWD for providing the tour of the Edmonston Pumping facility and Jensen Treatment plant on April 25.

**12B. MOTION:** Commissioner Craft moved for Commissioners to begin sitting at the dais for Commission meetings starting next month. Commissioner Marshall seconded the motion; a roll call vote reflected unanimous approval

**12C.** Commissioner McGee congratulated the City on winning the Wyland Foundation Mayor's Challenge.

**13. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** At 9:04 p.m., Commissioner McGee moved to adjourn the meeting to Wednesday, June 24, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in the West Annex Commission meeting room. Commissioner Craft seconded the motion and, hearing no objection, Chairperson Nishinaga so ordered.

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Approved as submitted June 24, 2015 s/ Rebecca Poirier, City Clerk
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