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TORRANCE CITY COUNCIL MARCH 24, 2015

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At 10:04 p.m., the meeting was adjourned to Tuesday, April 7, 2015, at 5:30 p.m. for an executive session, with regular business commencing at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber. Tuesday, March 31, is a Council dark night.

March 24, 2015

**MINUTES OF AN ADJOURNED REGULAR
MEETING OF THE TORRANCE CITY COUNCIL**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Torrance City Council convened in an adjourned regular session at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 24, 2015 in the Council Chamber at Torrance City Hall.

ROLL CALL

Present: Councilmembers Ashcraft, Barnett, Goodrich, Griffiths, Rizzo, Weideman and Mayor Furey.

Absent: None.

Present: City Manager Jackson, Assistant City Manager Giordano, City Attorney Fellows, City Clerk Poirier and other staff representatives.

2. FLAG SALUTE/ INVOCATION

The flag salute was led by Councilmember Griffiths.

The non-sectarian invocation was given by Councilmember Rizzo.

**3. REPORT OF CITY CLERK ON POSTING OF THE AGENDA/ MOTION TO
WAIVE FURTHER READING**

City Clerk Poirier reported that the agenda was posted on the Public Notice Board at 3031 Torrance Boulevard on Thursday, March 19, 2015.

MOTION: Councilmember Rizzo moved that after the City Clerk has read aloud the number and title to any resolution or ordinance on the meeting agenda, the further reading thereof shall be waived, reserving and guaranteeing to each Councilmember the right to demand the reading of any such resolution or ordinance in regular order. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Barnett and passed by unanimous vote.

4. WITHDRAWN, DEFERRED OR SUPPLEMENTAL ITEMS

No items were deferred or withdrawn; supplemental material was available for Items 8A, 8C and 13A.

5. COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Fire Chief Racowschi announced that ExxonMobil will be conducting their monthly community siren alert testing on Wednesday, April 1, 2015 at approximately 11:30 a.m. He advised that should the siren sound at a time other than monthly testing, the message is to shelter in place, which means that people should go indoors, close all windows, doors and fireplace dampers and turn off heaters and air conditioners, noting that details about the procedure are available on the City's website at www.TorranceCa.gov/TPD/9927.htm. He also announced that March 22 through March 28 is California Tsunami Preparedness Week and there will be a test of the tsunami warning system on Wednesday, March 25, at approximately 10:15 a.m. in coastal areas of central and southern California, with additional information at www.weather.gov.

Deputy Police Chief Anderson offered a reminder about Torrance Alerts, the City's emergency mass notification system. He advised that the system enables the public to receive informational messages from the City in the event of an emergency and it can also be used to message the public about community events and traffic alerts. He explained that it is an opt-in system, which means that people must register on-line and choose what type of information they want to receive and how they want to receive it. He noted that registration can be accessed on the City's website and Facebook page by clicking on the Torrance Alerts icon.

Councilmember Goodrich announced that the Strategic Plan Committee met earlier today to discuss the status of the City's Strategic Plan and staff provided an overview of the Strategic Plan, the Funding Action Plan, and the 2013-2014 Community Report. He reported that Key Performance Indicators for the 2nd quarter of 2015 will be updated and staff will return to the Strategic Plan Committee and the City Council for approval of the new three-year Action Funding Plan in late 2015. He noted that material from today's meeting and the Community Report are available online at www.TorranceCA.gov/strategicplan.

Councilmember Barnett announced that the Finance and Governmental Operations Committee met earlier this evening for a mid-year budget review and a report will be presented to the Council in the next 2-3 weeks.

Councilmember Griffiths announced that the sixth and final outreach meeting to discuss the possibility of an ordinance protecting views from obstruction from trees and vegetation in the Hillside Overlay District will be held on Tuesday, March 31, at the Katy Geissert Civic Center Library meeting room from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m., with additional information available by contacting the Community Development Department at 310-618-2550.

Mayor Furey announced that the City of Torrance will be taking part in the Wyland Foundation Mayor's Challenge, a competition among cities to see which city can be the most water wise. He explained that the city recording the most pledges to conserve water during the month of April will be declared the winner and encouraged residents to sign the pledge, which can be found at www.mywaterpledge.com.

6. COMMUNITY MATTERS

6A. RESOLUTION NO. 2015-12 RE LORNE M. HARTLEY

RESOLUTION NO. 2015-12

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TORRANCE
HONORING FIREFIGHTER LORNE M. HARTLEY UPON HIS RETIREMENT
FROM THE CITY AFTER THIRTY-ONE YEARS OF SERVICE

MOTION: Councilmember Goodrich moved to adopt Resolution No. 2015-12. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Ashcraft and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

To be presented at a later date.

7. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #1

7A. Adrienne Brandriss, Torrance, questioned why senior excursions offered by the City of Torrance are considerably more expensive than in neighboring cities.

7B. Suzan Hubert, Friends of Madrona Marsh, submitted copies of the organization's 2014 annual report and briefly highlighted their accomplishments. She announced that an Earth Day Fair will be held at the marsh on Saturday, April 18, which will include information booths, entertainment, a food truck, and tours of the marsh.

7C. Dolly Cross, Torrance, announced that the Torrance Art Museum will be opening a new exhibit featuring photography on Saturday, March 28, from 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.

7D. Avelino Valencia, senior district representative for Isadore Hall, reported that Senator Hall has relocated his office to 222 W. Sixth Street, Suite 320, San Pedro, and will be holding an open house on Thursday, April 2, from 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. He requested that residents and the Council support Senator Hall's request for an audit of Inglewood Unified School District and also requested their support for SB232, which would allow a school district under State receivership to access additional assistance from the state.

7E. Estelle Collins, Torrance, expressed concerns about traffic safety issues on 182nd Street between Crenshaw Boulevard and Van Ness.

7F. Debbie Park and Connie Chung, Torrance Youth Council, invited the public to attend the 16th annual Youth Council Pancake Breakfast on Saturday, April 18, from 7:00 – 11:00 a.m. at the Attic teen center located at 2320 W. Carson Street.

8. CONSENT CALENDAR

8A. AGREEMENT AMENDMENT RE TORRANCE SEASONS PUBLICATION

Recommendation

Recommendation of the City Manager that City Council approve an amendment to the service agreement between the City and Crestec USA Inc. of Torrance, CA (C2013-246) for the design of Torrance Seasons publication in the amount of \$19,572 for a new total amount not to exceed \$49,412.

8B. LICENSE AGREEMENT FOR USE OF RIGHT-OF-WAY

Recommendation

Recommendation of the Public Works Director and Transit Director that City Council approve the license agreement between the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LACMTA/Metro) and the City of Torrance (City) for use of Metro's right-of-way adjacent to the proposed Torrance Transit Park & Ride Regional Terminal site located at 465 Crenshaw Boulevard for landscaping purposes.

8C. AGREEMENT FOR CONSTRUCTION INSPECTION SERVICES

Considered separately, see page 4.

8D. AGREEMENT AMENDMENT RE AIRPORT PAVEMENT MAINTENANCE PROGRAM AND ZAMPERINI AIRFIELD SECURITY PROJECT

Recommendation

Recommendation of the Public Works Director that City Council approve a first amendment to consulting services agreement with AECOM Technical Services, Inc. of Orange CA, (C2013-065) in the amount of \$6,424 for a new not to exceed amount of \$131,636 to perform additional design services for the Airport Pavement Maintenance Program (I-126), and extend the term an additional six (6) months to September 30, 2015 in order to finalize construction inspection for the Zamperini Airfield Security Project (FEAP #616).

8E. APPROPRIATION OF ASSET FORFEITURE FUNDS FOR RENOVATION OF SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS DIVISION

Recommendation

Recommendation of the Chief of Police that City Council:

- 1) Appropriate \$130,000 of asset forfeiture funds for the renovation of the Special Investigations Division;
- 2) Authorize a purchase order to CSI Fullmer of Pasadena, CA in the amount of \$72,112.95 for the purchase and installation of workstations and associated furniture;
- 3) Authorize a purchase order to JMG Security Systems, Inc. of Fountain Valley, CA in the amount of \$28,511 for the purchase and installation of a secure-access control system; and
- 4) Authorize an expenditure of \$29,376.05 for construction, carpeting, painting and miscellaneous costs required for renovation completion.

MOTION: Councilmember Griffiths moved to approve Consent Calendar Items 8A, 8B, 8D and 8E. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Weideman and passed by unanimous vote.

Consent Calendar Item 8C was considered separately at this time.

8C. AGREEMENT FOR CONSTRUCTION INSPECTION SERVICES FOR MISCELLANEOUS SEWER IMPROVEMENTS AND REPAIRS

Recommendation

Recommendation of the Public Works Director that City Council approve a two-year consulting services agreement with CivilSource, Inc. of Irvine, CA, for an amount not to exceed \$90,642 to provide construction inspection services for Miscellaneous Sewer Main Improvements and Repairs, I-61/I-149.

Councilmember Goodrich noted that a Torrance firm (Hamilton & Associates) ranked a close second when staff evaluated the bids and asked about the difference in rankings.

Engineering Manager Overstreet reported that CivilSource scored 90 out of a possible 100 points and Hamilton & Associates scored 83 points and the reason for the difference was because CivilSource focuses on construction inspection services while Hamilton & Associates focuses on geotechnical services and the inspector CivilSource proposes to use has experience with this specific type of project.

Councilmember Goodrich agreed that it was important to use the most qualified firm, but suggested that consideration be given to awarding contracts to Torrance businesses when the differences in proposals are not material.

MOTION: Councilmember Griffiths moved to concur with the staff recommendation. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Weideman and passed by unanimous vote.

12. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

12A. STUDY RE POTENTIAL PURCHASE OF EDISON-OWNED STREETLIGHTS

Recommendation

Recommendation of the City Manager that City Council approve \$10,000 from the streetlight fund to initiate a study conducted by Southern California Edison on the potential purchase of Edison-owned streetlights.

Assistant to the City Manager Sunshine reported that staff was recommending that the City request that Southern California Edison (SCE) complete a study to determine what the cost would be for the City to purchase Edison-owned streetlights throughout Torrance. He explained that SCE currently charges a per pole fee to maintain the streetlights, but this maintenance charge is not guaranteed to be spent in Torrance and staff believes maintenance costs can be lowered and a higher level of service can be provided if the City purchases the streetlights. He noted that it is rumored that SCE no longer wishes to sell streetlights to cities and if this is the case, the City may wish to pursue the matter with the California Public Utilities Commission.

Councilmember Weideman questioned why the City was requesting that SCE conduct this study because it seems like “asking the wolf to guard the chicken coop.”

Public Works Director Beste explained that SCE requires the initial study because the company does not know exactly what equipment it has in any given city.

City Manager Jackson noted that Edison’s study will be reviewed by a consultant hired by the City.

Councilmember Goodrich asked about the rationale for the \$10,000 fee for the study, and City Manager Jackson advised that this is a flat fee charged by SCE regardless of the size of the city.

Councilmember Goodrich related his understanding that a survey of the City’s streetlight poles was done in the past and identifying stickers were affixed to them for tracking purposes.

Assistant to the City Manager Sunshine reported that a group of volunteers conducted the survey and recorded the serial number of each light pole and this information was provided to SCE, however, SCE indicated that this information was not useful to them. He clarified that distribution poles will remain under SCE ownership should the City purchase the streetlights.

In response to Councilmember Ashcraft’s inquiry, Assistant to the City Manager Sunshine provided clarification regarding the streetlights owned by the City in front of West High and along the new Del Amo Boulevard Extension.

Councilmembers Griffiths expressed support for taking whatever steps necessary to resolve the streetlight situation since SCE is not doing the job it’s being paid to do and many areas of Torrance still have lots of problems with their streetlights. He stated that he thought it was absurd that Torrance has been unable to get streetlights upgraded to more energy efficient lights and hopes these matters can be addressed as soon as possible.

Mayor Furey stated that he was confident that the City will be able to provide a much better level of service if ownership of the light poles can be acquired from SCE.

Councilmember Rizzo noted his agreement with his colleagues’ remarks, relating his belief that action must be taken to rectify the streetlight problem.

MOTION: Councilmember Rizzo moved to concur with the staff recommendation. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Barnett and passed by unanimous vote.

12B. SETTING OF DATES FOR BUDGET WORKSHOPS/PUBLIC HEARINGS

Recommendation

Recommendation of the Finance Director and the City Manager that Council approve May 12 and May 19, 2015, as dates to conduct two budget workshops/public hearings on the City of Torrance two-year 2015-2017 Operating Budget with adoption of the budget on May 19 or, if needed, June 2.

MOTION: Councilmember Rizzo moved to concur with the staff recommendation. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Barnett and passed by unanimous vote.

12C. CRENSHAW BOULEVARD INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS

Recommendation

Recommendation of the Public Works Director and Transit Director that City Council:

- 1) Approve the Measure R Highway Program Funding Agreement MR312.60, FTIP# LA0G1010-Crenshaw Boulevard Intersection Improvements from Del Amo Boulevard and Dominguez Street to be executed with Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority ("LACMTA");
- 2) Upon approval of Funding Agreement, appropriate \$3,300,000 to IAP T 157-Crenshaw Boulevard Intersection Improvements from Del Amo Boulevard and Dominguez Street with a new not to exceed project budget of \$6,439,958; and
- 3) Approve the second amendment to consulting service agreement (C2013-152) (PO2014-253) with Frank R. Webb Architects, Inc. of Los Angeles, CA for additional design services in the amount of \$98,900 for a new not to exceed amount of \$1,443,866, and to extend their contract to June 30, 2017 relating to Torrance Transit Park & Ride Regional Terminal.

Engineering Manager Semaan reported that this action will allow the Crenshaw Boulevard Intersection Improvement project to move forward, noting that construction is expected to begin in early July 2015.

MOTION: Councilmember Rizzo moved to concur with the staff recommendation. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Barnett and passed by unanimous vote.

13. HEARINGS

13A. MOD14-00009, DVP14-00001, WAV14-00004: ASI DEVELOPMENT (7-ELEVEN #37117) – 3401 TORRANCE BOULEVARD

Recommendation

Recommendation of the Planning Commission that City Council deny the appeal and adopt Resolutions denying a Modification of previously approved entitlements (CUP70-1 and PP70-1), and a Development Permit, to allow the redevelopment of the existing service station site, in conjunction with a Waiver of the street setback requirement, on property located in the H-DA2 Zone at 3401 Torrance Boulevard.

Recommendation of the Community Development Director that City Council uphold the appeal and adopt Resolutions approving a Modification of previously approved entitlements (CUP70-1 and PP70-1), and a Development Permit, to allow the redevelopment of the existing service station site, in conjunction with a Waiver of the street setback requirement, on property located in the H-DA2 Zone at 3401 Torrance Boulevard.

Mayor Furey announced that this was the time and place for a public hearing on this matter. City Clerk Poirier confirmed that the hearing was properly advertised.

With the aid of slides, Planning Manager Lodan briefly described the proposed project, which involves the demolition of an existing service station and the construction of a new one along with a new convenience store, noting that the application originally included the retail sale of beer and wine, but that has been eliminated from the project. He reported that the Planning Commission reviewed that project on November 19, 2015 and voted unanimously to deny it after members of the public expressed a variety of concerns, including the project's 24-hour operation, proximity to schools, potential increase in traffic, crime and safety issues, and economic competition with a nearby liquor store.

In response to Councilmember Griffiths' inquiry, Planning Manager Lodan confirmed that the Planning Commission's main concern about the project was the sale of beer and wine.

Councilmember Barnett disclosed that he visited the site and met with the applicant/appellant and the owner of a nearby barber shop.

Responding to questions from the Council, Planning Manager Lodan reported that most 7-Eleven stores are open 24 hours, including those in Torrance; that the proposed project is similar in height to the existing service station; and that the existing driveway on Madrona will be closed, but there will still be access from Madrona via the existing driveway on the adjacent property because there is a cross access easement.

In response to Mayor Furey's inquiry, Councilmembers confirmed that they had had adequate time to review the additional information submitted by the applicant/appellant.

Mayor Furey disclosed that he, along with Councilmember Weideman and Councilmember Rizzo, met with the applicant/appellant's representative a couple of weeks ago and learned that the project no longer included the sale of beer and wine.

Councilmember Ashcraft disclosed that she also met with the applicant/appellant's representative.

Erika Ramirez, representing 7-Eleven, applicant/appellant, proposed adding a condition requiring a 7-Eleven employee to walk around the property and remove any trash or debris at least once every shift since this was a concern of neighboring businesses. She stated that the applicant was also amenable to a condition restricting the hours of deliveries and a condition requiring loading/unloading to be done at the location identified on the site plan. She reviewed safety features incorporated into the project, including interior and exterior lighting, a high resolution surveillance camera system, and alarm system equipped with fixed and remote activators, noting that 7-Eleven has been recognized for its proactive approach to crime deterrence. She related her belief that the project would be an aesthetic improvement and add to the character of the area.

Mayor Furey invited public comment.

Anil Ali, owner of several 7-Eleven franchises, including one in Torrance, reported on the company's efforts to support the communities in which their stores are located, including donating food for school events and supporting charitable organizations. He noted that stores now offer fresh fruit, salads and other healthy snacks.

Michael Sundstedt, attorney representing the shopping center adjacent to the proposed project, stated that the center was designed with the idea that it would have a symbiotic relationship with the gas station on the corner, not compete with it. He noted that there are already six 7-Elevens within a two-mile radius of this site. He expressed concerns that the proposed convenience store would block the businesses in the center from view; that deliveries to the 7-Eleven store would encroach on their property; and that a 7-Eleven franchisee may seek to sell beer and wine at this location in the future.

Mayor Furey clarified that beer and wine may not be sold at this location without the Council's approval.

John Melano, Opal Street, expressed concerns that he will be disturbed by noise from customers in the parking lot during nighttime hours and that the 24-hour operation will attract homeless people and bring more crime to his neighborhood. He also expressed concerns that the project will add to cut-through traffic and increase trash and debris and that children visiting the store will be injured trying to cross the street to get a Slurpee.

Caroline Vranca, representing her parents, owners of Mr. K's Liquor Store, 3405 Torrance Boulevard, reported that her family has strong ties to Torrance spanning three generations and expressed concerns that the proposed 7-Eleven will lead to the demise of her parent's liquor store, as well as other businesses in the center. She contended that there is a lot of crime associated with 7-Eleven stores and a quick Google search would reveal many examples. She voiced her opinion that Torrance does not need any more 24-hour stores, noting that a petition against the project has been signed by over 1000 people.

Chang Park, owner of the subject property, 3401 Torrance Boulevard, reported that he has been in the gas station business for 43 years, 18 of which have been at this location, and he would now like to retire. He noted that he has lived in Torrance for 36 years and his three children all graduated from Torrance schools. He urged approval of the project, relating his belief that it will improve the look of this corner.

Donna Duperron, Torrance Area Chamber of Commerce, expressed support for the proposed project. She stated that 7-Eleven offers a safe, clean and friendly place to shop; that it helps meet the needs of residents who do not have traditional 8-to-5 jobs; and that it contributes to the local job market since 40-50% of their employees are local residents, many of whom walk to work. She maintained that sophisticated safety features and strict store policies will keep the convenience store and gas station a safe and welcoming place to do business around the clock.

Jennifer Lee, representing her parents, owners of Mr. K's Liquor Store, expressed concerns that the 7-Eleven store will put her parents store out of business, suggesting that this was an example of a small business being bullied by a large corporation. She stressed the importance of supporting small businesses, citing statistics from American Express. Noting that her parents are nearing retirement, she urged the Council to protect their investment and deny this project.

Lynn Rodriguez, owner of the barbershop at 3407 Torrance Boulevard, expressed concerns that the new structure will block her business from the view of passing traffic, thereby decreasing the number of customers. She stated that she has visited 7-Eleven stores in Torrance and observed at least one homeless person at every location. She contended that the proposed 7-Eleven will add to the existing trash problem at this center and its 24-hour operation will only lead to mischief. She maintained that it made no sense to approve one new business that will jeopardize at least four other businesses.

Jay Scharfman, Madrona Avenue, stated that many of his concerns about the project were addressed with the elimination of the sale of wine and beer, but he remains concerned that project would increase activity at this already busy intersection and lead to more trash being discarded on his property, which is adjacent to the shopping center.

Luanne Rosevear, Opal Street, voiced objections to the proposed project. She expressed concerns that the store's bright lighting and the traffic noise generated by the 24-hour operation will interfere with her ability to sleep at night and that the added traffic will endanger school children who must cross this intersection. She contended that there was no need for a 7-Eleven at this location since one is being built at Crenshaw and Torrance Boulevard. She urged the Council to preserve the quality of life for residents and to protect the "mom-and-pop" stores in this center, which contribute to Torrance's small town atmosphere.

Matt Budney, Torrance resident and 7-Eleven project manager, voiced support for the project, citing the amenities it will provide for customers and additional job opportunities for local residents. He reported that 7-Eleven was recognized by the National Crime Prevention Council for being the first major retailer to institute a formal crime deterrence program and it is committed to safety. He stated that 7-Eleven has a reputation for constructing stores on time and to the high standards of the governing city.

Otto Vavrin II, Maricopa Street, indicated that he was an advocate for the owners of Mr. K's Liquor Store and noted that they have operated their business without violating any state, county or local regulation. He reported that 7-Eleven franchisees must pay the company 52% of gross profits so a large percentage of money generated does not stay in the community. Submitting documentation from a New Jersey lawsuit, he asserted that 7-Eleven Corporation has engaged in unscrupulous business practices in an attempt to take back successful franchises. Referring to a lawsuit filed in federal court in Los Angeles, he stated that the company has been accused of racial discrimination, invasion of privacy, illegal surveillance and mistreatment.

Joe Nguyen, ASi Development, stated that he did not understand the opposition to the 7-Eleven store since competition is the American way and any business must remain competitive to survive in the marketplace.

Marji Shore, Torrance, reported that she and her disabled son frequent stores in this shopping center and enjoy their friendly, personalized service and expressed the hope that this will not change.

Ed Geis, Opal Street, expressed concerns about the project's impact on the small businesses in this center, relating his belief that four businesses will end up closing if it is approved. He noted that the Manhattan Beach City Council recently approved \$300,000 to fund a study to determine why it was losing its small businesses.

Myung Sook Lee, owner of Mr. K's Liquor Store, 3405 Torrance Boulevard, reported that she and her husband have owned the store for 8 years and it has been at this location for 50 years without creating any problems. She stated that she would like to retire in Torrance where she raised her family, but the proposed 7-Eleven will cause her retirement to disappear because no one will buy her store with another store so close. She noted that approximately two years ago the Red Eye liquor store on Hawthorne Boulevard closed down after a 7-Eleven was built nearby. She pointed out that there are several 7-Eleven stores as well as several supermarkets in the area so there is no need for another market.

Richard Song reported that he attends the same church as Mrs. Lee and expressed concerns that the owner of the subject property was seeking to make money at the expense of Mr. and Mrs. Lee's livelihood.

The owner of Elly's European Skin Clinic, 3439 Torrance Boulevard, (name inaudible/no speaker card), urged the Council to protect Mr. K's Liquor Store and other small businesses in this center, whose owners are trying to live the American dream. She expressed concerns that the 24-hour operation will bring more homeless people to the area.

In response to Councilmember Goodrich's inquiry, Planning Manager Lodan related his understanding that the existing gas station is not open 24 hours a day.

Councilmember Goodrich asked about the claim that deliveries would encroach on the adjacent shopping center.

Planning Manager Lodan reported that the project includes an on-site loading zone that is fully within the subject property. He noted that according to the Torrance Municipal Code deliveries may not take place after 10:00 p.m. or before 7:00 a.m.

With regard to concerns about lighting disturbing nearby residents, Councilmember Goodrich suggested that new technology has probably led to improvements in this area.

Planning Manager Lodan advised that replacement lighting is generally much better than existing lighting and the applicant will be required to submit a lighting study demonstrating that lighting is focused on the site and glare to residential properties has been minimized.

Councilmember Goodrich noted that he is familiar with another 7-Eleven store at the corner of Artesia Boulevard and Yukon, which does sell alcohol, and the store is similarly situated with various businesses around it, including a liquor store and two restaurants, one of which opened within the last couple of years. He questioned whether the City has any evidence to suggest that a store like the one proposed could lead to the closing of nearby businesses or if it might have the opposite effect and act as an anchor store attracting more people to the plaza.

Planning Manager Lodan stated that staff has done no studies, but typically when improvements are made to a property, any increase in business tends to spill over into adjacent businesses.

MOTION: Councilmember Weideman moved to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Rizzo and passed by unanimous vote.

In response to Councilmember Ashcraft's inquiry, Planning Manager Lodan clarified that the loading zone is toward the Madrona side of the subject property and there is a five-foot setback between the 7-Eleven building and the adjacent shopping center to the rear.

Councilmember Griffiths asked if 7-Eleven stores and/or 24-hour operations are associated with an increase in crime or problems involving the homeless.

Deputy Chief Anderson advised that the most common problem with this type of establishment is alcohol sales to minors, which will not be an issue in this case, and the homeless population tends to move around the city as the public and businesses become aware of them and report them to authorities.

Councilmember Griffith noted that it has been claimed that the existing gas station was open 24 hours at one time and questioned when that was. Planning Manager Lodan indicated that staff did not have that information.

Councilmember Weideman reported that during his seven years on the Planning Commission, he consistently voted against the sale of beer or wine at service stations, including 2 or 3 applications from 7-Eleven, and he was surprised the company has agreed to forego the sale of alcohol at this location because it is part of their business model. He noted that he had verified with the City Attorney that alcohol may not be sold at this location unless a Modification to the Conditional Use Permit is approved by the City Council. He related his belief that closing off the driveway on Madrona as proposed will improve the flow of traffic and that the project will make this corner more attractive. He pointed out that there was no need to include a condition restricting the hours of deliveries since this is already addressed in the Torrance Municipal Code.

MOTION: Councilmember Weideman moved to approve MOD14-00009, DVP14-00001, and WAV14-00004. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Ashcraft and passed by unanimous vote.

Mayor Furey stated that there was a lot of speculative information presented this evening, including claims that the project would attract the homeless and lead to an increase in trash in the neighborhood. He noted that the City has procedures in place to prevent the homeless from congregating in an area and the applicant has offered to have employees clean up the parking lot at least once each shift. He reported that McDonalds at the corner of 182nd Street and Crenshaw made a similar offer and has done an excellent job of keeping the parking lot clean, as well as the surrounding area. He related his observation that the shopping plaza adjacent to the subject property is very tired looking and suggested that this new development might spur some improvements that ultimately benefit tenants.

Planning Manager Lodan noted that staff will bring back resolutions reflecting the Council's action at the next meeting.

17. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #2

17A. Councilmember Rizzo reported that he attended the regional Bus Roadeo held in Gardena the past weekend at which Torrance Transit bus operators took first, second and third place.

17B. Councilmember Rizzo noted that he also attended the Torrance National Tournament on Saturday and was pleased to report that North High Girls Softball Team won the trophy for the second time in a row.

17C. Councilmember Rizzo reported that the owners of Gaetano's have opened up a second restaurant called Bettolino Kitchen at 211 Palos Verdes Boulevard and recommended that people give it a try.

17D. Referring to Item 13A, Councilmember Weideman noted that while the City Council voted unanimously to approve a project the Planning Commission had voted unanimously to deny, it was not the same project as was presented to the Planning Commission because the sale of beer and wine was eliminated.

17E. Councilmember Ashcraft reported that she and Councilmember Goodrich recently attended the “Visions of Unity” awards, which is an arts and literary contest for Torrance high school students focusing on diversity that was founded by a human relations group of which she has been a part for 15 years. She related her observation that the submittals reflected on Torrance students and their schools in a very positive way.

17F. Councilmember Barnett reported that he also attended the Torrance National Tournament and commended the Torrance High coach who stepped in to take over after the tournament lost its director. With the concurrence of Council, he requested that staff arrange to recognize the North High Girls Softball Team.

17G. Councilmember Barnett reported that he recently attended the Torrance Advantage awards and commended everyone involved.

17H. Noting that a Torrance-based business narrowly missed being selected for the project as discussed under Item 8C, Councilmember Goodrich, with the concurrence of Council, directed staff to study and report back to the Council on possibilities for the City to find more opportunities to provide work for local businesses under the RFP and other bidding processes, with report to include associated expenses, pros and cons, and the legalities of such.

17I. Councilmember Goodrich reported that he recently was approached by members of the airport community with some ideas to improve the character and functionality of Torrance Airport. With the concurrence of Council, he directed the Airport Commission to study the following items and bring back recommendations to the Council: 1) Painting a compass rose on the blank cement slab in front of the T-33 display; and 2) Adding or replacing existing signage for the hangar rows on the east side of the airport. He recommended that options for signage take into account cost, visibility, safety and addition of character to the airport, with the names of the rows to be assigned following the guidelines set forth in the City’s facilities naming resolution while focusing on local aviation history as a source of inspiration. He suggested that input be solicited from the airport community, the public, and other pertinent organizations such as the Torrance Historical Society. He requested that the Airport Commission explore the feasibility of an accompanying plaque to each sign that would describe that person’s contribution to Torrance’s aviation history with the potential of having the cost offset by donations.

17J. Councilmember Griffiths wished his son Matt a happy birthday.

17K. Councilmember Griffiths offered a reminder that there will be a Commissioner Certification class next Tuesday at 6:00 p.m. and encouraged residents to complete the training if they are interested in applying for a position on a City commission.

17L. Councilmember Griffiths extended wishes for a happy Easter.

17M. Mayor Furey commended his colleagues for attending the various community events that occurred last weekend. He noted that in addition to the events already mentioned, the PTA’s Honorary Service Awards were held last Friday and the Torrance Cultural Arts Foundation presented a murder mystery on Saturday night, which was well attended.

17N. Mayor Furey offered a reminder about the Wyland Foundation Water Wise challenge.

17O. Mayor Furey announced that the Torrance Batting Cages will be hosting a “Pitch, Hit and Run” competition for ages 7-14 on April 18, from 9:00 – 11:00 a.m., and winners will move on to competitions at the Dodger’s and Angel’s stadiums, with the finals to be held at the All Star game.

17P. Mayor Furey reported that earlier today he along with representatives from the Chamber of Commerce, visited local businesses, including Destination Art, Inspection Services, Inc., and Rapiscan, and he also attended a luncheon at Counseling for Kids

18. EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 9:26, the City Council recessed to closed session to confer with the City Manager and City Attorney on agenda matters listed under 18A) Public Employee Performance Evaluation – City Attorney and City Manager, and 18B) Conference with Labor Negotiator, pursuant to California Government Code §54957(b)(1) and 54957.6.

The City Council reconvened at 10:03 p.m. with all members present. No formal action was taken on any matter considered in closed session.

19. ADJOURNMENT

At 10:04 p.m., the meeting was adjourned to Tuesday, April 7, 2015, at 5:30 p.m. for an executive session, with regular business commencing at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber. Tuesday, March 31, is a Council dark night.

Attest:

/s/ Patrick J. Furey

Mayor Patrick J. Furey

/s/ R. Poirier

City Clerk Rebecca Poirier, MMC

Approved on May 5, 2015