

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF  
THE TORRANCE COMMISSION ON AGING**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order on January 11, 2011 at 9:30 a.m. in the Hosler Conference Room at the Bartlett Senior Citizen Center.

**ROLL CALL/MOTIONS FOR EXCUSED ABSENCE**

Present: Commissioners Cardella, Craft, Kraemer, Virobik and Chairperson Kimmel-Dagostino

Absent: Commissioners Draper and Robelotto

Staff: Senior Recreation Supervisor Wand

**MOTION:** Commissioner Craft moved to approve the excused absence of Commissioners Draper and Robelotto; motion was seconded by Commissioner Virobik. The motion passed by a roll call vote. (Absent Commissioners Draper and Robelotto)

**FLAG SALUTE**

Transit Administration Manager Mills led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**INSPIRATIONAL**

Commissioner Cardella provided the following inspiration:

*There is only one person who could ever make you happy and that person is you.*  
David Burns

Former Commissioner Griffith provided the following inspirations:

*For of all sad words of tongues or pen the saddest are these, "It might have been."*  
John Greenleaf Whittier

*None are so old as those who have outlived enthusiasm.*  
Henry David Thoreau

*If wrinkles must be written upon our brows, let them not be written upon the heart. The spirit should not grow old.*  
James A. Garfield

**ACCEPT AND FILE AFFIDAVIT OF AGENDA POSTING**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Kraemer moved and Commissioner Virobik seconded, to accept and file the Affidavit of Agenda Posting for its meeting of January 11, 2011. The motion carried. (Absent Commissioners Draper and Robelotto)

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Craft moved and Commissioner Virobik seconded, to approve the minutes of the Commission on Aging meeting of November 9, 2010. The motion carried. (Absent Commissioners Draper and Robelotto)

## **INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

Former Commissioner Griffith

Phillip Ross, Senior Librarian, City of Torrance

Jim Mills, Transit Administration Manager, City of Torrance

Ian Dailey, Transit Staff Assistant, City of Torrance

## **PRESENTATION: "DISCUSSION OF THE SENIOR AND DIAL-A -TAXI PROGRAM"**

Transit Administration Manager Mills distributed and presented information on the proposed changes to the Torrance Senior Ride and Dial-A-Lift programs. He stated that it was Transit's mission to provide reliable, safe, inexpensive and courteous transportation and noted that new hybrid busses had been successfully introduced six months ago.

Transit Administration Manager Mills described the transit system and the routes, noting that 40% of the service area was inside Torrance and 60% of the system covered areas outside of Torrance, with service hours ranging from 4:00 a.m. to midnight. He added that the current bus fleet was 51 buses, which served 4.6 million boardings on an annual basis.

Transit Administration Manager Mills stated that the Transit department acted as the lead agency for the Municipal Area Express (MAX), a commuter service, and had created the Senior Ambassador Program, a volunteer program to encourage seniors to ride the bus.

Transit Administration Manager Mills detailed a brief history of the Transit programs for the Senior Taxi and the Dial-A Taxi, including the start of the Senior Program in 1989 and the start of the Dial-a-Lift program as a van service for the disabled in 1978. In 2003, he stated that the two programs were consolidated under the Torrance Community Transit Program as an all taxi program, with 24 hour service and increased boundaries. He noted that a 90 day expiration date was added for the taxi tickets and a limit of sixteen tickets per month, with special needs patrons able to receive additional tickets on a case by case basis.

In response to a question from Commissioner Virobik, Transit Administration Manager Mills stated that a patron would need a note from their doctor to be eligible for the additional tickets and would need to renew the note every 90 days. He added that there were currently 30 to 40 people who required additional tickets.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Craft, Transit Administration Manager Mills stated that currently each ticket covered the first \$13 of the fare, multiple tickets could be used for each ride and the tickets needed to be used within 90 days.

Transit Administration Manager Mills explained that the Transit Department used HUD income criteria to determine tier levels for tickets: the approximate ranges were: \$0-to \$22,000 qualified for \$1.00 tickets, \$22,000 to \$44,000 qualified for \$3.00 tickets and over \$44,000 qualified for \$5.00 tickets.

Transit Administration Manager Mills stated that changes were necessary to the taxi program to maintain its financial integrity, due to the downturn in the economy, increased participation and the projected growth in the population of those aged 65 and over. He described the two program changes that Transit were recommending: a flat \$3.00 per ticket cost for all participants and a reduction in the current taxi ticket subsidy from \$13.00 to \$10.00.

In response to a question from Commissioner Cardella, Transit Administration Manager Mills stated that the City of Torrance did not fund the Transit Department; that the funding came directly from Proposition A, Local Return, a transportation tax measure, and was divided between the Senior Taxi Program and the bus system. He added that the revenues from the funding source were down 19% from 2008.

Responding to questions from Former Commissioner Griffith, Transit Administration Manager Mills stated that the Dial-a-Taxi service still serviced Lomita, with Lomita paying for the service. Transit Administration Manager Mills explained that bus fares were increased from \$.50 to \$1.00 in 2009, but the senior fares remained at \$.25 and there was now a student fare of \$.50.

Transit Administration Manager Mills presented a comparison of Torrance Senior taxi rates with other Los Angeles cities.

Transit Administration Manager Mills stated that he would be meeting next with the disabled community to share and gather input, and would then meet with the Transportation Committee, with the goal of presenting the proposal to the City Council in March. He stated that once the details of the proposal were finalized, the Transit Department would mail out the proposal information to all current taxi program users, at least thirty days prior to the City Council meeting, so that they might attend the meeting or offer comments on the proposal by phone, mail or email.

In response to a question from Former Commissioner Griffith, Transit Administration Manager Mills stated that the taxi companies would continue to receive the same rate and noted that the taxi companies did not think that the rate increase would result in a decrease in the use of the service.

Commissioner Virobik expressed concern for those whose ticket rates would increase from \$1.00 to \$3.00.

Transit Administration Manager Mills stated that he recognized the increase was substantial, but without the increase, there would be a deficit in the program.

Transit Administration Manager Mills stated that the taxi service was curb to curb, not door to door and that the service could not assist the disabled to the door, for liability reasons.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Virobik, Transit Administration Manager Mills stated that to facilitate prompt taxi pickup from a late night performance, the driver could be given an approximate time to return for the pickup and might actually "stage" outside of the venue, but that if the cab was not there in a reasonable time, it might be necessary to call one of the other cab companies. He noted that the three cab companies were: South Bay Yellow/United Checker Cab Co-Op, All Yellow Cab and Bell Cab.

Transit Administration Manager Mills stated that the bus schedules could currently be obtained online, at [www.torranceca.gov](http://www.torranceca.gov), under the transit department, as the revised schedules were in the process of being printed and not available at the libraries.

In response to a question from Former Commissioner Griffith, Transit Administration Manager Mills stated that the City had a liaison with Access Services and he believed that the system was working, but encouraged the Commissioners to let him know of any problems.

In response to a question from Senior Librarian Ross, Transit Administration Manager Mills stated that the Transit Department would try to reach the disabled community through the Harbor Regional Center, noting that there was a difficulty in finding one umbrella group that represented all the disabled.

Chairperson Kimmel-Dagostino stated that she understood the need for the proposed increase in the service in order to avoid a deficit.

Commissioner Cardella offered to ask Vickie Hershberger at Torrance Memorial Medical Center if she would want Transit Administration Manager Mills to speak to any groups at the center.

Former Commissioner Griffith suggested that Transit Administration Manager Mills add a slide to his presentation to illustrate the Torrance bus routes.

Chairperson Kimmel-Dagostino suggested that Transit Administration Manager Mills have a presentation at the Library and Senior Librarian Ross added that he would speak to Dana Vinke about the presentation.

Transit Staff Assistant Dailey stated that he would send bus schedules to Commissioner Virobik at Focal point, as soon as the new schedules were available.

Transit Administration Manager Mills asked the Commission to talk to seniors about the proposal and offered to return for the February Commission meeting.

The Commission agreed to gather feedback from the senior community on the proposal and bring the information to the February 8 meeting for discussion with Transit Administration Manager Mills.

## **SENIOR CITIZENS CONCERNS**

### **A. City Council Activities**

Commissioner Kraemer reported that there would be a water rate public hearing on February 15.

Commissioner Kraemer noted that Heroes Park would be dedicated on January 22 at 10:00 a.m.

### **B. Housing**

Commissioner Cardella stated that she had heard complaints of rate increases at mobile home parks.

Commissioner Virobik noted that Rancho Palos Verdes now had low income rental housing.

There was a discussion of rent control mobile homes in Carson.

Chairperson Kimmel-Dagostino noted that the mobile home subsidy was still available in Torrance.

### **C. Health**

Commissioner Virobik distributed an article from Consumers Report on how to navigate the Medicare maze.

Chairperson Kimmel-Dagostino announced that Torrance Memorial Medical Center would sponsor a lecture on January 22 on Transfusion Free Surgery through Blood Management.

There was a discussion of the fee for calling 911, especially when a person had no insurance. Former Commissioner Griffith stated that she would email the City Council and request clarification and information on the costs for calling 911 in Torrance and report on the City Council's response at the February Commission meeting.

### **D. Transportation**

Chairperson Kimmel-Dagostino stated that transportation had been addressed in the presentation by Transit Administration Manager Mills in the Senior and Dial-a-Taxi program discussion.

### **E. Community Programs**

Former Commissioner Griffith announced that the Smarter Seniors forum would take place on January 13 at the Culver City Center and noted that the LACCOA would be holding a

public meeting in Wilmington on February 3 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Wilmington Senior Center.

Chairperson Kimmel-Dagostino announced that there would be a reception for retiring Commissioner Rizzardi on January 13 at the Nakano Theater.

#### **F. Focal Point Program**

Commissioner Virobik reported the following Focal Point statistics for the months of:

##### **November 2010**

Total number of documented calls: 30	Total number of callbacks: 12
Miscellaneous calls: 93	Total number of walk-ins: 6
Total number of calls received: 123	

Of the documented calls:

13.3 % were in regard to legal services	23.3% were for housing
47 % were for in home services	

Commissioner Virobik also reported that Focal Point participated in 1 health fair and conducted 2 community presentations.

##### **December 2010**

Total number of documented calls: 26	Total number of callbacks: 10
Miscellaneous calls: 74	Total number of walk-ins: 8
Total number of calls received: 100	

Of the documented calls:

47 % were for in home services	8 % were for housing
15.4% were for transportation	

Commissioner Virobik reported that Focal Point volunteers were discouraged when there were fewer phone calls to the agency, even though Commissioner Virobik had explained that Focal Point's mission was to outreach to the various resources in the community, through items such as the directory, which then allowed others to pass on the information.

Senior Recreation Supervisor Wand stated that the Focal Point directory was an excellent resource tool and suggested that she and Commissioner Virobik meet to discuss other possible projects for the Focal Point volunteers.

#### **G. Elder Abuse/Fraud**

Chairperson Kimmel-Dagostino announced that there would be a seminar at the Katy Geissert Civic Center Library on February 15 at 10:00 a.m. entitled, "Seniors, Don't Be Scammed, Elder Financial Abuse".

#### **ORALS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Commissioner Virobik noted that she had completed the Ethics Training on line and that it was painless, although it did take 2 hours to complete and needed to be completed at one sitting.

Chairperson Kimmel-Dagostino requested that the Commission bring their suggestions for nominations for Older Americans Month to the February meeting.

Chairperson Kimmel-Dagostino reminded the Commissioners to consider becoming an officer on the Commission.

Senior Recreation Supervisor Wand stated that the Newport tour was successful; the Gentle Barn tour had been cancelled, but that the Frankie Avalon and Wonder Valley tours were filling.

Phillip Ross, Senior Librarian, announced that Paula Weiner, City Librarian, retired in December, but that the City would be hiring for the position of Principal Librarian and City Librarian.

Senior Librarian Ross reported on a program by the South Bay Cities Genealogical Society called "Find a Grave", on January 19, and the paper back book sale by the Friends of the Library on January 22. He noted that the Main Library would soon have volunteers to act as docents and offer assistance to library patrons.

Senior Librarian Ross stated that he, Librarian Theyer and others would be at the Bartlett Center in early March to promote library programs of interest to seniors and the disabled, such as Words on Wheels and Braille talking books.

Senior Librarian Ross noted that the Library's computers had recently been upgraded and now had Microsoft Word and Excel.

Commissioner Craft commended the Library on the computer and the audio visual department, but asked Senior Librarian Ross to check the lighting in the area of the technical reference section. Senior Librarian Ross stated that he believed that the problem had been addressed, but would verify his information.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:20 a.m. to the regular meeting on Tuesday, February 8, 2011 at 9:30 a.m. in the Hosler Conference Room at the Bartlett Senior Citizens Center.

Approved as Amended January 8, 2011 s/ Sue Herbers, City Clerk
--