

April 12, 2011

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

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order on April 12, 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 Craft, Draper, Kraemer, Virobik and Chairperson Kimmel-Dagostino

Absent: Commissioner Robelotto

Staff: Senior Recreation Supervisor Wand

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

FLAG SALUTE

EMS Coordinator Peterson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

INSPIRATIONAL

Former Commissioner Griffith provided the following inspiration:

I believe ...that maturity has more to do with what types of experiences you've had. And what you've learned from them and less to do with how many birthdays you've celebrated.

I believe...that it isn't always enough to be forgiven by others. Sometimes, you have to learn to forgive yourself.

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 April 12, 2011. The motion carried. (Absent Commissioner Robelotto)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: Commissioner Viribik moved and Commissioner Craft seconded, to approve the minutes of the Commission on Aging meeting of March 8, 2011. The motion carried. (Absent Commissioner Robelotto)

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Former Commissioner Griffith

Phillip Ross, Senior Librarian, City of Torrance

Randy Peterson, EMS Coordinator, Torrance Fire Department

Ardis Shubin, Community Services Specialist, H.E.L.P.

DISCUSSION REGARDING AMBULANCE COMPANY BILLING

Chairperson Kimmel-Dagostino stated that the Commission had requested information on ambulance billing and who was required to pay when an ambulance was called.

EMS Coordinator Peterson distributed information on the costs for the City of Torrance contracted ambulance service. He stated that the fees only covered about 80% of the cost of the program; the balance was covered by taxpayers.

EMS Coordinator Peterson stated that the City did not do their own transport but contracted with an ambulance provider. He noted that the contractor accepted first, second and third party insurance, such as Medicare, Medical, as full payment or would allow patients to make interest-free payments on bills.

EMS Coordinator Peterson stated that there could also be additional fees from the City if paramedics accompanied the patient in the ambulance. He noted that if insurance didn't cover the City's fees, the City would send out three bills, but if the bills were ignored, the City would not try to collect the payment. He also added that the City Council could vote to eliminate the fees, if they so chose.

In response to a question from Chairperson Kimmel-Dagostino, EMS Coordinator Peterson stated that if you had private insurance you might be required to pay any fees that your insurance didn't cover.

EMS Coordinator Peterson stated that the number of ambulance trips had increased from 8,000 in 1988 to 13,000 in 2010. He noted that many people who had no insurance used the ambulance service to be taken to the emergency room where, by law, they had to be treated.

In response to a question from Former Commissioner Griffith, EMS Coordinator Peterson stated that the ambulance fee would only be charged if you were actually transported to the hospital; the paramedics would not charge to help someone get up from a fall or other assistance in the home.

Former Commissioner Griffith presented information regarding a man she knew who had a bill from the ambulance service, and had no means to pay.

EMS Coordinator Peterson stated that ambulance costs existed no matter whether a patient could pay or not and that the City could not require the ambulance company not to collect. He noted that the paramedics could not, under federal law, ask patients if they had the means to pay for services.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Craft, EMS Coordinator Peterson stated that the ambulance fee information was public, but that many people did not have the information. He noted that the fee information could be distributed at health or senior fairs.

EMS Coordinator Peterson stated that the patient always had a choice of which hospital to be taken to, but depending on the medical condition and the distance, the paramedics would offer advice as to the best choice. There was a further discussion on the various local hospitals and their specialties.

EMS Coordinator Peterson stated that if a higher level of care was needed, a Torrance paramedic would accompany the patient in the ambulance and another Torrance vehicle would lead the ambulance, to ensure a fast, smooth ride to the hospital.

EMS Coordinator Peterson stated that Torrance had an enhanced 911 service which enabled 911 calls from landlines and most new cell phones to show an exact location to the operator. He also noted that good address signage was very helpful for emergency services.

In response to a question from Ardis Shubin, EMS Coordinator Peterson stated that the paramedics could ask if there was a DNR or a POLST, but if there was no information or any family member available to ask, then the paramedics would try to save the patient.

EMS Coordinator Peterson distributed information on 211 service and other available resources for elder care, as well as forms for recording a patient's information and medical history.

EMS Coordinator Peterson stated that in Torrance, for a serious medical run, there would be 6 trained personnel at the house, as well as the EMTs from the ambulance. He noted that the personnel had individual responsibilities, but worked as a team to assist the patient and coordinate the process at the scene.

EMS Coordinator Peterson stated that there were 48 paramedics on staff in Torrance.

SENIOR CITIZENS CONCERNS

A. City Council Activities

Commissioner Kraemer reported that all but one of the City's unions had agreed that new hires would pay part of their retirement.

Commissioner Kraemer noted that fees had been increased at Sea Aire Golf course.

Commissioner Kraemer stated that the presentation on budget updates for the Parks and Recreation department was available online, contained in the meeting of March 16.

Commissioner Kraemer reported that the City would continue the contract with MAX transit program for one more year.

B. Housing

None

C. Health

Former Commissioner Griffith reported on the County's efforts to reduce sodium in Senior Center meals.

Commissioner Virobik reported on technologies that help adult children monitor an aging parent from afar.

Commissioner Kraemer reported on changes to Medicare coverage and the problem of identification theft for healthcare.

D. Transportation

Chairperson Kimmel-Dagostino presented an update from Transit Administration Manager Mills on the proposed increase to the dial-a-ride and senior taxi services. She reported that Transit Administration Manager Mills, as of April 11, 2011, had received 76 responses to the proposal, all stating that the riders could not afford the proposed increase to the vouchers.

Chairperson Kimmel-Dagostino reported that due to the response, the Transit Department would, at the Council meeting on April 19, present a recommendation: to keep the tickets prices as is, at \$1, \$3 and \$5, reduce the City subsidy to taxis from \$13 to \$10 and reduce the number of tickets from 16 to 12. She noted that people could choose to speak at the

City Council meeting about the changes or send an email to Transit Administration Manager Mills.

Commissioner Virobik reported on an article about an intern with the Transit Department who helped to coordinate a customized Google Transit tool for the Torrance bus system.

Chairperson Kimmel-Dagostino reported on a meeting concerning the extension of the Green Line and stated that the funds would only cover the extension to the South Bay Galleria, not to the Torrance Transit center and the project could take 20 years to complete.

Chairperson Kimmel-Dagostino noted that Torrance was a finalist for an All American City and that the winners would be announced in June.

Former Commissioner Griffith stated that she given information to Los Angeles County Supervisor Don Knabe concerning the Torrance Senior Ambassador program for Transit and that the Supervisor would be meeting with Transit Administration Manager Mills to gather more information.

E. Community Programs

Chairperson Kimmel-Dagostino announced that the Senior Fair would be held on May 14 at the Ken Miller Recreation Center from 9:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. and the Bunka-Sai would be April 30 through May 1.

Senior Recreation Supervisor Wand reported that the Senior Prom was outstanding, with 100 seniors and 40 great high school volunteers in attendance.

F. Focal Point Program

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

March 2011

Total number of documented calls: 54	Total number of callbacks: 22
Miscellaneous calls: 84	Total number of walk-ins: 24
Total number of calls received: 138	

Of the documented calls:

20.4% were in regard to transportation	33.3% were for housing
31.4 % were for in home services	

Commissioner Virobik also reported that Focal Point did a presentation at a home owner's association and that starting in May would have a table at the Farmer's Market on Tuesday, twice a month.

G. Elder Abuse/Fraud

Commissioner Virobik reported on two bills that had been introduced that would require notice to be given to RCFE residents (Residential Facility for the Elderly) if the facility was in danger of closing, due to financial distress or enforcement action.

There was a discussion to cancel the June meeting of the Commission.

MOTION: Commissioner Kraemer moved and Commissioner Craft seconded, to cancel the June meeting of the Commission. The motion carried. (Absent Commissioner Robelotto)

Chairperson Kimmel-Dagostino noted that there could be a Council resolution for the Citizen's Redistricting Commission to keep all the South Bay cities together as a single community of interest.

OLDER AMERICANS RECOGNITION

Senior Recreation Supervisor Wand stated that May 10 was the City Council's Recognition Day for nominee Dee Hardison.

Senior Recreation Supervisor Wand noted that May 25 was the Recognition Day for the Los Angeles County award.

Commissioner Virobik noted that it was also Volunteer Recognition at City Council on April 12.

ORALS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Senior Librarian Ross wished everyone a happy National Library week. He distributed flyers for Brain Games for Grownups, an author and artist faire, book discussion groups, poetry readings, a hardback book sale, monthly movies and a children's event entitled "A Visit from Benjamin Franklin" on April 16. He added that on April 20 there would be an Area Disaster Center Drill at the WALTERIA Library.

Ardis Shubin distributed flyers for H.E.L.P.'s Life Planning class series at the Redondo Beach Library in April and the H.E.L.P. quarterly magazine. She added that H.E.L.P. would begin their Life Planning classes in May, at the Torrance Adult School and the Redondo Beach Joslyn Senior Center.

Chairperson Kimmel-Dagostino stated that she had attended the Metropolitan Water District's inspection tour.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:20 a.m. to the regular meeting on Tuesday, May 10, 2011 at 9:30 a.m. in the Hosler Conference Room at the Bartlett Senior Citizens Center.

Approved as Amended May 10, 2011 s/ Sue Herbers, City Clerk
