

January 27, 2015

**MINUTES OF A JOINT MEETING OF  
TORRANCE COMMISSION ON AGING AND  
TORRANCE CITY COUNCIL**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The joint meeting of the Torrance Commission on Aging and the Torrance City Council was called to order at 5:20 p.m. on Tuesday, January 27, 2015 in the West Annex Commission Meeting Room at Torrance City Hall.

**2. ROLL CALL/MOTIONS FOR EXCUSED ABSENCE**

Present: Councilmembers Ashcraft, Barnett, Goodrich, Griffiths, Rizzo, Weideman and Mayor Furey  
Commissioners Cohen, Kimmel-Dagostino, G.Davis, Kraemer, Miranda, Virobik and Chairperson K. Davis

Absent: None

Also Present: City Attorney Fellows  
City Clerk Poirier  
City Librarian Theyer  
City Manager Jackson  
City Treasurer Cortez  
Community Services Director Jones  
Deputy City Clerk Parker  
Deputy Community Development Director Cessna  
Engineering Manager Dettle  
Environmental Quality & Energy Conservation Commissioner DeWitt  
Park Services Manager Carson  
Recreation Services Manager Brunette  
Senior Business Manager Minter  
Senior Recreation Supervisor Reed

**FLAG SALUTE**

The pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Miranda.

**3. REPORT OF THE CITY CLERK ON THE POSTING OF THE AGENDA**

City Clerk Poirier stated that the agenda was posted on Thursday, January 22, 2015.

**4. EXPRESSION OF GRATITUDE FOR SERVICES OFFERED TO THE SENIOR CITIZENS POPULATION**

Chairperson K. Davis thanked the City Council for taking the time to meet with Commission and noted that the Commission on Aging was very proud of their Commission and the members of the public that attended the meetings and spoke on issues that were of concern to them.

Mayor Furey welcomed the Commission and noted that 16% of Torrance's population was over the age of 62, while 24% of the population were children who

attended school. He explained that tonight's meeting would focus on items from the Mayor's Pledge for the Best Cities for Successful Aging.

## **5. TOPICS OF DISCUSSION**

### **A. MAYOR'S PLEDGE**

- **SIDEWALKS**

Deputy Community Development Director Cessna explained that the City had federal funding from the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) which was targeted to low to moderate income residents and noted that, although Torrance did not have census tracts that qualified for the income levels, seniors and the disabled population were qualified as it was assumed that they met the required income levels. She noted that the funds had been used for sidewalk repair to allow free access and added that this was the third or fourth year of the sidewalk project which included repair work at Torrance Park. She stated that there was still close to \$500,000 in the fund for this year.

Mayor Furey noted that repairing and upgrading the sidewalks was an ongoing project, as the City had in excess of 500 miles of sidewalks, and explained that the City also had a grinder that was used to smooth out sidewalks.

Engineering Manager Dettle described the Torrance Park walkway renovation project and noted that there were over 100 trees in Torrance Park, which through the years had grown and lifted the sidewalks. He stated that the project would replace the asphalt with gravel and concrete which would allow the tree roots room to grow. He noted that only nine trees had had to be removed during the project and added that the project was now at 10% completion and would require four more weeks to finish, with a cost of \$226,550.

- **HOUSING**

Mayor Furey stated that the Council encouraged developers who wished to build to include a portion for affordable housing for seniors. He noted that there was an almost completed assisted living facility project on Sepulveda Boulevard as well as the resurrected project for the Sunrise Assisted Living. Mayor Furey stated his hope that with lower interest rates for construction loans, more building projects would come to the city and would include affordable senior housing.

Community Services Director Jones introduced Senior Business Manager Minter who described the Home Improvement Program (HIP). Senior Business Manager Minter noted that the HIP program had been presented at previous Commission of Aging meetings and explained that the program was designed to help keep seniors safe and in their homes longer by providing free services to upgrade older heating systems, install grab bars and hand rails, replace windows and repair leaky faucets.

In response to a question from Member Weideman, Senior Business Manager Minter stated that the low income threshold for the HIP program was based on the financial criteria as set by the Federal Government, Housing and Urban Development Department (HUD).

Mayor Furey announced that Commissioner G. Davis had presented information on the South Bay Village program to the Old Torrance Neighborhood Association and noted that she would also offer a presentation on February 5 at 7:00 p.m. for the North Torrance Homeowners Association at the Torrance Museum. He stated that he thought

that the program was a good idea and added that the Council was looking forward to hearing more about the progress of the program.

In response to a question from Chairperson K. Davis, City Manager Jackson stated that there were few subsidized housing projects since the collapse of the funding from the Redevelopment Agency. He added that even when there were set aside funds available, the City had exhausted the funds available to use for seniors and had to make them available for use for family housing. He noted that there was a family housing project in progress on Cabrillo Avenue and seniors were welcomed to apply, but explained that the project was intended primarily for affordable housing for families. He explained that current State and Federal Government programs still did have some benefits available for use by developers, but that many of the resources that used to be available no longer existed.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Virobik, City Manager Jackson stated that the Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) Office was developed with redevelopment funds and it was still not certain what the State would require the City to do with the property. He noted that the property was not available for rent.

Commissioner Virobik presented an overview of subsidized housing in Torrance. She explained that many seniors could not afford to live in assisted living facilities and the rent for apartments in Torrance could be \$1200 to \$1500 a month. She noted that there were three properties in the City that had subsidized units: Coleman Court, Ocean Terrace and Harmony Court. She added that there were several buildings in the City where the management offered subsidies which were not Section 8, which meant that when the tenants decided to move from the building, they could not transfer the subsidy to another apartment.

Commissioner Virobik reported that there were very few openings for section 8 housing and preference was usually given to displaced persons and veterans, before seniors were considered. She noted that the Torrance Section 8 housing was listed in the Focal Point Service Directory, as well as housing in Carson and Gardena. She explained that Focal Point advised seniors to continue to contact apartment owners with Section 8 units on a regular basis, to keep apprised of any openings.

City Manager Jackson stated that he would investigate whether additional apartment owners would consider offering subsidies privately to individuals.

Commissioner G. Davis discussed the concept of six-pack housing group living options.

Mayor Furey stated that it was important that senior housing that was developed was truly affordable senior housing.

There was a discussion of Section 8 housing in the City. Deputy Community Development Director Cessna stated that there were 18,000 people currently on the waiting list and fewer than 700 units that were section 8.

Commissioner Cohen discussed using the New Horizons complex as a model of senior housing. He noted that 25% of the units were rental units.

In response to a question from Commissioner Kimmel-Dagostino, Mayor Furey explained that the Meta Housing project had been drafted as a low-moderate income project under redevelopment.

Mayor Furey stated that there was still a need for senior housing, but there were no developers ready to build. He noted that he hoped that the State would develop a program which would replace the Redevelopment Agency.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Cohen, Mayor Furey stated that the County controlled property taxes and the City could not offer tax rebates to individuals or companies.

City Manager Jackson noted that there were other programs available for willing developers to use, such as bonding mechanisms through the County, the City and the developers, but he added that it was not profitable for the developers at this time. He explained that the City had had to give the land to the Meta Housing project to make the project feasible. He stated that the City received only 12% of property taxes and noted that he did not believe that taxes could be used for funding housing.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Cohen, City Manager Jackson stated that it would have to be a developer's decision to convert an apartment or apartments to senior housing condos and bring the unit up to code. He noted that condos might be less affordable than rental apartments.

Chairperson K. Davis stated that volunteering at Focal Point had shown her that there was a need for affordable senior housing. She noted that Gardena had constructed a new senior housing facility.

#### **B. INTRODUCTION OF A "SENIOR MOMENT."**

Commissioner Kraemer stated that the concept of the "Senior Moment" was to highlight current services, programs and information that the City already provided to the seniors. She explained that members of the Commission would attend Council meetings on a varying schedule and, during the Orals portion of the meeting, present information on ongoing City programs that would be of interest to seniors. She noted that many seniors were unaware of the type of programs and services that were already available to them. She added that the Commission members would be seeking information from various City departments, in order to better explain existing programs and services to seniors.

Commissioner G. Davis discussed the Mayor's Pledge and noted that there was an increased interest from other cities to sign the pledge. She thanked Mayor Furey for his commitment to seniors in signing the Pledge.

Commissioner Virobik stated that many of the cities attending the meeting of the South Bay Council of Governments were also interested in signing the Pledge.

### **6. ORALS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Commissioner G. Davis announced that the South Bay Village had had an article in the Torrance Tribune. She described the South Bay Village program as a program to help keep seniors in their homes by providing services, such as driving, through volunteers and community members and by connecting seniors with services and programs that already exist in the City. She noted that it was a nationwide program.

She stated that she had ten presentations scheduled in the next month with: homeowners associations, temples, and churches. She noted that the program and the presentations had been well received. She stated that one of the goals for the program was to reduce feelings of loneliness among the seniors. She invited all the Council members to attend a presentation.

Commissioner Virobik stated that Focal Point received many phone calls because people were lonely and just needed to talk to someone. She noted that the Focal Point volunteers did listen and completed follow up calls to these people to ensure that they were alright. She thanked the City for allowing Focal Point to operate and to help seniors, their families and the community at large. She noted that she had a great staff of volunteers.

## **7. ADJOURNMENT**

The City Council recessed at 6:08 p.m. to the regular City Council meeting held in Council Chambers at 3031 Torrance Boulevard, no earlier than 7:00 p.m. on January 27, 2015.

The Commission on Aging adjourned to a regular meeting on Tuesday, February 10, 2015 at 9:30 a.m. at the Bartlett Senior Citizens Center, Hosler Conference Room.

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Approved as submitted March 10, 2015 s/ Rebecca Poirier, City Clerk
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