

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING  
OF THE AIRPORT COMMISSION**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Torrance Airport Commission convened in a regular session on Thursday, February 9, 2006 at 7:00 p.m. in the West Annex meeting room at Torrance City Hall.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Present: Commissioners Dingman, Donnellan, Gates, Haddon, Ouwerkerk, Tymczyszyn, and Chairperson Pyles.

Absent: None.

Also Present: Facility Operations Manager Megerdichian, Airport Business Manager Zucker, and General Services Director Ballew.

**3. FLAG SALUTE**

Airport Business Manager Zucker led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**4. AFFIDAVIT OF AGENDA POSTING**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Haddon, seconded by Commissioner Donnellan, moved to accept and file the report of the City Clerk on the posting of the agenda for this meeting; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JANUARY 12, 2006**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Ouwerkerk moved for the approval of the January 12, 2006 Airport Commission meeting minutes as submitted. Commissioner Dingman seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

**6. ACTION ITEMS**

**6A. COMMISSIONER TRAINING WORKSHOP**

Facility Operations Manager Megerdichian introduced the item and welcomed facilitator Len Wood of Len Wood & Associates.

With the aid of a power point presentation, Mr. Wood conducted the first of a two part workshop focusing on Commissioner's roles and responsibilities, interacting with staff, and assessing Commission effectiveness. The second part will be conducted at the next regularly scheduled Commission meeting on March 9, 2006 and will focus on development of a work plan. He distributed copies of Commissioner's Little Handbook to each Commissioner, calling attention to "20 Ways to Offend Colleagues" on page 85.

Mr. Wood discussed the transition from a community activist position to a Commission member and Commission functions that include advisory and quasi-judicial, noting that the Airport Commission is an advisory Commission that advises the elected body on policies and programs. Next, he described the Commission partnership with the City Council, staff, and community.

He provided results of a survey that he conducts on how Commissioners rate the effectiveness of their Commissions, noting that only about one-third thought they were effective in carrying out their mandate. He discussed factors that lead to effective Commissions: clarity of role, teamwork, influence, Chairperson, support from staff, and completing homework before a meeting, noting that clarity of role was the most important factor.

Mr. Wood stated that the City was a Council/Manager form of government, one of the most popular forms of government for middle-sized cities in the United States in which the City Manager provides the administrative functions. He discussed where Commissions fit in the structure as liaison in the advisory arena, formulating recommendations to City Council and serving as the community eyes and ears. This advisory role includes: expressing views on programs and policies within the authorized scope of interest, focusing issues for City Council by identifying pros, cons and possible actions, holding forums for the public, and educating the public on the democratic process.

He provided information on the Commissioner's commitments to the City Council that is outlined in the City of Torrance Orientation Manual. He noted that the advisory role does not include: directing staff to initiate programs, determining departmental work programs or staff priorities, taking unilateral action as an official representative, serving as advocates for departmental budgets, programs or policies, becoming involved in operational matters, discussing or considering personnel matters, or serving the specific interests of special groups at the expense of the overall interests of the City.

He discussed the Commission support system that contributes to an effective Commission that includes agendas, staff reports, operating procedures, minutes, a work program, effective meetings, and a Chairperson. He noted that City Council at times expands a Commission's recommendation to include other parameters such as public needs, resources, and staff recommendations. He described the multiple roles in which staff serves the Commission and discussed their responsibilities that include being informed and making their best professional recommendation.

In response to Commissioner Haddon's inquiry, Mr. Wood stated that if staff and a Commission disagree on an item, usually both Commission and staff recommendations would go to City Council. He added that a healthy Commission/staff relationship should have 75% concurrence, and that problems occur when there is either too low or too much convergence.

He discussed the professional shield where staff conveys objectivity, has professional impartiality, and protects against getting pulled into personality and political disputes. He stated that neither staff nor Commission should be too submissive or too dominant.

Referring to the role of the Chairperson, Mr. Wood stated that the Chairperson should be first a facilitator and second, an active participant. He stated that the Chairperson's responsibilities include getting people involved, keeping the discussion

focused, making sure that all Commissioners are participating, keeping the audience informed, working with staff, seeking consensus among members, as well as keeping track of the process, agenda items, and the demeanor of the meeting. He stressed that the Chairperson is in a position of trust and should remain impartial while exercising the Chairperson role, noting that a Chairperson can turn the gavel over to the Vice-Chairperson if there is an issue of importance to him or her.

He discussed member responsibilities that include assisting the Chairperson, obtaining recognition before speaking, limiting remarks to the issue, asking clarification questions, respecting colleagues rights, explaining their reasoning, and raising concerns and objections at the meeting. He stated that staff will operate under the premise that a Commissioner agrees unless an objection or concern is voiced. Commissioner's responsibilities in the area of homework include reviewing agenda material before a meeting, calling staff to ask for clarification, visiting sites, and following up with assignments.

He reviewed the qualities of recommendations that are expected by City Council and issues that concern audience members that include respect, neutrality, competence, and fairness. He discussed how a Commission can either operate as a team or in cliques, noting that poor team work produces non productive endeavors. He reviewed qualities of group norms, positive norms, and negative forms.

Commissioner Haddon received clarification that he should talk to a staff member before a meeting if he has an agenda item issue.

The Commission was in recess from 7:56 p.m. to 8:05 p.m.

Mr. Wood requested that Commissioners complete a 100-question Assessing Commission Effectiveness survey that examines different aspects and relationships of advisory boards.

After Commissioners answered the questions on the survey, they were asked to total the ten columns. He explained that low scores may indicate strength and high score may indicate blockage. He reported on the average scores for the ten topics included in the survey that has been given to a cumulative total of 972 Commissioners throughout the State over several years. The Airport Commissioners' totals were not posted.

When Commissioner Haddon questioned the significance of the average scores, Mr. Wood stated that if the Commissioner's totals were posted, a difference in perception might be observed.

Chairperson Pyles stated that there were inconsistencies even in his own perceptions when he saw the categories that questions were under.

When Commissioner Gates stated that the exercise was a good evaluation in the process of identification, Mr. Wood responded that the survey results were important if there is a Commission that is polarized.

Mr. Wood reviewed the four stages of team development: testing, infighting, getting organized, and mature closeness and, when questioned, most Commissioners indicated that they believed they were in the getting organized stage. He concluded his presentation by listing qualities of successful Commissions: operate within the overall

philosophy of the elected body, provide their best collective judgment, remain independent and non-political, form partnerships with themselves and staff, develop work programs and goals, stay out of operations and administration, act as eyes and ears of the community, and treat the public the way a new business treats its customers.

Responding to Commissioner Gate's inquiry, Mr. Wood advised that it was in the Commission's purview to make recommendations regarding the operation and administration of the Airport.

Mr. Wood informed the Commission that he would return on March 9, 2006 to facilitate the development of a work plan. He asked that Commissioners think about what issues are important to them and how long they want the work plan to cover.

At Mr. Gate's request, Facility Operations Manager Megerdichian explained that after the work plan is formulated, staff will take it to City Council where it can be approved in its entirety or amended.

Commissioner Tymczyszyn cited the Airport work plan for the fiscal year 2000-2001, noting that the Commission has never referred to it. Facility Operations Manager Megerdichian offered to make copies and distribute it to Commissioners before the next Commission meeting.

Mr. Wood stated that it was important to continually review and update a work plan, and that now the Commission has the opportunity to institutionalize it.

**7. INFORMATION ITEMS**

None.

**8. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

**8A.** Facility Operations Manager Megerdichian welcomed Airport Business Manager Zucker back to the meetings.

**8B.** Facility Operations Manager Megerdichian initiated a brief discussion about large items and hazardous materials that were dumped at the Airport two weeks ago.

**8C,** Commissioner Gates discussed the status of the global flier.

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** At 9:10 p.m., Commissioner Ouwerkerk moved to adjourn the meeting to March 9, 2006. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Haddon and, hearing no objection, Chairperson Pyles so ordered.

Approved as Submitted March 9, 2006 s/ Sue Herbers, City Clerk (lc)
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