

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

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Torrance Airport Commission convened in a regular session on Thursday, May 14, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in the West Annex meeting room at Torrance City Hall.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Present: Commissioners Bohen, Boyce, Donnellan, Glass, and Chairperson Hsiao.

Absent: Commissioners Jacobsen and Orpe.

Also Present: Facility Operations Manager Megerdichian, Assistant to the City Manager Sunshine, and Deputy Community Development Director Cessna.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Donnellan moved to grant Commissioners Jacobsen and Orpe excused absences for the May 14, 2015 Airport Commission meeting. Commissioner Bohen seconded the motion; roll call vote reflected unanimous approval.

**3. FLAG SALUTE**

Commissioner Boyce led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**4. AFFIDAVIT OF AGENDA POSTING**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Glass, 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 roll call vote reflected unanimous approval.

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**5A. MINUTES OF APRIL 9, 2015**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Glass moved to approve the Airport Commission meeting minutes of April 9, 2015 as presented. Commissioner Boyce seconded the motion; a roll call vote reflected approval (absent Commissioners Jacobsen and Orpe, Chairperson Hsiao abstaining).

**6. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #1 AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

None.

7. **ACTION ITEMS**

7A. **RECOMMENDATION OF THE CITY MANAGER THAT CITY OF TORRANCE CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN THE FORMER FARMING AREA AT TORRANCE AIRPORT – ZAMPERINI FIELD AND NOT LEASE THE SITE FOR FARMING.**

Assistant to the City Manager Sunshine provided background on the former farming site leased by the Ishibashi family at the east end of the runway. He noted that the area has been vacant for approximately five years and that Public Works staff has conducted weed abatement at a cost of \$30,000 per year. He stated that, if the City wishes to reduce the cost of weed abatement, it would require bringing in a new farmer to the Airport. He noted that the former 24 acres encroached close to Airport movement areas and would be decreased to 17.7 acres, the area adjacent to the South End Racquet Club. He added that the previous lease brought in \$1,235 per year for the 24 acres and pointed out that Attachment A is the former farming area map and Attachment B is the potential area for new farming and equipment storage areas.

He stated that the City has worked to harden the Airport as a security target, with the installation of fences and camera systems. He noted that, if the City put out an RFP for a new farmer, several requirements would be developed into the lease that include ID badges and background checks on all farm employees, specific hours of operation, and no on-site sales. He stated that after careful review the City has decided against a new farm operation due to general Airport safety and security, communication with the Tower and Airport staff, and general access to the Airport. He added that a new farm operation would require the east gate to be open and closed all day which would mitigate the new security measures.

In response to Commissioners' inquiries, Mr. Sunshine stated that the Commission's input would be forwarded to City Council and Facility Operations Manager Megerdichian explained why background checks are not conducted on other businesses at the Airport.

Responding to Commissioner Donnellan's inquiry, Mr. Sunshine stated that the recommendation is more from a security standpoint than about cost. He explained that they are not really making money, they are saving money, and that it is a wash to keep the land clear.

In response to Chairperson Hsiao's inquiry, Facility Operations Manager Megerdichian stated that they did not have any security problems when the former farming operation was there. He added that pilots do not want a farming operation there because of the extra vegetation and equipment.

Commissioner Bohen asked if it is cost effective for a farmer and Mr. Sunshine stated that it would be difficult to respond to the RFP because of the new requirements. He added that all infrastructure was removed, and a new farmer would need to install water lines, sprinkler system, and equipment storage area. When Commissioner Bohen stated that \$30,000 a year for weed abatement is a significant amount that could cover the cost of many infrastructure projects at the Airport, Facility Operations Manager Megerdichian responded that the Airport Fund was designed for upkeep at the Airport, they would not lose any future projects, and Public Works crew would be mowing a certain amount of acreage anyway.

Anne O'Brien, Calle de Castellana, received clarification that one of the reasons for the recommendation is because pilots are concerned that extra vegetation would attract birds.

Barry Jay, Brian Avenue, President, Torrance Airport Association, stated that the Airport Fund receives a large amount of revenue from all the commercial properties developed near the Airport. He noted that \$30,000 is a small price to pay to prevent an aircraft accident due to birds.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Donnellan moved to recommend that the City continue to maintain the former farming area at Torrance Airport and not lease the site for farming. Commissioner Boyce seconded the motion; the motion passed on a 4-1 roll call vote (Commissioner Bohlen voting no, absent Commissioners Jacobsen and Orpe).

**8. INFORMATION ITEMS**

**8A. AERONAUTICAL OPERATIONAL INFORMATION UNDER THE PURVIEW OF THE GENERAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

Chairperson Hsiao noted that the following reports for May 2015 were included in agenda materials: Hangar and Tiedown Rental Status, Ongoing Projects, May Meeting Room Calendar, Hangar Waiting List, Events Requiring Emergency Response for March 2015, and Airfield Operations Status for March 2015.

Facility Operations Manager Megerdichian reported that there are currently no hangar vacancies. Referring to Report 2, Ongoing Projects, he noted that the Airport Security Project is complete, with minor punch list items remaining. He stated that the gates are functioning, cameras are recording, and most tenants have received their new key cards. He informed the Commission that the design of Runway 29L has begun and completion is expected by year end. He received Commission concurrence to make a format change in Report 5 that would list only one month in each report.

In response to Commissioner Donnellan's inquiry about the runway design, Facility Operations Manager Megerdichian stated that there needs to be geotechnical work done to determine how deep it will be ground.

Responding to Chairperson Hsiao's inquiry, he stated that funding is already established and that once the specs are put together, it will go out to bid for a contractor to do the work.

**8B. APPROVAL OF ANNUAL CURFEW EXEMPTION FOR N715CG**

Deputy Director Cessna reported that Community Development is starting a new process for annual curfew exemptions. She stated that previously curfew exemptions were done at a staff level, with no opportunity for the public to know it happened. She noted that the City Attorney informed them that it is an appealable item; therefore, staff has decided to institute an approval process mirroring that used in the Department for other administrative approvals. She advised them that from now an approved request would come before the Commission to allow any citizen to appeal the exemption.

She stated that currently there is one exemption for Giumarra Brothers Fruit Company that has been in effect since 1980. She noted that their aircraft, a King Air N715GC, has passed a series of noise tests and that the nature of the fruit business requires that the company have personnel in various locations in the early morning hours. She stated that their exemption is valid from July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016 and noted that they do not anticipate any new exemption requests.

In response to Commissioners' inquiries, Deputy Director Cessna stated that exemptions can be appealed 15 days from the approval date, that applicants reapply every year, that occasionally they have requests for a one-time exemption due to an emergency, and any exemption would be revoked if there is a noise violation.

#### **8C. DISCUSSION OF EAST T HANGAR ROW SIGNAGE TO ENHANCE CHARACTER OF THE AIRPORT**

Facility Operations Manager Megerdichian reported that at its March 24 meeting City Council assigned the Airport Commission to engage the Airport community, Airport organizations, and community groups such as the Torrance Historical Society to: 1) Paint the compass rose on the cement slab beneath the T-33 aircraft outside the General Aviation Center; 2) Add or replace signage for hangar rows to ensure cost feasibility, visibility, safety, and addition of character at the Airport; 3) Use the guidelines in the Naming of Public Facilities resolution to select names for the rows based on local aviation history; and 4) The feasibility of donated plaques to identify the contribution of each individual to aviation history.

He called attention to attachments: A – Compass Rose at Pacific Skies Aviation; B – Application for Naming of Public Facilities, and C – Resolution Establishing Policies and Procedures for the Naming of City Owned Land, Building, and Facilities. He was pleased to note that the local chapter of the Ninety-Nines has volunteered to paint the compass rose. Referring the hangar row signage, he stated that the 22 rows are identified with addresses only, and are not easily identifiable to aircraft at night. He stated that the Commission would report back to the Naming of Public Facilities Committee and forwarded to City Council for consideration.

In response to Commissioner Donnellan's inquiry regarding the proposed plaques, Manager Megerdichian stated that Airport tenants would be able to see the plaques and added that this would be a topic for discussion.

Anne O'Brien distributed a handout with ideas for Signage for East T's Rows and names, Signage for Transient Parking Area, Criteria for Signs, and Proposed Name Selection Process. She recommended that the signs be readable, color coded, and reflective. She raised the possibility of placing a master map and historical significance on the East T's "bathroom wall" and General Aviation Center.

Responding to Chairperson Hsiao's inquiry, she stated that row signage should have historical reference just to Torrance, adding that it would help people appreciate the City and its rich aviation history.

The Commission concurred with the concept and directed staff to move forward with the project.

**9. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #2**

**9A.** Commissioner Glass asked what “x” means on Noise Abatement quarterly reports and Deputy Director Cessna offered to provide clarification next month.

**9B.** Commissioner Glass stated that he worked at the Collings Foundation aircraft display on May 4-6 and was informed by staff that approximately 2,000 people attended.

**9C.** Jim Gates, Via Pasqual, stated that the Collings Foundation was impressed with the preparations and over 60 volunteers. He stated that school groups were able to tour the Western Museum of Flight and to see the aircraft. He noted that there were 109 paid rides and that the Collings Foundation hopes to come back next year on a weekend.

**9D.** Manager Megerdichian stated that the Torrance Airport Association is interested in taking the Commissioners on a tour of the Airport and noted that it may be possible to have a Commission meeting at the Airport and go on the tour during the meeting.

**9E.** Facility Operations Manager Megerdichian stated that 19 aircraft are scheduled to participate in the Armed Forces Day parade on May 16.

**10. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** At 8:10 p.m., Commissioner Donnellan moved to adjourn the meeting to Thursday, June 11, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. at the West Annex meeting room. Commissioner Boyce seconded the motion and, hearing no objection, Chairperson Hsiao so ordered.

###

Approved as amended June 11, 2015 s/ Rebecca Poirier, City Clerk
--