

July 20, 2010

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

CALL TO ORDER

The joint meeting of the Torrance Commission on Aging and the Torrance City Council was called to order at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, July 20, 2010 in the West Annex Commission Meeting Room at Torrance City Hall.

ROLL CALL/MOTIONS FOR EXCUSED ABSENCE

Present: Councilmembers Barnett, Brewer, Furey, Numark, Rhilinger, Sutherland, and Mayor Scotto
Commissioners Craft, Draper, Kraemer, Robelotto and
Chairperson Kimmel-Dagostino

Absent: Commissioner Cardella

Also Present: City Clerk Herbers
City Librarian Weiner
City Management Associate Barthe-Jones
City Manager Jackson
Community Development Director Gibson
Community Services Director Jones
Deputy Community Development Director Cessna
Recreation Services Manager Brunette
Senior Recreation Supervisor Wand

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

FLAG SALUTE

The pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Scotto.

REPORT OF THE CITY CLERK ON THE POSTING OF THE AGENDA

City Clerk Herbers stated that the agenda was posted on Thursday, July 15, 2010.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None

EXPRESSION OF GRATITUDE FOR SERVICES OFFERED TO THE SENIOR CITIZENS POPULATION

Chairperson Kimmel-Dagostino thanked the City Council for its continued assistance and funding for senior activities and programs, such as Focal Point on Aging, the Bartlett Center, travel excursions and for maintaining affordable transit fares for seniors. She stated that it was important to keep seniors as viable members of the community.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

A. Discussion of Focal Point Statistics: Affordable Housing Information Requests

Chairperson Kimmel-Dagostino presented the Focal Point Annual Report and a statistical analysis of phone requests received by Focal Point for the last three years that showed that almost 40% of phone calls received were concerning affordable rental housing.

Mayor Scotto stated that he and the City Council were well aware of the need for affordable senior housing and hoped that, in the near future, the City's plans to acquire land would eventually result in sustainable housing project.

Community Development Director Gibson stated that the City was looking to acquire or partner with owners of properties of an acre or more. He noted that there were several strategies that the City could use with developers, such as leasing out agency owned properties or perhaps donating properties, which would help the developer keep rental prices affordable.

Mayor Scotto noted that the City had not yet been able to acquire enough land to ask for a third party bid, but when there was sufficient property, the City would be looking to build affordable rental housing for families as well as seniors.

Mayor Scotto commented that the 2010 census will probably show a decrease in population of Torrance, as some people could no longer afford to live in the community and that he thought that the population figure for Torrance would be closer to 140,000, rather than the hoped for 145,000 to 150,000.

Responding to a question from Councilmember Rhilinger, Chairperson Kimmel-Dagostino stated that Focal Point did catalog the number of calls requesting information on assisted living, but that she did not have the data with her, but could make the information available.

Responding to a question from Councilmember Sutherland, Chairperson Kimmel-Dagostino stated that most of the calls to Focal Point were from Torrance residents.

Responding to a question from Councilmember Rhilinger, Chairperson Kimmel-Dagostino stated that Focal Point received approximately 150 calls per month, of which almost 40%, on average, were concerning affordable housing.

B. Update on Mobile Home Space Rental Subsidy Program

Responding to questions from Chairperson Kimmel-Dagostino, Deputy Community Development Director Cessna stated that the subsidy program had begun two years ago and currently had 45 people on the program, with another six (6) residents pending, from the recently added Del Amo Gardens Park. She reported that the program had been originally set up with the idea of subsidizing 100 people per year, and at this point, there was still funding available. She noted that the program had been slow to get started as it had not been attempted before and was developed as a cross between the subsidy program at Coleman Court and Ocean Terrace, with some elements of the Section 8 program.

Deputy Community Development Director Cessna explained that there were very minimal financial requirements to qualify for the subsidy and, if eligible, participants received a \$100 subsidy that was paid directly to the mobile home park. She noted that there was one mobile home park where the payments had to be made directly to the residents, which made the subsidy taxable for the residents. She announced that there

were still flyers at the mobile home parks, with a description of the subsidy program for those that might be interested.

Mayor Scotto stated that depending on the City budget the program could be extended for another year using the remaining money in the program.

In response to a question from Chairperson Kimmel-Dagostino, Deputy Community Development Director Cessna stated that under the subsidy program, the landlords could not raise the rent for those residents receiving a stipend in any different manner from those residents not receiving a subsidy. She noted that most park owners had been willing to sign an agreement to that effect, but even those owners who did not sign the agreement had not raised the rents.

Deputy Community Development Director Cessna stated that the subsidy program would continue until the funds were depleted; it would not depend on the length of time someone had been in the program. She stated that Housing Office reviewed the financial qualifications of those receiving stipends on a yearly or bi-yearly basis.

Mayor Scotto noted that although the City thought initially they would have more subsidy applicants than they had funding, many people have been reluctant to apply.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Craft, Mayor Scotto stated that some parks had residents sign long term leases with rent increases tied to the CPI, with the minimum of a 3% increase and a cap of a 6% increase. He noted that some Torrance mobile home parks were well maintained, with reasonable rents while others were poorly maintained with high rents and higher utilities. Mayor Scotto stated there was little the City could do to control rent increases as Torrance had no rent control.

C. Update on Shared Housing Program

Commissioner Robelotto reported on her preliminary investigation for a shared housing program and stated that it was her aim to develop an independent program that would eliminate any liability on the part of the City. She noted that she had been talking with the Beach Cities Health District about their program for the homeless, in order to gather information and ideas.

Commissioner Robelotto stated that her initial vision was a shared housing website which would be able to match people by their needs for housing or other living assistance. She added that there might be an opportunity to apply for grants to use for the program.

Responding to a question from Councilmember Rhilinger, Commissioner Robelotto said that the program was based on a program that Irene Griffith had investigated and similar to programs that were operating nationally as well as locally. Commissioner Robelotto noted that the other programs had difficulties because of liability and administration.

Mayor Scotto stated that there might be other organizations who would be interested in taking on the program and combining it with other aspects of their existing business.

Councilmember Furey stated that he agreed that the shared housing program was a good one, but that it might be better if another entity were to run the program.

Councilmember Brewer stated that he too agreed that the program was a good method for trading services and needs.

In response to a question from Councilmember Barnett, Community Development Director Gibson stated that there were no permits necessary to operate an assisted living facility (6 pack) in a home.

Recreation Services Manager Brunette suggested that the shared housing program partner with an existing entity, such as Craig's List, and create a specific senior category.

Councilmember Rhilinger stated that an existing organization in Los Angeles County might be a better solution to handle the liability concerns and background checks needed to make the match ups for housing.

Councilmember Numark stated that he agreed that partnering with Craig's List would be a good option for the shared housing program. He noted that screening and vetting of candidates could be a value added service, but would involve liability concerns that would need to be considered.

Councilmember Sutherland stated that he agreed with the value of the shared housing program and the need for more research.

Mayor Scotto stated that the City had a commitment to affordable housing, but that the acquisition of enough land could take time.

City Manager Jackson stated that as the City invested the resources to acquire land, there was a three year commitment in which to act and self imposed timeline in which to refund the money.

Mayor Scotto noted that much of the senior housing, (for over 55 years of age) that had been built in Torrance in the last ten years had not addressed the issue of affordability, and that many of the units were still for sale.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

City Clerk Herbers stated that there was only one applicant for the vacancy on the Commission on Aging.

ADJOURNMENT

The Commission on Aging adjourned to Tuesday, August 10, 2010 at 9:30 a.m. at the Bartlett Senior Citizens Center, Hosler Conference Room.

The Torrance City Council recessed at 6:24 p.m. and reconvened at 7:00 p.m. in the Torrance City Council Chambers.

Approved as Submitted September 14, 2010 s/ Sue Herbers, City Clerk
