

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF
THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND
ENERGY CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Torrance Environmental Quality and Energy Conservation Commission convened in a regular session at 7:02 p.m. on Thursday, September 3, 2009 in the West Annex meeting room at Torrance City Hall.

2. ROLL CALL:

Present: Commissioners Chim, Gobble, Griffiths, Reilly, and Chairperson McCabe.

Absent: Commissioner Watson (excused).

Also Present: Deputy Community Development Director Cessna and Senior Environmental Quality Officer Duncan.

3. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Reilly.

4. POSTING OF THE AGENDA

MOTION: Commissioner Griffiths, seconded by Commissioner Gobble, moved to accept and file the report of the secretary on the posting of the agenda for this meeting; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

5. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

6A. MINUTES OF JUNE 4, 2009

MOTION: Commissioner Griffiths moved for the approval of the June 4, 2009 meeting minutes as submitted. Commissioner Reilly seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Watson).

6B. MINUTES OF JULY 2, 2009

MOTION: Commissioner Gobble moved for the approval of the July 2, 2009 meeting minutes as submitted. Commissioner Reilly seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Watson).

6C. MINUTES OF AUGUST 6, 2009

MOTION: Commissioner Gobble moved for the approval of the August 6, 2009 meeting minutes as submitted. Commissioner Reilly seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Watson).

7. ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

7A. ENERGY EFFICIENCY PRESENTATION

Deputy Director Cessna presented a proposal to set up a workshop with the South Bay Environmental Services Center to provide energy efficiency and water conservation tips to residents and homeowners. She noted that a sample flier was included in agenda materials and requested that the Commission consider co-sponsoring the event in conjunction with the City.

In response to Commissioner Gobble's inquiry, she stated that the workshop would be early November 2009 in the Toyota Meeting Hall or Library meeting room and that they anticipate at least 100 attendees.

Responding to Commissioner Reilly's inquiry, Deputy Director Cessna advised that there would be give-aways such as light bulbs and grocery bags and that fliers would go out to Homeowners Associations as well as Green Living and Environmental Services Center mailing lists.

Commissioner Reilly suggested that high school environmental clubs be invited to participate.

MOTION: Commissioner Gobble moved that the Environmental Quality and Energy Conservation Commission co-sponsor an energy efficiency workshop in early November 2009 with the South Bay Environmental Services Center and the City. Commissioner Chim seconded the motion; a roll call vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Watson).

7B. PUBLIC WORKSHOP – DISCUSSION OF DIFFERENT APPROACHES FOR A REVISION TO THE CURRENT ORDINANCE REGARDING THE USE OF VEHICLES ON PRIVATE PROPERTY FOR HABITATION

Deputy Director Cessna indicated that the purpose of this workshop was to gather information from interested stakeholders to draft changes to the existing ordinance regarding the use of recreational vehicles (RVs) for habitation. She explained the difficulties in enforcing the current Code due to its verbiage and difficulty in proving habitation for 14 consecutive days. She stated that staff wanted to understand what RVs are used for, what are appropriate and inappropriate uses of RVs, determine a more specific definition of habitation, and how to draft an ordinance that would allow some use and still be enforceable. She stated that staff would present a series of questions and receive brainstorming feedback from audience members and Commissioners in order to craft a more appropriate and effective ordinance.

Chairperson McCabe explained the policies and procedures of the Environmental Quality and Energy Conservation Commission, including the right to appeal decisions to City Council.

MOTION: At 7:10 p.m., Commissioner Reilly, with a second by Commissioner Gobble, moved to open the public workshop; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Watson).

Senior Environmental Quality Officer Duncan asked audience members and Commissioners to consider what they believe are appropriate uses of RVs and responses were listed as follows:

Guesthouse for family and friends when in town
If a disaster strikes
Get away – quiet refuge
Watch television
Escape the heat
Auxiliary office
“Beats the doghouse”
Auxiliary kitchen during holidays
Preparation for trip
Service/maintenance
Slumber/card party
Temporary home during remodel

Deputy Director Cessna next requested input on what would be issues with these kinds of uses and comments were recorded as follows:

Property tax loss
Trailer being used as storage unit
Reduction of property value
Extension of home without having to following zoning/fire regulations

Staff received and recorded input regarding signs of RV habitation as follows:

Electric hook-up
Water hook-up
Sewer hook-up
Dumping facility
Levelers
Time the hook-ups are in place
Time the RV is in one spot
Slide-outs extended
Antenna/satellite dish
For rent sign
Totality
Expired tags
Activity – in and out of RV

Staff received and recorded comments regarding their concerns as follows:

No cost to residents
Permit for extended living (construction, etc.)
Not expensive to enforce
Find a balance

Hardship permits/time limits
No cost permits
Flexible on time and use of (permits)
Add boat specifically – definition of vehicles
Define exceptions broadly
Define exceptions clearly
Making an R-1 into an R-2
Reapply/renew after time limit
Getting around codes/safety regulations/property taxes
R-2 with one dwelling unit – no RV for number 2
Unintended negative effects
Negative financial impact on RV owners

Commissioner Gobble expressed concern about costs to the City, stated that he was in favor of reducing the number of allowable days of habitation from 14 to three to seven consecutive days, and expressed support for permits for extended periods of time.

Commissioner Reilly voiced support for no-fee permits that are flexible on time restrictions based on reasons for requests and recommended adding boats to the definition of an RV.

Commissioner Chim concurred that RVs are not meant to be a way to avoid property taxes or to be an extension of a home.

Commissioner Griffiths pointed out that there would not be an issue unless there is a complaint.

Chairperson McCabe expressed appreciation to audience members and stated that their input is a valuable benefit to the City.

Deputy Director Cessna advised that staff would compile comments, meet with the City Attorney's office, and bring back a recommended draft ordinance at the November or December 2009 Commission meeting.

MOTION: At 8:46 p.m., Commissioner Griffiths, seconded by Commissioner Gobble, moved to close the public workshop; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Watson).

8. ORAL COMMUNICATION

8A. Deputy Director Cessna stated that March 27, 2010 is the tentative date for the next Environmental Fair at Madrona Marsh Preserve.

8B. Deputy Director Cessna announced the Employee Variety Show on September 12, 2009.

8C. Deputy Director Cessna stated that City Council has asked staff to consider permit fees for solar panels and Commissioner Gobble suggested that they research what other cities are doing.

8D. Commissioner Gobble distributed Southern California Edison booklets on energy saving tips.

8E. Commissioner Reilly stated that the August 24, 2009 Council Committee meeting regarding Commission consolidation was informative with many good suggestions.

8F. Commissioner Reilly recommended providing a list of preferred providers for residents to utilize when installing solar panels.

8G. Chairperson McCabe inquired about the status of the ICLEI energy baseline and was informed by staff that they would provide a report in November 2009.

8H. Chairperson McCabe requested that Green Building, Recycling, and Solar be included as future agenda topics.

8I. Chairperson McCabe inquired how to communicate and partner with other Commissions and Deputy Director Cessna responded that the best way would be to give items of interest to staff who would then forward them to the appropriate liaison.

8J. Chairperson McCabe inquired if it would be possible to have Internet access at Commission meetings.

8K. Chairperson McCabe requested an update on the status of multi-tenant and business recycling.

9. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: At 9:00 p.m., Commissioner Gobble moved to adjourn the meeting to October 1, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. in the West Annex meeting room. Commissioner Griffiths seconded the motion and, hearing no objection, Chairperson McCabe so ordered.

Approved as Amended October 1, 2009 s/ Sue Herbers, City Clerk
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