

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
TORRANCE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Torrance Parks and Recreation Commission convened in a regular session at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, March 14, 2012, in the West Annex meeting room at Torrance City Hall.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Present: Commissioners Baxter, Gilbert, Greenberg,  
Hays, Mayeda, Ning, and Chairperson Taniguchi.

Absent: None.

Also Present: Community Services Director Jones, Senior Business  
Manager Minter, Recreation Services Manager Brunette,  
Park Services Manager Carson, Naturalist Drake,  
Senior Administrative Analyst Orpe, and  
Senior Recreation Supervisor Kelso.

**3. FLAG SALUTE**

Commissioner Ning led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**4. AFFIDAVIT OF POSTING**

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

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**5A. MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 8, 2012**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Hays moved for the approval of the February 8, 2012 Parks and Recreation Commission meeting minutes as submitted. Commissioner Greenberg seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

**6. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #1**

None.

**8B. APPROVAL OF SIGNAGE CONCEPT FOR EL PRADO PARK**

At Chairperson Taniguchi's request, Commissioners agreed to take this item out of order.

Park Services Manager Carson provided background on the item and recommended that the Commission approve the signage concept for El Prado Park in Attachments A and B of the material of record. He presented the proposal to install a

concrete sign “El Prado Park 1912” that would mirror the same style sign “Torrance Centennial Plaza 2012” within the Centennial Plaza project. Additionally, there would be another similar sign “El Prado Park 1912” placed at the southern end of the park along Manuel Avenue, that mirrors the Centennial signage at the northern end of the park.

Commissioner Hays stated that it was a fabulous idea but expressed concern about theft of the proposed bronze marker and graffiti.

Park Services Manager Carson advised that the marker would be cast in place in the concrete and that power washing off graffiti on concrete is not too difficult.

Chairperson Taniguchi stated that having two signs that look alike would be harmonious and add to the beauty.

Dick Rossberg, Via Malaga, inquired about the dimensions of the signage along Manuel Avenue and Community Services Director Jones responded that the ground-level signage would be 12 feet in length, 36 inches tall, and 8 inches wide.

Community Services Director Jones stated that there is a possibility that the Commission may be asked to consider some funding for this project pending bid submittals.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Mayeda moved to concur with staff recommendation to approve the signage concept for El Prado Park. Commissioner Gilbert seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

#### **8A. UPDATE ON THE TORRANCE CENTENNIAL PLAZA PROJECT**

This item was taken out of order.

Senior Business Manager Minter reminded Commissioners that they approved the conceptual design plans for a Centennial Project in June 2011. He stated that there have been a few minor changes made to the original concept that include addition of signage and lighting, additional walkways on the east and west sides of the plaza adjacent to the street to meet ADA requirements, and adjustment to the top of the bridge.

Community Services Director Jones added that the project is scheduled to go out to bid in the next few weeks, with construction expected to begin in May 2012.

Responding to Commissioner Hays’ inquiry, he stated that the Centennial Committee has sold over 350 bricks of their 600 goal, noting that the deadline is May 1. He announced the grand opening date of the Torrance Centennial Plaza on September 16, 2012.

#### **7. NEW BUSINESS**

#### **7A. MADRONA MARSH PRESERVE AND NATURE CENTER ANNUAL PRESENTATION**

Nature Center Manager and Naturalist Drake provided a report on the Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center during the year 2011. She stated that it was a challenging but extraordinary year and discussed the valuable habitat for birds, insects,

spiders, plants, frogs, reptiles, and small mammals. She stated that there was enough water in the wetlands to encourage bird and mallard breeding as well as several bird migrations. She noted that there was a complete bio assessment done of the Marsh and that they started and nearly completed a bio filtration unit. She stated that 1,500 school children toured the Marsh and that there were over 30,500 visitors. She shared information about staffing, the over 7,700 volunteers, vector control, Eagle Scout projects, Restoration programs, and Propagation Society. She discussed projects for 2012 that include redeveloping the Management Plan, completing the sump project, and publishing three books.

She presented a 15-minute video made by volunteer Joe Chang about the Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center.

The Commissioners applauded the beautiful photography in the film and Naturalist Drake offered to provide copies to Commissioners.

**7B. APPEAL REQUEST OF A SOCIAL SERVICE GRANT FROM PEDIATRIC THERAPY NETWORK**

Senior Recreation Supervisor Kelso presented Pediatric Therapy Network's appeal to the Commission to re-allocate a Commission and Council-approved \$2,500 Non-profit Social Services Agency Grant. He stated that the original grant was approved for the 2012 Camp Escapades program that was cancelled for the year, and that they are asking that the funds be re-allocated to the Leaps and Bounds program. He recommended that the Commission approve the appeal, deny the appeal, or send the appeal to the Grants Committee for review and recommendation back to the full Commission.

Responding to Chairperson Taniguchi's inquiry, he stated that he has not seen any other appeal in the last 12 years.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Hays moved to send the appeal to the Grants Committee for review and recommendation back to the entire Commission body to make a recommendation to City Council. Commissioner Greenberg seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

**7C. PRESENTATION OF THE ENTERPRISE FUND PROPOSED BUDGET REDUCTIONS AND/OR REVENUE INCREASES**

Community Services Director Jones provided background on City Council's request for an additional \$400,000 reduction goal from the Enterprise Fund and presented an operational plan for proposed budget reductions and/or revenue increases. He stated that the management team and staff worked for over two years evaluating every program area within the Cultural and Recreation Services Divisions. He stated that they worked to find ways to be more efficient in operations while taking into consideration the Philosophy Statement of the Parks and Recreation Commission and Cultural Arts Commission in continuing to provide quality enrichment programs to the community. He stated that the resulting body of work has found more than \$400,000 in reductions, deletions, and fee increases while still holding a tremendous quality, valuable program for the community.

Senior Business Manager Minter presented an overview of the Cost Recovery and City Subsidy Guidelines in Attachment C. He explained the matrix of six categories for all the programs and services within the Enterprise Fund. He noted that a new category for 10% subsidized programs, Category 5, was added specifically for adult classes. He explained that this new category was added to emphasize the importance of covering the costs of classes for non-residents.

He discussed participation by non-Torrance residents and the main reasons why non-residents pay more to participate in Torrance classes. He stated that in 2009 the non-resident fee was raised from \$10 to \$20 per class, resulting in a decrease in participation and class cancellations. He stated that, in response, staff has created a tiered system for non-resident fees based on a non-resident fee of 10% of the value of the class, with a maximum of \$20 per class. He expressed hope that some of the non-residents will return and help meet minimum enrollment levels. He noted that the City's subsidy of 10% for adult classes would be covered by the additional fee paid by the participant.

In response to Commissioner Gilbert's inquiry, staff stated that participation by non-residents has decreased by approximately 27% over the last two years.

Responding to Commissioner Hays' inquiry, Senior Business Manager Minter explained that 80 to 90% of classes offered cost between \$51 and \$150 and that most non-residents would pay an additional \$10 to \$15 per class.

He stated that it was determined to subsidize youth more as adults are subsidized less. He pointed out the economic and quality of life benefits to having non-resident youth enrolled in the City's classes and programs.

Senior Business Manager Minter reviewed the chart of Impact of Fee Increases over the last four years on page 7 of the material of record. He stated that the average class fee in 2008 was \$66.35 and in 2011 was \$81.39. He noted that total enrollments, both resident and non-resident, have decreased every year since 2008. He pointed out that the net revenue has remained constant but that less people are being served.

He summarized the Cultural Services Division as well as the Recreation Services Division Cost Recovery and City Subsidy Plan for fiscal year 2012-2013 in Attachment B.

Recreation Services Manager Brunette explained the difference between Direct Program Costs and Indirect Divisional Costs.

In response to Commissioner Ning's inquiry about Torrance Art Museum, Senior Business Manager Minter stated that there are challenges to renting out the facility to generate revenue but that staff is still exploring the possibility.

Commissioner Ning suggested considering renting out just the patio outside and, in response to his inquiry, Community Services Director Jones talked about the comprehensive marketing plan being developed and the scholarship program being revisited to try to bring patrons back.

Commissioner Mayeda offered his observation that a high percentage of the budget is spent on youth activities, particularly aquatics.

Community Services Director Jones stated that the combination of the total \$800,000 of expenditure reductions and revenue increases would lower the General fund subsidy of the Enterprise Fund to approximately \$3,200,000. He explained that the proposed adjustments to programs, events, classes, and staffing are broken down into three categories: deletions, reductions, and fee increases. He reviewed proposed deletions in Attachment A that include elimination of a vacant full time Typist Clerk position, Works in Progress, Shakespeare in the Park, Symphony in the Park, Concert in the Park, school year park program at Pueblo Park, and Saturday hours at the ATTIC. He described proposed reductions for part time labor, materials and supplies, and contracts as well as fee increases that include after school programs, swim and water polo programs, and day camp rate. He stated that he has prioritized the list of programs that could be brought back if City Council decides it is possible.

Commissioner Ning stated that exposure to cultural events is necessary and suggested finding entities in the City to donate funds to preserve existing programs. He pointed out that Shakespeare in the Park only costs \$3,000 but serves 1,000 people and offered to donate \$1,500 to save the program if there is a matching donation.

Responding to Commissioner Gilbert's inquiry, Community Services Director Jones stated that there may be a 10% drop off in participation with the proposed fee increases. He noted that fees for these classes were not raised the last time.

Commissioner Greenberg questioned if the City would lose the ability to bring back these programs in the future and received clarification from staff that most could be brought back as the economy improves.

Recreation Services Manager Brunette and Senior Administrative Analyst Orpe explained that, if reinstated, the City would have to pay for indirect costs as well as direct costs.

Commissioner Mayeda suggested utilizing volunteers to replace part time positions and co-sponsoring events with homeowners associations.

Community Services Director Jones concluded the presentation with a brief discussion regarding future Cost of Living increases and his recommendation that if increases are provided to the indirect divisional costs (full time labor) that this same amount of funding be added to the City subsidy level.

## **9. STANDING COMMITTEE UPDATES**

### **9A. FACILITIES COMMITTEE**

Commissioner Mayeda reported that the Facilities Committee met on March 14, 2012 to discuss criteria for Seaside Heroes Park's memorial wall honor program and will bring its recommendation to the full Commission at the April 11 Commission meeting.

### **9B. GRANTS COMMITTEE**

Has not met.

### **9C. OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE**

Has not met.

**9D. PROGRAMS COMMITTEE**

Senior Business Manager Minter stated that this year the Programs Committee is responsible for planning and hosting the Parks and Recreation Commission Banquet on July 11, 2012.

**10. MONTHLY DEPARTMENT ACTIVITY**

**10A. ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES DIVISION**

Senior Business Manager Minter noted that the Administrative Services Division Report for February 2012 was included in agenda packets. He explained that revenue figures for February are misleading because organizations often bundle their payments. He announced that effective March 1, 2012 the Community Services Department and Administrative Services Division have taken over the home improvement program. He noted that it provides home improvement for eligible seniors as well as teaches skills to at risk youth.

**10B. PARK SERVICES DIVISION**

Park Services Manager Carson noted that the Park Services Division Report for February 2012 was included in agenda materials. He reported that staff is putting together a bid proposal package for the court resurfacing project and that 27 and a half sports courts have been prioritized. He stated that General Services is spearheading the irrigation improvement project at Sea Aire Golf Course. He noted that the Wilson Park Pond maintenance manual is near completion and that 562 trees were trimmed as part of the Park Tree Management Plan.

In response to Commissioner Hays' inquiry, he described repairs made to the Hickory Park slide.

**10C. RECREATION SERVICES DIVISION**

Recreation Services Manager Brunette noted that the Recreation Services Division Report for February 2012 was included in agenda packets. He reported that the Youth Basketball program is concluding and had over 1,900 participants. He stated that Adult Softball, Basketball, and Roller Hockey programs are all at high points in the number of teams that are playing. He informed the Commission that Fit Kids Gymnastics would no longer be providing gymnastics classes and that staff is looking for a new gymnastics contractor. He announced the 13<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Pancake Breakfast at the ATTIC on April 7, 2012.

**11. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC #2**

**11A.** Commissioner Greenberg encouraged Commissioners to attend the annual Torrance Education Foundation dinner at the Torrance Marriot on March 23, 2012.

**11B.** Commissioner Ning discussed his recent visit to Singapore.

**11C.** Commissioner Gilbert announced upcoming Centennial events that include a delphinium planting on March 17, Zamperini Bus Tour on April 15, Zamperini film on April 25, and Zamperini presentation on April 28.

**11D.** Chairperson Taniguchi stated that she enjoyed the Cherry Blossom Tree Festival and was informed that it would be an annual event.

**11E.** Chairperson Taniguchi expressed her appreciation to Commissioner Greenberg for offering to serve on the Beat the Odds scholarship selection committee.

**11F.** Chairperson Taniguchi stated that she would be unable to attend the April 11, 2012 Commission meeting.

**11G.** Commissioner Hays announced an Old Torrance Neighborhood Association meeting on March 21, 2012.

**11H.** Senior Business Manager Minter stated that the Torrance Batting Cage request by Tyler Sports is being revised by the applicant and announced a fast pitch softball tournament on March 22-24, 2012 at Wilson Park.

**11I.** Janet Payne, Engracia Avenue, expressed her appreciation to staff and Commissioners for their support in placing signage at El Prado Park.

**12. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** At 9:46 p.m., Commissioner Mayeda moved to adjourn the meeting to April 11, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. in the West Annex meeting room. Commissioner Gilbert seconded the motion and, hearing no objection, Chairperson Taniguchi so ordered.

Approved as Submitted April 11, 2012 s/ Sue Herbers, City Clerk
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