

**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, October 10, 2007, in the West Annex meeting room at Torrance City Hall.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners Cook, Gilbert, Hazell, McGee, Numark, Orpe, Robbins*, Taniguchi, and Chairperson Smoot.

Absent: Commissioner Ning.

Also Present: Acting Community Services Director Jones, Senior Business Manager Minter, Park Services Manager Wilson, Senior Recreation Supervisor Kelso, Park Ranger Supervisor Fujimori, and Acting Recreation Services Manager Wand.

MOTION: Commissioner Numark moved to grant an excused absence to Commissioner Ning for the October 10, 2007 Commission meeting. Commissioner Gilbert seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

*Commissioner Robbins arrived at 7:37 p.m.

3. FLAG SALUTE

Senior Recreation Supervisor Kelso led the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. AFFIDAVIT OF POSTING

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

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

5A. MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 12, 2007

Commissioner McGee offered the following correction to the September 12, 2007 meeting minutes: Page 1, 5A, "Commissioner McGee seconded the motion..."

MOTION: Commissioner Gilbert moved to approve the September 12, 2007 Commission meeting minutes as corrected. Commissioner Taniguchi seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Ning).

6. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC #1

None.

7. NEW BUSINESS

7A. APPROVAL OF A PROPOSAL FROM RIVIERA LITTLE LEAGUE TO AMEND THEIR EXISTING LEASE AGREEMENT TO ALLOW AMPLIFIED SOUND FOR THEIR CLOSING DAY CEREMONIES

Acting Community Services Director Jones introduced the request, provided background on the material of record, and recommended that the Commission approve a proposal from Riviera Little League requesting an amendment to their existing lease agreement to allow amplified sound during Closing Day Ceremonies at Lago Seco Park. He stated that, if approved, staff would work with the City Attorney's Office to amend the lease agreement and prepare an item to be forwarded to City Council for final approval. He noted that letters from residents included in the agenda material and supplementary materials support the request.

He provided clarification to Commissioner Cook that the amendment would cover the next two years through the end of the lease agreement and to Commissioner Numark that there would only be amplified sound on one day each year.

MOTION: Commissioner Gilbert moved to concur with staff recommendation to approve a lease amendment allowing amplified sound at Lago Seco Park for Riviera Little League's Closing Day Ceremonies. Commissioner Taniguchi seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Ning).

7B. APPROVAL OF PROPOSAL FROM WEST TORRANCE LITTLE LEAGUE TO INSTALL TWO BATTING CAGES IN ENTRADERO SUMP

Acting Community Services Director Jones introduced the material of record and noted supplementary material received after agenda packets were prepared. He provided background on the item and recommended that the Commission approve the proposal from West Torrance Little League (WTLL) to build and maintain two batting cages in Entradero Sump.

Dave Timmerman, Glenn Place, WTLL Vice-President, presented the proposal, noting that there were four optional layouts included for consideration and that the batting cages could be split up or be side-to-side. He stated that there would be a chain link fence on all sides and top, interior net, clay floor, concrete mow strip around the perimeter, and locked equipment access and entry gates. He described the options for location and dimensions and discussed the benefits that participants would receive, noting that the cages would contribute to their goal of year-round maintenance and that there would be no cost to the City or taxpayers.

Bruce Masai, Halison Street, expressed opposition to the proposal due to noise, litter, and increased traffic concerns. He stated that only a few youth would benefit as very few go on to high school, college, or professional baseball. He contended that the batting cages would not be in the best interest of the surrounding neighborhood.

Harold Marsh, Halison Street, stated that he did not support construction of the cages due to noise concerns. He noted that the fields are in use seven days a week and that the gates are never locked. He questioned why WTLL did not clean up the fields and neighborhood first and whether the City was ever paid for extra fields built, dugout, snack bars, grading, and excess asphalt. He asked if an environmental impact study was ever done, why WTLL does not publicize the name of its president, and noted that this was the first time neighbors have ever been informed what is going on.

Jeff Dawson, Halison Street, expressed concern about increased traffic and litter that would occur if the batting cages were built.

Harry Stuver, Towers Street, stated that he was supportive of the proposal as long as the batting cages were only open concurrently with the current practice and games and only accessible to WTLL members.

Suzanne Grudnitski, Hinsdale Avenue, stated that she was in support of the proposal, that WTLL raises property values and sense of community, and that not all of the litter comes from WTLL.

Commissioner Robbins arrived at 7:37 p.m.

Mark Hardgrove, Saltee Avenue, introduced himself as president of WTLL and stated that he was in favor of the batting cages.

Rick Parr, Beran Street, WTLL volunteer, discussed improvements made to the facilities that include new bleachers, grass, dugouts, and snack bar repairs. He stated that most of the time the gate is locked, that they try to have parents pick up trash, and that he was in favor of the installation of batting cages.

Scott Takahashi, Sturgess Drive, stated that he was supportive of the proposal, noting that the noise was minimal, that it would promote safety, and that it would enable pitchers to be warmed up.

Mr. Timmerman addressed questions and concerns addressed by community members. He noted that WTLL was trying to do things differently and has a website www.wtll.com listing all Board members. He stated that he envisions three hours of operation on weekdays, no later than 8:00 p.m., and beginning at 9:00 a.m. on Saturdays and noon on Sundays. He added that the cages would be for West Torrance teams, involve all local youth, require reservations, be supervised, and for authorized team use. He contended that there was not a place to hit a ball safely in West Torrance, that WTLL has spent \$40-50,000 in the last three years making improvements, and that they were trying to green up the fields. He noted that Entradero Sump is also used by other organizations that include West High School cross country and baseball teams, a bicycle racing club, and an airplane club.

Commissioner Numark received clarification from Mr. Timmerman that he did not anticipate increased traffic and that the main season is in the spring; however, he Mr. Timmerman explained that there are up to 30 teams participating in fall ball.

In response to Commissioner Hazell's inquiry, Mr. Timmerman stated that at this time WTLL was not planning to install pitching machines.

Staff offered to consider curtailing amplified sound used by the bicycle racing club on weekends if it was important to community members.

Senior Recreation Supervisor Kelso provided additional information about fall ball that is spearheaded by District 27.

Responding to Commissioner McGee's inquiry, Mr. Timmerman advised that the batting cages would displace some parking spaces, depending on the layout, but that WTLL was willing to split the two batting cages to minimize loss of parking spaces.

Mr. Hardgrove noted that there would be minimal impact, that only seven or eight parking spaces would be lost, and that it would be a safer environment for youth playing in that location.

Commissioner Orpe initiated a brief discussion regarding exactly who would be eligible to use the batting cages.

Commissioner Robbins, with Mr. Timmerman's concurrence, suggested that staff and league officials craft a document that would be suitable to all parties.

Commissioner Taniguchi stated that there should be better communication between the homeowners and the League to resolve problems and indicated that she would like to conduct additional research.

Acting Community Services Director Jones stated that the Commission had the authority to approve, deny, or delay action, could ask for certain conditions to be placed on the League, or refer the item to TAB.

Chairperson Smoot suggested that the item be referred to the Facilities sub-committee for further consideration.

Commissioner Robbins concurred with Chairperson Smoot's suggestion, but further stipulated that the Facilities sub-committee meet with staff and representatives from WTLL to craft the framework for rules of use, followed by a forum for public input at the location; there was general consensus.

Responding to Commissioner McGee's inquiry, Mr. Timmerman advised that he hoped to have the batting cages installed by year end.

Commissioner Hazell suggested that WTLL prepare a secondary proposal with temporary fencing and be willing to have the cages on a trial basis to determine impact.

7C. APPROVAL OF PARK RANGER ANNUAL REPORT

Park Ranger Supervisor Fujimora presented the Park Ranger Program 2006-2007 Annual Report and provided background on the material of record regarding the implementation of the Park Ranger Program in July 1995 and its expansion to a year-round, seven day a week operation. He stated that the Program currently has 14 Rangers who have patrolling responsibilities at all City parks, five branch libraries, 12 Torrance Unified School District sites, and City-sponsored special events. He stated that

the purpose of the Program was making a visible presence at the park, frequent public interaction, vigilant observation, and effective communication.

A brief discussion centered on the change of Park Ranger tee-shirt color from bright yellow to white.

Commissioner Robbins received clarification that illegal vendors were those without business permits.

In response to an inquiry by Commissioner Numark, Supervisor Fujimora stated that there were no volunteer opportunities at this time.

Commissioner McGee suggested that the Park Ranger Program be expanded to include Entradero Sump.

In response to Commissioner Hazell's inquiry, Acting Community Services Director Jones advised that Torrance Unified School District does not pay for Ranger service at its campuses.

MOTION: Commissioner Numark moved to accept the Park Ranger Program 2006-2007 Annual Report as presented. Chairperson Smoot seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Ning).

8. STANDING COMMITTEE UPDATES

8A. FACILITIES COMMITTEE – YOUTH SPORTS HONOR WALL

Commissioner McGee reported that the Facilities Committee met on October 10, 2007 and would present a report at the November 14, 2007 Commission meeting.

8B. OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE – DOG PARK

Chairperson Smoot reported that the Open Space committee met on September 12, 2007 and will conduct a final meeting this month to finalize its report to the Commission at the November Commission meeting.

8C. PROGRAMS COMMITTEE – BENSTEAD PLUNGE USAGE POLICY

Senior Business Manager Minter reported that new applications and rate structure have been sent out and that the deadline for submittal is October 18, 2007.

8D. GRANTS COMMITTEE – GRANT PROGRAM

Commissioner Taniguchi reported that the Grants Committee met with staff on October 4, 2007 to review applications, noting that there are 20 eligible applications. She advised that hearing dates are October 15 and October 17, 2007, with November 8, 2007 tentatively scheduled for deliberations. She stated that results of deliberations would be brought to the Commission at the December 12, 2007 meeting.

9. MONTHLY DEPARTMENT ACTIVITY

9A. ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES DIVISION

Senior Business Manager Minter presented an Event Calendar from Boston College included in the agenda material, noting that the organization currently utilizes the event calendar software program that will be implemented on a City-wide basis.

In response to Commissioner Numark's inquiry, he advised that the program should be up and running in December 2007.

MOTION: Commissioner Numark moved to approve the Event Calendar as presented. Chairperson Smoot seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Ning).

9B. PARK SERVICES DIVISION

In response to questions raised at the last Commission meeting, Park Services Manager Wilson reported that General Services submits Graffiti Reports on a quarterly basis and that Park Services was mowing the large area of Victor School for two months to determine efficiencies or impacts.

He reported that they were in the process of prioritizing projects that include sidewalk replacement and installation of tables at Wilson Park and converting the basketball court to a bocce ball court at Columbia Park. He stated that Victor Park was the next park scheduled for playground equipment replacement and briefly discussed contingency plans to conserve water.

9C. RECREATION SERVICES DIVISION

Acting Recreation Services Manager Wand reported that parent orientation meetings for After School Programs have been successful and discussed the merge of the Harvest Health Fair and Salvation Army Health and Resource Fair. She announced that three Special Olympics athletes will be competing in the World Games in China.

Responding to an inquiry by Commissioner McGee, Acting Community Services Director Jones stated that the Baseball/Softball Academy is successful and continues to grow.

10. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC #2

10A. Acting Community Services Director Jones asked for volunteers to judge banners and pumpkins at the October 31, 2007 Halloween Carnival at Wilson Park. Commissioners Robbins, Numark, and McGee indicated that they would participate.

10B. Acting Community Services Director Jones requested volunteers to participate in the Youth Council selection committee on October 18, 2007 and Commissioner Orpe volunteered to attend.

10C. Acting Community Services Director Jones confirmed that Commissioners Robbins, Hazell, and Smoot would be attending the October 27, 2007 Commissioner Training at Costa Mesa Neighborhood Community Center.

10D. Commissioner Numark suggested that some Commission meetings be held at or around City parks.

10E. Commissioner Numark stated that he would like to further discuss the possibility of having volunteer opportunities for the Park Ranger Program.

10F. Commissioner Taniguchi stated that she was looking forward to her trip to Japan.

10G. Chairperson Smoot suggested that a method for improving communication would be to notify the public about rules of conduct and time limits before they speak.

10H. Chairperson Smoot encouraged Commissioners to participate in the Turkey Trot.

11. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: At 9:09 p.m., Commissioner Robbins moved to adjourn the meeting to November 14, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. in the West Annex meeting room. Commissioner Cook seconded the motion and, hearing no objection, Chairperson Smoot so ordered.

Approved as Submitted November 14, 2007 s/ Sue Herbers, City Clerk
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