

December 11, 2013

**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 7:06 p.m. on Wednesday, December 11, 2013 in the West Annex meeting room, Torrance City Hall. Due to the absence of Chairperson Hays, Vice-Chairperson Baxter led the meeting.

2. ROLL CALL/MOTIONS FOR EXCUSED ABSENCE

Present: Commissioners Greenberg, Love, Mayeda,
Reilly, Uchima, and Vice-Chairperson Baxter.

Absent: Chairperson Hays.

Also Present: Community Services Director Jones, Senior Business
Manager Minter, Park Services Manager Carson,
Administrative Analyst Orpe, Senior Recreation Supervisor
Kelso, Cultural Services Manager Rappoport, and Park
Ranger Supervisor Fujimori.

MOTION: Commissioner Mayeda moved to grant Chairperson Hays an excused absence for the December 11, 2013 Commission meeting. Commissioner Love seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

3. FLAG SALUTE

Commissioner Greenberg led the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. AFFIDAVIT OF POSTING

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

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

5A. MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 13, 2013

MOTION: Commissioner Love moved to approve the November 13, 2013 Commission meeting minutes as presented. Commissioner Uchima seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Chairperson Hays).

6. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #1

The Commission welcomed Torrance Youth Council members Anna Spalino and Kevin Kang from South High School.

8D. REVIEW AND SUPPORT ADDITIONAL PERMITTED PICNIC AREAS

This item was taken out of order.

Senior Business Manager Minter recommended that the Commission support additional permitted picnic areas at Hickory Park, Lago Seco Park, Sur La Brea Park, and Wilson Park. He provided background on existing permitted picnic areas and explained the Small Park Revenue Report in Attachment A showing the increase in public demand for permitted picnic areas at four parks added in 2010. He noted that staff is bringing forward this recommendation as the demand for park space continues to grow while drop-in visitors continue to use parks free of charge. He stated that adding additional permitted picnic areas would not only increase revenue to the City's General Fund but would allow the City to be in a better position to hold the user groups accountable for keeping the parks clean and obeying park rules.

He stated that at Hickory and Lago Seco Parks the entire picnic area would be reservable for up to 50 people per park and that at Sur La Brea Park the gazebo would be reservable for up to 25 people (Attachment B). Referring to Wilson Park, he requested that additional tables be made reservable, located north of the playground and south of the tennis courts (Attachment C). He stated that appropriate signage would be added, advertising would begin as soon as possible, and allowing bouncers would be considered as long as operators have liability insurance. He noted that the evaluation process looked at parking and restroom availability, keeping drop-in tables available, impact to residents, and ensuring that amenities match the size of the user group.

Karen Galvin, Iris Avenue, expressed concern that adding permitting would encourage large groups to visit Hickory Park that has residents on three sides. She stated that there are only seven trash cans for eight picnic tables, that she has never seen a Park Ranger at the park, that the grass would be driven on to bring bouncers, and that generators for bouncers are noisy.

In response to her inquiries, Senior Business Manager Minter advised her that, once permitted, Park Rangers would patrol the park more frequently, post signs on tables that are reserved, and follow up at the end of the permit period to make sure that trash is picked up. He noted that residents can reserve picnic tables nine months in advance while non-residents only one month in advance, adding that non-residents pay twice as much as residents for permits. He stated that it might be possible to install an electrical outlet in close proximity to where bouncers would be to avoid use of generators. He noted that reputable bouncer operators know they are not allowed to drive on the grass and ADA regulations require access. He raised the possibility of issuing permits on a trial basis.

At Commissioner Mayeda's inquiry about large groups, staff explained that the key is open space and how it is being used, adding that rarely have they been called out to break up large groups.

Commissioner Riley asked if bouncers are important to users and was informed that bouncers are requested 75-90% of the time. She voiced support for a 90 trial period for bouncers and not allowing operators to use generators. She recommended doing outreach to adjacent neighbors to get their feedback as well as providing a telephone number for them to contact if there are problems.

Commissioner Greenberg received clarification that if a group causes problems, it will not be issued another permit. Staff pointed out that users are more likely to follow rules if their credit card information is on file.

Ms. Galvin asked if the goal is to control the park or to generate revenue and if expenses have been factored in. She stated that she would support a 90 day trial period but voiced her objection to the use of generators. She requested that more trash cans be provided as well as signage limiting groups to 50 people.

Senior Business Manager Minter assured her that this is not a revenue generating program but a means to better control usage in parks. He stated that signage would be added and pointed out that any Commission recommendation still needs to go before City Council for approval. He agreed that providing electricity as a power source is a good solution to control noise.

Community Services Director Jones stated that drop-in users who are abusers will cease to frequent a park once there is a controlled environment. He suggested a six month trial period that would cover a picnic season, adding that they could explore providing electricity for bouncers and would add additional trash cans.

Hector Flores, Park Services, stated that the weekend maintenance crews go to all parks but go more than once to permitted parks.

Senior Business Manager Minter advised that staff would closely monitor the additional permitted picnic areas and any impact on neighbors. He stated that if there are problems, adjustments would be made or they would discontinue issuing permits if necessary, regardless if there is a trial period or not.

MOTION: Commissioner Mayeda moved to support additional permitted picnic areas at Hickory Park, Lago Seco Park, Sur La Brea Park, and Wilson Park with the caveat to provide electrical power for bouncers at Hickory Park. Commissioner Uchima seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Chairperson Hays).

7. OLD BUSINESS

7A. APPROVAL OF 2013-2014 GRANT FUNDING FOR NON-PROFIT SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCIES

Senior Recreation Supervisor Kelso provided background on the receipt of 18 applications, interviews conducted on November 19, and deliberations on November 21. He presented the Grants Committee's recommendation to approve grant funding under the 2013-2014 Grant Program for nine agencies as follows: Cancer Support Community \$3,000; Healthcare & Elder Law Program (H.E.L.P.) \$1,200; Pregnancy Help Center \$1,750; Providence Little Company of Mary \$1,000; South Bay Children's Health Center \$2,000; South Bay Literacy Council \$5,000; Torrance Lomita Meals on Wheels \$5,550; Torrance-South Bay YMCA \$1,000; and Westside Center for Independent Living \$1,000, for a total of \$21,500. He stated that, if the recommendation is approved, the item would go before City Council in January 2014 for final approval.

In response to Commissioner Riley's inquiry, he explained that part of the criteria used by Grants Committee members was to determine if a program would continue if it was not fully funded.

MOTION: Commissioner Riley moved to concur with the Grants Committee recommendation to approve grant funding for nine Non-Profit Social Services Agencies for the 2013-2014 Grant Program. Commissioner Greenberg seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Chairperson Hays).

Commissioner Mayeda, Chair of the Grants Committee, expressed his appreciation to Senior Recreation Supervisor for his guidance and assistance throughout the grant review process.

7B. FIRST QUARTER 2013-2014 BUDGET REVIEW

Community Services Director Jones reported that on November 26 City Council approved the First Quarter Budget Review Report, noting that the Executive Summary was included in Attachment A. He stated that the City is seeing more revenue coming in from sales and property taxes and is pleased to see things are starting to turn around.

7C. PARKS SERVICES DIVISION - PUBLIC SATISFACTION SURVEY 2013

Administrative Analyst Orpe provided results of the survey designed to assess public satisfaction with the parks in Torrance, based on a 1 to 7 scale. He reported that 73 responses were received at five Commission meetings. He stated that the overall score of 5.8 shows residents' satisfaction with the overall service provided by the Park Services Division. Referring to the results in the material of record, he highlighted the importance of Big Grassy Areas in all responses and that 100% of respondents feel safe in parks.

8. NEW BUSINESS

8A. LACMA ART AND FILM LAB AT WILSON PARK

Cultural Services Manager Rappoport provided information about a proposal from Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) to bring their Art & Film Lab to Torrance on August 8 to September 7, 2014. She distributed photographs of the Lab and stated that the plan is to install the Lab at Wilson Park on a concrete pad between the pond and hockey rink. She noted that, to date, the Lab has been in San Bernardino, Redlands, and Altadena, and that Torrance will be the final stop. She explained that the Lab holds two classrooms, one for holding Oral History Workshops and the other for film making, and that additionally there would be an outdoor screen for showing films on Fridays and Saturdays in front of the gazebo. She added that LACMA would provide the programming, security, and staffing, there would be no cost to the City, and all events would be free to the public. She stated that LACMA plans to give the City a free day at LACMA and that she would provide an update after she visits the Lab in Monterey Park in January 2014.

Commissioner Uchima expressed interest in attending workshops on photography and Commissioner Reilly suggested providing residents with information about public transportation to LACMA for the free day.

8B. DOG OBEDIENCE CLUB DONATION

Community Services Director Jones requested that the Commission accept a \$1,000 donation from the Dog Obedience Club of Torrance and that it be used toward the dog waste bag program. He noted that this brings the grand total of their donations to date at \$40,835.

MOTION: Commissioner Mayeda, seconded by Commissioner Love, moved to accept the donation from the Dog Obedience Club of Torrance and that it be used towards the dog waste bag program; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

8C. ACCEPT AND FILE THE 2012-2013 PARK RANGER PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORT

Park Ranger Supervisor Fujimori presented the Park Ranger Program 2012-2013 Annual Report.

Senior Business Manager Minter noted that the Park Rangers will be adding the multi-sports facility at 555 Maple Avenue to their routine patrols.

Responding to Commissioner Uchima's inquiry, he explained that, even though the Park Rangers cannot issue citations, they serve as the eyes and ears for the Police Department and are an education and advisory body. He stated that a part-time evaluation study is coming up and citation capability will be considered again.

9. STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

9A. FACILITIES COMMITTEE – No report.

9B. GRANTS COMMITTEE – Previously discussed

9C. OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE – No report.

9D. PROGRAMS COMMITTEE – No report.

10. MONTHLY DEPARTMENT ACTIVITY

10A. ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES DIVISION

Senior Business Manager Minter noted that the Administrative Services Division Report for November 2013 was included in agenda packets.

10B. PARK SERVICES DIVISION

Park Services Manager Carson noted that the Park Services Division Report for November 2013 was included in attachments.

10C. RECREATION SERVICES DIVISION

Community Services Director Jones noted that the Recreation Services Division Report for November 2013 was included in agenda materials.

11. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #2

11A. Senior Business Manager Minter stated that construction is underway at the 555 Maple Avenue property. He described the six options available to donate through the Donor Wall Sponsorship Program, noting that the cut off date is January 28, 2014. He stated that he expects the hosting of live sporting events in February 2014.

11B. Commissioners and staff wished each other a happy holiday season and Commissioners commended staff for their dedication and guidance.

11C. Community Services Director Jones thanked Commissioners for participating in the Turkey Trot and to Chairperson Hays for shooting the starting pistol. He was pleased to announce that there were more than 3,900 registrants this year.

11D. Community Services Director Jones expressed appreciation to Senior Recreation Supervisor Kelso and the Grants Committee for their efforts.

11E. Commissioner Greenberg requested an excused absence for the January 8, 2014 Commission meeting.

MOTION: Commissioner Uchima moved to grant Commissioner Greenberg an excused absence for the January 8, 2014 Commission meeting. Commissioner Mayeda seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

11F. Vice-Chairperson Baxter relayed Chairperson Hays' best wishes for a healthy and happy holiday season.

12. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: At 9:04 p.m., Commissioner Uchima moved to adjourn the meeting to Wednesday, January 8, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. in the West Annex meeting room at Torrance City Hall. Commissioner Love seconded the motion and, hearing no objection, Vice-Chairperson Baxter so ordered.

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| Approved as submitted February 19, 2014 s/ Sue Herbers, City Clerk |
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