

**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, May 13, 2015 in the West Annex Meeting Room, Torrance City Hall.

**2. ROLL CALL/MOTIONS FOR EXCUSED ABSENCE**

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

Absent: None.

Also Present: Community Services Director Jones, Senior Business Manager Minter, Park Services Manager Carson, and Senior Recreation Supervisor Reed.

**3. FLAG SALUTE**

Torrance Youth Council Chair Debbie Park led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**4. AFFIDAVIT OF POSTING**

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

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**5A. MINUTES OF APRIL 8, 2015**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Greenberg moved to approve the Commission meeting minutes of April 8, 2015. Commissioner Reilly seconded the motion; a roll call vote reflected unanimous approval.

**6. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #1**

**6A.** The Commission welcomed Torrance Youth Council members Debbie Park, Ryota Nishishiba, and Rita Lake.

**7. OLD BUSINESS**

**7A. McMASTER PARK REDEVELOPMENT UPDATE**

Senior Business Manager Minter provided an update regarding the \$2.1 million McMaster Park Redevelopment Project that started in January 2015. He reported that the project includes renovations to the sports field, basketball court, playground

equipment, park building, recreation program facilities, community center building, and parking lot. He stated that much of the interior building work is nearing completion and that the new driveway would allow entrance and exit off of Artesia Boulevard. He reported that there have been some delays to the project, primarily related to the moving of utilities, and that completion is now expected August 2015.

**7B. APPROVAL OF THE NON-PROFIT SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCIES 2013-2014 FINANCIAL AND NARRATIVE STATEMENTS**

Senior Business Manager Minter presented the Grants Committee's recommendation that the Commission approve the amended Financial and Narrative Statements for the 2013-14 Grant Program recipients, noting that the Financial and Narrative Reports were included in Attachment C. He stated that the Grants Committee met on May 12 and have been working on an evaluation of the Program and developing recommendations for changes in the future.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Mayeda moved to approve the amended Financial and Narrative Statements for the 2013-14 Non-Profit Social Services Agencies Grant Program. Commissioner Uchima seconded the motion; a roll call vote reflected unanimous approval.

**8. NEW BUSINESS**

**8A. RECOMMENDATION THAT THE COMMISSION SUPPORT THE PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS TO THE PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT AT HICKORY PARK**

Senior Business Manager Minter reported that staff hosted three community meetings at Hickory Park to solicit input from residents about their preferences for the new playground surfacing and equipment at Hickory Park. He stated that one concern was about surfacing, whether it would be sand, rubber, or engineered wood chips. The options presented at the meetings compared rubber surfacing with wood chips, noting that staff recommends and community members concurred to use wood chips. He stated that several play equipment design options were shown that include option A: Keeping the existing rocketship and replacing the existing play equipment around it, including the installation of new swings; and B: Remove the rocketship and replacing it with all new equipment, including the installation of all new equipment and new swings.

He stated that staff evaluated the feedback from the community meetings and that there was a slight majority in favor of removing the rocketship. He noted that the rocketship is no longer in compliance with Federal Playground Safety Standards, would require retrofitting with reinforced footings to make it safer, and puts the City at risk to greater liability exposure. He added that option B provides a much larger footprint for play equipment, as there is additional space available, and it would be able to have overhead bars. With the aid of slides, he described both options for consideration and presented staff's recommendation that the Commission support option B because it provides the greatest amount of play value and meets all current Safety Standards. He stated that Eric Huber, Dave Bang & Associates, representing Playworld Systems, was present to answer any questions.

Chairperson Baxter offered his granddaughter's observation that the tall slide at Greenwood Park is not smooth, and Mr. Huber explained that larger slides require

segmenting with multiple pieces. He stated that it should not be dramatic, however, and offered to go out and check that it was installed properly.

Janet Payne, Engracia Avenue, stated that she would love to see the rocketship stay because of its uniqueness and historical significance. She noted that the rocketship at Los Arboles Park is famous and was featured on the cover of an Auto Club magazine. She indicated that perhaps the rest City residents would like to keep it. She raised the possibility of moving it to Paradise Park that has a lunar lander or to seal it and make it a sculpture somewhere.

Stephanie O'Brien, Cerise Avenue, expressed her appreciation to staff for providing all the wonderful parks in the City. She stated that all the play equipment in City parks is beginning to look generic and that there is something special about the rocketship. She recommended saving it, retrofitting it, and adding a little more play equipment around it.

Senior Business Manager Minter stated that there is a limited supply of funding for 33 parks and that they need to use it wisely. He raised the possibility of removing it and putting it in the Torrance Historical Museum or storing it at the City Yard until a decision is made.

Community Services Director Jones noted that the community was unhappy when another rocketship was taken down several years ago and that staff learned to never make a decision without asking them. He stated that the sentiment at the three community meetings at Hickory Park was mixed, approximately 60-40% in favor of removing it, but that many people wanted to keep it. He noted that there are sufficient funds within the Playground Replacement Fund to upgrade the rocketship and would support maintaining it in its current location it as long as it is within the existing budget.

In response to Commissioner Love's inquiry, staff stated that color of the equipment was not an issue at the community meetings.

Commissioner Mayeda stated that safety and security of the rocketship is a primary objective and that he supported Option A that would provide new equipment and keep a touch of the past.

Responding to Commissioner Hays' inquiry, staff stated that there has never been a claim filed regarding rocketships. It was noted that it is surrounded by sand and would need to be moved a couple of feet because of its proximity to the curb.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Mayeda moved to recommend option A, to retrofit the existing rocketship and replace the existing play equipment around it, including the installation of new swings, and to forward the recommendation to City Council. Commissioner Hays seconded the motion; a roll call vote reflected unanimous approval.

**8B. RECOMMENDATION THAT THE COMMISSION RESCIND ITS SUPPORT OF A FEE WAIVER FOR THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA LADIES SOCCER ORGANIZATION (USALSO)**

Senior Business Manager Minter stated that this recommendation is a reversal of the request that staff brought forward in October 2014. He stated that the credit/fee waiver was based on donations made by USALSO for a portion of the costs associated

with the Eco-Fertigation system installed at Columbia Park. He reported that staff worked with the City Attorney's office and Finance Department to develop an agreement that meets the needs of both the City and USALSO. He noted that staff determined that the credit/fee waiver reduces the City's potential General Fund revenue by up to \$6,000 per year. He recommended that the Commission rescind its support of the waiver and require that USALSO pay the full field rental fees for any usage of City sports fields. He added that staff would explore other funding options to continue the Eco-Fertigation system, and he added that USALSO was not paying as much as for the system as was expected and that they understand the reversal.

Commissioner Hays stated that he was disappointed to see mounds of weeds in the playing fields at Columbia Park, and Park Services Manager Carson explained that the Eco-Fertigation system has no herbicide and does not take care of weeds.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Uchima moved to rescind the support of the credit/fee waiver and require that the United States of America Ladies Soccer Organization pay the full field rental fees for any usage of City sports fields. Commissioner Greenberg seconded the motion; the motion passed on a 5-2 roll call vote (Commissioners Hays and Reilly voting no).

#### **8C. TOYOTA SPORTS COMPLEX ANNUAL REPORT**

Senior Business Manager Minter presented the Year One Report for Toyota Sports Complex that opened in March 2014. He reported that staff took a slow approach in allocating field usage for the first few months, with weekday only bookings. He stated that once they were comfortable with a higher level of use, they started increasing the number of permits issued. He noted that the majority of user groups are American Youth Soccer Organizations and club soccer organizations, with occasional usage by adult groups, lacrosse clubs, and charter schools. He noted that there have been several tournaments at the facility that included the Founder's Cup and AYSO National Games.

He stated that the budgeted field usage revenue for the first year was \$187,060 and that the \$352,304 revenue generated nearly doubled the expected revenue; however, revenue from light usage fees was roughly half of the projected revenue. He stated that there are still opportunities for growth and that they need to develop a system to make sure there is no down time in field usage. He stated that the turf had a few low spots from settling but it was still under warranty and was replaced. He discussed a short-term change to add additional staff to the budget and long-term changes that include providing shade, a concession area where food and drinks are allowed, and replacing the turf in ten years.

#### **8D. EVALUATION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES**

Senior Business Manager Minter provided background regarding Standing versus Ad Hoc Committees and recommended that the Facilities, Open Space, and Programs Standing Committees be disbanded effective June 30 and begin operating as Ad Hoc Committees. He stated that the Committees have not met in a few years, other than to plan the annual Parks and Recreation Commission Dinner. He stated that the Commission could appoint an Ad Hoc Committee to review any projects, programs, or issues that arise and also to plan the Commission Dinner. He further recommended that the Grants Committee, beginning July 1, begin regularly scheduled monthly meetings,

with the exception of months in which meetings would not be required. He noted that staff believes that these changes would increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the subcommittees, and provide structure to the Commission for issues that need to be addressed in the future.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Greenberg moved to disband the Facilities, Open Space, and Programs Standing Committees effective June 30, 2015 and that the Grants Committee begin regularly scheduled monthly meetings effective July 1, 2015. Commissioner Mayeda seconded the motion; a roll call vote reflected unanimous approval.

**8E. AGENDA PACKET MAILING**

Community Services Director Jones reported that Commission agenda packets have been delayed in the mail and recommended that hard copy packets be sent electronically via email. He noted that hard copies would still be available at meetings.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Mayeda moved to approve that staff email the full Parks and Recreation Commission agenda packets in a PDF format the week prior to the corresponding meeting. Commissioner Hays seconded the motion; a roll call vote reflected unanimous approval.

**8F. BUSINESS CARDS FOR APPOINTED OFFICIALS DISCUSSION**

Community Services Director Jones reported that, effective immediately, the City Clerk's Office is only permitting City of Torrance contact information printed on business cards for Appointed Officials. He stated that the intent of this change in policy is for transparency purposes, to protect Commissioners, and to standardize contact information on all official City of Torrance business cards. Five Commissioners requested that staff order new cards for them.

**9. STANDING COMMITTEE UPDATES**

**9A. FACILITIES COMMITTEE** - No report.

**9B. GRANTS COMMITTEE**

Previously discussed in Item 7B. The next Committee meeting is scheduled for June 9, 2015 at the West Annex 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor conference room.

**9C. OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE**

Chair Greenberg reported that the Committee met to discuss plans for the July 8 Parks and Recreation Commission Dinner.

**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 April 2015 was included in agenda packets.

**10B. PARK SERVICES DIVISION**

Park Services Manager Carson noted that the Park Services Division Report for April 2015 was included in agenda packets.

**10C. RECREATION SERVICES DIVISION**

Senior Recreation Supervisor Reed noted that the Recreation Services Division Report for April 2015 was included in agenda packets. She stated that summer registration begins May 19 for Torrance residents and May 27 for non-residents. She expressed her appreciation to Chairperson Baxter for serving on the Beat the Odds scholarship selection committee.

**11. CORRESPONDENCE FOR COMMISSION REVIEW TO ACCEPT AND FILE OR FOR CONSIDERATION AT A FUTURE MEETING – None.**

**12. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #2**

**12A.** Senior Business Manager Minter that Torrance Police Department recognized fallen officers on May 13 and recognized Commissioner Mayaeda for serving as chaplain.

**12B.** Staff reminded Commissioners to always be transparent in person or electronically.

**12C.** Community Services Director Jones discussed the first budget hearing on May 12 and thanked Chairperson Baxter for serving on the Beat the Odds committee.

**12D.** Commissioner Greenberg distributed the Certificate of Recognition given to the Commission at the Kiwanis Club luncheon.

**12E.** Chairperson Baxter expressed his appreciation to Senior Recreation Supervisor Reed for the Beat the Odds scholarship program and noted that it is an event to be proud of.

**13. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** At 8:38 p.m., Commissioner Mayeda moved to adjourn the meeting to June 10, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in the West Annex Meeting. Commissioner Greenberg seconded the motion; a roll call vote reflected unanimous approval.

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Approved as submitted June 10, 2015 s/ Rebecca Poirier, City Clerk
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