

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF
THE TORRANCE TRAFFIC COMMISSION**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Torrance Traffic Commission convened in a regular meeting at 7:01 p.m. on Monday, August 2, 2010 in the West Annex meeting room at Torrance City Hall.

2. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairperson Sargent.

3. ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners Clouch, Galvin, Rische, Rudolph, Tsao, Walter, and Chairperson Sargent.

Absent: None.

Also Present: Transportation Manager Semaan,
Planning Associate Crump,
City Attorney Fellows,
Torrance Transit Director Turner,
Torrance Police Captain Smith, and
Torrance Police Sergeant Kozak.

4. AFFIDAVIT OF POSTING

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

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

5A. MINUTES OF JULY 13, 2010

MOTION: Commissioner Galvin moved for the approval of the July 13, 2010 meeting minutes as submitted. Commissioner Walter seconded the motion; a roll call vote reflected unanimous approval.

6. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #1

Chairperson Sargent explained the policies and procedures of the Traffic Commission, including the right to appeal decisions to City Council.

Jerry Snyder, Milne Drive, stated that the 30 m.p.h. speed limit signs on Anza Avenue north of Pacific Coast Highway are pointless because a vehicle traveling north is unable to reach that speed before the signage. He suggested installing speed limit signs further north instead.

7. ITEMS UNDER CONSIDERATION

7a. SEASIDE RANCHOS HOLIDAY TRAFFIC CIRCULATION DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Transportation Manager Semaan stated that there were representatives from Torrance Police Department, Fire Department, Public Works Department, City Attorney's office, Torrance Transit, and City Manager's office in the audience. He distributed supplemental material that was received after agenda packets were prepared.

City Attorney Fellows provided advice on conflict of interest, stating that it is important that nothing occur at the Commission level that would prejudice the City Council's ability to make a fair decision based upon the Commission's record. He provided information about three different categories that conflict of interest falls under in the State: California Political Reform Act, Common Law Conflict of Interest, and Common Law Doctrine of Bias. He stated that Commissioner Rische has a conflict of interest, whether it is a Political Reform Act conflict, a Common Law conflict, or bias. He recommended that Commissioners take into consideration whether Commissioner Rische's opinions would have any impact on recommendations they make to City Council.

In response to Commissioner Clouch's inquiry, City Attorney Fellows stated that Commissioner Rische lives on Carlow Road that has two ingress and egress points and is within 500 feet of the designated area being considered. Further, the value of his home could be affected by recommendations that may be made. He added that the location of his home is a more apt source of conflict of interest than his involvement with the Seaside Homeowner's Association.

When Commissioner Rische asked if the same advice applies to City Council members and who has final jurisdiction, City Attorney Fellows advised that initially City Council, then the District Attorney, and ultimately the Attorney General decides if there is a conflict of interest.

Commissioner Rische questioned why City Attorney Fellows waited until this meeting to bring up conflict of interest. He read Chairperson Sargent's November 1, 2009 letter to City Attorney Fellows asking for clarification regarding conflict of interest involving site visits. He stated that he has lived in his home for 53 years, that the value of his home is not relevant, and that the City Attorney's advice is "beyond paranoid."

City Attorney Fellows responded that his concern is protecting the openness and integrity of the decision-making process by both the Commission and City Council.

When Chairperson Sargent pointed out that Commissioner Rische's input could be useful because he knows the area and history of the holiday lights display, City Attorney Fellows responded that "special knowledge" is often an indicator of conflict of interest or bias.

Commissioner Galvin shared instances and reasons why she chose to recuse herself from the Commission.

When Commissioner Rische noted that residence alone should disqualify many City Council members from voting on issues, City Attorney Fellows explained the "public generally exception." He added that in Commissioner Rische's case, the potential exists for a third party to question the Commission's recommendation or City Council's action.

Commissioner Rische questioned why knowledge on an issue should disqualify him and stated that he would leave it to his fellow Commissioners to decide if he should recuse himself.

Hearing no objection from Commissioners, Commissioner Rische stayed for consideration of the item.

The Commission was a recess from 7:44 to 7:48 p.m.

Planning Associate Crump provided a two-part presentation regarding Seaside Ranchos holiday traffic circulation in the material of record. Part 1 is a list of responses to questions and comments made by the Traffic Commission and public and Part 2 is a list of recommendations for consideration. She briefly reviewed advantages and disadvantages listed in Part 1: I) Facilitate vehicular access into and out of the Seaside Neighborhood; II) Restrict vehicular traffic in the neighborhood through fixed-point barricades and require proof of residency for entering the neighborhood; and III) Suggestion to create a one-way street circulation system in the Seaside neighborhood.

Transportation Manager Semaan presented staff's response to IV) Suggestion to provide Shuttle-bus service to and from the neighborhood with parking at South High. He described discussions with Torrance Unified School District, existing public transportation provided by Metropolitan Transportation Authority, Torrance Transit, and private shuttle bus service providers.

Planning Associate Crump discussed V) What do other cities do? and shared research conducted with the Cities of El Segundo, Chino, Rancho Cucamonga, and La Palma. She presented VI) Concerns with golf carts, street vendors, and cars being driven with headlights off and VII) Residents turn off holiday light displays by 10:00 p.m.

She requested that the Commission review staff report, take public input and concur with recommendations to: 1) Install directional entry and exit signs at designated locations to help facilitate traffic circulation into and out of the neighborhood; 2) Provide educational materials; and 3) Encourage residents to turn off holiday lights by 10:00 p.m. daily.

Commissioner Galvin received clarification from staff that the proposal to restrict parking to one side of the road was not well received and is not included in staff's recommendation.

Responding to Commissioner Tsao's inquiry regarding public education, staff explained that changeable message signs, information on the City website, and fliers would help disseminate and disperse the ingress into the neighborhood and assist visitors in exiting the neighborhood.

At 8:08 p.m., Chairperson Sargent welcomed public input.

Kathie Reis, Reese Road, voiced concern that seniors would not be able to walk down the hill from Robert Road if dropped off by a shuttle bus, that signage would do no good without enforcement, and that one-way directional flow would inconvenience residents.

Mike Reis, Reese Road, suggested having neighborhood residents vote on any changes to be implemented. He urged them to decide something soon and not take away the fun of the event.

Michael Short, Bindewald Road, stated that he has constant traffic on two sides of his home for three weeks and that he is not even part of the holiday lights area but just an entry point. He suggested installing blockades and having only three entry points or utilizing a shuttle service.

Lisa Columbus, Clearsite Street, expressed concern about the safety of youth and littering and recommended better supervision at four-way stops, providing trash receptacles, and turning out lights at 10:00 p.m.

Jim Lockner, Reese Road, voiced concern that people are driving with their lights off, noting that they need to have at least their parking lights on.

Vic Cooper, Sharynne Lane, stated that real data is needed, not anecdotes, and questioned what problems they are really trying to solve. He suggested running a shuttle service from Del Amo Mall and voiced support for installation of signage.

Bob Solomon, Reese Road, suggested doing little to nothing, although concurred with the proposal to install trash receptacles. He questioned if it would be possible to remove the barricade at Avenue H in Redondo Beach to eliminate many of the traffic issues.

Transportation Manager Semaan related his understanding that the City of Redondo Beach wants to continue the policy but provided clarification that the Fire Department has the ability to get through the barricade if necessary.

Commissioner Galvin voice her agreement with staff recommendation and suggested that police officers ticket golf carts and drivers with their lights off, that Public Works work with the Homeowners Association to install trash receptacles, and that residents work together to mutually agree to turn off their lights at 10:00 p.m.

In response to Commissioner Rische's inquiry regarding the ad hoc committee's recommendations in 1994, Transportation Manager Semaan advised that some recommendations were implemented but were scaled back due to budgetary constraints.

Commissioner Rische stated that signs are highly appropriate, noting that the holiday lights display was a grass roots movement and did not come from the Homeowners Association. He maintained that the City should take some stand either to stop the event or take some part in regulating it.

Commissioner Rudolph stated that the problems are difficult but solvable and that the City needs to take a stand on traffic flow and police enforcement. He noted that signage was part of the solution but that they need multiple solutions.

Commissioner Walter described signage that has been used over the last eight years and showed the drawing that the City uses to install signage.

Commissioner Tsao suggested installing signs that state fines for littering, driving without lights, and driving illegal golf carts.

Chairperson Sargent stated that he originally supported one-way directional traffic but now realizes it is impractical and would penalize residents. He stated that police enforcement is very important and offered to approach the City of Redondo Beach to see if they would remove the barricade at Avenue H.

Commissioner Rudolph initiated discussion regarding the feasibility of the one-way traffic flow option, with one entry and one exit point, with the use of volunteers.

Transportation Manager Semaan stated that there are a multitude of possibilities but that there is no way to cover all the neighborhood streets that have lights. He maintained that it was important to use police officers, not volunteers, adding that the annual cost would be approximately \$55,000.

Mike Reis, Reese Road, stated that one-way traffic would be confusing and difficult for residents.

Bob Solomon, Reese Road, stated that one-way traffic would not alleviate traffic. He pointed out that signage would attract more visitors more quickly and suggested use of mounted police officers.

Brian Ormsby, Reese Road, stated that providing education is a good idea and recommended directional signs near Seaside Elementary as an additional entry point. He noted that extra police officers should be provided because the event generates revenue for the City.

Commissioner Rudolph stated that it was important to find a strategy to maintain some sense of order, noting that police and Fire Department presence would help keep people in line.

When Commissioner Walter suggested putting a neighborhood map on the City website showing entry and exit points, Transportation Manager Semaan advised that they are considering this as part of the education process.

In response to Commissioner Galvin's inquiries, Police Sergeant Kozak stated that there are no mounted police but motorcycles could be used, that police cadets cannot manage traffic, and that there are 25 police officers in the City on a typical weekend night.

Captain Smith stated that they used to do more and now they do less because without manning barricades it is not effective. He assured them that this year there would be a police presence because it is a public safety issue. He stated that using police cadets or private security guards was not a good idea because they are not treated the same as uniformed police officers. He recommended concurring with staff's recommendation as well as increased police presence and enforcement.

In response to Commissioner Galvin's request, Commissioner Walter stated that he was a Traffic and Lighting Supervisor for 10 years for the City and introduced Traffic and Lighting Supervisor Richard Hall.

Commissioner Clouch stated that he was in favor of doing nothing and that staff recommendations are acceptable but self-evident.

Commissioner Rische suggested using more imaginative, "Christmasy" signs that would not be so easily ignored.

MOTION: Commissioner Clouch moved to concur with staff's recommendations. Commissioner Tsao seconded the motion; a roll call vote reflected unanimous approval (with Commissioner Rische abstaining).

In response to Chairperson Sargent's inquiry, Commissioner Rische stated that he was abstaining because his motives and integrity were attacked and because he wants to avoid any appearance of dishonesty.

Transportation Manager Semaan introduced Transit Director Kim Turner and stated that the item does not need to go to City Council because no additional capital costs are being recommended. He stated that staff would work with Public Works regarding trash receptacles or extra pick-ups.

8. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #2

June Lee, Vanderhill Road, noted the lack of mention regarding vendors and was assured by staff that police involvement would include unlicensed vendors.

Transportation Manager Semaan announced a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson training on September 23, 2010 from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Transportation Manager Semaan stated that a traffic signal would be installed on Del Amo Boulevard at Madrid Avenue as part of the Del Amo Boulevard extension, noting that the Extension project began in January 2010, that the City is relocating four underground pipelines, and that construction of the bridge overpass is expected to begin in late 2010 or early 2011. He relayed Public Works' confirmation that there is existing signage prohibiting truck traffic on Del Amo Boulevard between Crenshaw Boulevard and Van Ness Avenue.

Referring to an inquiry on July 13, 2010 regarding the intersection of 182nd Street and Hawthorne Boulevard, Transportation Manager Semaan advised that Public Works has asked the State to conduct an investigation.

He stated that the proposal for signage at Monte de Oro was forwarded to Public Works staff and that the request is ongoing.

Transportation Manager Semaan stated that the resident concern included in agenda packets regarding the intersection of Dominguez Street and Sartori Avenue was forwarded to Traffic Engineering staff and that he would bring back their recommendation.

Following a brief discussion, it was decided that the Commission would go dark in September 2010.

Commissioner Clouch received clarification from staff that the interdepartmental Traffic Team consists of staff from Community Development, Police Department, Fire Department, City Manager's office, and Public Works.

Commissioner Clouch offered the observation that the discussion with the City Attorney at this meeting was not on the agenda and questioned if it was a Brown Act violation.

Transportation Manager Semaan responded that the City Attorney providing legal advice to the Commission is not an agenda item.

9. ADJOURNMENT

At 9:58 p.m., Chairperson Sargent adjourned the meeting to October 4, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. in the West Annex meeting room.

Approved as Amended October 4, 2010 s/ Sue Herbers, City Clerk
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