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TORRANCE CITY COUNCIL MARCH 3, 2015

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At 8:24 p.m., the meeting was adjourned to Tuesday, March 3, 2015 at 5:30 p.m. for an executive session, with regular business commencing at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber.

March 3, 2015

**MINUTES OF AN ADJOURNED REGULAR
MEETING OF THE TORRANCE CITY COUNCIL**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Torrance City Council convened in an adjourned regular session at 5:31 p.m. on Tuesday, March 3, 2015 in the Council Chamber at Torrance City Hall.

ROLL CALL

Present: Councilmembers Ashcraft, Barnett, Goodrich, Griffiths, Rizzo, Weideman and Mayor Furey.

Absent: None.

Present: City Manager Jackson, Assistant City Manager Giordano, City Attorney Fellows, City Clerk Poirier and other staff representatives.

Agenda Item 18 was considered out of order at this time.

18. EXECUTIVE SESSION

The City Council immediately recessed to closed session to confer with the City Manager and City Attorney on agenda matters listed under 18A) Public Employee Performance Evaluation – City Attorney, and 18B) Conference with Legal Counsel – Anticipated Litigation, pursuant to California Government Code §54957(b)(1) and 54956.9(d)(2).

The City Council reconvened at 7:04 p.m. with all members present. No formal action was taken on any matter considered in closed session.

2. FLAG SALUTE/ INVOCATION

The flag salute was led by Councilmember Ashcraft.

The non-sectarian invocation was given by Councilmember Barnett.

3. REPORT OF CITY CLERK ON POSTING OF THE AGENDA/ MOTION TO WAIVE FURTHER READING

City Clerk Poirier reported that the agenda was posted on the Public Notice Board at 3031 Torrance Boulevard on Thursday, February 26, 2015.

MOTION: Councilmember Rizzo moved that after the City Clerk has read aloud the number and title to any resolution or ordinance on the meeting agenda, the further reading thereof shall be waived, reserving and guaranteeing to each Councilmember the right to demand the reading of any such resolution or ordinance in regular order. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Barnett and passed by unanimous vote.

4. WITHDRAWN, DEFERRED OR SUPPLEMENTAL ITEMS

No items were withdrawn or deferred.

5. COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Fire Chief Racowschi announced that ExxonMobil will be conducting their monthly community siren alert testing on Wednesday, March 4, 2015 at approximately 11:30 a.m. He advised that should the siren sound at a time other than the monthly testing, the message is to shelter in place, which means that people should go indoors and close all windows and doors, turn off heaters and air conditioners and close fireplace dampers. He noted that details about the procedure are available on the City's website at www.TorranceCa.gov/TPD/9927.htm.

Police Chief Matsuda provided information about Torrance Alerts, the City's emergency mass notification system. He advised that the system enables the public to receive informational messages from the City in the event of an emergency and it can also be used to message the public about community events and traffic alerts. He explained that it is an opt-in system, which means that people must register on-line and choose what type of information they want to receive and how they want to receive it. He noted that registration can be accessed on the City's website and Facebook page by clicking on the Torrance Alerts icon.

Councilmember Griffiths invited the public to attend a meeting of the Ad Hoc Website Redesign Committee on Tuesday, March 10, at 3:00 p.m. in the Third Floor Assembly Room at City Hall.

City Clerk Poirier announced that the next Commissioner Certification class will be held on March 31 in the Nakano Theatre from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. and that registration is available on line at www.TorranceCa.gov/1936.htm or by calling the City Manager's office at 310-618-5880.

Noting that people may now view Torrance City Council meetings throughout the L.A. Basin, Councilmember Goodrich reminded those in the viewing audience in cities with elections today that there was still time to vote before polls close at 8:00 p.m.

Mayor Furey announced that the California Senate Oversight Committee will hold a hearing on the February 18 explosion at the ExxonMobil refinery on Thursday, March 5, at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber.

6. COMMUNITY MATTERS

6A. RECOGNITION OF HIGH SCHOOL BAND MEMBERS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE 2015 ROSE PARADE

Mayor Furey, with the assistance of Tom King, South High marching band director, presented certificates of recognition to the following band members from various Torrance high schools who participated in the 2015 Rose Parade: David Snowiss, Trent Ogaz, Nick Ezpeleta, Landon Smith and Brennan Smith.

7. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #1

7A. David Oster, Torrance, reported that he has been appointed local team captain for the World Special Olympics in Long Beach.

7B. Amy Josefek, Torrance, expressed concerns about a new development being proposed for Riviera Village in Redondo Beach and requested that the City assist residents in communicating these concerns.

7C. Jim Valerio, Torrance, expressed concerns about the ExxonMobil incident due to possible exposure to toxins and voiced his opinion that fluoride should be removed from drinking water.

8. CONSENT CALENDAR

8A. JANUARY 2015 MONTHLY INVESTMENT REPORT

Recommendation

Recommendation of the City Treasurer that City Council accept and file the monthly investment report for January 2015.

8B. SUBSIDY OF FEES FOR USE OF PORTABLE STAGE

Recommendation

Recommendation of the Community Services Director that City Council subsidize fees in the amount of \$761.35 for use of the portable stage by the American Cancer Society for the Relay for Life event to be held at South High School April 24 through April 26, 2015.

8C. LIVING DEDICATION TREE PROGRAM 2014 ANNUAL REPORT

Recommendation

Recommendation of the Parks and Recreation Commission and Community Services Director that City Council accept and file the Living Dedication Tree Program annual report for the period of January through December 2014.

8D. PURCHASE ORDER FOR HARMONIC PLAYBACK SERVER EQUIPMENT

Recommendation

Recommendation of the City Manager that City Council award a purchase order in the amount of \$90,050 to *TBC Integration, Inc. dba Digital Glue of Laguna Niguel, CA for the purchase of harmonic playback server equipment and installation.

MOTION: Councilmember Griffiths moved for the approval of Consent Calendar Items 8A through 8D. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Weideman and passed by unanimous vote.

12. ADMINISTRATION MATTERS

12A. LAND USE STUDY REGARDING THE KEEPING OF BEES AND CHICKENS

Recommendation

Recommendation of the Community Development Director that City Council consider a Land Use Study regarding the keeping of chickens and bees for single-family residences within the City and provide direction to staff.

Deputy Community Development Director Cessna stated that staff was seeking direction from the Council on possible changes to the Torrance Municipal Code that would allow residents to keep chickens (hens only) and bees in their backyards. She provided an overview of the draft ordinances, noting that the chicken ordinance was based on an existing ordinance that allows the keeping of pigeons and doves and the bee ordinance was based on an existing ordinance that allows beekeeping in industrial zones with the approval of the Environmental Quality Commission. She reported on public outreach efforts, which included an Old Torrance Neighborhood Association meeting, the Environmental Fair and meetings of the Environmental Quality Commission and the Planning Commission.

Mayor Furey related his understanding that a number of residents are currently raising chickens, and Deputy Community Development Director Cessna advised that while there are residents who have chickens, it is not permitted by the Torrance Municipal Code.

Councilmember Griffiths disclosed that he was chair of the Environmental Quality Commission when this issue was first considered.

Sherry Roberts, Torrance, voiced support for allowing the keeping of bees, noting that there has been a decline in the bee population, which could drastically impact food production. She also expressed support for allowing the raising of chickens, citing the benefits of helping children understand the food chain. She reported that many affluent communities allow chicken raising, including Manhattan Beach, San Marino, Pasadena, South Pasadena and Rancho Cucamonga, and noted that Torrance's sister city Kashiwa, Japan, also allows the keeping of chickens.

John Crookston, Torrance, reported that he's been a beekeeper since 1976 and it has not created any problems for his neighbors and urged approval of the proposed ordinance.

Amy Josefek, Torrance, voiced support for allowing the keeping of chickens and bees in Torrance.

Harry Stuver, Torrance, reported that he currently has a chicken on his property and would like to see it become legal.

Margaret Robinson, Torrance, stated that she has a sizable backyard, which she believes would be very adequate for raising chickens, and her grandchildren are urging her to do so.

Julie Vogue, Torrance, expressed support for the proposed ordinances, relating her belief that beehives do not pose a safety risk.

Judith Gerber, Torrance, stated that she fully supports the proposed ordinances, noting that she has a plot at community garden and looks forward to being able to have a beehive and a chicken coop for educational purposes.

Jim Montgomery, Torrance, voiced his opinion that the benefits of allowing the keeping of chickens and bees far outweigh the risks.

Urging approval of the chicken ordinance, Annetta Patel, Torrance, reported that she operates a licensed home day care facility and has a chicken she uses to help educate the children about caring for an animal and food production. She related her experience that chickens are clean, do not produce odors and help reduce insects.

Ray and Carolyn Waters, Hermosa Beach, reported that they raise chickens, which is allowed in Hermosa Beach, and their neighbors are very supportive.

A 4-H Leader from Palos Verdes Peninsula (name inaudible/no speaker card) stated that there are several 4-H members in Torrance who would love to be able to raise chickens. She stressed the importance of beekeeping due to colony collapse, which has greatly reduced the bee population in her home state of Montana. She noted that she has had bees for many years, as well as chickens, and they have not created any problems for neighbors.

Lloyd Brown, Torrance, related his understanding that the State of California has established new rules regarding the amount of space required for the keeping of chickens so L.A. County regulations that are incorporated into the proposed ordinance by reference may not be up to date. He expressed concerns that beekeeping could be a fad and bees could be released into the community when a resident becomes tired of caring for them.

Councilmember Griffiths voiced his opinion that allowing the keeping of chickens and bees was warranted as long as it's properly regulated to ensure that the public is protected from irresponsible chicken and bee owners and the detriment to neighbors is minimized. He asked about a resident's recourse if a neighbor does not maintain the required setback for beehives.

Deputy Community Development Director Cessna advised that there is a process by which the beekeeping would be deemed a public nuisance if a beekeeper fails to maintain proper setbacks and the City can issue citations and levy fines, as well as take other actions until the problem is abated.

Commissioner Griffiths questioned whether enforcement staff would be able to go onto someone's property without their permission to investigate a complaint.

Deputy Community Development Director Cessna stated that she believes the City would have a right of entry, but this still needs to be confirmed by legal staff.

Councilmember Griffiths related his belief that enforceability was a critical element in the drafting of these ordinances.

Councilmember Weideman noted that Torrance has a long history of farming, including dairies and turkey farms and a hog farm that almost caused North Torrance to secede from the city of Torrance. He indicated that he was also supportive of allowing chickens and bees as long as they can be properly regulated, but felt there were many unanswered questions.

Councilmember Ashcraft pointed out that there is a great deal of difference between raising chickens and beekeeping and stressed the need for distinct regulations to govern these activities. She proposed that there be a sign-off process for those who want to keep chickens or bees, which requires that they obtain the signatures of neighbors confirming they are not opposed to it. She questioned whether chickens will be free range or confined to a coop since feed can attract rodents and also questioned whether complaints about unsanitary conditions will be handled by the City or referred to the L.A. County Health Department.

Deputy Community Development Director Cessna reported that it has not been determined whether chickens will be required to be confined to coops. She related her understanding that complaints about unsanitary conditions will be handled by the City, but this is another area that needs to be clarified.

Councilmember Ashcraft questioned whether people seeking beekeeping permits will be required to complete some type of education.

Deputy Community Development Director Cessna stated that staff will look into including an education requirement, noting that beekeepers must obtain the approval of L.A. County so there's an additional level of regulation.

Councilmember Rizzo questioned whether additional staff would be needed for the issuance of permits and enforcement.

Community Development Director Gibson explained that it's difficult to gauge the demand on staff because it will depend on the number of applications received.

Police Chief Matsuda advised that enforcement will be easier with a well-crafted ordinance with "some teeth in it" so that the enforcement process is not long and drawn-out, noting that enforcement will be on a complaint basis.

Councilmember Goodrich commended staff for their efforts over the past two years, which included an extraordinary amount community outreach. With regard to the draft ordinances, he stated that he thought we are close to something workable, but he would like more information on the right of entry issue.

Councilmember Barnett suggested that there may be an element of NIMBY (not in my backyard) with regard to these activities and related his belief that it was important to address the issues discussed at this meeting if this matter goes forward.

Pointing out that most of the information the Council has been provided with is from advocates, Mayor Furey stated that he would like to see more scientific information/evidence and empirical data which supports the idea that an urban environment can sustain chicken raising and beekeeping. He expressed concerns that the proposed beekeeping ordinance lacks information about hive management requirements, the right of entry for enforcement, the public nuisance issue/nuisance abatement, and violations and penalties. He suggested that L.A. County Vector Control could be a source of information about bees, including whether colony collapse is an issue in this area and if it would be remediated by home beekeeping. He reported that he has heard conflicting information as to whether there are odors associated with chicken raising and felt that scientific information on this issue would be helpful. He indicated that he was not swayed by the fact that other cities allow these activities and emphasized the need for clearly defined, easily enforced regulations that do not place a strain City resources.

MOTION: Councilmember Griffiths moved to direct staff to research the issues discussed and return with revised draft ordinances. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Goodrich and passed by unanimous vote.

17. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #2

17A. Mayor Furey offered a reminder about the California Senate hearing on the ExxonMobil incident to be held on Thursday, March 5, at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber.

17B. Margie Shore, Torrance, expressed concerns about the lack of shelter at the bus stop at Torrance Boulevard and Madrona Avenue.

18. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Considered earlier in the meeting, see page 1.

19. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:24 p.m., the meeting was adjourned to Tuesday, March 10, 2015 at 5:30 p.m. for an executive session, with regular business commencing at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber.

Attest:

/s/ Patrick J. Furey

Mayor Patrick J. Furey

/s/ R. Poirier

City Clerk Rebecca Poirier, MMC

Approved on April 7, 2015