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TORRANCE CITY COUNCIL – APRIL 20, 2010

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At 10:27 p.m., the meeting was adjourned to Tuesday, April 27, 2010, at 5:30 p.m. for an executive session, with regular business commencing at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

April 20, 2010

**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 5:32 p.m. on Tuesday, April 20, 2010 in City Council Chambers at Torrance City Hall.

ROLL CALL

Present: Councilmembers Barnett, Brewer, Furey, Numark, Rhilinger, Sutherland, and Mayor Scotto.

Also Present: City Manager Jackson, Assistant City Attorney Sullivan, City Clerk Herbers, 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) Conference with Labor Negotiator and 18B) Conference with Legal Counsel – Anticipated Litigation, pursuant to California Government Code §54957.6 and 54956.9(a).

The City Council reconvened in open session at 7:01 p.m. No formal action was taken on any matter considered in closed session.

2. FLAG SALUTE/INVOCATION

The flag salute was led by Dutch Holland.

Councilmember Rhilinger gave the non-sectarian invocation.

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

City Clerk Herbers reported that the agenda was posted on the Public Notice Board at 3031 Torrance Boulevard on Thursday, April 15, 2010.

MOTION: Councilmember Furey 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 Numark and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

4. WITHDRAWN, DEFERRED OR SUPPLEMENTAL ITEMS

Agenda Items 12B and 12C were withdrawn and deferred to the April 27 City Council meeting.

5. COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

City Clerk Herbers announced that Southwood Riviera Homeowners Association is sponsoring a Candidate Forum on Wednesday, April 21, at 7:00 p.m. at Calle Mayor Middle School, located at 4800 Calle Mayor. She noted that the new Election Page on the City's website is almost ready for unveiling and it will include campaign finance documents and voter education materials.

City Clerk Herbers announced that a free Commissioner Certification class will be held on Wednesday, May 26, noting that residents must complete the training to be eligible for appointment to commissions and training must be renewed every two years. Reservations for attendance are required and can be made by contacting the City Manager's office at 310.618.5880 or online www.torranceca.gov/CommissionerCert.htm.

Councilmember Brewer announced that the 51st annual Armed Forces Day Celebration will be held the weekend of May 14 through May 16, with exhibits on display at the Del Amo Fashion Center, free concerts by the United States Coast Guard Band to be held on Friday, May 14, at 1:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. at the Armstrong Theatre, and the parade to be held on Saturday, May 15, at 1:30 p.m. along Torrance Boulevard between Crenshaw Boulevard and Madrona Avenue.

6. COMMUNITY MATTERS

6A. PROCLAMATION RE "NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK"

Mayor Scotto presented a proclamation declaring April 18 through April 24, as **National Volunteer Week** in the City of Torrance to Mary Hoffman, president of Torrance Rose Float Association. Laura Lohnes, City of Torrance Volunteer Coordinator, highlighted the accomplishments of the following volunteers and Mayor Scotto presented them with certificates: Mary Hoffman, Jordan Thompson, Doris Herzog, Warren Wong, Thelma Carr, Dutch Holland, Carl Tice, Chester Pitts, Steven Vascellano, George Jones, Lawanna Adams, Damien Magnus, Patty Miller, Marilyn Medeiros, Nancy Ingrahm, and Rita Catalano.

6B. PROCLAMATION HONORING WALSER'S

Mayor Scotto presented a proclamation honoring **Walser's** for their outstanding environmental contributions and service to the community to Jack Walser and family.

7. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #1

7A. Mary Hoffman, Torrance Education Foundation, announced the "A Dollar a Day to Save Our Schools" campaign to raise funds for the Torrance Unified School District, noting that the City of Torrance is a partner in the campaign.

8. CONSENT CALENDAR

8A. APPROVAL OF YOUTH COUNCIL PARTICIPATION IN RELAY FOR LIFE

Recommendation

Recommendation of the Torrance Youth Council and the Community Services Director that City Council grant permission to the Youth Council to participate in the "Relay for Life" American Cancer Society's fundraising walk at South High School on April 24 and April 25, 2010 and use and display the City of Torrance City logo and the Youth Council name in conjunction with their team.

8B. PURCHASE ORDER RE CAB AND CHASSIS WITH DUMP TRUCK BODIES

Considered separately, see page 3.

MOTION: Councilmember Sutherland moved for the approval of Consent Calendar Item 8A. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Brewer and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Consent Calendar Item 8B was considered separately at this time.

8B. PURCHASE ORDER RE CAB AND CHASSIS WITH DUMP TRUCK BODIES

Recommendation

Recommendation of the General Services Director that City Council authorize the issuance of a special opportunity purchase order to Reynolds GMC of Covina, CA in the amount of \$254,620 including sales tax and tire fees to furnish two (2) new and unused 2009 model year GMC TC7500 propane-fueled cab and chassis with 5-cubic yard dump truck bodies.

Fleet Services Manager Winnett reported that the two propane-fueled vehicles to be purchased would replace two diesel-fueled dump trucks over 20 years old.

Councilmember Sutherland asked about the possibility of purchasing only one truck at this time and extending the life of the other truck

Fleet Services Manager Winnett related his belief that it would be preferable to purchase both vehicles at this time because the older trucks are costly to maintain and must be equipped with a diesel particulate filter at approximately \$18,000-20,000 per vehicle if the City continues to operate them.

Public Works Director Beste advised that the model to be purchased has been discontinued so staff was able to obtain favorable pricing and the only alternative would be a much costlier natural gas vehicle.

MOTION: Councilmember Sutherland moved to concur with the staff recommendation. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Brewer and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

12. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

12A. RESOLUTION RE RETIREMENT HEALTH SAVINGS PLAN

Recommendation

Recommendation of the City Manager that City Council adopt a Resolution amending Resolution No. 2009-30 for employees covered by the Safety Management Employees Resolution amending the benefits section to implement a Retirement Health Savings Plan (RHSP) and adopt a Resolution relating to the Employee Retirement Health Savings Plan to allow distribution of non-vested funds to the deceased participant's beneficiary.

Assistant to the City Manager Chaparyan noted supplemental material available at the meeting clarifying that the amount of life insurance coverage for Safety Management Employees is \$100,000 instead of \$50,000 as listed in the Resolution.

MOTION: Councilmember Furey moved to concur with the staff recommendation. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Rhilinger and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

RESOLUTION NO. 2010-34

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TORRANCE
AMENDING RESOLUTION NO. 2009-30 SETTING FORTH CHANGES
REGARDING THE WAGES FOR SAFETY MANAGEMENT EMPLOYEES

MOTION: Councilmember Rhilinger moved to adopt Resolution No. 2010-34. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Barnett and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

RESOLUTION NO. 2010-35

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TORRANCE RELATING TO THE EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT HEALTH SAVINGS PLAN

MOTION: Councilmember Rhilinger moved to adopt Resolution No. 2010-35. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Barnett and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

12B. APPROVAL OF CLASS SPECIFICATION FOR FORENSIC SUPERVISOR

Recommendation

Recommendation of the Human Resources Director and Civil Service Commission that City Council approve the proposed class specification for Forensic Supervisor.

Item was withdrawn and deferred to the April 27, 2010 City Council meeting.

12C. RESOLUTION RE SALARY RANGE FOR FORENSIC SUPERVISOR POSITION

Recommendation

Recommendation of the Human Resources Director that Council adopt a Resolution amending the Memorandum of Understanding for the Torrance Professional and Supervisory Association (TPSA) Resolution No. 2007-56 to implement the proposed salary range for Forensic Supervisor. The cost to implement the salary adjustment is \$6359. Funds are available in the Police Department Operating Budget as part of the Fiscal Year 2009-2010 budget as adopted by the City Council.

Item was withdrawn and deferred to the April 27, 2010 City Council meeting.

12D. CONSULTING SERVICES AGREEMENT RE ESTABLISHMENT OF QUIET ZONE

Recommendation

Recommendation of the Public Works Director that City Council award a one year consulting services agreement in the amount of \$39,892 to RailPros, Inc. to create conceptual exhibits and provide a conceptual cost estimate to establish a Quiet Zone that would silence the sound of train horns at eight at-grade crossings within the City limits.

Engineering Manager Overstreet reported that in response to residents' concerns, staff has been exploring the feasibility of establishing a Quiet Zone at railroad crossings in Torrance; that in order to do so supplemental safety measures must be installed, which are estimated to cost between \$2-10 million; and that RailPros, Inc. has the expertise to create conceptual exhibits and provide a firm cost estimate for the safety measures.

MOTION: Councilmember Furey moved to concur with the staff recommendation. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Numark and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

12E. APPEAL OF TRAFFIC COMMISSION APPROVAL OF STOP SIGNS

Recommendation

Recommendation of the Community Development Director that City Council review the staff report, take public input, deny the appeal, and concur with the Traffic Commission approval to install all-way stop signs at 1) Cerise Avenue and 225th Street; 2) Eriel Avenue and 230th Street; and 3) Eriel Avenue and 225th Street.

Transportation Planning Manager Semaan reported that in response to complaints from residents regarding speeding and cut-through traffic in the Southwood Sunray neighborhood, a traffic analysis was conducted, which resulted in a recommendation that all-way stop signs be installed at the following locations: 1) Cerise Avenue and 225th Street; 2) Eriel Avenue and 230th Street; and 3) Eriel Avenue and 225th Street. He noted that the recommendation was approved by the Traffic Commission on March 1, 2010 and this decision was subsequently appealed to the City Council.

Responding to questions from the Council, Transportation Planning Manager Semaan provided information about the traffic study conducted in the neighborhood. He advised that speeds and volumes were within the expected range, however, the installation of the stop signs was recommended to provide positive right-of-way assignment. He confirmed that some cut-through traffic was observed, with the intersection of Eriel Avenue/225th Street being most affected. He reported that there have been two traffic accidents in the vicinity over the past five years, but neither was correctable by the installation of traffic control devices.

Councilmember Sutherland disclosed that he had met with the appellants and two other people last week to hear their point of view, but had not made a decision on this matter.

Stafford Howlett, West 225th Street, appellant, voiced his opposition to the proposed stop signs. He stated that staff conducted a comprehensive traffic study of the area and concluded that traffic speed and volumes were within expectations and there were no operational issues, therefore there was no need to install stop signs in this area. He noted that staff has cited right-of-way assignment as the reason for the stop signs, however, all three intersections are T-intersections where right-of-way is easily determined and there have been no complaints from residents about this issue. He reported that he researched the Caltrans manual and the intersections do not meet criteria for the installation of stop signs. He asserted that most of what has been termed cut-through traffic is actually parents driving their children to and from Hickory School and adding stop signs would only backup traffic, frustrate drivers and burden the neighborhood. He explained that residents would be adversely impacted by additional noise and pollution from stopped vehicles, as well as the loss of street parking due to red curbing adjacent to stop signs, noting that street parking is already very limited because residents on the north side of 225th do not have driveways. He urged the Council to accept the findings of the traffic study and reject the proposal to install stop signs.

Michael O'Brien, West 225th Street, stated that his street is a major cut-through for avoiding the intersection of Crenshaw and Sepulveda and it often resembles a drag strip. He reported that he was personally involved in an accident with a cyclist at the intersection of 225th Street/Cerise Avenue that could have been avoided if stop signs had been installed, and noted that there was an injury traffic collision at the intersection of 225th Street/Greenwood Avenue on April 10, 2010. He contended that the arguments of opponents had no merit because noise and pollution from vehicles would actually be reduced due to the decrease in cut-through traffic and reduction in speed. Referring to written material submitted for the record, he quoted from an email dated July 29, 2009 in support of the stop signs from Torrance Police Officer Applegate, the traffic officer assigned to this area. He urged the Council to uphold the Traffic Commission's decision.

Newt Young, Hickory Avenue, voiced support for the stop signs, stating that this area has a tremendous traffic problem, with a much larger volume of traffic than other residential areas. He disputed claims of added noise and pollution from stop signs,

explaining that he has lived next to a stop sign near Hickory School for almost 50 years and there have been no such problems. He stated that there is a small group of opponents who live near the intersection of 225th Street and Cerise and they were initially in favor of the installation of stop signs in the neighborhood, but became opposed when stop signs were proposed for their intersection.

Andrea Howlett, 225th Street, voiced her opposition to the installation of the stop signs. Citing criteria used in other Southern California cities to determine whether stop signs were warranted, she maintained that there was no factual basis to support the installation of the proposed stop signs and discussed the negative impacts of unwarranted stop signs. She urged the Council to rely on the conclusions of the traffic study, which determined that there was no need for additional traffic controls.

Chuck Jacobs, West 225th Street, submitted a petition in opposition to the stop signs. He voiced his opinion that there were no facts to support the installation of the stop signs and installing them would be a waste of time and money.

Councilmember Numark related his understanding that Mr. and Mrs. Jacobs had sent correspondence expressing concerns about speeding traffic in the neighborhood.

Patricia Jacobs, West 225th Street, clarified that she favored speed bumps/humps to control speed, not stop signs.

Urban Klintworth, 230th Street, expressed concerns about the dangers posed by speeding motorists to children in the neighborhood and related his belief that the stop signs would be effective in slowing traffic.

Expressing support for the stop signs, Eleanor Edwards, Greenwood Avenue, reported that the traffic has slowed considerably since stop signs were installed at 227th Street and Greenwood and she has experienced no increase in vehicle noise.

David Heenan, West 225th Street, voiced objections to the stop sign at 225th Street and Cerise. He related his belief that stop signs were ineffective in slowing traffic and the installation of speed humps was the only viable solution.

Mayor Scotto noted that driving over speed humps in certain vehicles can be extremely noisy to the extent that it would disturb the sleep of those living nearby.

Kerri Rustrum, Cerise Avenue, expressed her opposition to the proposed stop signs, citing the traffic study, which concluded that most drivers were driving in a safe and prudent manner and there were no operational issues. She clarified that an earlier email sent to the City was in support of speed humps; that it has been her experience that speed humps do not create problems; and that she now believes no action is necessary based on the conclusions of the traffic study.

Councilmember Rhilinger noted that an email from Ms. Rustrum expresses concerns that the traffic poses a danger to her son.

Ms. Rustrum responded that her concerns were related to an isolated incident and traffic is not an ongoing problem.

The Council briefly recessed from 8:59 p.m. to 9:16 p.m.

Patricia Jacobs, West 225th Street, stated that she was strongly opposed to the stop signs and agreed with the comments of Mr. and Mrs. Howlett.

Michael Klint, West 225th Street, voiced support for the stop signs, relating his observation that 225th Street is plagued with cut-through traffic and impatient motorists who tailgate and even attempt to pass motorists who are going the speed limit.

Mr. Klint disclosed that he once hosted a campaign event for Mayor Scotto, however, that was his only connection to him. Councilmember Brewer and Councilmember Sutherland disclosed that they also attended the event at Mr. Klint's home.

Councilmember Sutherland noted that the traffic study did not find a problem with speeding on 225th Street. Mr. Klint explained that the speeding mainly occurs in the morning when parents are rushing to get children to school on time.

Voicing support for the proposed stop signs, Phil O'Connor, West 225th Street, stated that he is a retired Los Angeles Police officer with experience in estimating speeds and he has observed vehicles going up to 50 mph on 225th Street. He questioned the validity of the traffic survey since part of it was done during the summer.

Steve Oda, Iris Avenue, stated that he was opposed to the stop signs because he was concerned that the haphazard placement of stop signs would lead other residents to request them until there is a stop sign on every corner. He noted that stop signs do not necessarily slow traffic as some motorists speed up after stopping to make up for lost time. He suggested that speed humps be installed on a trial basis to see if traffic can be slowed uniformly throughout the neighborhood to discourage cut-through traffic.

John Paul Tabakian, West 225th Street, expressed concerns that a traffic fatality will occur if stop signs are not installed.

Sandra Carter, director of Happy Face Preschool, 2254 Eriel Avenue, voiced support for the proposed stop sign at 225th Street and Eriel Avenue, explaining that speeding traffic poses a risk for parents and children walking to and from the school. As a possible compromise, she proposed the installation of speed humps with cut-outs for fire trucks that enable them to drive over the humps without reducing their speed.

Mayor Scotto asked if Ms. Carter was concerned that the stop sign near the school would result in a loss of street parking, and Ms. Carter responded that parking was not an issue as the preschool has plenty of on-site parking.

David Jeheber, West 225th Street, stated that speeding is a definite problem on Eriel and he felt a stop sign on Eriel at 225th Street would be helpful, however, he was not sure that all nine of the proposed stop signs were needed.

Steven Howlett, West 227th Street, voiced objections to the proposed stop signs. He noted that the traffic study determined that no action was needed because most motorists are driving in a safe and prudent manner and contended that a handful of neighbors were using hyperbole to exaggerate traffic problems. He suggested that what some neighbors believe is cut-through traffic, is actually typical neighborhood traffic associated with Hickory School, which will not be deterred by adding stop signs, and related his belief that the stop signs will only create problems.

Responding to questions from the Council, Mr. Howlett confirmed that he is related to Stafford and Andrea Howlett and his home is on the east side of Crenshaw.

Dan O'Brien, Signal Hill, reported that his grandparents formerly owned property on 225th Street; related his experience that traffic has gotten much worse on this street; and urged that the stop signs be installed for safety reasons.

Returning to the podium, Stafford Howlett reiterated his position that there was no justification for installing the stop signs.

In response to Councilmember Rhilinger's inquiry, Mr. Howlett confirmed that he is able to observe the traffic during the day because he is retired.

Councilmember Numark asked about staff's opinion on speed bumps/humps.

Transportation Planning Manager Semaan advised that Torrance has not installed speed humps due to concerns of safety personnel about the impact on response time, noting that the speed humps with cut-outs for fire trucks would still slow the response time for police vehicles. Additionally, he explained that there are significant problems associated with speed humps and some cities have gone to considerable expense to remove them.

Responding to questions from the Council, Transportation Planning Manager Semaan explained the rationale for recommending that stop signs be installed at three intersections as opposed to one or two, relating his belief that all three are needed to manage traffic flow. He reported that red curbing is typically installed 20-25 feet in advance of a stop sign; that it is not required; and that the decision of whether to install it is based on line-of-site issues. He confirmed that narrowing the drive lanes by painting white lines along each side of the street has been effective in slowing traffic on 235th Street and this is something that could be considered for 225th Street.

Mayor Scotto suggested that traffic counts be taken after the stop signs have been installed for a few months to determine whether they have been effective in reducing cut-through traffic. Referring to the diagram of the streets, he noted that it appears that red curbing could be eliminated at some of the stop signs where there are no line-of-sight issues.

Police Lieutenant Jon Megeff provided background information about traffic in the area, noting that traffic on 225th Street has been a longtime concern of residents. He reported that officers did observe speeding violations when they were using radar in an unmarked car to verify traffic data that was collected by staff.

In response to Mayor Scotto's inquiry, Lieutenant Stark reported that the average speeds observed in this area, which were 5-10 mph above the posted speed limit, are typical for most areas.

Councilmember Rhilinger expressed support for the staff recommendation. She requested that staff look into installing handicapped accessible curbing since there is a residential care home in the neighborhood.

Councilmember Sutherland stated that he thought both sides had presented valid arguments, however, he did not want to be responsible for not putting in a stop sign and having someone get hurt and preferred to err on the side of caution. He noted that stop signs can always be removed if it turns out that they are creating a problem.

MOTION: Councilmember Rhilinger moved to concur with the staff recommendation to install nine stop signs and directed staff to minimize red curbing to the extent possible and to return with an update in six months. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Brewer and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

17. ORAL COMMUNICATION #2

17A. Councilmember Brewer asked staff to look into the possibility of installing a light at the east door of the meeting room at the Katy Geissert Civic Center Library.

17B. Councilmember Brewer encouraged everyone to "Take a stand, wear your band, and save our schools," noting that SOS wristbands are available for \$5 with proceeds benefit the "Save Our Schools" campaign. For more information to purchase or sell the wristbands contact tusd.sos@gmail.com.

17C. Councilmember Furey announced that the annual Celebrate Education dinner will be held on May 8 at the Torrance Marriott, with additional information available at www.torranceeducationfoundation.org or by calling 310.972.6418.

17D. Councilmember Furey announced a "Tip a Torrelle" fundraiser at the Buffalo Fire Department restaurant located at 1261 Cabrillo Avenue with 15% of the pre-tax bill to benefit the American Cancer Society Torrance Relay for Life.

17E. Councilmember Numark announced that the Relay for Life event to benefit the American Cancer Society will be held on Saturday, April 24, beginning at 9:00 a.m. at South High School located at 4801 Pacific Coast Highway.

17F. Councilmember Sutherland announced that the Torrance Civic Chorale and Orchestra will be performing on April 24 at the Armstrong Theatre with additional information available by contacting the box office at 310.781.7171.

17G. Councilmember Sutherland announced that Downtown Sounds, an event hosted by the Torrance Rotary Club, Torrance Education Foundation, and The Depot, will be held on Sunday, June 13, at The Depot restaurant to benefit music programs at TUSD schools. For ticket information visit www.rotarydowntownsounds.com.

17H. Councilmember Barnett noted his attendance at the 52nd annual North South Kendo Tournament and commended Community Services staff and the Torrance Kendo Club for doing a great job of hosting the event.

18. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Considered earlier in the meeting, see page 1.

19. ADJOURNMENT

At 10:27 p.m., the meeting was adjourned to Tuesday, April 27, 2010 at 5:30 p.m. for an executive session, with the regular meeting commencing at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber.

Attest:

/s/ Frank Scotto
Mayor of the City of Torrance

/s/ Sue Herbers
Sue Herbers,
City Clerk of the City of Torrance

Approved on June 22, 2010

Sue Sweet
Recording Secretary