

February 8, 2011

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF  
THE TORRANCE COMMISSION ON AGING**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order on February 8, 2011 at 9:30 a.m. in the Hosler Conference Room at the Bartlett Senior Citizen Center.

**ROLL CALL/MOTIONS FOR EXCUSED ABSENCE**

Present: Commissioners Cardella, Draper, Kraemer, Robelotto, Virobik and  
Chairperson Kimmel-Dagostino

Absent: Commissioner Craft

Staff: Senior Recreation Supervisor Wand

**FLAG SALUTE**

Transit Staff Assistant Dailey led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**INSPIRATIONAL**

Commissioner Cardella provided the following inspiration:

*Remember, if you ever need a helping hand, you'll find one at the end of your arm...As you grow older you will discover that you have two hands. One for helping yourself, the other for helping others*

Audrey Hepburn

**ACCEPT AND FILE AFFIDAVIT OF AGENDA POSTING**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Robelotto moved and Commissioner Virobik seconded, to accept and file the Affidavit of Agenda Posting for its meeting of February 8, 2011. The motion carried. (Absent Commissioner Craft)

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Senior Librarian Ross requested a correction to the minutes of January 11, 2011, under Orals/Announcements in paragraph 5, line 4, to delete the words "sponsored by the Friends of the Library".

**MOTION:** Commissioner Kraemer moved and Commissioner Virobik seconded, to approve the minutes of the Commission on Aging meeting of January 11, 2011, as amended. The motion carried. (Absent Commissioner Craft)

**INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

Vickie Hershberger, Torrance Memorial Medical Center  
Phillip Ross, Senior Librarian, City of Torrance  
Jim Mills, Transit Administration Manager, City of Torrance  
Ian Dailey, Transit Staff Assistant, City of Torrance  
Pat Sako, Focal Point Volunteer

## **UPDATE OF PROPOSED FEE INCREASES TO THE SENIOR AND DIAL-A-TAXI PROGRAM**

Transit Administration Manager Mills presented an update and timeline for the proposed changes to the Torrance Senior Ride and Dial-A-Lift programs. He stated that he was also interested in obtaining any feedback on the proposal that the Commission might have gathered since the January Commission meeting.

Transit Administration Manager Mills reviewed the proposed changes to the Senior and Dial-a-Lift Taxi programs that were deemed necessary, due to increased ridership and the cap that the City had set of \$1,000,000 in subsidy to the systems.

Transit Administration Manager Mills explained that the Transit Department, last calendar year, had to ask the City Council for an additional \$115,000 appropriation to balance the budget and now needed to return to the Council with recommendations for changes to the program.

Transit Administration Manager Mills stated that the Transit Department had projected out five years to fiscal year 2015 with a projected growth of 5%, but noted that it was difficult to accurately predict the impact of the aging baby boom population on the system.

Transit Administration Manager Mills stated that the Transit Department was proposing a flat rate of \$3 per ticket, instead of rates of \$1, \$3 and \$5. He explained that all disabled currently paid \$1 rates, while for all other seniors, 84% currently paid a rate of \$1, 10% paid \$3 and 6% paid \$5. Transit Administration Manager Mills added that Transit was also proposing a decrease in the ticket subsidy from \$13 to \$10. He stated his understanding that the rates increases would have an impact on those using the system.

Transit Administration Manager Mills expressed his willingness to come to any future Commission meetings to address any concerns and to gather additional feedback from the Commission. He stated that Transit wished to talk to advocacy groups for the disabled and was attempting to set up a meeting with the Harbor Regional Center. Transit Administration Manager Mills added that Transit also planned to go to the Transportation Committee for their recommendations, at the end of February. He noted that after the meeting with the Transportation Committee, Transit would prepare a one page explanation of the proposed changes, which would then be posted and included in mailings with ticket renewals. He stated that Transit would send out the proposed changes and allow for at least thirty days prior to the City Council meeting, so that anyone interested might either attend the meeting or offer comments on the proposal by phone, mail or email.

Transit Administration Manager Mills stated that Transit intended to go before the City Council with the proposal in mid April, and follow with posting and mailing out the Council's actions on the proposal with ticket renewals, with the final goal of implementing the changes by July 1.

In response to a question from Commissioner Robelotto, Transit Administration Manager Mills stated that there were currently no yearly passes, but only monthly tickets. He stated that the cost of purchasing a yearly pass might be difficult for some seniors, but that the question of a yearly pass could be included with the questionnaire that would be sent out with tickets renewals.

Responding to a question from Chairperson Kimmel-Dagostino, Transit Administration Manager Mills stated that he wasn't sure if the \$5 rate would remain, instead of decreasing to \$3.

Transit Administration Manager Mills stated that seniors asking for disability tickets needed a note from the doctor, explaining the disability, and needed to renew every three months, if it was a short term disability.

Transit Administration Manager Mills noted that the Transit department did not require seniors to supply IRS paperwork to prove income level, that it was an honor system, and noted that the proposed flat rate of \$3 would eliminate the need to verify income levels.

Transit Administration Manager Mills stated that the average cost of a taxi ride in Torrance was \$14, which was combined cost for travel and waiting time.

Transit Administration Manager Mills stated that taxi services had lift cabs available with 24 hour notice.

In response to questions from Commissioner Virobik, Transit Administration Manager Mills stated that Transit received approximately \$2.1 million from Prop A Transportation funds, which was shared between the senior /disabled ride services and the bus system. He stated that the appropriation to cover the contract shortage came from money that was transferred from Transit Services; as the Transit Department was an enterprise republic, required to bring in their own revenue and pay their own bills and did not receive money from the general fund.

Commissioner Virobik reported that Focal Point volunteers expressed concern for the hardship on those whose ticket rates would increase from \$1.00 to \$3.00. She stated that the volunteers suggested a six month or yearly pass.

Transit Administration Manager Mills stated that he recognized the increase was substantial, but without the increase to \$3, there would be a deficit in the program.

Transit Administration Manager Mills stated that some of the difficulties in administering a yearly pass would be the current 90 day expiration for tickets and the cost of a swipe card.

Chairperson Kimmel-Dagostino reported that she had explained the cost increase proposal to seniors in terms of Torrance's balanced budget and rising prices in general.

Transit Administration Manager Mills noted that the Commission could promote the 25 cent fare to ride the regular bus as an inexpensive option to those seniors who were able.

Chairperson Kimmel-Dagostino suggested that Transit conduct information sessions at the library to educate the public on the bus system routes and services.

Transit Administration Manager Mills stated that the revised bus schedules were scheduled to be printed.

Transit Administration Manager Mills reported that the Senior Ambassador Bus program had been effective in increasing the senior ridership of the bus by 9%.

Transit Administration Manager Mills asked that the Commission send him any additional input that they might have and noted that his email address was: [jmills@torranceca.gov](mailto:jmills@torranceca.gov)

Senior Librarian Ross expressed his willingness to host a Senior Ambassador Bus program at the Waltheria Park Building and stated that he would coordinate the meeting date with Transit Administration Manager Mills.

Transit Administration Manager Mills stated that he would return to the March Commission meeting with an update on the meeting with the Transportation Committee.

## **SENIOR CITIZENS CONCERNS**

### **A. City Council Activities**

Commissioner Kraemer reported that there would be an Elder Financial Abuse seminar, as part of the "Seniors, Don't be Scammed" series, on February 15 at the Katy Geissert Civic Center Library at 10:00 a.m.

Commissioner Kraemer noted that there would be a special election for the 28<sup>th</sup> Senate District on February 15.

Commissioner Kraemer reported that the AARP was offering free income tax consulting for seniors in the basement of the West Annex from February 1 through April 15 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Commissioner Kraemer stated that the Centennial Committee was presenting their quarterly report at the February 8 City Council meeting, which would include a list of approved activities to date.

Chairperson Kimmel-Dagostino stated that the Disaster Council had been abolished and was now under the Police Department.

### **B. Housing**

Commissioner Robelotto stated that the shared housing agencies that she had investigated to date, had all involved the concept of seniors leaving their homes to live elsewhere in shared housing. She noted that was not the model she had envisioned, but had wanted to have roommates move into the senior's home to share rent and responsibilities.

Commissioner Robelotto stated that she was planning to start a non-profit for the shared housing project. She noted that some type of enforceable contract would be necessary in order to be able to remove roommates that were not acceptable.

Commissioner Virobik stated that Cecilia, from Love, Inc. could be a resource to Commissioner Robelotto on roommate matching procedures. Commissioner Virobik also suggested that Commissioner Robelotto speak with the people who offered free legal advice at the Bartlett Senior Citizens Center.

Commissioner Virobik noted that the Alternative Living for the Aged in Los Angeles had been successful in coordinating shared housing.

### **C. Health**

Commissioner Virobik presented information on an article on "An Early Alert for Alzheimer's".

Commissioner Kraemer noted that the Medical funding for daycare centers for the elderly might be cut from the budget.

Commissioner Virobik distributed a newsletter on dementia and Alzheimer's.

### **D. Transportation**

None

### **E. Community Programs**

Senior Recreation Supervisor Wand noted that the Season's newsletter had been mailed, but the newsletter itself had been scaled back, with more information now available on line.

Senior Recreation Supervisor Wand noted that March 4 was the sign up date for the next Senior Tours.

**F. Focal Point Program**

Commissioner Virobik reported the following Focal Point statistics for the month of:

**January 2011**

Total number of documented calls: 51	Total number of callbacks: 34
Miscellaneous calls: 89	Total number of walk-ins: 16
Total number of calls received: 140	

Of the documented calls:

8.6 % were in regard to transportation	36.4% were for housing
5.8 % were for in home services	

Commissioner Virobik also reported that Coleman Court had vacancies, but not those with the subsidy, so that the rent would be \$1025 per month. She stated that she advised people to also look at rentals in complexes that were not for seniors only.

Commissioner Virobik noted that Focal Point will staff a table at the Katy Geissert Civic Center on February 15, during the seminar on “Elder Financial Abuse”.

**G. Elder Abuse/Fraud**

None

**OLDER AMERICANS RECOGNITION**

Chairperson Kimmel-Dagostino distributed Hope Witkowsky’s resume and nominated her for an Older Americans Recognition.

Senior Recreation Supervisor Wand stated that she had no dates yet for the County program, but recommended that the Commission vote for their County nominees at the March Commission meeting.

Chairperson Kimmel-Dagostino requested that the Commission bring any other suggestions for nominations for Older Americans Month to the March meeting.

**ORALS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Commissioner Robelotto noted that she had completed the Ethics Training on line and found it interesting and well written.

Chairperson Kimmel-Dagostino stated that the Ethics Commission had been abolished and a new Ethics Committee had been formed to continue with the proposals. She noted that the form 700, a financial disclosure form, might become necessary for Commissioners.

Vickie Hershberger distributed information on a workshop on Healthcare Directives on February 10 at Torrance Memorial Medical Center and copies of Vim and Vigor Magazine. She reported that there would be a talk on Heart Care: Update 2011 on February 16 at the Health Conference Center and a free program called Kids N Fitness at the Torrance-South Bay YMCA.

Pat Sako, Focal Point Volunteer stated that Commissioner Virobik was great.

Senior Librarian Ross distributed February’s Library Calendar of Events and flyers for the H.E.L.P. Life Planning Classes from February 22 through March 29, 2011.He noted that

Hilary Theyer was the acting City Librarian until the City Librarian position was filled. He stated that two Principal Librarian positions were also to be filled.

Senior Librarian Ross reported that the Library would be doing outreach at the Bartlett Senior Citizens Center in March for "Words on Wheels" and Braille Talking Books.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m. to the regular meeting on Tuesday, March 8, 2011 at 9:30 a.m. in the Hosler Conference Room at the Bartlett Senior Citizens Center.

Approved as Submitted March 8, 2011 s/ Sue Herbers, City Clerk
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