

April 6, 2006

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF
THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND
ENERGY CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Torrance Environmental Quality and Energy Conservation Commission convened in a regular session at 7:07 p.m. on Thursday, April 6, 2006, in the West Annex Meeting Room at Torrance City Hall.

2. ROLL CALL:

Present: Commissioners Basile, Chim, Griffiths, Minter, Watson, and Chairperson McCabe.

Absent: Commissioner Reilly.

Also Present: Environmental Services Administrator Cessna and Environmental Quality Officer Jones.

MOTION: Commissioner Chim moved to grant an excused absence to Commissioner Reilly for the April 6, 2006 Environmental Quality and Energy Conservation Commission meeting. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

3. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairperson McCabe.

4. POSTING OF THE AGENDA

MOTION: Commissioner Minter, seconded by Commissioner Griffiths, moved to accept and file the report of the secretary on the posting of the agenda for this meeting; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Reilly).

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Watson noted the following correction to the March 2, 2006 meeting minutes:

Page 1, Item 2: Roll Call. Absent: "Commissioner Watson".

MOTION: Commissioner Minter moved for the approval of the March 2, 2006 Environmental Quality and Energy Conservation Commission meeting minutes as corrected. Commissioner Griffiths seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Reilly).

Environmental Services Administrator Cessna distributed existing Goals, Policies, and Objectives in the current Conservation Element of the General Plan. She

requested that Commissioners review and provide additional items for inclusion in the draft General Plan update.

6. SIGN HEARINGS

6A. SNP06-00002: GRAND WORLD BUFFET, 21557 WESTERN AVENUE #B

- Request:**
- A) One 5'6" high x 14'3" internally illuminated individual channel letter wall sign, two lines of copy, "GRAND WORLD BUFFET", in red. Located on the building tower element south.
78.3 sq. ft.
 - B) One 2' high x 21', internally illuminated individual channel letter wall sign, red copy, "GRAND WORLD BUFFET". Located on north building wall elevation.
42.0 sq. ft.

TOTAL REQUEST: 120.3 SQUARE FEET

Recommendation:

The Environmental Division staff recommends denial of the request as submitted. Staff would approve a sign color and height that adheres to the existing Eastgate Plaza sign program.

With the aid of slides showing south and north elevations, Environmental Quality Officer Jones introduced the request. She stated that the applicant originally proposed signs that did not adhere to the existing sign program for the shopping center that calls for green copy and letter height not to exceed 16" tall, noting that all tenants in the shopping center have wall signs with green copy.

Environmental Services Administrator Cessna noted that Redevelopment staff feels strongly that the established color scheme should be maintained.

Responding to Commissioner Griffiths' inquiry, Environmental Services Administrator Cessna explained that technically property owners dictate sign guidelines, but that there are many reasons why they sometimes choose to let the City handle it.

In response to Commissioner Minter's inquiry, Environmental Quality Officer Jones estimated that there were 20 tenants in the shopping center.

Chairperson McCabe reviewed the policies and procedures of the Environmental Quality and Energy Conservation Commission, including the right to appeal decisions to City Council.

MOTION: At 7:21 p.m., Commissioner Griffiths, seconded by Commissioner Basile, moved to open the public hearing; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

Dan, owner of 88 Sign Corporation, El Monte, distributed a letter from the property's landlord stating that he would not allow red copy; therefore, the applicant was in agreement to using the green copy per staff recommendation. He requested that the back sign be moved from the left side to the right side of the wall and that the

Commission grant the applicant's request to exceed the height allowance, noting that the store frontage is 100 feet. He clarified that there are tenants on both sides of the building.

Environmental Services Administrator Cessna stated that staff's major issue was with the request for red copy, and the slightly higher sign allowance would be acceptable since Grand World Buffet is such a large tenant.

MOTION: Commissioner Watson moved to close the public hearing. Commissioner Chim seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

Commissioner Watson indicated that she would support the request if the copy color is green.

MOTION: Commissioner Griffiths moved for the approval of SNP06-00002 with the color of the wall signs to have green copy, with finding of fact that as a larger tenant the larger letter size is acceptable. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Watson and passed by a unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Reilly).

7B. SNP06-00003: MIAMI'S AUTO SPA, 2472 PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY

Request: One 25' high x 8' wide internally illuminated double-face pole sign with an electronic readerboard. The sign cabinet is 8' high x 7'6" wide, white background with gold and black copy and logo, "MIAMI'S AUTO SPA." The readerboard is 4'6" high x 8' wide. The sign will utilize the existing pole on the property and will be located on the southeast corner of Hillworth Avenue and Pacific Coast Highway.

TOTAL REQUEST: 200.0 SQUARE FEET

Recommendation:

The Environmental Division recommends denial of the pole sign and readerboard as requested. Staff would like to work with the applicant to design a ground sign that is lower in height for the property.

With the aid of slides, Environmental Quality Officer Jones introduced the request, noting that a wall sign permit has already been issued allowing a logo and individual channel letters totaling 73 square feet. She expressed staff concern that residents living to the south of the location may object to an electronic readerboard.

MOTION: Commission Watson moved to open the public hearing at 7:35 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Griffiths; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

Anthony Assera, applicant, stated that an adjacent building to the west blocks visibility of his building when traveling eastbound on Pacific Coast Highway, and that the street leans at an angle. He noted that he was not asking for a new pole, but for a new can on the existing pole that was approved for the previous owner. He added that the

sign would be offset so it would not overhang the sidewalk, and that lowering the height of the sign would negatively impact his business.

It was determined that the applicant was allowed 270 square feet of signage and, with this request, the total would be 273 square feet. Clarification was provided that the existing pole is 17', with a requested 8' can.

Gus Navarro, San Pedro Electric Sign Company, Wilmington, stated that Miami's Auto Spa was state of the art and upscale. He confirmed that it was 30" from the sidewalk and property line to the center of the pole.

In response to Chairperson McCabe's inquiry, Mr. Navarro stated that the readerboard would show the time, temperature, hours of operation, or to advertise special offers and community announcements.

Responding to Commissioner Watson's inquiry, Environmental Services Administrator Cessna stated that there was not a specific plan for the area, but that staff would prefer to have the sign lower and more of a monument-style. She noted that the applicant's building was beautiful and deserved better than what he was requesting.

Commissioner Watson stated that the building was appealing, that she did not think people driving past would miss it, and that the sign should complement the building. She added that she liked the use of slate, but would prefer the sign to be broader rather than higher.

In response to Commissioner Minter's inquiry, Environmental Services Administrator Cessna stated that readerboards are not generally used for a single user business.

Responding to Commissioner Griffiths' inquiry, Mr. Navarro advised that the readerboard was an LED unit with brightness equal to 25 watts.

Discussion centered on the use of readerboards in the City, reducing the width of the requested readerboard, widening the base of the sign, and ways to make construction of the sign components more integrated so as not to look like a "lollipop" sign.

Mr. Navarro distributed copies of an alternative design that was rejected by the applicant.

Chairperson McCabe received clarification from staff that every readerboard request was required to go before the Commission, and that the Division was attempting to lower signs throughout the City when there is new development.

Environmental Services Administrator Cessna suggested that the Commission approve in concept the idea of the readerboard and appropriate height, and that the applicant would work out design details with staff.

MOTION: Commissioner Chim moved to close the public hearing. Commissioner Basile seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

Commissioners discussed options that included a small readerboard, reducing the sign height, widening the pole, and adding additional information about the business. Setting a precedent regarding readerboards in the City, control of content on the readerboard, the need for the applicant's business to have a readerboard, other businesses that have readerboards in the City, and speed of traffic on Pacific Coast Highway were also discussed.

Chairperson McCabe stated on behalf of the Commission that the applicant's investment in the City was greatly appreciated.

MOTION: Commissioner Watson moved for approval of SNP06-00003 within the following parameters:

1. The sign is not to exceed 23';
2. A permitted readerboard is not to exceed 5'2" in width;
3. Design elements to be worked out with staff to create a sign that is integrated;
4. There are to be provisions for emergency use of the readerboard;
5. Readerboard will support community projects;
6. Timing of changeable copy on readerboard to be arranged with staff;
7. Finding of fact will reflect that Miami's Auto Spa is a new business, bounded on the west side by a large building built up to the property line next to the sidewalk which blocks signage and visibility approaching east on Pacific Coast Highway, that Miami's Auto Spa has a 40' set back, that the sign would be as supplement to the lack of visibility by the two approximate businesses adjacent, that Pacific Coast Highway jogs at this location further impairing visibility, and that Pacific Coast Highway has multiple existing signs that makes a readerboard an appropriate use for the property.

Commissioner Chim seconded the motion. The motion passed as reflected in the following roll call vote (absent Commissioner Reilly):

AYES: Commissioners Basile, Chim, Watson, and Chairperson McCabe.
NOES: Commissioners Minter and Griffiths.

The Commission was in recess from 8:45 p.m. to 8:50 p.m.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

7A. CONTINUE DISCUSSION OF WORK PLAN

Environmental Services Administrator Cessna announced that the South Bay Energy Conservation Center will have a table at the June 3, 2006 City Yard Open House.

Referring to the current Conservation Element previously distributed, she advised that the Commission Work Plan should reflect the priorities of the General Plan. She stated that Goals, Policies and Objectives in the Conservation Element would dictate what kinds of issues the Commission will be looking at for the Work Plan as it moves forward. She stated that next week she would send Commissioners minutes of previous meetings and a differently formatted version of the current Conservation Element that will allow them to choose to modify, maintain, or delete items, and that they would be able to list additional Goals, Policies, and Objectives. She advised that Commissioners would have the opportunity to prioritize programs that implement goals and policies.

Chairperson McCabe stated that there would be information and links on the website by the next Commission meeting. He suggested that a green building checklist be put on the website listing things for residents to consider when doing an addition or remodeling. He offered to prepare and provide a list of accepted concepts to staff, with the aid of a Green Building Guide from another city.

8. NEW BUSINESS

Environmental Services Administrator Cessna informed Commissioners that the proposal to make Torrance Beach smoke free would be considered by City Council on May 9, 2006. She advised that the Parks and Recreation Commission asked their staff to prepare a letter of support for the ordinance. There was general consensus among Commissioners that the item be placed on the May 4, 2006 Commission meeting agenda for further discussion regarding the Commission's position on the proposed ordinance.

Commissioner Minter noted that an apartment complex on Spencer Street just east of Hawthorne Boulevard has multiple tattered banners hanging on its property. He also commented that the windows of a liquor store on Torrance Boulevard just west of Dove Furniture are completely covered with posters and signs.

Commissioner Griffiths commented that the front plate glass windows of Best Buy Furniture on Hawthorne Boulevard just south of Spencer Street are almost 100% covered with fluorescent paint.

Commissioner Chim stated that she noticed flags on an apartment building on Anza Avenue just north of Pacific Coast Highway as well as at the Willowtree Apartments on Pacific Coast Highway.

Chairperson McCabe asked that staff provide an item for discussion regarding readerboard policy and guidelines as well as an organizational chart of the City.

Chairperson McCabe requested a short, concise summary report from Recycling Coordinator Allison Sherman every two or three months.

Commissioner Griffiths offered to send information to staff regarding energy saving devices for vending machines.

9. INFORMATION ITEMS

No report.

10. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

10A. Commissioner Griffiths shared information about a Daily Breeze insert entitled "Our Environment Series," with future inserts to be published on May 20, September 16, and November 4, 2006.

10B. Commissioner Chim discussed her attendance at the groundbreaking ceremony at Honda Acura Research and Development facility last month. She stated that she also

had the opportunity to tour the Toyota facility including the green building, noting that she was impressed with the furniture and cubicles made out of recycled materials.

Commissioner Watson suggested that the Chairperson of the Commission give plaques recognizing Toyota and Honda.

Chairperson McCabe discussed the possibility of benefiting collaboratively with the businesses.

10C. Commissioner Watson announced the 3^d annual Alternative Building Materials and Design Expo at Santa Monica Air Center on May 4, 2006.

10D. Commissioner Watson discussed her trip to Turkey where she saw solar panels and heaters provided at cost in rural areas.

10E. Environmental Quality Officer Jones initiated a brief discussion on improving staff reports for sign cases.

10F. Environmental Services Administrator Cessna announced the Green Expo at the City of Downey Gas Company on April 21, 2006.

10G. Commissioner Basile informed Commissioners that a City candidate's forum will be held at the Bartlett Center on April 26, 2006 at 7:00 p.m.

10H. Commissioner Watson announced that Earth Day is April 22, 2006.

11. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: At 9:55 p.m. Commissioner Watson, seconded by Commissioner Minter, moved to adjourn the meeting to Thursday, May 4, 2006 at 7:00 p.m.; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

Approved as Amended May 4, 2006 s/ Sue Herbers, City Clerk
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