

**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 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, September 3, 2015 in the West Annex meeting room at Torrance City Hall.

2. ROLL CALL:

Present: Commissioners Deemer, Endo-Roberts, Gobble, Martin, Montgomery, Wright, and Chairperson DeWitt.

Absent: None.

Also Present: Deputy Community Development Director Cessna and Environmental Quality Officer Travers.

3. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Commissioner Gobble led the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. POSTING OF THE AGENDA

MOTION: Commissioner Endo-Roberts, with a second by Commissioner Montgomery, moved to accept and file the report of the secretary on the posting of the agenda for this meeting; a roll call vote reflected unanimous approval.

5. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

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

5A. Kevin Gilligan, Toluca Avenue, stated that working out of his home is difficult because of noise from leaf blowers. Referring to a July 4, 1997 Los Angeles Times article, he noted that several cities have banned gas leaf blowers and others have placed time restrictions on their use. He requested that the City consider banning gas leaf blowers and imposing noise restrictions, at least on weekends.

In response to Commissioner Montgomery's inquiry, Deputy Director Cessna stated that City Council was not interested in pursuing a ban on leaf blowers in June 2013; however, now that there are new Councilmembers, they may feel differently about the issue. With concurrence from Commissioners, she offered to place the item on a future agenda.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES : AUGUST 6, 2015

A correction was noted as follows: Page 1, Item 2, "ROLL CALL: Absent: Chairperson Gobble."

MOTION: Commissioner Endo-Roberts moved to approve the Commission meeting minutes of August 6, 2015 as amended. Commissioner Martin seconded the motion; a roll call vote reflected approval with Commissioner Deemer abstaining.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

7A. PACE YGRENE PROGRAM

James Ross, Regional Account Manager, provided a presentation on Ygrene Energy Fund, a program designed to aid and encourage green improvements by homeowners through the use of Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) financing. He noted that the program allows property owners in participating cities and counties to choose to finance a wide range of energy efficiency and water conservation improvements on their properties. He stated that the installed improvements are financed by the issuance of bonds by a joint powers authority and that property owners agree to repay the amount borrowed through the voluntary contractual assessment collected together with their property taxes.

He stated that Ygrene is similar to the HERO program but provides more options that include lower fees, the longest repayment terms, no bulk assessment lien, the widest range of availability, and thorough consumer disclosure. He noted that the program creates green jobs, increases economic investment, increases property values, increases business for energy contractors, and reduces energy costs for property owners. He stated that there would be zero cost to the City or local taxpayers because Ygrene pays for all costs including district implementation, staffing and marketing, and project funding.

Responding to Commissioner Wright's inquiries, Mr. Ross stated that solar projects are eligible for up to a 30-year loan term, noting that 20 years is the typical term length. He stated that Golden State Finance Authority sponsors the program and offered to provide additional information regarding banking regulations and oversight.

In response to inquiries from Commissioner Deemer, he stated that Ygrene is located in several jurisdictions that include Chula Vista, Palm Desert, and Santa Rosa, adding that they plan to open an office in the area in the near future. He noted that approximately 20% of improvements are for solar projects but other eligible improvements include gray-water systems, HVAC duct zoning-control systems, cool roofing, electric vehicle charging infrastructure, and drought tolerant landscaping.

Commissioner Martin inquired about prepayment penalties and Mr. Ross stated that it is a minimal fee of .25%.

Commissioner Montgomery stated that he would like to see a comparison sheet of the Ygrene and HERO programs and, in response to his inquiry, Mr. Ross stated that the major compelling reason to use Ygrene instead of HERO is because there is no bulk assessment filed on property tax bills.

Responding to Commissioner Gobble's inquiry, he explained that contractors must apply, register, and meet all program requirements before receiving Ygrene Certified Contractor status, and that all contractors undergo training to ensure they can accurately support and represent the program to property owners.

MOTION: Commissioner Gobble moved to concur with staff recommendation to recommend to City Council that a resolution be adopted allowing residents of the City to participate in the Ygrene PACE program. Commissioner Deemer seconded the motion; a roll call vote reflected unanimous approval.

7B. ELECTRIC VEHICLE (EV) EVENT UPDATE

Deputy Director Cessna and Commissioners discussed final plans for the City's Drive Electric Week event on September 12, 2015 behind Katy Geissert Civic Center Library. She announced that 34 vendors are scheduled to participate, several EVs would be on display, and that so far four vehicles are available for ride and drives, including two Teslas. She stated that there would be a map of charging stations in the City and an opportunity for the public to say what other locations they would like to see chargers. She announced that there would be a food truck, port-a-potties, and music from a sound system provided by CitiCABLE. She stated that the City's charging stations are expected to be energized on September 10, 2015.

8. NEW BUSINESS

8A. Deputy Director Cessna raised the possibility of the Commission going dark on December 3, 2015 due to an item regarding overgrown vegetation being considered by City Council that evening.

8B. Commissioner Gobble discussed the practice of painting lawns green.

8C. Chairperson DeWitt received clarification that the Annual Report is usually prepared in October or November and that if the Commission meets off-site it would require City Council approval.

9. ORAL COMMUNICATION

9A. Commissioner Deemer asked staff to set it up so Commissioners can view the upcoming ExxonMobil hearings.

9B. Commissioner Wright was informed that the beekeeping item is going to City Council on October 20 or 27.

9C. Chairperson DeWitt announced the Torrance Transit Center groundbreaking ceremony on September 8 and a Coastal Clean Up on September 19.

10. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: At 8:25 p.m., Commissioner Gobble moved to adjourn the meeting to October 1, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in the West Annex meeting room. Commissioner Martin seconded the motion and, hearing no objection, Chairperson DeWitt so ordered.

Approved as submitted
October 1, 2015
s/ Rebecca Poirier, City Clerk

Deborah Schaffer
Recording Secretary

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