

Notes on the RHA's Zoom General Meeting on Nov 3 2021

Co-presidents Pam Popovich and Judy Brunetti kicked off the meeting with over 80 attendees with greetings and invitations to all residents to renew or initiate their voluntary memberships.

Our first guest, Riviera resident Richard Root, discussed the Torrance Airport noise abatement issue.

In the past the city has required pilots to comply with these rules, most importantly:

- Noise over 82 decibels in the day and 76 decibels at night not allowed
- No left turn in airspace until aircraft reaches the ocean or elevation of 1500 feet.

The City of Torrance had contracted with an outside company to monitor the airport/pilots for compliance. The revenue to pay for the service was generated from the airport leasing fees; so no City funds were used. In a 4-2 vote in City Council Meeting, the vote was made to let the outside contract expire.

For the past year there has been no enforcement and it was left to the airport and pilots to self-monitor. Many complaints have already come in on the increase in noise in our neighborhood and others near the airport, since the monitoring service is no longer in charge.

The airport commission is now looking at new proposals for outside monitoring and is deciding which services need to be eliminated or retained.

Late breaking news: The Torrance City Council voted Dec 14 to place a contract for airport noise monitoring to begin sometime in the middle of 2022.

Mayor Pat Furey gave a report on the "State of the City"

[note: the opinions expressed are those of the Mayor and not of the RHA]

- Covid Information – 240 Torrance residents have died from Covid and 10,000 Positive cases since Covid began. Please get the vaccine if you have not.
- Airport Noise – It was a foolhardy decision to let the contract expire [Mayor Furey had voted against it] and now it will cost more money for fewer services as the Council is accepting new bids for the contact.
- Police misconduct is not tolerated and does not reflect the values of our city. The internal Investigation is being conducted with Chief Hart. The Mayor is confident it will be resolved.
- Torrance was a finalist for the Most Business-Friendly City in LA County Award given by the LA Economic Development Association.
- Drought update: We are in the midst of a 20-year drought and no telling if it will get better. However, the city has its own water system and provides it to 80% of its residents. Torrance water Rates are 50% lower than California Water Service. We have 3-million-gallons in reservoirs and are drilling wells and purifying brackish water, trying for 80% water independence. Unfortunately, those in the Hollywood Riviera who have Cal Water as our service cannot be brought into Torrance Water because of the high costs of doing so. Water is very valuable. The equity in our own water keeps us from bankruptcy. In the future we could sell our water system back at a great profit.
- Upcoming Elections: June 2, 2022. Mayor Furey will term out. Only 2 of the candidates so far have City Council Experience. Please look at the candidates closely and come to the open forum. Do not buy into "dog whistles" and ask questions and get direct solution-based answers, not rhetoric.

- City Budget: We are still recovering from the 2008 recession. We have made budget cuts through 2012 and were starting to see some recovery. Toyota leaving for Texas hurt, as well as an 18-month shutdown of the Mobil Refinery, which had brought in \$700,000 to \$800,000 per month in utility taxes. The 2020 Pandemic took its toll on business taxes with restaurants closed, hotels empty, gas sales down, and low utility users' tax revenues. The American Rescue plan has given us about \$24 million dollars between this year and next. A sales tax measure which would increase the tax to 10.25% would help and is what is being charged in most of the cities surrounding us. This is a .75% increase to what we currently have and would help to offset our losses. It is only another \$7.50 per \$1,000 spent, and it is what most cities are currently using. If this increase passed, it would mean another \$27 million to the city revenue every year. This would help to keep our services as they currently are. If not, we will have to continue to cut our budget. The good news is that we have new businesses coming into our city and they will help us continue to grow. For example, the refinery is selling off much of its property to industrial use. Mayor Furey predicted that in 10 years the Mobil refinery will close, so we need to be prepared for the tax consequences of that.
- We are mandated to create housing in our city. We have some great locations for this if we can talk developers into doing this.

The mayor faced written and verbal questions from the meeting audience, covering various topics such as:

- whether he supports elimination of the use of highly toxic MHF (Modified Hydrofluoric Acid) at the Torrance refinery. (He doesn't think it's financially feasible for the refinery to retool.)
- his support for the Hillside Overlay Ordinance in respect of recent large home remodeling proposals. The Mayor verbalized support for the HOO, and suggested hillside residents to get involved on the Planning Commission.
- sheltering the homeless. The Mayor discussed the new temporary housing being proposed near the city hall/police department area, and the limits placed on municipalities in dealing with the unhoused.

As a final discussion item, Immediate Past President for the RHA Amy Josefek discussed the impact of recently passed Senate Bills 8 and 9, and the risk they pose to character of our neighborhood with our traditional R-1 single residency zoning. She urged residents to mobilize to counter these new laws by promoting a voters' initiative to be on next year's ballot that would protect local land-use and zoning from state law overrides. She encouraged residents to study this issue closely by reviewing the issue on [Our Neighborhood Voices - Our Neighborhood Voices](#)

Finally, co-president Pam Popovich offered deepest gratitude to Amy Josefek on behalf of the RHA Board for the many years of service to the community and for her contributions as co-president.