

Council Meeting of
September 19, 2006

Honorable Mayor and Members
of the City Council
City Hall
Torrance, California

Members of the Council:

SUBJECT: Community Services – Accept and file Library Commission Annual Report 2005-06

RECOMMENDATION

The Community Services Director, City Librarian, and the Library Commission recommend that the City Council accept and file the Library Commission's 2005-06 annual report.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

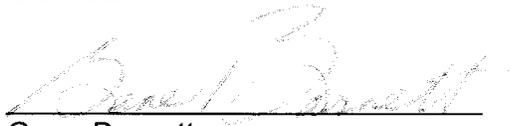
The Library Commission Annual Report for the period July 2005 through June 2006 as prepared by the Library Commissioners is attached for the Council's information and review. The Commissioners approved the report at their September 11, 2006 meeting.

Respectfully submitted,



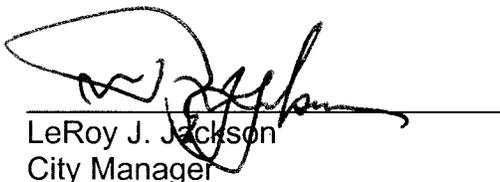
Paula J. Weiner
City Librarian

CONCUR:



Gene Barnett
Community Services Director

NOTED:



LeRoy J. Jackson
City Manager

Attachment A: Library Commission Annual Report 2005-06

CITY OF TORRANCE LIBRARY COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT

Fiscal Year: July 1, 2005 – June 30, 2006

In an effort to better understand and communicate the role of libraries within their surrounding communities, the Commission engaged in discussion to update the 2003 Torrance Library Commission Mission Statement at various commission meetings. After examining the vision of other libraries and their commissions, the Torrance Library Commission Vision and Mission Statements have been changed to the following:

Vision Statement

The vision of the Torrance Library Commission is that all Torrance residents have access to quality library services in order to

- ◀ Achieve their greatest potential
- ◀ Participate in a global society, and
- ◀ Enrich their daily lives

Mission Statement

The Torrance Library Commission is committed, through leadership, advocacy, and service to the Torrance Public Library system, to ensure that this community has a place to access information, to pursue lifelong learning, and to experience cultural heritage and enrichment.

MEMBERSHIP

The Torrance Library Commission was comprised of the following members:

- ◀ Kathryn D. Roberts– Chairperson
- ◀ Keri S. Botello– Vice Chairperson
- ◀ Clarence Chappell
- ◀ Linda Grogan
- ◀ Jerome J. Haig
- ◀ Carrie Lang
- ◀ Wendy Wang

Commissioner Jerome J. Haig was reappointed by the City Council on January 10, 2006.

In an effort to enhance the effectiveness of the Commission, members, along with the City Librarian, participated in one of two informal workshops (September 10, September 28, 2005) conducted by a trainer from the California Association of Library Trustees and Commissioners (CALTAC).

MEETINGS

The Commission continued its tradition of an annual meeting with the City Council. The two bodies met at the Katy Geissert Civic Center Library on September 20, 2005 and

were updated on the activities of the Library's support groups, the Friends of the Torrance Library, and the Torrance Public Library Foundation.

The Commission meets on the second Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m., usually at the Katy Geissert Civic Center Library. However, the Commission continued its custom of visiting each branch library once every year. The Commission met at each of the branch libraries on the following dates:

- ◀ October 10, 2005, at the North Torrance Branch Library
- ◀ November 14, 2005, at the Walteria Branch Library
- ◀ January 9, 2006, at the El Retiro Branch Library
- ◀ February 6, 2006, at the Southeast Branch Library
- ◀ March 13, 2006, at the Henderson Branch Library

In addition to members of the Library Commission, regular attendees at the meetings included City Librarian Paula Weiner and Principal Librarian Hillary Theyer. On a less frequent basis, the Commission also welcomed City Councilmembers, Library Services Manager Norm Reeder, Senior Librarians and Youth Services Librarians from each branch, Friends of the Torrance Library Vice President Teresa Covey, and representatives of the Youth Council.

CONSOLIDATION UPDATE

While the Commission watched with anticipation the consolidation of the Library and the Parks and Recreation Departments to form the Community Services Department last year, the Commission is pleased that the transition appears to be moving smoothly.

CHALLENGES AND CONCERNS

As the Commission held meetings at each library branch facility, the Commission was gravely concerned to learn about the continuing electrical wiring and power problems at the Southeast Branch Library. Several members of the Commission questioned the safety, health, and services issues related to this problem. Sensing the urgency, the Commissioners directed City Librarian Weiner to convey this concern to City staff. It is the Commission's understanding that the electrical wiring problem is being addressed in the capital improvement projects budget approved by City Council this year.

Previously, the Torrance Public Library applied for a multi-million dollar grant through Proposition 14, the California Reading and Literacy Improvement and Public Library Construction and Renovation Bond Act of 2000. The purpose of the grant application was to secure funds to rebuild the North Torrance Library and Community Services Center. Had a new Library Bond Act, Proposition 81, passed in California during the June 2006 election, this grant application would have been considered in the first round of funding. Given that Proposition 81 did not pass, the Commission looks forward to hearing about other creative funding mechanisms to support the rebuilding project of the North Torrance Branch Library.

GRANTS

The Commission received periodic updates from the City Librarian regarding the status of various grant applications. The Library was awarded the following grants this fiscal year:

- ◀ “Stories in Art,” a grant from the Arts Education Partnership program in the amount of \$8000. The Library, working with staff from the Cultural Services Division, presented a series of creative programs for children and their families that included storytelling, docent-led tours of exhibits at the Torrance Art Museum, and studio time for youth to create original artwork.
- ◀ “Better Together: Creating Partnerships for Community Learning” Conference (funding to attend was provided by the California State Library), where Principal Librarian Theyer and other City staff learned about free-choice learning opportunities and collaborated on grant preparation for a multi-media resource about Torrance.
- ◀ ExxonMobil Foundation provided a \$5,000 grant to support the Library’s highly successful youth Summer Reading Program.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

As the Commission continues to evaluate its role in a dynamic environment with ever changing technological advances, legislative priorities, and socio-cultural changes, the Commission is dedicated to improving its communication with the surrounding communities. A new dimension of this dedication is regular e-mail updates to active homeowners associations regarding library events and relevant issues. Spearheaded by Commissioners Lang and Wang, the Commission seeks to disseminate information more effectively to library patrons.

EVENTS

Commission members were routinely involved in several local boards, committees, and agencies. Among the commissioners who were involved in organizations and functions related to the Torrance Public Library were:

- ◀ Commissioners Haig and Wang periodically attended meetings of the Torrance Public Library Foundation
- ◀ Commissioner Grogan represented the Commission at the Torrance Unified School District Educational Council of Torrance (ECT) meetings
- ◀ Vice Chair Botello was elected to the Assembly of the California Library Association for a three-year term
- ◀ Chairperson Roberts participated in the “Beat the Odds” Scholarship selection process on April 20, 2006
- ◀ On June 14, 2006, the Commission held its annual Library Staff Recognition Day event to honor part-time employees of the Library. Commissioners, City Management, Senior Library Management, and Library staff were present. The Commission used a substantial portion of its annual budget to fund the event.

Commissioners also undertook other activities for the benefit of the Library:

- ◀ Chairperson Roberts and Commissioner Wang attended the “Greek Wedding” Community Services awards banquet sponsored by the Parks and Recreation Commission celebrating the consolidation of the Library Department with the Department of Parks and Recreation on July 13, 2005.
- ◀ Commissioner Wang attended the presentation entitled “Lewis and Clark in Indian Country” (a commemoration of the Bicentennial of the Corps of Discovery expedition) on July 27, 2005 at Katy Geissert Civic Center Library.
- ◀ Commissioners Haig, Lang, and Wang attended Congresswoman Jane Harman’s reception for the South Bay winners of the Congressional Art Competition honoring Iraq Veterans on August 18, 2005 at Katy Geissert Civic Center Library.
- ◀ Commissioner Lang attended the California Association of Library Trustees and Commissioners (CALTAC) workshop on October 29, 2005 in Santa Clara.
- ◀ Chairperson Roberts, Commissioners Botello, Chappell, and Wang attended the California Library Association Annual Conference, November 4-7, 2005 in Pasadena.
- ◀ Vice Chair Botello and Commissioner Lang attended the *Library Day in the District* meetings at State Senator Debra Bowen’s Office in Redondo Beach, and Assemblyman Ted Lieu’s Office on February 3, 2006, in El Segundo.
- ◀ Chairperson Roberts and Commissioners Chappell and Wang attended the CALTAC workshop on March 11, 2006, at Burbank.
- ◀ Commissioner Chappell helped organize the Switzer Center’s 2006 South Bay Woman of the Year Luncheon on April 20, 2006, in Torrance.
- ◀ Chairperson Roberts attended the Metropolitan Water District’s Colorado River inspection tour on April 21- 23, 2006.
- ◀ Commissioners Grogan, Haig, and Wang attended the Torrance Public Library Foundation fundraiser for the Southeast Branch Library Homework Center on April 22, 2006 at Toyota Automobile Museum.
- ◀ Chairperson Roberts and Commissioner Wang attended the *Library Legislative Day* on April 26, 2006, in Sacramento, California.
- ◀ Chairperson Roberts and Commissioner Wang attended the “Beat the Odds Scholarship” dinner on May 11, 2006.

PARTNERSHIPS

The Torrance Library Commission remains committed to strengthening its relationships with key partners in the community. Both the Friends of the Torrance Library and the Torrance Public Library Foundation have enabled the Library to enhance its current operations through donations. Similar to past years, the Friends of the Library continued its generous funding for enhanced programming and other needs not covered under the City of Torrance’s budget. This year, the Torrance Public Library Foundation committed to raise funds for the establishment of a Homework Center at the Southeast Library branch. The Torrance Library Foundation achieved its goal by hosting its first fundraiser at the Toyota Automobile Museum.

It was with great sadness that the Commission noted the passing of former Library Commissioner, Margaret ('Peggy') Jean Basile. Commissioner Basile served on the Library Commission from January 16, 1996 to January 15, 2004, and made many contributions to the Library.

The Torrance Library Commission wishes to thank the dedicated staff at all library locations for the insight and assistance given it during the past fiscal year. The Commission commends the efforts of the entire staff of the Library, as they provide a wide array of quality programs and services to the public.

Respectfully submitted,

TORRANCE LIBRARY COMMISSION

By


Kathryn Roberts
Chairperson