

Council Meeting of
August 7, 2007

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

Members of the Council:

SUBJECT: Community Services - Library Commission Annual Report 2006-07

RECOMMENDATION

The Acting Community Services Director, City Librarian, and the Library Commission recommend that the City Council accept and file the Library Commission's 2006-07 annual report.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

The Library Commission Annual Report for the period July 2006 through June 2007 as prepared by the Library Commissioners is attached for the Council's information and review. The Commissioners approved the report at their July 9, 2007 meeting.

Respectfully submitted,



Paula J. Weiner
City Librarian

CONCUR:



Norm Reeder
Acting Community Services Director

NOTED:



for LeRoy J. Jackson
City Manager

Attachment: Library Commission Annual Report 2006-07

CITY OF TORRANCE LIBRARY COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT

Fiscal Year July 1, 2006 – June 30, 2007

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, July 2006 – January 2007
- Keri S. Botello – Vice Chairperson, July 2006 – January 2007; Chairperson, January 2007 – June 2007
- Clarence Chappell – Vice Chairperson, January 2007 – June 2007
- Judith Gerber
- Linda Grogan
- Jerome J. Haig
- Carrie Lang
- Wendy Wang

Commissioner Wendy Wang was reappointed by the City Council on January 9, 2007. Commissioner Judith Gerber was appointed by the City Council on January 9, 2007.

MEETINGS

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:

- February 5, 2007, at the North Torrance Branch Library
- March 12, 2007, at the El Retiro Branch Library
- April 9, 2007, at the Southeast Branch Library

- May 14, 2007, at the Henderson Branch Library
- June 11, 2007, at the WALTERIA Branch Library

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

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 19, 2006, and the Council was updated on current research in to the use of and public opinion about public libraries. The Council and Commission also discussed current library issues including Sunday hours of operation, safety and refurbishment of library facilities, and materials, services, and programs.

The Commission began a new tradition of meeting with the Parks and Recreation Commission. The two bodies met at the Katy Geissert Civic Center Library on July 10, 2006, and exchanged information on each commission's vision and mission statements, and the structure of both commissions, including their standing and Ad Hoc committees. They also identified and discussed activities and interests common to both commissions, including the possibility of offering joint programming and working together on capital projects.

CHALLENGES AND CONCERNS

The Commission was concerned about the potential impact of the impending closure of Hull Middle School on the Southeast Branch Library. Staff kept Commissioners apprised of preparations undertaken for an expected change in clientele and usage of the facility.

As noted in the fiscal year 2005-2006 Library Commission Annual Report, the Commission was gravely concerned about earthquake safety of branch shelving at all library locations, including the Katy Geissert Civic Center Library, and the electrical wiring and power problems at the Southeast Library. Sensing the urgency of this issue, in September 2006, the City Council voted to fully fund the remodel of the main floor of the Katy Geissert Civic Center Library to include earthquake safe stacks, new carpeting, reorientation of the Reference Desk, additional study rooms, and a more efficient workroom configuration. The City Council also funded new ADA compliant and earthquake safe shelving and carpeting for all branch libraries.

The Commission expressed its concern that the materials budget had not been increased for five years. This has been addressed by the City Council's approval of a \$100,000 increase to the materials budget for the next two-year budget cycle

The Commission also requested an increase to its budget, since it uses a substantial portion of its annual budget to fund the Library Part-Time Staff Recognition event. The increase is also necessary in order for commissioners to attend California Library Association and CALTAC events, the annual Legislative Day and other advocacy activities, in addition to covering membership in professional organizations. This budget increase was approved in May 2007.

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:

- Live Homework Help, a grant administered by the California State Library with assistance from the Friends of the Torrance Library in the amount of \$24,548 to fund a live, online tutoring service that will be available to help students with their schoolwork.
- An ExxonMobil Foundation grant in the amount of \$5,000 to fund science-related programming for children.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

The Commission is dedicated to improving communication and outreach with residents of the Library's service area and seeks to disseminate information more effectively to Library patrons.

As part of this effort, the Commission undertook the following activities:

- On October 14, 2006, Commissioners Lang and Chappell attended ExxonMobil's Community Open House to assist library personnel in staffing a community booth distributing handouts on library programs and services.
- On April 7, 2007, Commissioners Grogan and Lang volunteered with staff at a booth promoting library services at the Torrance Certified Farmers' Market.
- In April 2007, Commissioners Lang and Gerber disseminated a letter and a response form to solicit interest from active homeowners associations in receiving regular e-mail updates regarding library events and relevant issues.

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.

- Chairperson Roberts represented the Commission as a Metropolitan Cooperative Library System (MCLS) Advisory Board Delegate through January 2007, with Chairperson Botello serving as the MCLS Delegate from January 2007 through June 2007.

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

- Chairperson Roberts and Commissioner Lang attended the California Library Association Annual Conference November 11-13, 2006, in Sacramento.
- On January 26, 2007, Vice Chairperson Chappell and Commissioners Grogan and Wang attended CLA "Day in the District" meetings at State Senator Jenny Oropeza's Office and Assemblyman Ted Lieu's Office. Former Library Commissioner Kathryn Roberts attended as a private citizen.
- Commissioners Gerber, Grogan, and Lang attended the Southeast Branch Homework Center Grand Opening on March 8, 2007.
- Chairperson Botello and Commissioner Grogan attended the CALTAC workshop/meeting on March 24, 2007, at the Huntington Beach Library.
- Commissioner Haig attended CLA Library Legislative Day on April 18, 2007, in Sacramento, California.
- On June 13, 2007, the Commission held its annual Library Staff Recognition Day event to honor part-time employees. City officials, Commissioners, Senior Library Management, and Library staff members were present.
- On June 27, 2007, the Library Commission, in cooperation with the Environmental Quality and Energy Conservation Commission, jointly sponsored a program about global warming with the documentary film screening of *An Inconvenient Truth* and discussion of the book *Field Notes from a Catastrophe: Man, Nature, and Climate Change*.

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 fundraising and donations. Similar to past years, the Friends of the Library continued its generous underwriting of enhanced adult and youth programming, purchase of equipment and materials, and other needs not covered by the City of Torrance's budget. This year, the Torrance Public Library Foundation raised the funds necessary to establish a Homework Center at the Southeast Branch Library, as well as matching funds to support the Live Homework Help on-line tutoring program for students.

PEOPLE

Commissioner Kathryn Roberts was selected as the 2006 CALTAC Award recipient in the category of Trustee, Commissioner, or System Advisory Board Member for outstanding service to a local library or system. Fellow Commissioners had nominated Ms. Roberts for this prestigious honor and Commissioner Lang and City Librarian Weiner were in attendance at the CLA banquet at which Ms. Roberts' award was received.

Commissioners Chappell, Lang, and Wang participated in Commission Certification Training on September 27, 2006, and Library Commissioners Botello, Gerber, and Grogan attended mandated ethics training.

A Tree Dedication and Memorial in recognition of former Library Commissioner Margaret (Peggy) Jean Basile was held on October 20, 2006, at Torrance Park.

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 
Keri S. Botello, Chairperson