

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

Members of the Council:

**SUBJECT: Community Development – Solar Permitting Fees and Process  
Expenditure: None**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Recommendation of the Community Development Director and the Environmental Quality Commission that the City Council consider changes to the Solar Permitting fees and processes currently in place.

Funding: Not applicable.

### **BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS**

City Council requested that the Environmental Quality Commission examine the City's policies regarding solar panel permitting processes and fees, particularly in respect to the Sierra Club Solar Fee Study of June, 2009.

The Sierra Club Report recommends a maximum flat fee of \$324 for single family residential solar panel permits, below the average cost shown in the survey of \$493. While the information in the Sierra Club Report shows the City as having a much higher fee than recommended, the information in the report is based on general building permitting policies which calculate permit fees based on valuation of the project as a whole. Solar Panels themselves are fairly expensive, however, they are considered equipment, and as such have already been tested and approved; therefore they require only inspection for the actual installation and not the equipment itself.

This means that the permit fee is based on the valuation of the installation only rather than the cost for installation and panels. The actual building permit fee for a single family residential solar panel installation would be approximately \$250, with plan check done either over the counter or with a two to three day turn-around, depending on the complexity of the installation. In addition, there is a charge of \$239 for plan check by

the Fire Department and a turn-around time of up to two weeks. The next edition of the Sierra Club Report should reflect this information.

After discussion, the Environmental Quality Commission came up with several recommendations that they felt would encourage and simplify the permitting process for single family residential solar permits. The recommendations were as follows:

1. Waive solar permitting fees for the first 50 applicants and charge a flat \$100 fee for all other applicants for the remainder of the 12 month period beginning the date of approval.
2. Review the fee structure at the end of the 12 month period.
3. Consolidate the permitting process and have all single family solar panel plan checks performed by Building and Safety.
4. Provide information sheets and pre-approved installation diagrams at the counter.
5. Utilize referrals/vendor list provided by South Bay Environmental Services Center.

After discussion with Building and Safety, staff feels that all fees for single family solar panels should be waived for the year, as keeping track of the number of solar permit issues would be time-consuming at the counter and, based on current trends, we would likely not reach the 50 permit mark during this period. In addition, Fire and Building staff will need to discuss ways that the plan check could be consolidated, should the Council wish to move in that direction. Fire has concerns that some of the safety issues that they consider may require working more intensively with applicants to get the best results; to that end, we could consider a standard, approved installation meeting all of Fire's requirements that could be issued over the counter with installations that do not meet the standard entering into Plan Check with the Fire Department. Therefore, staff recommends the following amendments to the Environmental Quality Commission recommendations:

1. Waive solar permitting fees for the remainder of the 12 month period beginning the date of approval.
2. Work with Building and Fire to create a system allowing for all single family solar panel installation plan checks meeting basic standards to be performed by Building and Safety staff.

Respectfully submitted,

Terrance Environmental Quality Commission



Paul McCabe  
Chair

JEFFERY W. GIBSON  
Community Development Director

By 

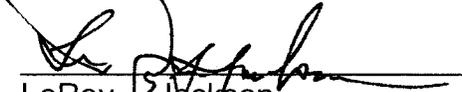
Linda Cessna  
Deputy Community Development Director

CONCUR:



Jeffery W. Gibson  
Community Development Director

NOTED:



LeRoy J. Jackson  
City Manager

Attachments:

- A. October 1, 2009 TEQECC Agenda Item and Minutes
- B. November 5, 2009 TEQECC Agenda Item and Minutes



**TORRANCE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMISSION**

October 1, 2009

To: Chairman McCabe and Members  
of the Torrance Environmental Quality Commission

Subject: Solar Electric Permitting Fees

The City council recently requested that the Environmental Quality Commission look at the Sierra Club report on Solar Electric permit fees for single family residential installation and consider the possibility of changing the City Of Torrance policy for permitting solar panels in order to lower our fees. The study done by the Sierra Club asked each municipality the total cost for a permit to install a solar system valued at \$27,000, whether permit fees were based on valuation or fixed cost and how long permit processing would take.

According to the Sierra Club, the City of Torrance charges \$1,009 to permit a solar system with a valuation of \$27,000 and would take from three to five weeks from submission until permit issuance. However, the information provided to the Sierra Club by the City was not specific to solar panels but rather to generic construction projects.

While our Building permit fees are based on valuation, in the case of solar panels the valuation is based only on installation and support system costs, not on the price of the actual panels. The panels are considered equipment, and as such are already tested and approved; therefore the equipment itself does not need to be inspected, only the installation, support system and attachment to the electric grid need inspection. As a result, the permitting fee would be approximately \$250 for the system described in the Sierra Club survey. The three to five week plan check period is a normal plan check for construction projects; again, in the case of a solar panel installation, plan check would be done over the counter or, in more complex cases, would take a period of up to three days.

Under current practices, there would be an additional flat fee from Fire of \$239 and a wait of up to two weeks for their plan check process, however, Fire and Building are discussing ways that the fee might be bifurcated with a lower fee for residential and the higher fee for the more complex business installations, as well as the possibility of an expedited plan check.

The Sierra Club found that the average residential solar installation fee in Southern California is \$493; they recommend a maximum flat fee of \$324 based on what they consider to be the average amount of time required to inspect and process solar installations at an average salary rate. They also found that most jurisdictions took from 1 to 2 weeks to issue a permit for solar installations while they recommend that solar

installations be issued over the counter whenever possible and with a maximum turn-around time of one week.

Some of the worst practices cited by the Sierra Club include valuation-based fees, Fire Department reviews, Public Works Department reviews, Planning Department reviews and Municipal Utility approvals. Of these, the City uses valuation-based fees, but only on installation costs, not on the cost of the solar panels. We also have Fire Department review, which is felt to be an important safety consideration for the City and one which we do not feel should be eliminated entirely. Our Building staff is currently working with Fire personnel to see if there are ways we can streamline the current process while still maintaining the level of safety required for maximum fire protection. While we did have Planning review only for installations in the hillside overlay district, that is no longer required and Public Works and Municipal Utility review are not included in the permitting process.

Based on current practices of our Building Division, our fees and permit issuance times would be in keeping with the recommendations of the Sierra Club study; this information has been forwarded to the Sierra Club and should be reflected in the upcoming revision of their report. While the Fire requirements may be more stringent than the Sierra Club would recommend, we feel that Fire input is crucial to maintaining the safety of residential installations, and will continue working with the Fire personnel to streamline the permitting process while still maintaining an appropriate level of safety.

The Sierra Club report can be viewed online at:  
<http://angeles.sierraclub.org/energy/pvfeereport.asp>

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda Cessna  
Deputy Community Development Director

**TORRANCE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMISSION**

October 1, 2009

To: Chairman McCabe and Members  
of the Torrance Environmental Quality Commission

Subject: Ad Hoc Committee

Mayor Scotto requested and obtained authority from the City Council to appoint an Ad Hoc Committee of the City Council to review Commissions. The City Council concurred with the Mayor's request to appoint Councilman Gene Barnett as Chair and Councilman Pat Furey and Councilman Bill Sutherland as members of the Ad Hoc committee. The new committee was given 90 days to return to the City Council with recommendations.

On Monday August 24, 2009, the first meeting of the Ad Hoc Council Committee for Commission Review was held in the Katy Geissert Civic Center Library. During that meeting, several issues were raised by those in attendance.

- Cost of Commissions
- Department input related to scope of Commission as well potential realignment opportunities.
- Potential of scheduling meetings on a quarterly basis or as needed based on issues.
- Potential to move specific issues/duties from one Commission to another
- Opportunity for your Commission to review these issues during an upcoming meeting and provide feedback for the upcoming meeting.
- Look for ways to tie in the Strategic/General Plan with Commission duties and scope.

This information is presented to the Commission for discussion, in which comments and concerns will be reflected in the official meeting minutes. This will provide the Ad Hoc Committee with input so that a full report can be presented to the City Council.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda Cessna  
Deputy Community Development Director

Attachments:

- A – Hand Out from August 24, 2009 meeting
- B – Minutes from August 24, 2009 meeting

October 1, 2009

**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 7:05 p.m. on Thursday, October 1, 2009 in the West Annex meeting room at Torrance City Hall.

**2. ROLL CALL:**

Due to the absence of Chairperson McCabe, Vice-Chairperson Reilly led the meeting.

Present: Commissioners Chim, Griffiths, Watson, and  
Vice-Chairperson Reilly.

Absent: Commissioner Gobble\* and Chairperson McCabe.

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

**MOTION:** Commissioner Chim moved to grant an excused tardy to Commissioner Gobble and an excused absence to Chairperson McCabe for the October 1, 2009 Commission meeting. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

\*Commissioner Gobble arrived at 8:16 p.m. following adjournment of the meeting.

**3. SALUTE TO THE FLAG**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Griffiths.

**4. POSTING OF THE AGENDA**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Griffiths, seconded by Commissioner Chim, 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.

**5. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Amy Wagner, West 228<sup>th</sup> Street, relayed comments by her veterinarian that less than 5% of animals in his practice are not altered. She provided information regarding Maddie's Fund that donated \$12 million dollars from 1999 to 2002 for California animal programs. She expressed concern about divisions among animal groups and stressed the importance of patience, courage, and finding common ground in contentious issues. She encouraged compliance with scoop, leash, and licensing laws and not burdening residents with a mandatory spay/neuter law.

6. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

6A. **MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 3, 2009**

Vice-Chairperson Reilly requested that the following be added to the September 3, 2009 meeting minutes:

Page 4, Item 7A: "Commissioner Reilly voiced support for no-fee permits, such as habitating an RV due to home fire, home destruction, or remodeling, that are flexible on time restrictions based on reasons for requests. She recommended adding boats to the definition of an RV."

Page 5, Item 8L: "Chairperson McCabe requested an update on the tree planting for former Commissioner Jackie Decker."

Page 5, Item 8M: "Chairperson McCabe requested that the Commission be placed on the City Council calendar for a joint meeting."

**MOTION**: Vice-Chairperson Reilly moved for the approval of the September 3, 2009 meeting minutes as amended. Commissioner Griffiths seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Gobble and Chairperson McCabe).

7. **ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS**

7A. **SOLAR PANEL PERMITTING FEES**

Deputy Director Cessna noted that a staff report and the Sierra Club report on Solar Permitting Fees and Practices throughout Southern California were attached in agenda materials. She reported that Torrance was rated number 7 in Southern California; however, staff determined that the information the Sierra Club received was for more generic type permits rather than specifically solar practices. She stated that the permitting fee for the solar panel system would actually be approximately \$250 and that plan check would take a period of up to three days. She advised that City fees and permit issuance times have been forwarded to the Sierra Club and should be reflected in the upcoming revision of their report. She noted that revisions should reflect that Torrance charges less than the Sierra Club recommends and permit issuance would be within their recommended time frame.

She reported that under current practices there is an additional plan check from the Fire Department that includes a flat fee of \$239 and a wait of up to two weeks for plan check. She advised that Building staff is working with Fire personnel to see if there are ways to streamline the current process while still maintaining the level of safety required for maximum fire protection, adding that one proposal is to have an annual solar symposium for residents. She stated that staff is working with South Bay Council of Governments and Los Angeles County to benefit from AB811, an incentive that would help residents install solar systems with minimal up-front costs.

She relayed City Council's request that the Commission consider the possibility of waiving permitting fees to lower costs, offering incentives and education programs, and providing a qualified vendor list.

Responding to Commissioner Griffiths' inquiry, Deputy Director Cessna stated that there are less than 30 residential solar panel installation requests per year and that there is pressing desire to make it more accessible, easier, and affordable. She added that at this point hillside overlay considerations would be part of solar panel installation.

In response to Vice-Chairperson Reilly's inquiry, staff estimated that less than 1% of City residents have solar panels and that there have been no permits issued for wind turbines.

Commissioner Griffiths expressed support for offering as many incentives as possible including reduction of fees and combining the Building and Fire plan check processes.

Responding to Commissioner Watson's inquiry, Deputy Director Cessna stated that in the past Building staff has been wary of providing lists of providers due to liability concerns. She added that the public could be invited to yearly workshops that would provide a list of guidelines that are required.

Commissioner Chim agreed with Commissioner Griffiths that the process should be made as easy as possible and predicted that soon more people will be showing interest in installing solar panels. She voiced support for offering incentives that are limited to a certain term.

Vice-Chairperson Reilly recommended offering incentives that include waiving fees, merging the Fire and Building plan check processes together, promoting long-term cost savings, providing a list of providers who are familiar with the City process, and participating in the AB811 program with Los Angeles County.

**MOTION:** Vice-Chairperson Reilly moved to open discussion to the public. Commissioner Chim seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

Don Clouch, West 238<sup>th</sup> Street, voiced support for combining the Building and Fire plan check processes as most installations would be done by contractors who are aware of requirements. He stated that he was in favor of waiving fees as long as it does not cost tax payers anything but would prefer a "department store concept" of buying now and paying later. He noted that there is more than one kind of solar panel and that the Strategic Plan is committed to promoting green processes.

Deputy Director Cessna summarized Commissioners' recommendations: no fee with a time limit and possible extensions, streamlining Fire and Planning plan check processes, promoting incentives, maximizing the AB811 program, developing a provider list, and providing yearly symposiums. She advised that staff would look into the recommendations and bring back a program for consideration at the next meeting.

Vice-Chairperson Reilly suggesting that staff contact the City of Santa Monica regarding its list of providers and Commissioner Griffiths requested that staff bring back the cost to the City if fees are waived.

## 8. **NEW BUSINESS**

**8A. CITY COUNCIL AD HOC COMMITTEE FOR COMMISSION REVIEW**

Deputy Director Cessna reported that an ad hoc Council Committee for Commission Review met on August 24, 2009 to initiate discussions for review of City Commissions. She noted that History and Background of City Commissions and Minutes from the August 24, 2009 meeting were included in agenda materials. She requested that Commissioners provide feedback and input which would be forwarded to the Council Committee.

She submitted Chairperson McCabe's recommendation to remove animals, signage, residential property recreational vehicle parking, and oil wells from the Commission's purview in order to be able to spend more time on traditional environmental issues. She noted that staff disagrees strongly with this recommendation except for animal cases which are now under the Police Department. She stated that the Department conducts business on the other items on a day-to-day basis.

In response to Commissioner Watson's inquiry, Deputy Director Cessna stated that there is no Commission that deals with Police Department issues but that that Municipal Code could be amended.

Commissioner Griffiths related his observation that animal, signage, RVs, and oil well issues have not been overly burdensome in the four years that he has been on the Commission.

Vice-Chairperson Reilly concurred with Commissioner Griffith, adding that the issues should remain with the Commission until such time that they become so dominating that nothing else can be addressed. She recommended not changing the scope of the Commission and to continue to meet monthly.

Commissioner Watson received clarification from staff that the Commission could meet more than once a month.

**9. ORAL COMMUNICATION**

**9A.** Commissioner Griffiths shared a September 24, 2009 section "Guide to Smart, Sustainable Living--Live Better Green" in the Daily Breeze and suggested that staff submit City activities for publication.

**9B.** Commissioner Griffiths, with concurrence from fellow Commissioners, recommended revisiting the issue of noise and pollution from gardeners.

**9C.** Commissioner Chim related her observation of an ASPCA poster on Assemblymember Lieu's door recommending September as "Adopt a Shelter Pet" month.

**9D.** Vice-Chairperson Reilly stated that the subcommittee met with Deputy Director Cessna last week to discuss the proposal to develop a City solar co-op program. She advised that the subcommittee recommends focusing more on the AB811 program with Los Angeles County but to continue to research liability, infrastructure, and terms and conditions involved with having a co-op program.

9E. Commissioner Watson announced an exhibit of environmental friendly means of transportation on October 2-3, 2009 in the City of Santa Monica.

9F. Deputy Director Cessna stated that the feeding ordinance as well as the carbon footprint report will be presented at the November or December 2009 Commission meeting.

10. **ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** At 8:15 p.m., Commissioner Griffiths moved to adjourn the meeting to November 5, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. in the West Annex meeting room. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion and, hearing no objection, Vice-Chairperson Reilly so ordered.

Approved as Submitted December 3, 2009 s/ Sue Herbers, City Clerk
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**TORRANCE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMISSION**

November 5, 2009

To: Chairman McCabe and Members  
of the Torrance Environmental Quality Commission

Subject: Solar Electric Permitting Fees

At the October meeting, solar permitting fees were discussed, potential recommendations were formulated and additional information was requested. The potential recommendations included:

1. Waive fees for residential solar installations, perhaps with a time limit that could then be extended if desired.
2. Consolidate permitting process and have all solar plan check performed by building staff.
3. Provide information sheets regarding installation requirements.
4. Preferred Provider list such as in Santa Monica.
5. Pre-approved installation methods that could be issued over the counter.

Information was requested regarding the number of residential solar installations in the City; the cost of waiving fees for solar installations; information regarding the Santa Monica preferred provider program and the possibility of doing something similar in the City of Torrance.

Staff looked at the permitting records for 2008 and 2009 and found that there were 8 residential solar installations in 2008 and 22 in 2009. Using an average cost of \$500 for permitting fees and plan check, the cost to the City of waiving those fees would be about \$11,000 in 2009. There have also been discussions with Fire regarding their plan check fee, and the possibility of charging a smaller fee for residential solar as compared to commercial/industrial installations. Should that happen, the cost to the City of waiving fees would be less per installation, however, given the jump in the number of solar installations, it would seem likely that there will be even more such installations in 2010, resulting in a larger loss of fee revenue.

The Solar Santa Monica program provides not only a preferred provider list, but also technical support, on-site solar assessments and bid comparison services. There is no cost break for using one of the preferred providers, however. Information regarding the program can be found at [www.solarsantamonica.com](http://www.solarsantamonica.com). Santa Monica has staff devoted specifically to this program.

At this time, staff would recommend working with the South Bay Environmental Services Center, as they have indicated that they will be looking at posting a list of Solar Installers, particularly as we move closer to implementation of the AB 811 program with the County. There are concerns with publishing a list of "preferred providers" as the City, as references would need to be checked as would insurance and even with regular monitoring, there is the potential for liability for City if there are problems between the installer and the resident.

Therefore, staff would recommend that the Commission forward the first three recommendations to Council; recommend working on partnering with the SBESC for provider listings; and, working with Building and Safety and Fire to come up with installation method recommendations.

Respectfully Submitted,



Linda Cessna  
Deputy Community Development Director

November 5, 2009

**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 7:05 p.m. on Thursday, November 5, 2009 in the West Annex meeting room at Torrance City Hall.

**2. ROLL CALL:**

Present: Commissioners Chim, Gobble, Griffiths, Reilly, Watson, and Chairperson McCabe.

Absent: None.

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

**3. SALUTE TO THE FLAG**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Reilly.

**4. POSTING OF THE AGENDA**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Chim, seconded by Commissioner Watson, 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.

**5. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

None.

**6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**6A. MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 3, 2009**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Gobble moved for the approval of the September 3, 2009 meeting minutes as submitted. Commissioner Reilly seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

**7. ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS**

**7A. GREEN PRIDE IN TORRANCE AWARD FOR CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT GARDENS**

Senior Environmental Quality Officer Duncan presented Green Pride in Torrance awards for California native plant gardens in the City. Roy Nitzchner accepted the

award for 1752 Andreo Avenue and Fern Ruiz received the award for 1404 Engracia Avenue. Rory and Kristie Lanktree were not present to accept the award for their garden at 1537 Marcelina Avenue.

Deputy Director Cessna announced that Green Pride in Torrance award winners will be recognized at the December 15, 2009 City Council meeting.

Chairperson McCabe expressed appreciation to tonight's recipients and suggested that they be included in the March 2010 Environmental Fair.

The Commission was in a brief recess from 7:12 p.m. to 7:20 p.m. for a photo opportunity.

## **7B. SOLAR PANEL PERMITTING FEES**

Deputy Director Cessna provided background and presented potential recommendations that were suggested at the October Commission meeting: 1) Waive fees for residential solar installations, perhaps with a time limit that could then be extended if desired, 2) Consolidate permitting process and have all solar plan check performed by Building staff, 3) Provide information sheets regarding installation requirements, 4) Preferred provider list such as in Santa Monica, and 5) Pre-approved installation methods that could be issued over the counter. She noted that there were eight residential solar installations in 2008 and 22 in 2009. She recommended that the Commission forward the first three recommendations to City Council, recommend working on partnering with the South Bay Energy Savings Center (SBESC) for provider listings, and working with Building and Safety as well as Fire to come up with installation method recommendations.

In response to Commissioner Chim's inquiry, she stated that permit fees average \$250 for residential solar panel installation and that the Fire Department charges a \$240 flat plan check fee for both residential and commercial installations. She added that staff has suggested to the Fire Department that they charge a smaller fee for residential solar installation.

Commissioner Reilly expressed concern that there may be a surge in installation applications and potential loss of revenue for the City. She suggested waiving fees based on quantity rather than time; for example, waiving fees for the first 50 or 100 applications.

Responding to Commissioner Griffiths' inquiry, Deputy Director Cessna stated that permits can be processed over the counter or take up to two days to process. She added that Fire Department plan checks take approximately two weeks but that Building and Safety staff are more than capable of checking roof strength, distance from the ridge, and other things that the Fire Department looks for in residential installations.

Commissioner Gobble expressed support for providing a "preferred provider" list to assist residents and Deputy Director Cessna advised that the City prefers not to go in that direction due to the potential for liability if there are problems between installer and resident as well as staff time required to determine who would be on the list. She recommended referring applicants to the SBESC website that provides a list of installers.

Commissioner Watson described the services offered in the City of Santa Monica, pointing out that it is a very intense process and for a much smaller population.

Commissioner Griffiths voiced support for waiving permit fees, noting that this is a great opportunity to make a strong statement that the City is environmentally friendly.

Commissioner Gobble suggested offering a fee reduction in 2010, from the current approximately \$500 to \$200, and revisiting again at the end of 2010.

Commissioner Chim suggested the possibility of using a combination of both Commissioner Reilly's and Commissioner Gobble's recommendations.

Chairperson McCabe stated that SBESC should provide a list of "green" vendors such as the City of Santa Monica does and voiced support for very low or completely waived fees to encourage residents.

Referring to the second recommendation to consolidate the permitting process, Commissioner Gobble discussed Southern California Edison's plan check process and stated that he supports having all solar plan checks performed by Building staff.

Commissioner Griffiths stated that the Fire Department's involvement in plan checks is duplicative and that it makes sense to consolidate the permitting process.

In response to Chairperson McCabe's inquiry, Deputy Director Cessna discussed Assembly Bill 811 that will encourage all kinds of energy savings by giving residents money up front and allowing them to repay over a number of years through their property tax.

Commissioner Watson stressed the importance of making the process simple, free, and streamlined.

Commissioners discussed recommendation #3 that would provide information sheets regarding installation requirements.

Commissioner Gobble stated that he supports the recommendation but noted that information sheets need to be clear, provided in advance of installations, and professionally developed to ensure that requirements are met.

Deputy Director Cessna stated that recommendation #3 would provide general information sheets but that recommendation #5 would provide actual diagrams. She added that solar vendors apply for the majority of permits.

Commissioner Chim cautioned that there may be disputes between neighbors over right to light and air issues and that the City should have a plan in place to address this before the recommendations go into effect.

Deputy Director Cessna stated that the City Attorney's Office is aware of this potential but that there is no case law yet.

Commissioner Gobble concurred with Commissioner Chim and raised the possibility of recommending that solar panels be no more than six inches over a ridge line.

Commissioner Reilly suggested that recommendation #5 be included with recommendation #3 and staff concurred.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Gobble moved to adopt the five recommendations but with recommendation #1 to state that fees for residential solar installations be \$100 for a period of one year and to expire December 31, 2010 with no limit, that recommendations 2, 3, and 5 be combined together, and that staff would utilize the preferred provider list used by the South Bay Energy Savings Center for recommendation #4. The motion failed due to a lack of a second.

Deputy Director Cessna advised Commissioners that they could present a range of options to City Council in the item.

Commissioner Gobble stated that a minimal fee would get applicants in the door and would not limit solar panel installations.

Commissioner Griffiths stated his opinion that fees should be completely waived for 12 months from the date of approval but that permits should still be required.

Commissioner Chim stated that she liked the suggestion to give City Council several options, but added that they may be more comfortable with concrete numbers.

Commissioner Reilly stated that her only concern was the potential cost to the City if there is a large increase in applications, agreeing that permits should be required. She suggested waiving fees for the first 50 applicants and \$100 thereafter.

Commissioner Watson and Chairperson McCabe recommended waiving fees for 12 months and reviewing the fee structure at the end of the period.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Gobble moved to recommend to City Council to 1) waive solar permitting fees for the first 50 applicants and a \$100 fee for all other applicants for the remainder of the 12 month period beginning the date of approval, 2) to review the fee structure at the end of the 12 month period, 3) to consolidate the permitting process and have all solar plan checks performed by Building staff, 4) to provide information sheets and pre-approved installation methods over the counter, 5) to utilize the list of preferred vendors provided by the South Bay Energy Savings Center, and 6) with the understanding that other options discussed at this meeting will also be presented to City Council. Commissioner Chim seconded the motion. The motion passed by a 5-1 roll call vote (with Commissioner Griffiths voting nay).

Commissioner Griffiths explained that he voted against the motion because he supports waiving all fees and believes that recommendation #4 should be completely eliminated.

#### **7C. TEQECC ANNUAL REPORT 2008-2009**

Deputy Director Cessna noted that the Commission's Annual Report for 2008-2009 was included in agenda materials.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Gobble moved to accept as presented the Annual Report for the Environmental Quality and Energy Conservation Commission for 2008-2009. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

**8. ORAL COMMUNICATION**

**8A.** Commissioner Chim raised the possibility of shortening the name of the Commission and Deputy Director Cessna offered to forward the suggestion to the Ad Hoc Council Committee for Commission Review.

**8B.** Deputy Director Cessna announced a Proclamation for "A Day Without Bags" at the December 15, 2009 City Council meeting as well as recognition of coloring contest winners, the Commission's Annual Report, and Green Pride in Torrance award winners.

**8C.** Deputy Director Cessna stated that "Save the Date" letters were sent out to vendors for the March 27, 2010 Environmental Fair and that they are starting to get feedback.

**8D.** Deputy Director Cessna stated that she is working with Jackie Decker's family to incorporate a tree planting in her honor at the March 27, 2010 Environmental Fair at Madrona Marsh Preserve.

**8E.** Deputy Director Cessna stated that she hopes to bring the carbon footprint report to the December 2009 Commission meeting.

**8F.** Deputy Director Cessna briefly discussed the SBESC meeting on October 23, 2009.

**8G.** Fred Koch, Via Ventura, urged the City to take advantage of stimulus funds that may be available for green building at the local level. He mentioned that Public Works provides a list of contractors and suggested that there be consistency.

In response to his inquiry, Deputy Director Cessna stated that the City has not established criteria for green building but has adopted Build it Green as a voluntary program for residential building and remodeling.

**8H.** Commissioner Gobble distributed information about innovative construction techniques for concrete, walls, carbon, and solar applications.

**8I.** Commissioner Chim shared information about her tour of the energy efficient Coca Cola plant in Torrance and the several environmentally geared vendors at the Women's Conference in the City of Long Beach.

**8J.** Commissioner Reilly announced that Exxon Mobil refinery is giving \$80,000 to North Torrance Library in celebration of their 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

**8K.** Commissioner Reilly discussed the 360 video and “real time” demonstration of energy consumption of buildings at the SBESC meeting on October 23, 2009.

**8L.** Commissioner Reilly stated that she is maintaining the “back burner” list for the Commission to continue to monitor.

**8M.** Commissioner Watson received clarification from staff that some positive feedback was received from the Environmental Fair vendor survey.

**8N.** Commissioner Watson shared information about the billboard controversy in the City of Los Angeles.

**8O.** In response to Chairperson McCabe's inquiry, Commissioner Reilly stated that the solar subcommittee decided to defer the solar co-op proposal and to focus more on promoting AB811.

**8P.** Responding to Chairperson McCabe's inquiry, Deputy Director Cessna stated that she has not confirmed a date for the joint meeting with City Council yet.

**8Q.** Chairperson McCabe stated that he was misquoted in the ad hoc Council Committee for Commission Review meeting minutes. He stated that he actually recommended that some of the items be taken away from the Commission that do not fall in line with environmental quality and energy conservation.

**8R.** Chairperson McCabe stated that the City of El Segundo is accepting green waste if residents want to drop it off.

**8S.** Commissioner Gobble requested an excused absence for the December 3, 2009 Commission meeting.

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** At 9:10 p.m., Commissioner Griffiths moved to adjourn the meeting to December 3, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. in the West Annex meeting room. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion and, hearing no objection, Chairperson McCabe so ordered.

<p>Approved as Amended January 7, 2010 s/ Sue Herbers, City Clerk</p>
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