

City Manager Needed

(An Editorial)

All the frenzied effort by Torrance city officials to raise funds through parking meters, business licenses and industrial head taxes in order to meet a politically-minded swollen budget was aptly paraphrased the other day when one of the city officials remarked, "We pluck before we prune."

And that in a nutshell is the whole trouble with the present City Hall policies. Instead of attempting to trim expenses to income, like any business executive is forced to do to stay in business, the politically-minded city administrators seek first to find ways of tapping new tax sources. And the reason is simple. It costs votes to pare down expenses.

The whole picture has brought to focus the necessity of changing our municipal affairs to the City Manager basis. A good business executive devoting his entire time and energy to municipal affairs could easily balance an adequate budget without resorting to parking meters, excessive business licenses and industrial head taxes. This is especially true of Torrance which has an abnormally high tax assessment base of nearly \$30,000,000.

There may be some need for these extra taxes in cities with only three to ten millions in assessed property, but certainly not in Torrance. On the contrary, our advantageous position should make Torrance the "white spot" among other municipalities, free of nuisance and extraneous tax burdens. This advantage would attract new industries, new retail businesses, and new patronage to our trading center, which in turn would further increase our taxable worth and lower the cost of municipal government to the individual taxpayer by reason of the greater amount of property over which to spread the levy.

Furthermore, with a competent business executive in charge at the City Hall, the ridiculous fumbling of the airport negotiations, the constant turmoil in the bus department, and the trouble in the building department could be streamlined out and made to function as a well coordinated business enterprise. There must be something wrong, when new residential subdivisions spring up all AROUND Torrance and none of them are located WITHIN this city. It is time to take care of the city.

Even from the standpoint of the practical politician, the City Manager plan has its advantages. City Councilmen can well take a lesson from the astute members of the County Board of Supervisors. The Supervisors long ago set up a "chief administrative officer" who in every respect is a county manager. When painful economies are required or some action needed which may draw fire from some special interest, the Supervisors get off the spot by passing the buck to the County Manager. The City Manager, being an appointive officer is not subject to the pressure exerted on an elective officer. He can stand his ground in defense of good government for the majority and run the affairs of the office in a businesslike, impartial manner.

Recent amendments to the State Laws governing cities of the sixth class permit the engagement of an officer to perform the duties of a city manager. As soon as the newly adopted city charter is ratified by the State Legislature, an amendment should be adopted definitely setting up a city manager for Torrance; but in the meantime, the same action, in effect, can be accomplished under existing law. Torrance has outgrown its small-town practices and needs a competent business executive at the helm.

The Herald believes that the individual members of the present City Council are anxious to do a good job for the majority of Torrance people. Some of the councilmen have indicated that they favor the City Manager plan. We suggest that other members of the Council discuss the idea with their fellow citizens, and if the plan is favored, then put it into effect.

OFFICIALS TO MEET WYATT FOR CONFERENCE ON NEEDS FOR HOME BUILDING HERE

The critical housing situation in Torrance will be laid before Wilson W. Wyatt, national house expeditor, by an official Torrance group headed by Acting Mayor W. H. Tolson on Monday, it was revealed this week.

Tolson said that the city is making reservations for participation in the meeting in the Biltmore Bowl on Monday, Sept. 30, which will be addressed by Wyatt, and that efforts are being made to secure a conference to explain the problems which are holding back construction of nearly 1,000 homes in Torrance, badly needed by war veterans.

Attending the meeting with Tolson will be J. G. Caldwell, Veterans Service Center director; Blaine Walker, Chamber of Commerce secretary, and Ben Weston, owner of large holdings available for development in South Torrance.

Wyatt's office had received a communication from the City of Torrance addressed to President Truman in which the President's aid in securing approval of the F. H. A. for mutual mortgage insurance at several Torrance tracts was asked, and this communication has been referred to Preston L. Wright, regional expeditor in San Francisco, Wyatt told Mayor J. Hugh Sherfy Jr. in a letter received last week.

Wright has been instructed to give every possible assistance in working out a solution to the problem which is facing your community," Wyatt said, but Acting Mayor Tolson declared that Torrance intends to miss no bet in seeking solution to the housing problem of the community.

The F.H.A. had rejected the Thomas Johnson tract at Hawthorne Blvd. and 182nd st. and the Kettler tract at Narbonne ave. and Sepulveda Blvd., where developers were prepared to proceed with construction of several hundred homes. Johnson is reported to be planning to proceed with his program, and has said that the sewers are needed and that the property can stand the bonded debt necessary, but due to material shortages and an outlet advised against its construction at this time.

When Acting Mayor W. H. Tolson announced that the County Sanitation District is interested in providing a trunk line for the outlet, the matter was referred back to Barnett for further consideration.

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TORRANCE, CALIFORNIA, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 1946



U. S. STEEL TOP EXECUTIVES VISIT TORRANCE . . . Posed before the building housing the Torrance plant are members of the Board of Directors of U. S. Steel Corporation. Seated, left to right: Alexander C. Nagle, George A. Sloan, Nathan L. Miller, Arthur M. Anderson, Cason J. Callaway, Enders M. Voorhees, chairman finance committee; Benjamin F. Fairless, president; Irving S. Olds, chairman of the board; William A. Irvin, Philip R. Clarke, Robert C. Stanley and James B. Black. Standing, left to right: Al Puetz, office manager, Columbia Torrance plant; John H. Osmer, general assistant to chairman, U. S. Steel; Harlow P. Dotson, assistant general superintendent, Columbia Torrance plant; J. G. Cummings, traffic manager, U. S. Steel Export Co.; A. B. Nauert, assistant sales manager, Columbia Torrance; Carl Wittenburg, manager sales, Southern District; B. D. Long, vice president in charge of sales, Columbia Torrance; A. Averell Brown, secretary, U. S. Steel; O. L. Pringle, vice-president in charge of operations, Columbia; C. B. Gray, superintendent sheet mill, Columbia, Torrance; William A. Ross, president, Columbia Steel; O. A. Kresse, general superintendent, Columbia, Torrance; J. Marshall Orris, superintendent rolling mills, Columbia, Torrance; J. Carlisle MacDonald, assistant to chairman in charge of public relations, U. S. Steel; and Lee Sharp, chief industrial engineer, Columbia Steel, Torrance. (Torrance Herald photo)

COLUMBIA WORKERS' WAR RECORD PRAISED AS U.S.S. DIRECTORS VISIT PLANT

"United States Steel Corporation is proud of the wartime record of the Torrance works, Columbia Steel Company, and of its peacetime accomplishments," President Benjamin F. Fairless of U. S. Steel declared yesterday during an inspection of the Torrance plant.

Registration For Nov. 5 Closing Today

If you did not vote in the general election of 1944, or if you have moved and have not since re-registered, you must register not later than today, Sept. 26, if you wish to cast your ballot in the Nov. 5 general election.

Deputies are on hand in the office of City Clerk A. H. Bartlett. Mrs. T. J. Wilkes will register voters at 2117 Carson st. Walkers may register at the home of Mrs. Roy Palmer, 24432 Los Cordon ave., or of George P. Thatcher, 3908 Newton st.

American Rock Wool Co. Takes Torrance Plant

Coast Insulating Company has been merged with the American Rock Wool Co., and the Torrance firm now is under new management, operating as the American Rock Wool Co., California branch.

W. T. Tillotson is plant manager, and he came to Torrance from the American Rock Wool plant in Indiana. Prior to joining American, Tillotson was with the U. S. Gypsum Co. in Los Angeles.

J. Ebbingshouse, also from the Washburn, Ind., American Rock Wool plant, is office manager. William Wheeler, who was with Coast Insulating Company, remains as superintendent, and H. C. Smith, formerly head of the firm here, now is with a newly organized firm in Los Angeles, it was said.

Miss Maxine Deal, secretary, also came to the California plant from Indiana. American Rock Wool Co. has plants in Minnesota, Ohio and New Jersey, as well as the Torrance and Washburn plants.

Approximately 100 persons are employed in the Torrance works, engaged in making home and industrial insulation. Considerable expansion is planned, it was revealed.

Quandt Water Purchased For \$36,500

Provisions for the development of Torrance Municipal Water District No. 1 in Southwest Torrance including the Walteria area, were rounded out Tuesday with the purchase by the district of the C. H. Quandt water system for \$36,500.

The system, long in service of the Walteria community, was priced as high as \$70,000 by attorneys representing the owners and as low as \$20,000 by the city, as they dickered for the purchase, which was necessary before the city could develop the Water district in Southwest Torrance.

With the completion of the sale, the bonds are being sold and engineering details worked out preparatory to building the necessary pipe and trunk lines for service of the area. The City Council Tuesday night gave final action calling for the election in North Torrance, Nov. 19, on the formation of Torrance Municipal Water District No. 2.

WILSON'S SON KILLED

P. W. Wilson, pharmacist with Discount Drug Co., received word yesterday that his son, Glenn, had been killed in a hunting accident in Idaho. The son, who lived in Oregon with his Irish bride, was said to be 25 years old. Wilson left immediately to join his daughter-in-law in her bereavement.

Hospital Sale To County Is WAA Approved

Sale of the Torrance Army hospital to Los Angeles County was approved Tuesday by the War Assets Administration at a discount of 95 percent of the current market value of \$959,951. The price paid was \$48,000.

The county supervisors Tuesday approved a plan for shifting 300 more patients from the County General hospital to Torrance. The newly acquired institution is known as the Harbor General hospital and has been in operation by the county for three months under an agreement.

It is planned to operate the 480-bed hospital for indigent sick and dependent poor. A limited number of paying patients will be admitted. There are now 250 patients in the Harbor General hospital in Torrance, in 10 wards, according to J. E. Smits, director. Two are occupied by post-polio cases where convalescing patients are receiving the Kenny hot pack treatment.

Emergency facilities are not yet available, he said, due to the lack of graduate nurses. He said that there are now 260 to 270 persons employed at the hospital, and that the development of the institution will go ahead as fast as help is obtained. Some 500 persons will be employed there when the institution is in full operation, it was said.

The hospital formerly was operated by the Port of Embarkation. Movement of the patients is to provide additional space in the County General hospital, overtaxed for many years.

The supervisors also voted to shift 200 patients from the County General hospital to former Camp Elliott Fleet Marine base in San Diego county. The action was on recommendation of County Manager Wayne Allen, who estimated the cost of installing beds at Camp Elliott at \$33,000. The Marine Corps property has been leased by Los Angeles and San Diego counties for \$1-a-year and will be operated jointly as a hospital.

LEGION POST ASKS COUNCIL ABOUT CITY JOB POLICY

American Legion Post No. 170 Tuesday night asked the City Council about its policy of hiring veterans and married women on city jobs, and was told that the city has only six emergency employees left on the payroll.

The council had agreed to eliminate all temporary employees as of July 1. All others are under Civil Service.

LOCKRIDGE GETS LEAVE

J. W. Lockridge, maintenance man at the Walteria city park, was granted a leave of absence by the City Council Tuesday night.

Protesting Crowd Forces Council To Defer License Ordinance; Sales Tax Due

Beleagued by a protesting throng of 150 merchants and taxpayers, Torrance City Council Tuesday night backed away from its proposed new business license ordinance which, among other things, levied a head tax on employees, with the following results:

- 1. Torrance will have no business license ordinance as of Oct. 1, next Tuesday.
- 2. A city sales tax is inevitable.

3. Employment of a City Manager who will be able to save a hundred times his salary in cutting city expenses is being given strong consideration.

The license ordinance must have been passed Tuesday night as an emergency measure for the City of Torrance to have any licensing ordinance at all, as the old measure expires Sept. 30 at midnight.

A public hearing is being called for Oct. 9 on the license ordinance and it is expected that between now and that date, the proposed ordinance will be changed to remove the objectionable features which resulted in its being tabled Tuesday night, and some form of licensing measure will be adopted with or without a city sales tax.

Prior to consideration of the proposed ordinance at the meeting Tuesday night, the City Council heard City Clerk A. H. Bartlett read a resolution of Torrance Chamber of Commerce calling for the council to "adopt an ordinance creating the office of City Manager, and conferring upon him fixed and definite powers and authority to effect economy and curtailment in the expenditure of public funds."

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Sales Tax, Parking Meters, Sewer Rental Seen In All California Cities

If the tone of the city officials expressed at the convention of the California League of Cities in San Diego recently is a barometer of things to come, each California city will have, within the next few years:

- 1. A municipal sales tax.
- 2. Automobile parking meters.
- 3. Sewage service taxes.

So states Councilman William H. Tolson, veteran of Torrance municipal affairs and former mayor who has been holding down the office of chief executive of Torrance during the absence from the city of Mayor J. Hugh Sherfy Jr.

"A great increase in the assessment roll of California cities is coming next year," Tolson said. "This will add to the tax burden of the owner of real property, and real estate now is standing just about the limit of its share in taxation. Not that the increase is not justified, because the assessed valuation of property is far below potential taxing value, particularly at this time when prices are so high. A house selling now for \$10,000 is assessed as low as \$2,000. It should be assessed for from \$4,000 to \$5,000. To assess this house at the accepted 40 to 50 percent of actual value places too great a burden on the owner of that house and the only answer in view of the need for more municipal revenue, is the sales tax."

Tolson declared that the sales tax in Torrance should produce upwards of \$250,000 a year, at from 1/2 to 1 percent, and the cost of collection should be negligible. He said that the sales tax would relieve the property owner of unnecessary burden and equalize the cost of detail.

Twenty-six California cities already have city sales tax ordinances and the cost of collection of the tax runs from one percent in Santa Barbara. Returns are made on simple forms at the time returns are made to the State Board of Equalization, and the same figures are used in both cases except that cities require less detail.

Shoestring Strip Community Group Holds Meeting

The regular semi-monthly meeting of the Shoestring Strip Community association was held last night at seven thirty at the Nazarene church, 1501 Carbone ave. Two hundred and fifty persons attended.

J. Borell of the recreation department of Los Angeles, spoke regarding facts and ideas as to the best possible methods of securing recreation facilities for the strip. Following his talk, a question period followed.

Several older residents of this community offered suggestions on selecting a more appropriate name other than the shoestring strip. It was their contention that this area deserved a more suitable name. This suggestion was marked for future reference until such time information as to the proper procedure could be obtained.

A. E. Kirkpatrick, chairman of the zoning committee, reported that satisfactory progress was being made by his committee. Three new committees were appointed as follows: recreation, R. MacArthur, W. J. Vernon, Charles Emery, B. L. Tuttle and E. G. Spratt; school, mesdames L. E. Watson, Don Wolf, C. Knorr, Robert Foster and Robert Linton; by-laws, Mrs. L. C. Smith and C. S. Munger.

The next meeting of the association will be held Oct. 8 at 1:30 p.m.

Council Okays Perpetual Flight Strip Permit

Torrance City Council Tuesday night placed the stamp of approval on the perpetual permit for occupancy of the 89.9 acres comprising the flight strip of the 480-acre army developed airport on 101 highway.

The permit was granted by the Public Roads Administration, and it is reported that a similar permit for the remaining 400 acres is enroute for approval of the City Council.

The Torrance Aviation Commission requested the council to order prepared a uniform permit form for concessions at the airport, but it was held for study due to the fact that the whole airport is not yet in the hands of the City of Torrance.

Report Rendered On Walteria Area Sewer Proposal

Harold A. Barnett, civil engineer, Tuesday night rendered his report to the City Council on the formation of the sewer district in the Walteria area. He said that the sewers are needed and that the property can stand the bonded debt necessary, but due to material shortages and an outlet advised against its construction at this time.

When Acting Mayor W. H. Tolson announced that the County Sanitation District is interested in providing a trunk line for the outlet, the matter was referred back to Barnett for further consideration.

Torrance High Sportsmanship Award Revealed

Torrance high school has been awarded the sportsmanship trophy of the Marine league for the past year, Principal Raymond J. Casey said yesterday.

Second was Banning high school; third, San Pedro; fourth, Narbonne, and fifth, Gardena high.

Each year, a beautiful trophy is presented to the student body in the league which displays the best sportsmanship, in athletic contests, in the bleachers, the attitude toward officials and opposing teams, conduct in automobiles and conduct on the campus of the host school.

While Torrance won last year, the Tartars (Torrance) rated third the previous year when San Pedro won. Narbonne ranked second.

Winning of this trophy is a high honor for the school, Principal Casey said, and involves the complete cooperation of every member of the student body and athletes.

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