

# COUNCIL NIXES MOVE TO DROP MILLION DOLLAR SUIT ON PARK

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# City May Hit Legal Snag In Zoning Downtown Lots

## Parking Zone in Question

The city's move to zone all downtown parking lots to restrict them to parking only may have hit a legal snag this week in a ruling prepared by City Attorney Stanley Remelmeier.

In a brief prepared for the Council meeting this week, Remelmeier concluded that the proposed rezoning of the property to P-1 "is probably unconstitutional except as to those lots where a written approval is received from the owners."

Remelmeier's ruling was made after the City Council and the planning commission had instituted action to change parking lots within the boundaries of the downtown assessment district to the special zone which would assure their future use as parking sites.

The planning commission held public hearings on the rezoning request in November and sent the matter to the Council without recommendation, but asked for the city attorney's legal opinion.

A third hearing, before the Council will be needed to effect the rezoning.

Consent Needed  
Remelmeier's finding concludes that written consent from the owners of the property will be needed. Three such consents have been received, he reported.

Eight lot owners protested the action at the planning commission hearing.

## Old Timers Tell About Early Days

"Young people should learn all they can about such subjects as chemistry, physics, and mathematics," declared W. N. "Dick" Felker, pioneer Torrance industrialist whose genius made the Felker diamond saw world famous, in a talk Thursday night before the Rotary Club.

Felker, with Sam Levy and Jack Barrington, gave a program made up of reminiscences of early Torrance. Some early history was liberally mixed with humor and sagacity to entertain Rotarians and visiting guests.

Felker, spry and alert for his 72 years, admitted that he spent a good deal of his time these days at favorite fishing and hunting haunts. But it wasn't always this way, he indicated, for he spent hard years before achieving almost overnight success.

Levy recalled his early days in Torrance and made some comparisons on land values of today and those of 35 years ago. Barrington related the vicissitudes of establishing what is today the flourishing Barrington Iron Works.



WELCOME TO AMERICA . . . Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Stenger, who arrived Wednesday from Holland, look over some of the canned goods which their neighbors brought in to welcome them to America and to their new home at 2438 W. 234th St. Shown are Ann, 12; Elizabeth, 10; Stenger; Mrs. Stenger; Joyce, 11 months; and Ingrid, 14. (Story on Page 2)

## Indoctrination Session Slated For Volunteers

First indoctrination session of some 90 leaders of the women's volunteer corps for the \$100,000 general gifts program of the Little Company of Mary Hospital Campaign will be held Monday morning at 10 o'clock at the Torrance Woman's Club.

Mrs. Elaine Tweedy and Mrs. Clara Conner, co-chairwomen of the general gifts drive, will meet with 16 majors and 80 captains to receive instructions concerning the personal solicitation of more than 20,000 families in the hospital area. A corps of between 400 and 500 volunteer workers will undertake the drive, beginning Feb. 27.

Campaign headquarters Saturday urged all majors to contact their captains to assure attendance at Monday's meeting. During the week, the captains will recruit workers, with the aid of the campaign headquarters staff, and preparations will be completed for the Feb. 27 kickoff at Torrance Civic Auditorium.

George W. Post, director of the general public phase of the \$776,000 fund drive for the hospital, and Fred A. Kraus, campaign director, will address the Monday meeting, which is expected to be completed within one hour, or by 11 o'clock.

Post urged that any ladies wishing to participate in the endeavor call campaign headquarters, FAIRfax 8-9616. The effort will be concluded, he said, by mid-March.

## City Pioneer Dies, Rites Set Tomorrow

Funeral services for Lora Edith Cusick, 84, one of the city's earliest residents, will be held at 2 p.m. tomorrow at Stone and Myers Mortuary with Rev. C. M. Northrup of the First Baptist Church officiating.

Mrs. Cusick who lived at 1358 Engracia, came to Torrance 43 years ago when the Pacific Electric shops were being built here. She was a native of Valley Falls, Kans.

Members of the First Baptist Church will serve as pallbearers tomorrow. She is survived here by a niece, Mrs. Helen Zamzla, of 1571 W. 210th St.

Interment will be in Forest Lawn.

## Little League Sets Meeting For Saturday

Registration for the 1957 season of the American Little League will be held Saturday at 9 a.m. at Seaside School. All boys living within the boundaries between the ages of 8 and 12 are eligible to register. Each boy must bring a birth certificate.

League boundaries are south of Sepulveda, west of Hawthorne to the Torrance-Redondo Beach boundary line, and north of Pacific Coast Hwy. Homes located on the southeast corner of Hawthorne and Sepulveda are also included.

Try-outs will be held the following three Saturdays, March 2, 9, and 16. Time and place for each age group will be given at the registration.

## OFFICIALS TO DISCUSS AIRPORT AT BREAKFAST

Plans for the development of the Torrance Municipal Airport will be discussed Tuesday morning at the February breakfast meeting of the Chamber of Commerce to be held in the Y.W.C.A. building on Carson street.

Representatives of Quinton Engineers, who have been engaged by the city to develop the master plan, will present the plan itself with engineering and architectural displays. Members of the Airport Commission will be invited guests and Councilmen Willys Blount and Robert Jahn, both familiar with airport's needs as officials and as pilots, will be asked to comment on the proposals.

Manager Dick Fitzgerald of the Torrance Chamber urges all who are interested in attending the meeting to make reservations at once by telephoning FA 8-2814.

## Court Probes Bail System

Charges that bail money posted with a privately hired warrant officer of the Torrance Police Department didn't reach the court were aired at an informal hearing Thursday afternoon. Testifying on the matter before Municipal Judge Otto B. Willett at South Bay Municipal Court were

Jack Gee, who handles out-of-town warrant service for Torrance; and a Los Angeles man who said he paid Gee the bail charges, only to be told at the court later that his bail was never posted.

No Record Here  
Police Chief W. H. Haslam said the local department had no record of the matter, and that Gee had apparently never been paid a commission for serving the Los Angeles warrant. Gee said he turned the money over to Torrance police.

This week's development followed charges last summer that the warrant officer had been slow in depositing bail monies he collected. At that time, he canceled his contract, but the city retained him on a per diem basis after revising the method of handling the accounts. The case heard Thursday involved bail monies due prior to last year's reorganization.

System Changed  
Chief Haslam said the Tor-

rance officer then handling the accounts had been assigned to other duties, and that a stricter accounting system for warrants given to the special officer and the balls paid in was instituted.

No record of the bail money receipt could be produced by Gee, and the local department has no record of the matter, Haslam says.

Gee's offer to pay the \$91 discrepancy was refused by Judge Willett, Haslam said.

One of Best  
Haslam told the HERALD yesterday that Gee was one of the best "skip-tracers" in the business, and that he had been highly successful in running down violators for Torrance and other Torrance area cities.

All bail monies due the court could be accounted for except the one case in question, Haslam said. He said money sometimes had been late in arriving at the court, but that it was all accounted for except the \$91.

Further hearings on the matter may be held this week.

## Cash, Smokes Taken From Legion Hall

An undetermined amount of cash, 22 packages of cigarettes and an electric shaver were taken by a burglar who broke into the American Legion Hall at 1109 Border Ave., police reported Saturday.

Investigators said the thief jimmied a rear door and then smashed vending machines. In another burglary, B. A. Barrow of 16521 Regina Ave., reported that someone broke into his barn and made off with five parakeets valued at a total of \$20.

## Group to Seek Santa Fe Pact

A six-man committee was named to meet with Santa Fe officials in an effort to reach an agreement on additional land north of the present 27-acre civic center site at the conclusion of a three-hour hearing this week on the city's action in filing condemnation proceedings on 50 acres of the industrial property.

The appointment of the committee by Mayor Albert Isen climaxed a session which was marked with charges of bias on the part of the mayor, and a threat to call for his ouster as mayor.

Named by the mayor to the committee were Herina Tillim, president of the parks and recreation commission; Bert Lynn, president of the planning commission; John J. Fitzgerald, 1122 Maple Ave., who had earlier presented a petition asking that the entire area between Maple Ave., Dominguez reservoir, Torrance Blvd., and Hawthorne Ave. be barred to industrial development; F. W. Mill, representing the Torrance Industries Tax Committee; A. E. Thompson, president of the Chamber of Commerce; and the mayor.

Home Owners Opposed  
Appointment of the committee came as a substitute to a motion entered by Councilman Willys G. Blount that the condemnation proceedings be dropped.

The hearing was opened with the reading of letters from residents favoring acquisition of the 50-acre site for parks and a letter from the North Torrance Civic Improvement Assn. opposing the proposal.

City Manager George Stevens reported that the Belond Manufacturing Co. had decided that it would not build the muffler factory on the 10-acre site north of Maricopa near Madrona, which had touched off the hearing. The company decided not to build because of the controversy, Stevens said he was told.

Plans for Future  
Speaking for the acquisition of the land were a number of residents in the general area of the civic center, pointing out that the city should plan now for the park it will need when the city reaches 140,000 to 150,000 population which is predicted in a few years.

Among those speaking were Rev. H. Milton Sippel of the First Christian Church; Vickie Feldon, president of the Torrance Art Group; J. A. Beasley, Mrs. Herma Tillim, president of the parks and recreation commission; and others.

Mrs. Tillim said there should be sufficient land acquired to put in an auditorium, culture center, and the park.

"This would not mean an end to the neighborhood parks," she emphasized.

Opponents Speak  
Speaking out against the proposal were James Hall, former city attorney, who asked where the city was going to get the money to buy the land, improve it, and maintain it.

"It would be beautiful property," Hall said, "but the city would wind up with an investment in excess of its present municipal plant."

He estimated it would cost \$100,000 a year to maintain.

Mayor Isen, answering Hall, said it couldn't be done in a year, that it was a long range program.

Tax Loss Cited  
Fred Mill, division controller and assistant secretary of the National Supply Co. here and representing the Torrance Industries Tax Committee at the hearing, pointed out that the area in question had a potential tax valuation of \$5 million, and that it could cost the city hundreds of thousands of dollars a year in lost tax revenue.

He pointed out that the National Supply Co., which is located on 34 acres, pays into

the city and school district nearly a quarter of a million dollars a year in taxes.

"Increased commercial development will help the city, but it won't mean a thing to the school district," Mill said.

His remarks were supported by Councilman Blount who said the park system should be spread around the city, not concentrated downtown.

Property Cleared  
"To put a cloud on a man's property without paying him is not American," Blount said in asking that the city drop its condemnation suit.

Recreation Director Harry Van Bellehem substantiated the report that it would probably cost about \$50,000 an acre to develop the property.

Councilman Drele read from a confidential report filed with the city by an appraiser saying that the market value of the land at the time of the condemnation was \$18,500 an acre, and the opinion of the appraiser that no court would render a judgment less than \$1 million for the site.

Mayor Challenged  
Drele also challenged Isen's remarks that the program was a long range measure.

"When you condemn property, you have to put the cash up," Drele emphasized. The city doesn't have a million dollars to buy the land, he said.

Drele pointed out that the present combined tax rate for Torrance is a little over \$8, and that a recent school override of 75 cents, plus a bond issue of \$8 million needed to develop park properties would put the taxes up to nearly \$9.

After Isen's retorts to Drele's comments, including a statement that Drele "can work faster than IBM," Drele threatened to call for a "division of the house," and remove Isen as chairman. The threat was not carried through, however.

Isen went on to list his hopes for the civic center area, which include a central library, youth and adult recreation buildings, little theater building, Post Office, children's recreation area, and stadium.

## 2 Children Hurt In Week End Traffic Crashes

Two children and two women were hurt in four traffic accidents Thursday and Friday, police report.

Gordon Clarke, 6, of 16533 Casimir Ave., was treated by a private physician for minor hurts suffered when he was bumped by a car along Crenshaw Blvd., north of 164th St. The motorist was Angela McIlvaine, 28, of 18631 Wilton Pl.

Dean Stewart, 8, of 4309 W. 179th St., suffered cuts and bruises when his bicycle was involved in a collision with a car in front of 4303 W. 179th St. The driver was Dorothy Leininger, 36, of 4303 W. 179th St.

A two-car crash at Crenshaw and Redondo Beach Blvds. resulted in slight hurts for Carolyn Mitchell, 28, of Inglewood, the other motorist was Ruben Garcia, 22, of Lawndale, who was jailed on suspicion of drunken driving.

Shirley McClellan, 21, of Long Beach, suffered minor injuries in a two-car crash at Cabrillo Ave. and El Prado. Drivers were Lowell McClellan, 23, of Long Beach, and Theresa Pender, 21, of 1410 W. 215th St.



DEDICATION TODAY . . . The first unit at the Hope Evangelical United Brethren Church will be officially dedicated today, with Bishop Ira Warner presiding at the 3 p.m. rites. The church, located at 3343 W. 174th, was built by volunteer labor and cost about \$45,000. Pastor is the Rev. Monrad Bergesen.