



CITY OF HUNTINGTON BEACH

City Council Meeting – Council Member Items Report

To: City Council
From: Pat Burns, Mayor Pro Tem
Date: September 3, 2024
Subject: **ESTABLISHING A FLAGPOLE AT BACA PARK IN HONOR OF VIETNAM VETERAN MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENT JOHN P. BACA**

ISSUE STATEMENT

Tony Roman, a restaurant owner in Huntington Beach, and Don Kennedy, a resident and City Council candidate, contacted me requesting the consideration of a flagpole displaying the American flag be placed at Baca Park, located south of Ellis Avenue and west of Gothard Street.

John Philip Baca, born on January 10, 1949, is a distinguished Vietnam War veteran. Serving as a specialist four with Company D of the 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division in South Vietnam, he demonstrated exceptional bravery and a willingness to suffer the ultimate sacrifice during Operation Toan Thang IV in Phước Long Province. On February 10, 1970, amidst intense enemy fire, John led his team to rescue a besieged platoon.

When a fragmentation grenade threatened their lives, he selflessly covered it with his helmet and himself, shielding eight fellow soldiers from harm. John survived the injuries sustained from the incident and none of his men died. John Baca often quotes John 15:13 from the bible and he is a living example of it: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

President Richard M. Nixon awarded him the Medal of Honor on June 15, 1971, in a White House ceremony. Despite the wounds sustained from the grenade blast, John's commitment to service remained unwavering. In 1990, he returned to Vietnam, collaborating with former North Vietnamese Army soldiers to build a health clinic north of Hanoi.

On September 17, 2001, the Huntington Beach City Council adopted Resolution 2001-64, which outlines the naming policy for city parks, features, and community facilities. As part of this resolution, the park previously known as Seagate or Sherwood Park was officially designated as John Baca Park, honoring his extraordinary courage and legacy. To further commemorate John's contributions, community members propose installing a flagpole at John Baca Park, proudly flying the American Flag. This symbolic gesture will serve as a tribute to his selflessness and sacrifice as well as to honor every American combat veteran who has heroically and selflessly served this nation.

A flagpole will bring the park added attention, as it is easily missed in its current state. I am certain it will be appreciated by all military veterans and will surely serve as an inspiration to younger generations, reminding them that veterans like John have made great sacrifices so they can experience the liberties and freedoms enjoyed by all Americans every single day, and to never take for granted that they live in the greatest country God has ever created!

RECOMMENDED ACTION

- A. Direct the City Manager and Public Works Director to provide and install an approximate 30–45 foot flagpole for an American Flag to be displayed at John Baca Park. Estimates for the flagpole and installation is \$18,000; and,
- B. Consider displaying the Medal of Honor flag, in honor of John Baca, on a separate mobile and temporary pole at a dedication ceremony. This action will require a unanimous vote of all City Council members per City Charter Section 806.

ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS

This action is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2) (the activity will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment) and 15060(c)(3) (the activity is not a project as defined in Section 15378) of the CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, because it has not potential for resulting in physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly.

STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL

Non Applicable - Administrative Item

ATTACHMENTS

None