



City of Huntington Beach

File #: 24-468

MEETING DATE: 7/2/2024

REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION

SUBMITTED TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

SUBMITTED BY: Eric G. Parra, Interim City Manager

VIA: Ashley Wysocki, Director of Community & Library Services

PREPARED BY: Ashley Wysocki, Director of Community & Library Services

Subject:

Approve the naming of the Shipley Nature Center Interpretive Center located at 17851 Goldenwest Street as the "Shirley Dettloff Interpretive Center," as recommended by the Community & Library Services Commission

Statement of Issue:

There is a need to formally name the Shipley Nature Center Interpretive Center located at 17851 Goldenwest Street.

Financial Impact:

Not applicable.

Recommended Action:

Approve the naming of the Shipley Nature Center Interpretive Center located at 17851 Goldenwest Street, "Shirley Dettloff Interpretive Center," in honor of Shirley Dettloff, as recommended by the Community & Library Services Commission.

Alternative Action(s):

Do not approve the recommended action and direct staff according.

Analysis:

Named after former Mayor, Donald D. Shipley, the Shipley Nature Center (Nature Center), was opened in 1974. Dr. Shipley's vision was to have a place which reflected what California was like 100 years before.

On Wednesday, June 12, 2024, the Community & Library Services Commission voted to name the Interpretive Center (contained within the Shipley Nature Center), the "Shirley Dettloff Interpretive Center," due to her longstanding impacts and efforts related to the unique space in Huntington Central Park.

After years of neglect, the Nature Center became overrun with invasive, exotic plant species that crowded out more desirable native plants on which local native wildlife depended. In addition to non-native plant life, giant reeds were depleting the ground water and causing trees to die off and become fire hazards, which also caused Blackbird Pond to suffer from lack of oxygen.

In 2001, the City considered closing the Nature Center due to budget limitations. Shirley Dettloff was instrumental in convening a group of interested citizens, which would later become The Friends of Shipley Nature Center (FSNC), a non-profit organization.

FSNC, with the leadership of Shirley Dettloff, established a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the City in 2004, which permitted the non-profit to operate, improve, and restore the 18 acres of Nature Center, based on the City Council approved Master Plan. In 2023, City Council approved a five-year extension of the FSNC MOU with an option to further extend the MOU into 2033.

Once established, FSNC partnered with contractors who donated the pillars and the entry gate to the Nature Center. Stone masons built the pillars on which the gates, donated by the iron workers, swing. Other donations and volunteerism have continued to grace the unique Nature Center over the last 20 years.

The Interpretive Center is a 1,500 sq. ft. building that houses exhibits on local wildlife and ecology. Shirley Dettloff coordinated the creation of the panels which chronical the history of the property from the Ice Ages to the 21st Century. These panels are still featured inside the Interpretative Center. She also created interactive exhibits, and the extensive Docent Manual which is still used today to train volunteers who lead tours inside Shipley.

The Interpretive Center is utilized as a visitor's and learning center for not only the public, but school tours as well, providing access to books on nature, interactive displays, and programs. The Interpretive Center is also used by birders in the recording of birds detected in Huntington Central Park and updated to a national database. Annually, the Interpretive Center welcomes thousands of visitors and students, eager to learn about the history of the landscape and today's nature and wildlife patterns.

Shirley Dettloff, an active member of the community and environmental enthusiast for decades, passed away on Tuesday, April 23, 2024. Shirley was elected to the Huntington Beach City Council, serving as a Council Member from 1994-2000 and the City's 60th Mayor in 1998.

In addition to revitalizing the Nature Center, Former Mayor Dettloff served as the following:

- Commissioner on the California State Coastal Commission and Orange County Harbors, Beaches, Parks Commission
- Chair of the HB Planning Commission and Children's Task Force
- Director of the OC Sanitation District
- City Council Liaison for the HB Council on Aging, the Huntington Beach Human Relations Task Force, and the Citizens' Infrastructure Committee
- Co-founder of the Friends of the Library
- Past President of the American Heart Association and Amigos de Bolsa Chica.

Environmental Status:

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(5), administrative activities of governments that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment do not constitute a project.

Strategic Plan Goal:

Non Applicable - Administrative Item

Attachment(s):

1. PowerPoint Presentation