



City of Huntington Beach

File #: 18-343

MEETING DATE: 9/17/2018

REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION

SUBMITTED TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

SUBMITTED BY: Fred A. Wilson, City Manager

PREPARED BY: Marie Knight, Director of Community Services

Subject:

Approve the placement of a memorial plaque recognition for Father Christian Mondor and Pastor Blaine “Sumo” Sato on Tower Zero on the Municipal Pier

Statement of Issue:

At the direction of City Council, the Community Services Commission was to develop a proposal for a public memorial honoring Father Christian Mondor and Pastor Blaine “Sumo” Sato. The Commission has made its recommendation to place a memorial plaque on Tower Zero on the Municipal Pier in honor of both men. The location now needs final approval by the City Council.

Financial Impact:

Purchase and installation of the plaque will be funded by the Greater Huntington Beach Interfaith Council.

Recommended Action:

Approve the placement of a memorial plaque recognizing Father Christian Mondor and Pastor Blaine “Sumo” Sato as recommended by the Community Services Commission, on Tower Zero on the Huntington Beach Municipal Pier.

Alternative Action(s):

Do not approve placement of a memorial plaque honoring Father Christian Mondor and Pastor Blaine “Sumo” Sato on Tower Zero on the Huntington Beach Municipal Pier and direct staff on how to proceed.

Analysis:

Father Christian Mondor and Pastor Blaine “Sumo” Sato were prominent members of the City and the surfing community. Due to the recent passing of these two prominent residents, Council Member Patrick Brenden submitted a request for City Council to honor each for their contributions to the City. The request was approved by City Council on July 16, 2018, which directed the Community Services

Commission to work with the surfing community and followers of Father Mondor and Pastor Sato on a public memorial to honor both (Attachment 1). The Greater Huntington Beach Interfaith Council came in support of a memorial honoring Father Mondor and Pastor Sato and have committed to fund the purchase and installation of the plaque.

Father Mondor was a vicar emeritus with Saints Simon and Jude Church, where in 1990 he was named parochial vicar. His active involvement in the community included a term as President of the Greater Huntington Beach Interfaith Council and serving as a member of the Board of Trustees for the Huntington Beach Council on Aging. As President of the Interfaith Council, he was instrumental in the first citywide interfaith Procession of Lights service. Father Mondor was also instrumental in coordinating the annual "Blessing of the Waves," which attracts surfers and others from all faiths to a service of thanksgiving for the ocean and natural resources. In 2012, he was honored as Grand Marshall of the annual Fourth of July Parade, and in 2013 Father Mondor was named a lifetime member of the H.B. Longboard Crew and inducted into the Surfing Walk of Fame. Father Mondor, also known as the "Surfing Padre," passed on April 25, 2018, three days shy of his 93rd birthday.

Pastor Blaine "Sumo" Sato, was born in Honolulu, Hawaii, and became a resident of Huntington Beach in 1990. Known simply as "Sumo," Pastor Sato was a waterman, chef, and family man. He spent several years traveling between Hawaii and California, sharing his commitment to his faith by helping to form churches, offering encouragement to at-risk youth, and assisting the homeless. While settling in Huntington Beach, he quickly became a staple of the surfing community and became known for his positive spirit. In 2011, he helped form the H₂O Community Church in the City and also served as the Chaplain for the City's Marine Safety Division. Over the years, Pastor Sumo participated in the annual Blessing of the Waves and offered opening prayers for countless surfing events. In 2016, Pastor Sumo was inducted into the Surfers' Hall of Fame, having his name, handprints and footprints pressed in cement in front of Huntington Beach Surf n' Sport. Pastor Sumo passed on March 11, 2018, at the age of 55 after a battle with cancer.

Prior to the August 8, 2018, Community Services Commission meeting, staff reached out to the Huntington Beach Interfaith Council and various organizations representing the surfing community to obtain input on this request. At the August 8, 2018, meeting, the Community Services Commission reviewed the background of Father Mondor and Pastor Sato and listened to public comments from Surfing Hall of Fame and Surfing Walk of Fame members in support of recognizing the two individuals. Members of the Surfing Museum also issued written support of the concept. Given the background of the two men and their contributions to the surfing community and lifestyle in Huntington Beach, the Commission felt that, per Council Member Brenden's suggestion, Tower Zero was an appropriate location to place a memorial plaque.

The concept, reviewed by Commission, was for a single plaque with images of both men to be placed on Tower Zero (Attachment 2). Currently, there are two bronze plaques located on Tower Zero - a recognition plaque for former Lifeguard Chief and Community Services Director, Max Bowman, and a plaque recognizing the dedication and project team for Tower Zero. The Commission's recommendation is to place the plaque for Father Mondor and Pastor Sato next to the Max Bowman Plaque (Attachment 3). The Commission further recommended that the project dedication plaque be relocated to the wall just to the right of the Tower Zero entrance (Attachment 4).

The Interfaith Council is currently reviewing quotes for purchase and installation of the plaque should Council approve of the concept. The intent is to install a plaque consistent in size with the existing project dedication plaque (24" x 20"). Materials being considered include cast bronze, cast aluminum or granite. Final design and materials for the plaque will be determined based upon funding, but the intent is to be consistent with the look and style of the existing plaques. At this time, Council is being asked to approve the Community Services Commission's recommendation on the placement of the plaque.

Environmental Status:

Not applicable.

Strategic Plan Goal:

Improve quality of life

Attachment(s):

- 1) July 16, 2018, Council Member Item 18-187
- 2) Plaque Design Concept
- 3) Plaque Location on Tower Zero
- 4) Project Dedication Plaque Relocation