



City of Huntington Beach

File #: 22-780

MEETING DATE: 9/20/2022

REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION

SUBMITTED TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

SUBMITTED BY: Al Zelinka, City Manager

VIA: Chris Slama, Director of Community & Library Services

PREPARED BY: Chris Slama, Director of Community & Library Services

Subject:

Approve the dedication of the central hallway wall at the Senior Center in Central Park, in recognition of Michael E. Rodgers and name the former Senior Outreach Center building at 17th Street Park as Memorial Community Hall as recommended by the Community & Library Services Commission

Statement of Issue:

There is a need to consider dedicating the central hallway wall at the Senior Center in Central Park in recognition of Michael E. Rodgers and naming the former Senior Outreach Center building located at 17th Street Park as Memorial Community Hall as recommended by the Community & Library Services Commission.

Financial Impact:

Not applicable.

Recommended Action:

A) Approve the recommendation by the Community & Library Services Commission to formally dedicate the central hallway wall at the Senior Center in Central Park in recognition of Michael E. Rodgers; and,

B) Approve the recommendation by the Community & Library Services Commission to formally name the former Senior Outreach Building located at 1718 Orange Avenue as Memorial Community Hall.

Alternative Action(s):

Do not approve the recommended actions, and direct staff accordingly.

Analysis:

At the May 11, 2022, Community & Library Services Commission (Commission) meeting, Commission approved the recommendation to name the parkland at 1706 Orange Avenue as 17th

Street Park and name the former Outreach Building (Building) on the property as the Michael E. Rodgers Clubhouse. At the City Council meeting on June 7, 2022, City Council approved naming the parkland as 17th Street Park. However, the naming of the building was tabled in order to allow staff to provide more information regarding options for recognition of Michael E. Rodgers at the Senior Center in Central Park (Senior Center) and to honor veterans at the Building.

On June 22, 2022, the Park Naming & Memorials Committee (Committee) met at the Senior Center in Central Park. During the meeting, Committee members toured various options both inside and outside of the Senior Center that could potentially memorialize the humanitarian efforts of Michael E. Rodgers.

At the July 20, 2022 Commission meeting, a study session was conducted in order to further deliberate and narrow down options regarding the recognition of Michael E. Rodgers at the Senior Center and to honor veterans at the Building. Committee Chair Pike and staff provided an overview of the June 22 Committee meeting. During the discussion, Commission reached a consensus that the central hallway wall outside of the game room would be the best potential naming opportunity, due to its open visibility and high daily traffic.

Commissioners were also presented further information regarding a recommendation for naming the former Outreach Building. Based on previous discussions and research of similar buildings in other cities, staff presented several naming variations including words such as “Veterans” and/or “Memorial,” along with “Hall,” “Building,” or “Clubhouse.” Several Commissioners felt that only including “Veterans” or “Memorial” in the name would lead to a misconception by the community that use of the facility is exclusively for veterans. To alleviate the confusion, a majority of the Commissioners in attendance preferred adding the word “Community” to the name.

During the presentation, staff also explained that a “Memorial Hall” previously existed in Huntington Beach. From 1923-1974, the Huntington Beach Memorial Hall building was the first home of the American Legion Post 133 (Legion). The Legion was the main resident and manager of the second-floor of the former Memorial Hall during its tenure, while the first floor was used for various general community gatherings. Since the intended use of the Building at 17th Street Park will be similar to the original Huntington Beach Memorial Hall, staff suggested that the use of “Memorial” in the new name could be appropriate. After further dialogue, the Commission narrowed the naming options for the Building as Memorial Community Hall and Veterans Community Hall.

Given the history of humanitarian efforts of Michael E. Rodgers specific to senior citizen advocacy, and based on discussions amongst City Council and Commission, staff recommended approving the dedication of the central hallway wall at the Senior Center in Central Park in recognition of Michael E. Rodgers.

At their August 24, 2022 meeting, the Commission approved naming the Building as “Memorial Community Hall” and dedicating the central hallway wall outside of the game room at the Senior Center in recognition of Michael E. Rodgers. Should City Council approve both of these actions, staff will work with the Committee, Commission, and Historic Resources Board to develop plaques for both locations, capturing historical information regarding the 17th Street Park property including the

original Memorial Hall, the American Legion Post 133, and the former Michael E. Rodgers Seniors' Center. Final concept renderings and subsequent information to be included will be brought back for City Council approval in accordance with Park Naming and Memorials Resolution 2017-25.

Environmental Status:

Not applicable.

Strategic Plan Goal:

Community Engagement

Attachment(s):

1. Community & Library Services Commission Minutes from May 11, 2022
2. City Council Minutes from June 7, 2022