



TRAY MEMO

**Correspondence received
regarding Cesar Chavez Blvd.**

Copies sent to:
City Council
Mayor (electronic only)
City Manager (electronic only)

DATE: March 29, 2023

TO: COUNCILMEMBERS
MAYOR DYER
CITY MANAGER WHITE

FROM  TODD STERMER, CMC, City Clerk

SUBJECT: CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED REGARDING CESAR CHAVEZ BLVD.

Attached, please find the following e-mail correspondence received by the Clerk's Office:

1. 3-28-2023 e-mail from Susan Smith
2. 3-29-2023 e-mail from Heidi Nakayama
3. 3-29-2023 e-mail from Debbie and Jim Christian
4. 3-29-2023 e-mail from Jacob and Susan Khushigian

The subject matter for each of the above e-mails is Cesar Chavez BLVD. The intended recipients of these message are the City Councilmembers, Mayor and City Manager. As there are no current agenda items for this subject matter, and no request include these messages as part of Unscheduled Communication for the March 30, 2023, meeting, I am simply forwarding copies to each of you.

Thank you.

3-28-2023 E-mail from Susan Smith

From:
To:

Subject: Fwd: Renaming of streets
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 7:58:42 PM

External Email: Use caution with links and attachments

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Suzanne Smith** >
Date: Tue, Mar 28, 2023 at 7:50 PM
Subject: Renaming of streets
To: <[jerry](#)>

Mayor Dyer-

I am so disappointed in the City Council in the recent action of renaming the Kings Canyon/Ventura/California aves. Years and years of history is being wiped away. Why change the names when there is already something bearing his name, the Cesar Chavez Adult School, a park in Sanger, a statue on Highway 58 and a grammar school in Parlier. How much and how many more things need to bear his name? Dedicate a **stretch of highway**, name a new park. Don't wash away what already is. Mayor Dyer, I believe you want what is best for this community but this community is not just about Mr. Chavez. Don't forget the farmers of east Fresno, Kings Canyon Ave, the Armenian community, Ventura Ave and the African-American community, California Ave. These streets tie all these communities and many, many more together. Please reconsider other options to honor this person who already has his name on a building. Don't let our voices be overshadowed by those that talk on the bullhorn! The City Council shouldn't be able to push this through just because it's been 30 years since it was first introduced. He has been honored, leave the streets alone. STAND UP Mr. Mayor, you represent us all.

Suzanne Smith

3-29-2023 E-mail from Heidi Nakayama

From:
To:
Subject: renaming Kings Canyon Road
Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 9:54:40 AM
Attachments: [Kings Canyon 3-28-23 #2.docx](#)
[Kings Canyon 3-28-23.docx](#)

External Email: Use caution with links and attachments

Please see attached letters and stop the renaming of Kings Canyon Rd.
Sincerely, Heidi Nakayama

Heidi Nakayama

March 28, 2023

Fresno City Council

President Tyler Maxwell (Tyler.Maxwell@fresno.gov)

Vice President Annalisa Perea (Annalisa.Perea@fresno.gov)

Councilmember Mike Karbassi (Mike.Karbassi@fresno.gov)

Councilmember Miguel Arias (Miguel.Arias@fresno.gov)

Councilmember Luis Chavez (Luis.Chavez@fresno.gov)

Councilmember Garry Bredefeld (Garry.Bredefeld@fresno.gov)

Councilmember Nelson Esparza (Nelson.Esparza@fresno.gov)

RE: ID 23-403; RESOLUTION - To Begin the Process to Change Kings Canyon/Ventura Boulevard to "Cesar Chavez Boulevard" (Subject to Mayor's veto)

Dear President Maxwell, Vice President Perea, and Councilmembers Karbassi, Arias, Chavez, Bredefeld, and Esparza:

I am a 40 year resident of the Fresno Sunnyside area directly affected by any decision to rename Kings Canyon Road. Shame on the City Council for pushing a political agenda to benefit yourselves at the expense of many! No Street in Fresno should be "renamed" above all an already historically named street such as Kings Canyon. Kings Canyon Road has 100 years of history in Fresno with memories and that would be erased forever because of your foolishness. Businesses are still struggling to come back after Covid and your decision could cause them unjustifiable time and money.

There is no benefit to renaming Kings Canyon Road other than to satisfy a selfish political agenda. New developments around Fresno offer plenty of alternatives to name a new street after Mr. Chavez. Please use some commonsense and name a new street after Mr. Chavez.

Sincerely,

Heidi Nakayama

Sunnyside Resident

CC: Mayor Jerry Dyer, Fresno County Board of Supervisors

Heidi Nakayama

March 28, 2023

Fresno City Council

President Tyler Maxwell (Tyler.Maxwell@fresno.gov)

Vice President Annalisa Perea (Annalisa.Perea@fresno.gov)

Councilmember Mike Karbassi (Mike.Karbassi@fresno.gov)

Councilmember Miguel Arias (Miguel.Arias@fresno.gov)

Councilmember Luis Chavez (Luis.Chavez@fresno.gov)

Councilmember Garry Bredefeld (Garry.Bredefeld@fresno.gov)

Councilmember Nelson Esparza (Nelson.Esparza@fresno.gov)

RE: ID 23-403; RESOLUTION - To Begin the Process to Change Kings Canyon/Ventura Boulevard to "Cesar Chavez Boulevard" (Subject to Mayor's veto)

Dear President Maxwell, Vice President Perea, and Councilmembers Karbassi, Arias, Chavez, Bredefeld, and Esparza:

I am a 40 year resident of the Fresno directly affected by the attempt to rename Kings Canyon Road. There is no benefit to renaming the historical Kings Canyon Road other than to satisfy a selfish political agenda. New developments around Fresno offer plenty of alternatives to name a new street after Mr. Chavez.

This is foolish and frivolous spending of tax payer money and its affects would be departmental to all the struggling business along it route. Taxpayer monies should be used for more important things that our city so desperately needs;

- Fix our enormous amount deteriorating streets and potholes.
- Hire police to fight the crime we hear about every night on local news. Safe neighborhoods should be your top priority.
- Cleanup our city homeless trash residue and graffii that is everywhere.
- Educate our children whose marks are at an all-time low.
- Make Fresno beautiful and safe again.

Sincerely,

Heidi Nakayama

Sunnyside Resident

CC: Mayor Jerry Dyer, Fresno County Board of Supervisors

3-29-2023 E-mail from Debbie and Jim Christian

From:
To:

Subject: Sensible honoring for Caesar Chavez
Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 10:04:52 AM

External Email: Use caution with links and attachments

To all supervisors, councilmen, Fresno City Clerk, City Manager and Mayor,

I am writing with a **heartfelt plea** to honor Caesar Chavez with a **common sense** approach. The current renaming of the historic existing streets of Kings Canyon, Ventura and California is a true **unnecessary action** because of these valid points:

1. Financial burden to those affected by this action. Can they be reimbursed for their time and their frustrations to accomplish change? This action will create these burdens.
2. This action is erasing the historical significance of the existing street names. This is history and history should never be erased because you can never replace what history was. History is of life in the past based on evidence which cannot be changed in the present or it would not be called history. History is a teaching tool for the future and therefore should NEVER be changed but learned from instead.
3. Through this action, you are creating the division of the people instead of uniting those you honor.
4. The community represented by you has been left out of any input or reasonable notification about this change! Aren't we in America where we at least have a say in this matter? You represent all of Fresno and not a special interest. This abrupt action without representation of the people will affect so many, upset so many and cause so many to distrust you and the system which has failed the people. You work for the people so shame on you for failing to do your due process to those people who rely on you to do the right action.
5. Is this a sensible way to honor Caesar Chavez or could there be a better way that won't hurt and upset so many people? Yes there is!!!
6. **One thing is certain, the main reason for this effort is to honor Caesar Chavez but my plea is do this in a practical. logical way**

Positive suggestions to honor Caesar Chavez without burdens to the people, without erasing history and still accomplishing honoring Caesar Chavez A win win for all involved:

1. Monument at a place of public interest that has his life story to read by all. Have you ever read the historical signs on a trip along the way? Pretty interesting and part of history.
2. Name the huge new soccer complex on Peach Ave. in honor of Caesar Chavez..
3. Name or even create a youth center naming it Caesar Chavez for all youths to prosper
4. Name a new community park after Caesar Chavez
5. Name a new street in a new subdivision in the South side of town or wherever you want

This is the time to do what is sensible, logical and right for Caesar Chavez and the people whose voices you represent. Don't let them down!!

Debbie Christian and Jim Christian-Southeast residents

-

3-29-2023 e-mail from Jacob and Susan Khushigian

From:
To: [t](#)
Subject: Renaming California, Ventura, and Kings Canyon Avenues. A REALLY BAD DECISION.
Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 12:40:09 PM

External Email: Use caution with links and attachments

RE: THE FRESNO CITY COUNCILS VOTE OF RENAMING CALIFORNIA,
VENTURA AND KINGS CANYON AVENUES

March 29, 2023

Dear Mayor and Fresno City Council members,

It is appalling that certain city political figures have totally ignored the usual policy and procedures and somehow forgot to engage the public as they quietly promoted and legislated the renaming of California, Ventura, and Kings Canyon Avenues, which represent over 100 years of Fresno history. Furthermore, the Fresno Bee and Mayor Dyer of Fresno have communicated that this is a "Done Deal".

We do not dispute the significant impact made by Mr. Cesar Chavez. He was and is a very important person to many people. At the same time, the 100+ year significant history of Fresno has been defined by its streets, neighborhoods and communities. A decision to erase these major street names is outrageous, and appears reckless and impulsive. Why has the Fresno City Council promoted a disruption of the long-standing connection and unity of Fresno's neighbors and neighborhoods. Why was such an action needed? There appear to be many equally effective ways to honor Mr. Chavez without the damage and hardship this decision will cause.

In reality, there is absolutely **NO real tangible benefit** for any person or business by changing these street names. On the other hand, there is **significant and totally unnecessary hardship and detriment** to the people and businesses along California, Ventura, and Kings Canyon Avenues. Did the Fresno City Council consider what harm they were doing as they quietly pushed through and secured the majority vote of the City Council?

Where was the public input? Why was the general public not invited to participate? The decision to approve the name change is a clear violation of trust by the Fresno City council and, even worse, it is a slap in the face of the citizens and ethnic groups who have been part of and have shared this common history. The sentiment we are expressing was clearly communicated in a recent large meeting of community residents who represented people of all nationalities in Fresno. Uniformly, the participants felt the city council has betrayed the public trust by this specific action that effectively erases and/or masks our important history.

Let us summarize some of the major problems:

1. Rewriting or erasing the years of history that bind many people in this city from West Fresno, downtown and far east to the mountains. Let's reflect on the significant citizens who attended Edison High School, the downtown area, convention center and the many visitors that passed through Fresno to see the mountains and the National Forests.
2. Encumbering numerous businesses and individuals both financially and in time spent.
 - a. Businesses will be encumbered and have to spend an inordinate amount of time and money changing documents to satisfy the city, county, state, and federal governments.
 - b. Elderly in apartments and nursing homes will have to change their addresses on all official documents including financial documents, medical insurance, government and business websites and more.
3. There is no direct connection between Mr. Cesar Chavez and these streets.
4. The City of Fresno plans to spend 1 million dollars on this renaming project. We are certain the City Council can spend this money in a much wiser fashion.

This problematic behavior/action of the Fresno City Council clearly promotes and teaches the next generation that when some other accomplished person arrives on the scene, it will be fully acceptable for political figures to (quietly) erase history for the latest political agenda. For example: It won't be long until someone realizes that "Avenida Cesar Chavez" was named after Mr. Cesar Chavez who was a devout Catholic who valued St. Francis of Assisi (*A man that highly honored Jesus Christ, or God in the flesh, as the motivation to change the culture and care for the poor and marginalized.*). Because of such faith, they might conclude he was a fanatic and evil. Such future political leaders will then justify the future tearing down and the erasing of any memorial to God inspired people, like Cesar Chavez. Do our leaders understand their actions? Sound familiar? What message should we give to the next generation? Again, there are many ways to honor historically important people without removing the past.

Let's preserve these historical streets that have so long defined us. Our leaders should promote decisions that unify our people and display honorable, moral civic character. Please rescind your vote to change the names of California, Ventura, and Kings Canyon Avenues.

Sincerely,

Lifelong residents of Fresno, CA

Jacob Khushigian, M.D.

Susan Khushigian