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**Title:** Subcommittee final update and recommendation regarding Fresno City Council Resolution 2020-272 directing the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) to review the names of all City facilities and provide recommendations regarding any facility named after a controversial historical or cultural figure

**Sponsors:** Planning and Development Department

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**Attachments:** 1. Resolution - - 2020-272 - 10\_15\_2020, 2. \_FINAL\_WORKING COPY\_HPC PROPERTY NAMES RESEARCH, 3. AdoptedVisionMissionGuidin\_FresnoCo.\_2017, 4. MUEX HOME\_NATIONAL REGISTER

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
1/25/2021	2	Historic Preservation Commission	approved	Pass

**January 25, 2021**

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**SUBJECT**

Subcommittee final update and recommendation regarding Fresno City Council Resolution 2020-272 directing the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) to review the names of all City facilities and provide recommendations regarding any facility named after a controversial historical or cultural figure

**RECOMMENDATION**

The City staff recommend that the HPC review and approve research which identifies any potential life histories of namesakes which are inconsistent with Resolution 2020-272 which states:

*NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Fresno as follows:*

- 1. The City Administration shall compile a list of the name of all City facilities, and provide the list to the Chairperson of the Historic Preservation Commission within 10 days of the effective date of this Resolution.*
- 2. The Historic Preservation Commission shall review the list and report back to Council within sixty days with recommendations regarding any facility named after a controversial historical or cultural figure.*

3. *All future requests for naming of City facilities shall be reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission to ensure consistency with the intent of this Resolution prior to Council taking action.*
4. *No City asset shall be named after a cultural or historic figure known to be racist or bigoted*
5. *This Resolution shall be effective immediately.*

Research has identified two properties which are located at 1007 R Street (APN 46606612T) and 510 W Kearney Blvd (APN 46422043T), which should be presented to the Commission and Council.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The HPC Subcommittee and City staff, reviewed and researched 86 facilities/parks following the approved methodologies. The Meux Home is located at 1007 R Street (APN 46606612T) and the Fresno Chandler Executive Airport 510 W Kearney Blvd (APN 46422043T) have been identified and are recommended for review by the HPC and the Council. If accepted and presented before the Council, the property will be subject to consideration for name removal and renaming, which will be decided by the Council.

## **BACKGROUND**

The City Council adopted Resolution 2020-272 on October 15, 2020 and it took effect on October 22, 2020. The Resolution states:

*WHEREAS, the City has a number of facilities named after individuals who played an important role in our City or nation; and*  
*WHEREAS, the Council condemns racism and bigotry in all its forms; and*  
*WHEREAS, the Council further condemns naming any City assets after a cultural or historic figure known to be racist or bigoted; and*  
*WHEREAS, the Council deems it advisable to review the names of its City assets to ensure the names are culturally sensitive and appropriate.*

At the regularly scheduled HPC meeting on October 26, 2020, the commission was brought a concern for City facilities/parks whose namesake were associated with inconsistent histories. The Commission addressed this directly by forming a subcommittee, consisting of HPC Chairs Patrick Boyd, Vice Chair Jason Hatwig, Commissioner Kristina Roper and City staff Historic Preservation Specialist, Alicia Gonzales. The subcommittee along with City staff members, Assistant Director, Mike Sanchez and Management Analyst II, Karnell Grijalva, were tasked with developing the research methodology and identifying City owned facilities/parks named after a controversial or cultural figure. In its review, the HPC Subcommittee determined that such a figure would include, but is not limited to, one with known affiliations or actions taken through statements, events, groups or organizations which promote racism, bigotry, xenophobia, homophobia, sexism or other forms of discrimination within our community.

The HPC Subcommittee met on November 13<sup>th</sup>, December 4<sup>th</sup>, December 18<sup>th</sup> and January 13<sup>th</sup>. Initially the HPC Subcommittee, with assistance from City staff, gathered an exhaustive list of names and eliminated those facilities/parks that clearly did not warrant investigation, such as city owned equipment namely water wells, sewer lift stations, benches and shelters etc. The HPC Subcommittee and City staff then identified 86 facilities/parks which would require a review of the

namesakes' history. The principals that guide the review process were taken directly from Resolution 2020-272 and referenced the County of Fresno Mission, Vision and Guiding principles (Attachment).

Research methods consisted of fact-finding focused on:

- Identifying the person or persons who facilities/parks were named after
- Identifying the dates and public documentation affiliated with these facilities/parks naming
- Identifying why facilities/parks were named after their namesake; i.e. community leader, acts of service, philanthropic gift/donation, influential to the culture, community or history etc.
- Investigate if there are histories contesting the legacy of the namesake by any individuals or groups
- Identifying if a namesakes life history is consistent with some of the City and County of Fresno's principles and inconsistent with others; i.e. subject for debate

The HPC Subcommittee determined priority resources for research which were: internal City resources such as past Council Resolutions, Planning and Development records, respective department records, library records, google searches, newspaper article archives and ancestry.com . City staff collaborated with Melissa Scroggins and Bill Secrest from The Heritage Center at the Fresno County Public Library. City staff used additional sources which included: The Fresno Bee, Fresno Morning Republican archives, and newspapers from archives.com, the Library of Congress and various internet searches on topic related to development of recreational parks in Fresno, history of Fresno, social movements in Fresno, agriculture, education and name specific searches. Additionally, City staff reached out to local news station KFSN-TV to source their archives. HPC Chair Boyd requested the Commission members and public to email City staff with any further historical information on the identified properties for examination at the December 21, 2020 HPC meeting.

On November 20, 2020 City staff met virtually with Terry Cox, Chief of Staff to Councilmember Esmerelda Soria, and provided a status update, the decided methodology of the assigned project by the HPC, in addition to the formation of the subcommittee. This meeting was summarized with a follow-up email to Ms. Cox by HPC Chair, Patrick Boyd.

The HPC reviewed the revised list, and were apprised of research progress and questions from the Commission were addressed at their regularly scheduled meetings on November 23, 2020 and December 17, 2020.

Of the 86 facilities/parks that have been researched, the Meux Home located at 1007 R Street (APN 46606612T) and Fresno Chandler Executive Airport at 510 W Kearney Blvd (APN 46422043T), have been identified as having life histories which may have inconsistencies with the City Council Resolution 2020-272.

The Meux Home built in 1889 is an asymmetrical Victorian Queen Anne style residence, typical of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The building demonstrates various detailed eclectic stylistic features, reflective of the various periods in which the building has survived; most notably the Victorian Gothic style roof and porch extends around the building entire first floor. The Meux Home was built by Dr. Thomas Richard Meux. Dr. Meux born in Tennessee was enlisted in 1861 as a private in the Ninth Tennessee Volunteer Regiment of the Confederate Army. Meux established a medical practice in Fresno in 1889, served as president of the Fresno County Medical Society and was a member of the Fresno County Democratic Club. The Meux Home is located in the National Historic District of St. John's Cathedral and is individually listed on the Local registry (H.P. #2)and National Register of Historic Places.

The Fresno Chandler Executive Airport consist of five buildings, four of which contribute to the Fresno Municipal Airport Historic District. The four contributing properties are the Administration Building/Terminal which was built 1936-1977, Administration Building Annex was built in 1936, Electrical Control Building was built in 1937 and the Bathroom Building was built 1937. The airport design reflect several styles of Art Moderne, Streamline Moderne, Art Deco and Spanish Revival.

The Chandler Executive Airport was named for Senator Wilber F. Chandler and Wife Edna Marie Wilber, who donated the initial one hundred-acre site for public use in 1929. Senator Chandler was born in Illinois and served five terms in the State Assembly and two terms in the Senate. Both Senator Wilber and wife Edna, supported numerous local civic ventures including Fresno's early aeronautics community and the Y.W.C.A. Senator Wilber was an early investor in petroleum fields near Coalinga, operated a vineyard, was director of the First National Bank of Fresno and partnered with Dr. Chester Rowell in 1912 to build the historic Rowell Building which was the first steel-framed building. Notably, in 1911 Senator Chandler was one of 12 state Assembly members who voted against SCA 8 (1911), which amended the State Constitution and gave women the right to vote in California.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The HPC Subcommittee and City staff recommend that the HPC review and approve the aforementioned research. Furthermore, the HPC Subcommittee and City staff have identified the Meux Home and the Fresno Chandler Executive Airport as facilities/parks named after controversial historical or cultural figures, which should be recommended to City Council.

The Subcommittee and City staff believe it is historically and socially valuable to document and retain public records of the research conducted and any subsequent decisions that result from them. Dissemination, honesty and integrity was paramount in guiding this research. By submitting recommendations to the Council, the HPC and City staff encourage community feedback and assistance in enhancing this continual process. The HPC and City staff are committed to affirming dignity of all individuals and communities in which discrimination and hate are not tolerated. Additionally, the HPC and City staff are dedicated to ensuring freedom of speech from the full spectrum of views held by our diverse and varied community. The HPC is charged with fact-finding and recommendations for the council to consider, not with making decisions for removal or renaming of facilities/parks.

### **Attachments:**

Resolution 2020-272

Research Findings Spreadsheet

Adopted Vision Mission County 2017

Meux Home National Register