Agenda Report

April 4, 2022

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: Departments of Public Works & Parks, Recreation and Community Services

SUBJECT: NAMING OF NEW PARK LOCATED AT 701 EAST UNION STREET

RECOMMENDATION FROM THE RECREATION AND PARKS COMMISSION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Find that the proposed action of naming a City park not a "project" as defined in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Public Resources Code Section 21065 and Section 15378(b)(4) and (5) of the State CEQA Guidelines and, as such, is not subject to environmental review; and

2. Name the new park located at 701 East Union Street as Octavia Butler Park and the stage area as Van Halen Stage.

BACKGROUND:

On December 7, 2021, Public Works staff presented a report to the Recreation and Parks Commission detailing the public outreach process and public input received for naming of the park. The Commission also heard public comment, both live and via emails previously submitted.

Following discussion, the Commission recommended that the new park be named Octavia Butler Park and the park's trellis structure be named the Eddie Van Halen Stage. The Commission felt it was important to recognize both of these individuals and since the project includes a trellis structure that will also be used as a stage area for performances, the Commission felt it would be fitting to name it the Eddie Van Halen Stage.

Upon consulting with the Van Halen family, it was requested by the family that the stage area be named for the entire Van Halen band instead of exclusively for Eddie Van Halen. As a result of the request, on February 8, 2022, the Commission amended its recommendation on the naming of stage to Van Halen Stage.

Additional Information Provided by Public Works

The project currently referred to as Playhouse District Park and Parking Lot is currently under construction at 701 East Union Street between El Molino Avenue and Oak Knoll Avenue. The project consists of a 1.04-acre park including a children's play area, dog run, trellised structure over sitting/stage area, lighted pathways, restroom and storage building, and a 48-space parking lot (see Attachment A for Site Plan). Construction of the project is scheduled to be completed by Summer 2022.

In an effort to establish an official name for the new park, Public Works Engineering staff implemented a public outreach process per the procedures established by the City's Public Park and Recreational Facility Naming Policy (Attachment B) to solicit public opinion.

On July 26, 2021, an online survey was posted on the City's website asking residents to propose names for the new park based on the Policy's naming criteria outlined below:

- Geographical location of the park or facility; or
- Natural or geological features proximate to the park or facility; or
- Cultural or historical significance to the City or surrounding neighborhood; or
- Name of an individual who has made a significant contribution to the community, country, state or the field of parks and recreation.

Residents and business owners within a 1,000-foot radius of the new park were also notified via postcard mailer, which included a link to the survey on the City's project webpage. In addition, City's social media platforms disseminated the link through various posts and physical signs were posted along the project's perimeter on Union Street between El Molino Avenue and Oak Knoll Avenue. The initial survey closed on August 20, 2021. At its closing, the survey had received 725 submissions, including 45 unique names. The submitted names were vetted by Public Works Engineering staff for adherence to naming criteria established in the City's naming policy.

On September 13, 2021, the 25 top names meeting the requirements of the naming policy were posted in a second online survey. The second survey used the same web address and link as the original request for proposed names. Information for the second survey, including dates and requirements, was included with initial postcard mailers, social media posts, and signs posted at the project construction site. Reminders of the survey were posted on the City's social media platforms. Public input for a preferred name on the second survey was limited to one submission per IP address. The online survey remained open until the end of business-day on September 24, 2021. At the time of its closing, the survey had received 4,290 responses from unique IP addresses.

The following three names received the most support, accounting for 94 percent of the responses received from the public opinion survey:

- **Octavia E. Butler Park (526 survey responses):**

  Born in Pasadena in 1947, Octavia E. Butler was an African-American science fiction author and a three-time recipient of The Hugo Award and the Nebula awards for best science fiction or fantasy works and achievement. Her life and works have been highly influential in science fiction, the literary world and popular culture, and sales of her books have increased enormously since her death in 2006. She authored "The Parable of the Sower", "Fledgling", "Kindred", and other landmark works.

  From an early age, Butler was shy and found it difficult to socialize with other children. As a result, she spent a vast amount of time reading at Pasadena Central Library where her fascination with science fiction was cultivated. At the age of 10, her mother purchased her a typewriter on which she began to write her stories and at age 12 drafted a story which would become the basis of her Patternist novels. Octavia Butler graduated from John Muir High School in 1965 and Pasadena City College in 1968 with an Associate of Arts degree.

  In 1995, Butler became the first science-fiction writer to receive a MacArthur "Genius" Fellowship grant. In 2020, NASA named the landing site of the agency's Perseverance rover "Octavia E. Butler Landing" in honor of the renowned author. And in October 2021, Octavia Butler was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame for her leadership and achievements.

  Most recently, in February 2022 the Pasadena Unified School District (PUSD) renamed Washington Steam Multilingual Academy to Octavia E. Butler Magnet for her outstanding achievements in literary science-fiction and representing the qualities of a PUSD graduate that will inspire its students.

  During her lifetime, Butler maintained a longstanding relationship with Huntington Library and bequeathed her papers including manuscripts, correspondence, school papers, notebooks, and photographs to the library in her will. The collection, comprising of 9,062 pieces, is available to scholars and researchers.

  Criteria met: Individual who has made a significant contribution to the community, country or state.

- **Eddie Van Halen Park (3,408 survey responses):**

  Van Halen was an American rock band co-founded by the Van Halen brothers Eddie (guitarist) and Alex (drummer) and Mark Stone (singer/bassist) in 1972.

The Van Halen brothers emigrated from the Netherlands to Pasadena in 1962 and attended Hamilton Elementary School, graduated from Pasadena High School, and attended Pasadena City College.

Van Halen began its climb to international stardom playing backyard parties in and around Pasadena from 1972-1975. In 1978, the band's self-titled debut album reached No. 19 on the Billboard pop music charts and would go on to sell over 10 million copies in the U.S. In 2007, the band was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and was credited with "restoring hard rock to the forefront of the music scene."

Criteria met: Individual who has made a significant contribution to the community, country or state.

- **Playhouse Village Park and variations, including Playhouse Park (135 survey responses)**:

  Pasadena's Playhouse Village (formerly known as Playhouse District) neighborhood is bordered by Interstate 210 to the north, California Boulevard to the south, Los Robles Avenue to the west, and Hudson Avenue to the east, with a panhandle-like extension to Wilson Avenue. At its center is the District's namesake, the Pasadena Playhouse, as well as Vroman's Bookstore, Pasadena's oldest operating independent bookstore, and Laemmle's Playhouse 7 movie theater.

  Criteria met: Cultural or historical significance to the City or surrounding neighborhood; and, geographical location of the park.

Upon determination from City Council, Public Works Engineering staff will have the construction contractor fabricate and install the park's monument signs. The park is anticipated to be completed and open to the public this summer.

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

The naming process presented is consistant with the City's Public Park and Recreational Facility Naming Policy.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

CEQA excludes from environmental analysis those actions that are not "projects" as defined by State CEQA Guidelines Section 15378. That section excludes from the definition of "project" the creation of government funding mechanisms and fiscal activities which do not yet commit the lead agency to any specific project, and also excludes organizational or administrative governmental activities that do not result in physical changes to the environment. The action proposed for the naming of a park facility is part of the City's normal administrative process.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact for this action.

Respectfully submitted,

TONY OLMOS, P.E.
Director of Public Works

BRENDA HARVEY-WILLIAMS
Director of Parks, Recreation and
Community Services

Prepared by:

Kris Markarian, P.E.
City Engineer

Approved by:

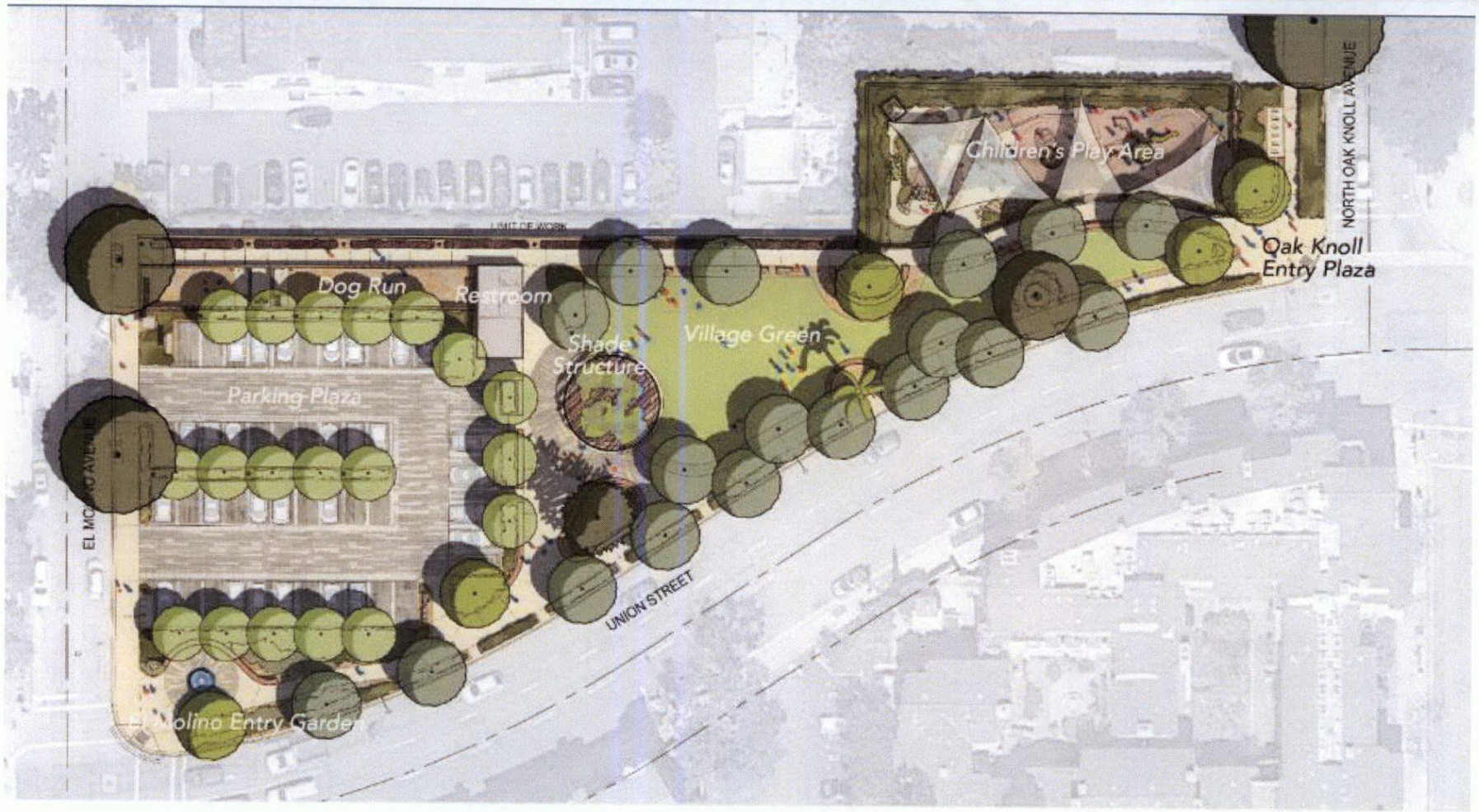
CYNTHIA J. KURTZ
Interim City Manager

Attachments:

Attachment A - Park Site Plan
Attachment B - Public Park and Recreational Facility Naming Policy

Attachment A: Park Site Plan

Department of Public Works



PASADENA

Attachment B
CITY OF PASADENA
PUBLIC PARK AND RECREATIONAL FACILITY NAMING POLICY

I. PURPOSE

The city finds that it is in the best interest of the community to develop a formal process for requests to name parks and recreational facilities in city parks. Therefore the city deems it desirable, and in the public interest, to establish a set of guidelines and procedures for the selection of names for parks and recreational facilities.

II. POLICY

The City will adopt a name for each city park based on one or more of the following criteria and, when deemed appropriate, may do the same for a recreational facility located within the physical boundaries of a city park. The following criteria shall be used in determining the names of city parks and recreational facilities:

(a) Geographical location of the park or facility; or
(b) Natural or geological features proximate to the park or facility; or
(c) Cultural or historical significance to the City or surrounding neighborhood; or
(d) The name of an individual who has made a significant contribution to the community, country, state, or the field of parks and recreation.

Existing names shall not be subject to change unless, after investigation and review, the proposed name is found to be more appropriate than the existing name, based on the criteria listed in this policy. Any action to change the name of an existing park shall follow the same process as outlined below.

III. PROCESS

A. Any person or organization may submit a request to name a public park or recreational facility to the City Manager. Such requests should provide the proposed name, the location and brief description of the park or facility to be named, and a statement evidencing that the proposed name is consistent with this policy.

B. The City Manager shall review such requests and may refer the request to the Director of Public Works for appropriate action. In the case of the naming or

renaming of a park, the city will notify and accept input from all property owners within a 1000-foot radius of the subject site. The proposed name change, along with any input received from property owners regarding such, will be considered by the Recreation and Parks commission at a public meeting.

C. Upon the recommendation of the Recreation and Parks commission, staff will prepare an agenda report pertaining to the proposed naming. Such action will be considered by the City Council at a public meeting. The date, time and location of such hearing shall be noticed in advance. Although not required by law, courtesy notices of the name change should be mailed in advance of the City Council's consideration of a name change to all property owners within 1,000 feet of the park and to other parties which have expressed an interest. Based on the action taken by the Council, staff will take all appropriate measures regarding the naming of the park or recreational facility. Petitioner shall be responsible for all costs associated with name change.