



## CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

### PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION REPORT

**AGENDA DATE:** October 24th, 2014

**TO:** Parks and Recreation Commission

**FROM:** Recreation Division, Parks and Recreation Department

**SUBJECT:** Proposal to Rename the Westside Neighborhood Center

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Commission:

- A. Receive a presentation by staff on the naming of public facilities;
- B. Receive a presentation from Word of Life Santa Barbara regarding their proposal to rename the Westside Neighborhood Center after Mr. Louis Urzua; and,
- C. Make a recommendation to City Council on the proposal to rename the facility, and, include as appropriate findings consistent with the City of Santa Barbara Municipal Code, Section 22.48, Naming of Public Facilities and Private Streets.

**DISCUSSION:**

The Parks and Recreation Department received a request on February 14, 2014, from Pastor Miguel Montano, representing Word of Life Santa Barbara, to rename the Westside Neighborhood Center after Mr. Louis Urzua. The proposal includes a petition signed by 200 people, the majority of whom listed a Santa Barbara residence.

Based on the information provided by Pastor Miguel Montano, representing Word of Life Santa Barbara, Mr. Louis Urzua was a community activist who provided outreach and mentorship for local youth in the 1960s, 70s and 80s, and promoted education and youth empowerment among ethnic minority groups. Mr. Urzua, who passed away in 1991, was one of the founders of La Casa de La Raza, and was employed as a community liaison with the Santa Barbara Unified School District in his post-retirement years. The proposal states that residents believe that renaming the Westside Neighborhood Center is a stand against gang members identifying with the use of "west side" as gang turf while simultaneously paying homage to Mr. Urzua's legacy as a youth advocate.

Parks and Recreation Neighborhood Centers

The Parks and Recreation Department operates three neighborhood centers whose focus is to provide services to specific neighborhoods and low income or underserved residents. Unique to neighborhood centers, these Parks and Recreation facilities also provide lease space at significantly reduced rates to nonprofit organizations that provide high priority services for the target audience. The three facilities include the Franklin Neighborhood

Center located on the lower Eastside, Louise Lowry Davis Center located downtown, and the Westside Neighborhood Center located in west downtown.

### Naming of Public Facilities

The City of Santa Barbara Municipal Code, Section 22.48, Naming of Public Facilities and Private Streets, describes the criteria and process by which the City Council names public facilities. Suggestions, comments, and recommendations by community or citizen groups and the citizens in the neighborhood of the facility are to be considered in the selection of names for City-owned facilities. Once the proposal is reviewed by the City Administrator, it is forwarded to the respective board or commission to hold a public hearing to consider the necessity or desirability of naming the facility, and the proposed name and any alternatives. The Commission is to make a recommendation to the City Council. The recommendation includes the name for the facility, if any, which is deemed most appropriate in accordance with the policies and guidelines and the justification for the selection of such name, as stated in the Municipal Code for Naming of Public Facilities and Private Streets.

Section 22.48.020, Principles, Policies and Priorities, outlines the policy related to naming of public facilities, and includes the following:

1. As a general policy, names which commemorate the culture and history of Santa Barbara will be given first priority; those names commemorating California history may be given second priority.
2. The name of an individual shall be considered only if such individual has made a particularly meritorious and outstanding contribution, over a period of several years, to the general public interest or the interests of the City.
3. A preference shall be given to names of long established local usage, names which are euphonious, and names which lend dignity to the facility to be named.
4. Names selected shall be of enduring, honorable fame, not notoriety, and shall be commensurate with the significance of the facility.

The proposal to rename the Westside Neighborhood Center after Louis Urzua has been referred to the Parks and Recreation Commission by the City Administrator to conduct a public hearing and make a recommendation to City Council.

### Naming of Parks and Recreation Facilities

There have been no proposals to rename a Parks and Recreation facility in recent history. Many City parks were named after the individual who donated or played a key role in securing the land (i.e., Alice Keck Park Memorial Garden, Parma Park, Franceschi Park); or,

played a critical role in developing parks and recreation facilities for Santa Barbara (i.e., MacKenzie Park, Orpet Park, Stevens Park); or, made a major contribution to the development of Santa Barbara (i.e., De la Guerra Plaza, Dwight Murphy Ballfield, Chase Palm Park, Ortega Park). Some parks and facilities are named in relationship to the area or street where they are located (i.e., Carrillo Recreation Center, Cabrillo Pavilion Art Center and Bathhouse, La Mesa Park, Eastside Neighborhood Park).

Westside Neighborhood Center - Located at 423 W. Victoria Street, the Westside Neighborhood Center has operated as a community center serving the needs of the Westside community since 1980. Prior to the City acquiring the property, it was the Wilson Elementary School. The facility was named the Westside Community Center, and was modified to Westside Neighborhood Center in 2012, reflecting the City's renewed focus on neighborhood services.

Franklin Neighborhood Center – Located at 1136 E. Montecito Street, the facility was designed and built as a community center in 1974 using Federal HUD grant funds. The center was part of the “Franklin Master Plan” that included adjacent Franklin Elementary School and the Eastside Library.

Louise Lowry Davis Center – Located at 1232 De la Vina Street, this facility was renamed in 1970 in recognition of the substantial contributions Ms. Davis made to the community and senior citizens in particular, in her role as an outstanding Recreation Supervisor of women's sports with the Parks and Recreation Department over 30 years. Ms. Davis also provided the funding for renovating the facility, on the condition that the facility be dedicated to primarily serving senior citizens.

### Conclusion

The Parks and Recreation Commission recommendation on the renaming of the Westside Neighborhood Center will be forwarded to City Council for final determination.

- ATTACHMENT:**
1. “Proposal to Rename the West Side Community Center after Louise Urzua,” submitted by Pastor Miguel Montano representing Word of Life Santa Barbara
  2. City of Santa Barbara Municipal Code, Section 22.48, Naming of Public Facilities and Private Streets

**PREPARED BY:** Mark Alvarado, Neighborhood and Outreach Services Senior Supervisor

**SUBMITTED BY:** Judith McCaffrey, Recreation Manager

**APPROVED BY:** Nancy L. Rapp, Parks and Recreation Director