



## DISCUSSION ITEMS

### Agenda Item # 13

#### AGENDA REPORT SUMMARY

**Meeting Date:** July 12, 2016

**Subject:** Consider a proposal to rename Community Plaza to Veterans Plaza and direct staff accordingly

**Prepared by:** Jon Maginot, City Clerk/Assistant to the City Manager

**Approved by:** Chris Jordan, Interim City Manager

**Attachment(s):**

1. Los Altos Municipal Code Chapter 9.28

**Initiated by:**

Public

**Fiscal Impact:**

None

**Environmental Review:**

Not applicable

**Policy Question(s) for Council Consideration:**

- Does the Council wish to rename Community Plaza to Veterans Plaza or to direct staff to develop a process for gathering community input on the most appropriate way to recognize veterans?

**Summary:**

- A group of community members has proposed to rename Community Plaza to Veterans Plaza as a way to honor United States Armed Forces Veterans

**Staff Recommendation:**

Consider a proposal to rename Community Plaza to Veterans Plaza and direct staff accordingly



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### **Purpose**

To consider a proposal to rename Community Plaza in Downtown Los Altos to Veterans Plaza

### **Background**

Community Plaza is a 0.16 acre plaza located at the intersection on Main and State Streets in downtown Los Altos. The Plaza was built in 1994 as a joint effort between the City, Rotary Club and the adjoining Citibank. While Rotary Club and Citibank were instrumental in the construction of Community Plaza, the Plaza is the City's.

### **Discussion/Analysis**

A group of community members has approached the City with a proposal to change the name of Community Plaza to Veterans Plaza to honor all military veterans that have served the United States of America.

Chapter 9.28 of the Los Altos Municipal Code sets forth the criteria for naming or renaming of public parks. It lists the following criteria which may be considered in selecting a name: 1) Neighborhood or geographical identification; 2) natural or geological features; 3) historical or cultural significance; 4) the articulated preference of residents of the neighborhood surrounding the public facility; and 5) a person or group of persons who have made an unusually outstanding public service contribution, provided that such person has been deceased for at least twenty-five (25) years.

The following groups have indicated support for renaming Community Plaza to Veterans Plaza: Rotary Club of Los Altos, Los Altos Chamber of Commerce, Los Altos Village Association, Foothill College, American Legion Los Altos Post 558 and Los Altos Kiwanis Club.

On June 8, 2016, the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) considered the proposal to rename the Community Plaza. At that meeting, eight community members spoke regarding the proposal, seven in support and one in opposition. Commissioners supported recognizing veterans but questioned whether this action was appropriate and/or adequate. The PRC unanimously supported the idea of taking action to designate a location within the City in recognition of veterans and to create a process for receiving community input and considering options to recognize veterans. The PRC did not dismiss renaming Community Plaza to Veterans Plaza as a potential option.

Following the PRC meeting, staff posted a topic on Open City Hall to gather input from the community on the proposal. As of July 1, a total of 132 individuals had responded to the topic. Of those responding, 55 supported renaming Community Plaza to Veterans Plaza and 73 opposed.

Those opposed to the proposal cited a number of reasons including, but not limited to, the City already has a memorial in Shoup Park, a fear that renaming the Plaza would not be adequate, a desire to maintain the name Community Plaza and a concern that the Community Plaza is in too busy of a



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location to serve as a memorial to veterans. It is anticipated that a final report of the results of the Open City Hall discussion will be presented at the July 12 Council meeting.

From staff's perspective, there is no advantage or disadvantage to renaming Community Plaza to Veterans Plaza.

### Options

- 1) Approve renaming Community Plaza to Veterans Plaza

**Advantages:** None identified

**Disadvantages:** None identified

- 2) Do not approve renaming Community Plaza to Veterans Plaza

**Advantages:** None identified

**Disadvantages:** None identified

- 3) Direct staff to create a process for receiving community input and considering options to recognize veterans

**Advantages:** This option would allow for further community dialogue regarding this topic

**Disadvantages:** This option could potentially require significant staff time and resources to develop and carry through a process for determining a manner to recognize veterans

### Recommendation

The staff recommends either Option 1 or Option 2.

Chapter 9.28 - NAMING OF PUBLIC STREETS, PARKS AND OTHER PUBLIC FACILITIES

**Sections:**

9.28.010 - Naming criteria.

- A. The naming or renaming of public streets, parks and other public facilities shall be in accordance with the criteria set forth below. Once adopted, name changes should occur on an exceptional basis only.
- B. The following criteria may be considered in selecting a name:
  - 1. Neighborhood or geographical identification.
  - 2. Natural or geological features.
  - 3. Historical or cultural significance.
  - 4. The articulated preference of residents of the neighborhood surrounding the public facility.
  - 5. A person or group of persons who have made an unusually outstanding public service contribution, provided that such person has been deceased for at least twenty-five (25) years.

(Ord. No. 2011-360, § 1, 1-25-2011)

9.28.020 - Naming and renaming procedures.

- A. A request to name or rename a street, park or other public facility may be initiated by the city council or by a majority of those residents whose addresses will change as a result of the renaming. If the city council determines that the naming or renaming of a street, park or public facility requires additional review, it may forward the matter to the historical commission, other appropriate commission, or council subcommittee for a recommendation.
- B. Street, park or other public facility names may be approved by the city council at a public hearing, following the criteria set forth in Section 9.28.010. No duplication of street names shall be permitted within the city.

(Ord. No. 2011-360, § 1, 1-25-2011)