

MEMORANDUM

ITEMS FOR UPDATE

TO: Mayor and Council
FROM: City Manager Andrew Ching and Madalaine McConville
DATE: February 9, 2023
SUBJECT: Street and Park Renaming Committee Update



BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE:

At the October 21, 2021 Work Study Session, Tempe City Council directed the renaming of several city parks and streets named for individuals who, historical records show, were members of a local Ku Klux Klan chapter in the 1920s.

Hudson Lane, Laird Streets, and Hudson, Harelson and Redden parks bear the names of now-deceased community leaders who the city discovered to have been dues-paying members of the KKK's Butte Klan No. 3 in the Tempe area. Tempe's research was conducted by Tempe History Museum staff using records from the Arizona Historical Society and Phoenix Public Library.

Initially, Hudson Drive was also designated for renaming but further research conducted by the Tempe History Museum staff after the Oct. 21, 2021 Work Study Session found that Hudson Drive was not named for an individual affiliated with the KKK, so it was removed from the list.

Additionally, last June, the Tempe Elementary School District renamed three schools bearing some of the associated names. Gililand Middle School will be named Geneva Epps Mosely Middle School, Hudson Elementary will be named Joseph P. Spracale Elementary School, and Laird School will be named Cecil Shamley School. All were previously employed at Tempe Elementary in different capacities, but all had a great impact on the school and education in Tempe.

RECOMMENDATION OR DIRECTION REQUESTED:

The Street and Park Ad Hoc Renaming Committee voted to forward the following recommendations for Council action: Romo-Jones Street (for Adolfo Romo and Joaquina Jones), to replace West Laird Street; Michelle Brooks-Totress Park, to replace Redden Park; Parque de Sotelo-Soza, to replace Hudson Park; Mary & Moses Green Park, to replace Harelson Park; Thomas Lane (for Maggie and Theodore Thomas), to replace Hudson Lane; and Ragsdale Street (for Lincoln Ragsdale), to replace East Laird Street.

Subsequent to the closure of the committee, we received an alternative suggestion by a direct descendent of the Sotelo and Soza families. Instead of combining the family's names for Parque de Sotelo-Soza to replace Hudson Park. The alternative is to instead have Parque de Soza replace Hudson Park, and identify the original 160-acre Sotelo Ranch as Rancho de Sotelo a Special Recognition Area to honor both families appropriately.

FISCAL IMPACT or IMPACT TO CURRENT RESOURCES:

Fiscal impact will include costs to change the streets and parks names and reimbursing impacted residents for costs relating to their street's names changing. Staff is working on a reimbursement process for impacted residents and finalizing the budgetary impacts for changing the streets and parks names. Additionally, there are no impacted businesses on the three streets. Please see the "Next Steps" attachment for additional information.

STAKEHOLDER/PUBLIC OUTREACH:

A public forum was opened from September 22, 2022 to November 30, 2022. Postcards were also sent to impacted residents to facilitate their feedback and notify them of the open public forum. There were also opportunities for citizens to provide public comment during committee meetings. Public input was also provided via email and council communicators. Staff members also attended various stakeholder meetings throughout the process to get additional feedback.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1 –Street & Park Renaming Committee Update Presentation

Attachment 2 – Next Steps