

MEETING DATE: March 10, 2008

AGENDA ITEM: Council Discussion on the Renaming of
Various Conference Rooms in City Hall.

ATTACHMENTS

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| 1. Requested input from the society on naming rooms in
City Hall memo | 1-6 |

Culver City Historical Society
P.O. Box 3428 Culver City, CA 90231-3428

TO: Shelly Wolfberg, City of Culver City
FROM: Culver City Historical Society, Gov. Liaison Julie Lugo Cerra
RE: Requested input from the society on naming rooms in City Hall
Date: January 15, 2008

The Culver City Historical Society appreciates the opportunity to offer input for future naming of city hall rooms. Conference rooms currently named appear to fall into two categories of importance in city history:

1. Former Councilmembers:

Mike Balkman Council Chambers
Dan Patacchia Conference Room

2. Movie Stars: (generally one word)

(Oliver) Hardy
(Stan) Laurel
(Clark) Gable
(Red) Skelton
Lucy (Lucille Ball)

Issues we took into consideration:

In the entry to the Mike Balkman Council Chambers, there are photos of the current councilmembers and within the chambers, the Historical Society has provided the initial installation of historic photo plaques picturing trustees/councilmembers from 1917. We are in the process of bringing it up to date. Therefore we did not suggest former councilmembers/trustees' names in the interest of duplication. We would like to suggest that we broaden the information, however, on each councilmember after we complete the plaques, so that the photos and background might appear on the city website.

There are also many streets already named to reflect elected officials (see attached).

Parks also reflect many elected and appointed officials (ie Coombs Park, Tellefson Park, Culver West Alexander Park, Bill Botts Field, Syd Kronenthal Park). Just as an FYI, we are following up to determine if Lindberg Park was misspelled, as appears to be the case. There is a Charles Lindbergh tie to Culver City, so we might be recommending a new sign if the research substantiates that claim. There are also questions of the appropriateness of renaming Victory Park to Dr. Paul Carlson Park.

With that in mind, we give you these suggestions:

- Harry Culver (city founder)
- Dale Jones (former CAO, longest or 2nd longest serving CAO in state history?)

If you are looking to broaden the categories, another suggestion was to use surnames of the early settler families, which would include:

Machado, Talamantes, Higuera, Lugo, Saenz, Rocha, & Ybarra

(a reminder, however, that there is a Machado Way, Higuera St. and Lugo Way in CC and that the names of early settler families appear on a plaque in Carlson Park.)

For general historic opportunities:

- Gabrielino Room
- Rancho Room

Entertainment figures: Input reflected people who might be considered role models. We also wondered if you wanted duplicates of stars who have their names on studio buildings, but since public access is limited, we also including those. One concern was that we were not sure if you wanted to only consider names that could be referred to with one word, so here is the full list:

Louis Armstrong (played at Frank Sebastian's Cotton Club, owned a home on Wade)

Gwen Verdon (dancer/movie star who grew up in Culver City where her mother had a dance studio)

Van Johnson (often seen in town, took his car to a local garage)

Spencer Tracy (who met Katharine Hepburn at MGM)

Gene Kelly

Paul Newman

Greta Garbo

Rudolph Valentino

Buster Keaton

Judy Garland

Elvis

Marx Bros.

Jackie Cooper

Will Rogers (appeared in Culver City, and Jr. had a ranch in what became Blair Hills)

Fred Astaire/Ginger Rogers

Orson Welles

Sidney Poitier

John Wayne, movie star, who also owned the Culver Hotel at one time.

"Munchkins"

E.T.

Hal Roach (founded the third major studio in the city, geared to family entertainment)

"Little Rascals" –since "Our Gang" carries a negative connotation today. (It was a suggested name for closed session room ;-)

In totally different areas, we received input that suggested names of local citizens,(Mitchell and Mildred Wolff, for example) and another option was to honor exemplary retired city employees with their years of service. There is a question of precedent, and choices, so we are just passing it along, with the suggestion that walls of honor within rooms might suffice, particularly for retirees, with input from city staff.

As an FYI: When you are requested to consider individuals, it becomes a bit of a “sticky wicket,” we know and hard to determine just who should be named, so there are other options:

- The tiles around the fountain in front of the VMB were purchased with names to finance the installation (c. 1980).
- The bricks around the Town Plaza Lion sculpture were sold to help defray costs.
- In the school district, there are opportunities on a wall in the district office, for those supportive of the district. In the Youth Health Center there are opportunities to buy “bricks” or spaces for recognition of individuals.
- Helms Field at Culver High reflects the Helms Bakeries’ support of athletics.
- Lin Howe School was named for a greatly respected principal at Culver Grammar School. The CCUSD has the ability to name for their own.

One of the concerns expressed by many was the issue of consistency. We think a plan should be clear, so that citizens know up front how to use the process, and who qualifies. It is difficult when a death leads to suggestions because emotion and grief often cloud the decision-making process.

This also led to discussion of the use of other buildings. As the VMB has plaques listing local veterans, and rooms named for each sister city, other city facilities might be used to honor their own. Police and Fire, Public Works, Transportation, for example, have many exemplary employees or benefactors to be considered for the naming of a room. The Senior Center named rooms for higher elected officials who might be considered conduits for funding. There are also buildings in local parks. This could broaden opportunities, within the confines of a stated policy.

We hope this has given you some help.

The background information on street names appears below:

Street Names

When tract maps are filed with the county, streets are named. In early developments, names reflected developers’ family, colleagues and historic figures.

The first tract (# 1775 --Washington Park), filed by Camillo Cereghino and his Washington Improvement Co. in 1912 named streets for national and international figures like presidents:

- (George) Washington
- (Abraham) Lincoln
- (James) Madison
- (Martin) Van Buren
- (Andrew) Jackson

Other Washington Park streets were named for:

- Duquesne (a French naval officer)

- (Edward) Braddock (a British Commander) who was defeated at Fort Duquesne in 1755
- (Admiral David) Farragut, (a Civil War Naval Commander)
- La Salle (a French explorer),
- Marquis de LaFayette, (a French statesman/general who served in the Continental Army during the American Revolution)

Tract 2444, a September 11, 1913 by the Culver Investment Co., included Main Street and land north to Pico.

Tract 2530 was an Higuera filing, which explains the 1919 naming of Higuera Street. The Higuera's founded Rancho Rincon de Los Bueyes, which was the second Rancho from which Culver City was carved.

We annexed some areas that were already named, like the east end's Mc Manus St. which is a name in question.

In some instances, street names were changed to be consistent with the County master street plan. For example, a street in Culver City was often changed for continuity with its Los Angeles extension. For example, in 1950, Bankfield Avenue was changed to Hayter Avenue by ordinance C.S.-130 "to reduce confusion" and "to serve the public interest." Likewise, Moynier Lane within Culver City was changed to South Fairfax and La Cienega.

- Overland Avenue has been First Street, Flower St. and the "Road to San Pedro," where Agustín Machado traded.
- Hazelton was changed to Kinston to project a better image.

Early Settler recognition:

- Elenda Street was named for Elenda Young, the wife of John D. Young, who acquired a Talamantes portion of Rancho La Ballona.
- Lugo Way was named for Charles Reyes Lugo, a descendent of early settlers, who retired as a CC police captain.
- Cota Street references an early family, relatives of the Machado Family.
- Jefferson Blvd. was changed from Machado in 1925.
- Machado Road, a connector road from Sepulveda to Jefferson honors the early settler family who established Rancho La Ballona.
- Agustín is the first name of the Machado who founded Rancho La Ballona.
- Ballona was named for the Machado/Talamantes rancho.

Local Political/Business figures:

- Culver Boulevard began in 1926, a change from Putnam Avenue, while another portion was changed from Del Rey Blvd. in 1927.

- Delmas Terrace related to Harry Culver's business partner Delphin Delmas.
- Eastham Drive was named for Earl Eastham, a business associate and brother-in-law of Harry Culver.
- Lindblade was another of Culver's associates.
- Stephon Terrace was named for 1930s Councilman and Police Commissioner, Phillip Stephon.
- Tellefson Road was named for a city official, Mike Tellefson.
- Stubbs Lane, a private road, leads to former City Clerk Helene Stubbs' home.
- Lotz Lane commemorates former Mayor Marty Lotz
- Coombs Avenue honors early city trustee and contractor, Dan Coombs.
- Hacienda Street was changed in 1949 to Culver Center Street.
- Dobson Way was a 1950 name change from Whitehead St. to honor Mayor Frank Dobson.
- Segrell Way honors former Mayor A. H. Segrell.
- Vera at nearby WLAC (County) honors our former Mayor Albert Vera.

Streets reflecting Culver City's movie history:

The redevelopment of MGM's Lot #3 yielded names of movies filmed on that land. Some examples:

- Raintree (County)
- Bounty Lane (Mutiny on the Bounty)
- St. Louis Street (Meet Me in St. Louis)
- Velvet Lane (National Velvet)
- Showboat Pl
- Rainbow (Over the Rainbow)
- Copperfield
- Huck Fin

Studio Estates, previously a portion of MGM's Lot #2. Developers Goldrich & Kest offered star names like:

- (Fred) Astaire,
- (Jackie) Coogan
- (Judy) Garland
- (Hedy) LaMarr

In Downtown Culver City,

- Ince Blvd. commemorates Thomas Ince, who built the first two major studios in Culver City

Developers personal choices:

- Helms Avenue edges the Helms Bakery Building.
- Diller was one of the developers of Sunkist Park (Diller & Kalsman)

Culver Crest streets:

- Esterina Way immortalized developer Lou Crank's wife, Esther.
- Youngworth was named for the early developer, whose home is still on the Marycrest Manor property.

Blair Hills:

Stone & Stone, the developers, came up with

- Stoneview
- Vicstone, and
- Blairstone streets.

Blair was the name of one of the developer's grandchildren.

Studio Village:

- Blanco Way refers to R. J. Blanco, who developed Studio Village; he also dedicated land for Blanco Park.

Jefferson Blvd. Industrial area:

- Leahy was named for Don Leahy, the developer of that commercial/industrial area.
- Pearson was named for the Pearson Candy Company, which was located on Jefferson and Pearson.

Hayden Industrial Tract:

- Hayden (Ave, Place)-- the developer of the first industrial tract in Culver City.
- Steller was named for the Main Street hardware store owner and Chamber president who actively promoted the Hayden Tract in the 1940s.

Other historic references

- Lantana is a new street named for the city flower
- Heritage Place honors the diverse heritage of Culver City residents.

And for those of us who have been here awhile, we remember that we almost had a "Rocky Road," not for the ice cream, but because of the Rocky movies.....

JLC 1/2008