



## City Council Staff Report

From: City Manager

Report Type: **CONSENT CALENDAR**

Lead Department: **Community Services**

Meeting Date: **August 12, 2024**

Report #:2406-3196

### TITLE

Adopt an Ordinance to Rename Tower Well Park to Fred Eyerly Tower Well Park as Recommended by the Parks & Recreation Commission; CEQA status – not a project.

### RECOMMENDATION

The Parks and Recreation Commission and staff recommend the City Council adopt the attached ordinance renaming ‘Tower Well Park’ to ‘Fred Eyerly Tower Well Park.’

### BACKGROUND

On November 8, 2023, following the City’s Naming Policy, the Palo Alto Historical Association (PAHA) was asked to recommend a name for a proposed park at the corner of Alma Street and Hawthorne Avenue. Given the significant historic landmark on the property, PAHA recommended “Tower Well Park.” PAHA noted, “When constructed in 1910, the water tower was the first major visible infrastructure of the City’s utilities and is a symbol of the City’s successful beginnings and forward-thinking leaders. The PAHA board agrees that “Tower Well Park” reflects the historic significance of this site.”

On November 28, 2023, the PRC voted unanimously<sup>1</sup> (7-0) to recommend that the City Council adopt a Park Dedication Ordinance for the Tower Well site, 0.19 acres of land (8,437 square feet) at 201 Alma Street and approve the proposed name “Tower Well Park.” On March 4, 2024, the City Council considered an item<sup>2</sup> to dedicate the ‘Tower Well Site’ as parkland. Staff noted the site is among the City-owned properties that were found eligible in 2000 for the National Register of Historic Places, and the City Council would be receiving the Historic Resources Board’s recommendation for placement of the property on the local Historic Resources Inventory. The

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<sup>1</sup> Parks and Recreation Commission, November 28, 2023; Agenda Item #3; Minutes, [www.cityofpaloalto.org/files/assets/public/v/1/agendas-minutes-reports/agendas-minutes/parks-andrecreationcommission/agendas-minutes/2023-agendas-and-minutes/11-nov/prc-draft-minutes-11.28.23.pdf](http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/files/assets/public/v/1/agendas-minutes-reports/agendas-minutes/parks-andrecreationcommission/agendas-minutes/2023-agendas-and-minutes/11-nov/prc-draft-minutes-11.28.23.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> City Council, March 4, 2024; Agenda Item #6; SR# 2402-2669, <https://cityofpaloalto.primegov.com/Portal/Meeting?meetingTemplateId=13507>

March 4, 2024 staff report linked in the footnote includes additional background on the history of the park and the next steps.

During the March 4th Council meeting a member of the public submitted correspondence<sup>3</sup> urging the Council to name the newly dedicated park "Fred Eyerly Tower Well Park" and initiate adding the site to the California Historic Register and National Historic Register. Fred Eyerly, who passed away May 12, 2000, served on Palo Alto's City Council for eight years, one year as a Palo Alto Mayor in 1982, and eight years on the Palo Alto Utilities Commission. The Tower Well site was informally named for Mr. Eyerly in a dedication ceremony on October 2, 2000.

The Council adopted a park dedication ordinance for the Tower Well site, 0.19 acres of land at 201 Alma Street, approved the proposed name "Tower Well Park", and referred to the Historic Resources Board (HRB) and Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) to consider renaming it to Fredrick (sic) Eyerly Tower Well Park. The Council also referred the addition of the site to the California and National registers to the HRB. The site was added to the City's Historic Resources Inventory on April 22, 2024<sup>4</sup>. Resources are required to place it on the California and National registers, which have not yet been assigned.

## **ANALYSIS**

Following the March 4<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting, staff received additional input from PAHA on the name of the new park. PAHA informed City staff that the PAHA Board met and discussed the interest in associating the name of Fred Eyerly with Tower Well Park. The Board agreed that the proposed addition of Fred Eyerly's name to the park was proper. The Board Members, including several who know Mr. Eyerly, stated that the community knew him as Fred, not Frederick, and the less formal name should be used.

Staff presented the history, March 4<sup>th</sup> Council motion and PAHA's reconsideration to the HRB on May 9, 2024, as directed by the Council. The HRB passed a motion unanimously (4-0) to retain the name Tower Well Park rather than adding Mr. Eyerly's name to the park name. Overall, the HRB felt that a simple name is appropriate for a small park and consideration should be given to other individuals, not just Mr. Eyerly.

The Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) supports renaming the park Fred Eyerly Tower Well Park. The PRC felt that Mr. Eyerly and Palo Alto Utilities, which Tower Well Park symbolizes, are strongly associated and therefore including his name is appropriate. The PRC passed the motion unanimously (6-0).

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<sup>3</sup> Public speaker correspondence, <https://cityofpaloalto.primegov.com/Portal/viewer?id=0&type=7&uid=b9f8097f-97e8-4af7-a1d0-3fb5bed7887f>

<sup>4</sup> City Council, April 22, 2024, Agenda Item #12; SR#2402-2684, <https://cityofpaloalto.primegov.com/Portal/viewer?id=0&type=7&uid=0ac73ad7-aa3b-461e-a61e-8aa70de09a01>

Staff support changing the name to Fred Eyerly Tower Well Park as recommended by PAHA and the PRC.

**FISCAL/RESOURCE IMPACT**

There is no fiscal impact associated with changing the park name. Staff will add a park sign with the park name following this decision. The Community Services Department will absorb the \$2,500 expense for adding a park sign.

**STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

There have been several opportunities for the public to provide input on the park name, including Parks and Recreation Commission meetings, Historic Resources Board meeting and Council meetings. Additionally, staff have sought guidance from the Palo Alto Historical Association throughout this process.

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

Changing the name of a park is not a project as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A: Ordinance Renaming Tower Well Park

**APPROVED BY:**

Kristen O'Kane, Community Services Director