



CITY OF
**PALO
ALTO**

Historic Resources Board Staff Report

From: Planning and Development Services Director
Lead Department: Planning and Development Services

Meeting Date: May 9, 2024
Report #: 2404-2913

TITLE

201 Alma Street, Tower Well Park: Park Name Discussion per City Council Direction

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Historic Resources Board (HRB) review the name of Tower Well Park at 201 Alma Street and consider renaming it to Fredrick Eyerly Tower Well Park. The Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) will also review the park name.

BACKGROUND

PAHA

On November 8, 2023, following the City's Naming Policy, the Palo Alto Historical Association (PAHA) was requested to recommend a name for the new park at the corner of Alma Street and Hawthorne Avenue. Given the significant historic landmark on the property, PAHA recommend "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."

Council Action March 4, 2024

On March 4, 2024, the City Council considered an item (item #6), park dedication for the 'Tower Well Site'. Staff noted the site is among the City-owned properties that was found eligible in 2000 for the National Register of Historic Places, and City Council would be receiving the HRB's recommendation for placement of the property on the local Historic Resources Inventory.

During the March 4th Council meeting a member of the public submitted correspondence¹ urging the Council to retain the current name/name the newly dedicated park as "Fred Eyerly Tower Well Park" and initiate adding the site to the California Historic Register and National Historic Register. The speaker noted:

- The Tower Well site was named for Eyerly in a dedication ceremony on October 2, 2000
- The HRB had discussed the site in 1999 and 2000 (Palo Alto Weekly of May 12, 1999, and April 5, 2000, and the Daily News of September 2000).
- The site was identified as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places
- The reasons for dedicating the site as parkland were discussed more than 23 years ago in his November 7, 2000 letter to the HRB that included excerpts of Palo Alto Weekly articles of May 24, 1999, and April 5, 2000, and of City Council Minutes of February 28, 1994, and June 10, 1996.

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 HRB and PRC to consider renaming it to Fredrick Eyerly Tower Well Park. Council also referred to the HRB adding the site to the California and National registers.

Fred Eyerly

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. A Palo Alto Weekly article² described Mr. Eyerly as "an eminently fair and considerate mayor".

Council Action April 22, 2024

On April 22, 2024, Council received the HRB's recommendation for the property for placement on the HRI as a Category 1 resource. The nomination form and evaluation are on the City's website.³ The City Council placed the property on the City's local historic resources inventory.

AUTHOR/TITLE:

Amy French, Chief Planning Official

¹ Public speaker correspondence <file:///C:/Users/afrench/Downloads/Item%206%20Public%20Comment.pdf>

² Link to Palo Alto Weekly article: https://www.paloaltoonline.com/morgue/page4/2000_May_24.TOWN24.html

³ Nomination form and evaluation 201 Alma: https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/files/assets/public/v/1/planning-and-development-services/historic-preservation/historic-inventory/almast_201.pdf