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MEMORANDUM

TO: Historian Panel, Street Renaming Process
FROM: Dena Marshall, Susan Hammer, Joe Hertzberg, Mike Greenfield
SUBJECT: Historian Panel Hearing Summaries Regarding Grand Avenue, Broadway, and 39th Avenue
DATE: April 10, 2009

A series of three public hearings were held to provide public testimony on the application of César E. Chávez Boulevard Committee to rename a Portland city street in honor of César E. Chávez.

Grand Avenue: March 23, 2009 (600 NE Grand Ave. Portland, Oregon)

Appropriateness of the Proposed Honoree

Eight individuals testified in support of the appropriateness of renaming a street in honor of César Chávez. Three individuals testified in opposition.

In Support

- ◆ César Chávez's values, path of nonviolence, and lifelong work of improving the working conditions of farm workers is an inspiration, locally and globally.
- ◆ César Chávez was influential in my decision to become an educator and naming a street after him would send a clear message that we honor American heroes of all colors.
- ◆ My father learned English and became a citizen because of the educational programs initiated by César Chávez.
- ◆ Latino youth are in dire need of role models. By honoring César Chávez, we demonstrate to Latino youth that their culture can produce leaders that everyone can honor.
- ◆ Naming a street after César Chávez is an opportunity to propel the change we'd like to see in the city.
- ◆ The streets of any city belong to the citizens, and honoring César Chávez by renaming a street would give future residents and Latinos pride about the street they live on.
- ◆ Renaming a street for César Chávez would send a powerful statement to students that they have someone to look up to. Such a movement will portray a message of embracement and acceptance, and can foster more civility in Portland.
- ◆ Proclamation from the Board of Multnomah Board of Commissioners honoring the spirit of César Chávez.

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- ◆ Letter from State Senator Jackie Dingfelder endorsing the renaming of a street for César Chávez.

In Opposition

- ◆ There are many significant historical figures, including and several that are directly connected to Grand Avenue.
- ◆ César Chávez has nothing to do with the background of individuals and businesses on Grand Avenue.
- ◆ There is no connection or authenticity in the consideration of renaming Grand Avenue to honor César Chávez.

Historical Significance of Grand Avenue

In Support

- ◆ Grand Avenue's place in the history of Portland is marked by commerce. Grand Avenue is the "commercial spine" of the East Portland / Grand Avenue Historic District formed in 1990.
- ◆ Originally platted as 5th Street, Grand Avenue was renamed in 1893 to increase its prominence in East Portland and to have a more imposing street name.
- ◆ Grand Avenue was named after the Grand Army of the Republic in the Civil War.
- ◆ The street name, Grand Avenue, evokes an emotional response. But so does every street name. Grand Avenue was not named after a prominent person, event, or concept.
- ◆ The historical significance of Grand will remain because of the historic district.
- ◆ Renaming a street on the east side of the river would reinforce old prejudices – the east side is where the brown, black, working class, and poor live, while the wealthy and powerful have historically done business and lived on the west side.
- ◆ Many business names are synonymous with the name of the street.
- ◆ Significance is in the power of the place, not the name of Grand Avenue.

In Opposition

- ◆ Other, more appropriate, naming opportunities should be explored, particularly the new pedestrian bridge and the new light rail bridge. A bridge is a more fitting tribute to the spirit of César Chávez.
- ◆ It will be a financial hardship on small businesses, in a difficult economic time, to make the changes associated with a new street name. There will be an economic hardship and undue burden on businesses to change stationary, business cards, signage, brochures, and other marketing materials if the street is renamed.
- ◆ The address of a business is more than a mailing address. Customers, contracts, vendors, financial institutions, and manufacturers will be affected by an address change for years to come.
- ◆ Renaming a street at this time is mismanagement of city funds and a waste of tax payer's money.
- ◆ In regard to the expense to reprint business cards and brochures and to change signage, these are annual budget line items for advertising and marketing.

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- ◆ Renaming Grand Avenue for César Chávez is an honor, not a hindrance for businesses.
- ◆ Broadway is the center of our city. Every city has a Broadway. Like the Cole Porter song says, "Don't Monkey with Broadway."

Broadway: March 30, 2009 (600 NE Grand Ave. Portland, Oregon)

Appropriateness of the proposed honoree

Fifteen individuals testified in support of the appropriateness of renaming a street in honor of César E. Chávez. Four individuals testified in opposition.

In Support

- ◆ Portland has been known by many names in the last several thousand years. Don't buy into the negative, but see how the positive of naming a street after César Chávez blesses all of us.
- ◆ César Chávez is a hero and an influence to me and others locally and globally. Let's celebrate his inspiration and life's work by naming a street after him.
- ◆ César Chávez is worthy of this recognition for his work using nonviolent means to provide social justice and equity for all.
- ◆ César Chávez has lasting ties to Oregon from his visits to Salem, the University of Oregon, Lewis and Clark and Mount Angel. An annual student leadership conference, named for him, has taught 1,405 Oregon high school students about the life and legacy of César Chávez over the last 19 years.
- ◆ César Chávez is a hero to so many people in this country. He thought about the good of all and of the community as a whole.
- ◆ The street renaming process puts equality and justice into action. Let's celebrate diversity, goodwill and include the richness of other cultures.

In Opposition

- ◆ Broadway is significant for its history as the theatre and entertainment center for the city and it served as an early connection to growing neighborhoods on the East side. It's very naming in 1913 and its development since, has been reflective of Portland social, cultural and architectural history.
- ◆ I lived in Salinas, CA in 1970's and was caught in the violence of striking farm workers, organized by César E. Chávez, on the road I commuted on for my job. I was jeered and shouted at as well as having rocks and bottles thrown at my car. This is my personal view of César Chávez and what his actions did to me.
- ◆ Rename a city park, a farmer's market, the new pedestrian bridge, a street in Hillsboro, Woodburn or Cornelius, school etc., for César Chávez.
- ◆ César Chávez eschewed personal recognition. So what is the value of a symbolic act by renaming a street after him? Symbolism hurts more than it helps.

Historical Significance of Broadway

Thirty three individuals testified on the significance of Broadway. Eight neighborhood and business associations were represented in the testimony.

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In Support

- ◆ Broadway's place in the history of Portland is marked by its prominence as a main street of the city. Its history has been defined as the home of theatres and entertainment, a site of African American heritage in the city and conduit to neighborhoods and business on the NE, SE and NW sections of Portland.
- ◆ Many business names are synonymous with the name of Broadway and there is pride in the integral heritage of Broadway.
- ◆ I recommend a change in the street renaming criteria of the city code. No street should be renamed if there is an existing business district association working hard to brand and market a district.
- ◆ I relocated my business last year because I wanted to be part of a business district that is recognized throughout the Portland metro area. Broadway has the commercial cache I want for my business.
- ◆ Other, more appropriate, naming opportunities should be explored, particularly the new pedestrian bridge.
- ◆ It will be a financial hardship on small businesses, in a difficult economic time, to make the changes associated with a new street name.
- ◆ Broadway is the center of our city and should not be altered.

In Opposition

- ◆ It is time to build a new history. Change is something we do well in Portland. Renaming Broadway will not be erased from our minds if it becomes César Chávez Boulevard.
- ◆ The César E. Chávez Boulevard Committee (CECBC) has worked hard to get a street renamed not a park, school or bridge. People are asking the committee to start from scratch with a new process. Street renaming can be a challenge, but well worth the effort.

39th Avenue: April 6, 2009 (4122 NE Sandy Ave. Portland, Oregon)

Appropriateness of the proposed honoree

Nineteen individuals testified in support of the appropriateness of renaming a street in honor of César E. Chávez. Four individuals testified in opposition.

In Support

- ◆ How many streets have significant personal meaning? Acknowledge César E. Chávez's work for social justice and bring our community more inclusiveness with a street renamed after him.
- ◆ César Chávez brought awareness about unfair working conditions and the dangerous use of pesticides. We (CECBC) are not going away. Let us work together and make positive changes.
- ◆ The annual César Chávez Student Leadership Conference teaches Oregon high school students about the life and legacy of César Chávez. Students learn about the historical significance of his life and have a positive role model to look up to.

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- ◆ We are going to be so proud when we name a street after César Chávez. This will tell Latino youth they belong here and their culture and contributions make Portland a better place. Send a message of power, hope and inclusiveness.
- ◆ We all benefit from the bounty of the 175,000 farm workers in Oregon. Honor the dignity and contributions of these extraordinary people.
- ◆ Renaming a street will recognize the contributions of César Chávez. It will promote self worth, community pride, and sense of belonging. Implement the concept of inclusivity.

In Opposition

- ◆ Not all of César Chávez and the United Farm Workers activities were nonviolent. There are many recorded acts of violence from riots to beatings that have not been mentioned in relation to César Chávez.
- ◆ There are many famous individuals associated with the labor movement in this country. It shows partiality to honor just one person.

Historical Significance of 39th Avenue

Thirty one individuals testified on the significance of 39th Avenue. Four neighborhood and eight business associations were represented in the testimony.

In Support

- ◆ There are many city and state assets (parks, schools, bridges, etc.) that can be named for someone. The process for accomplishing this goal involves many levels of petitioning, approval and exceptions. The CECBC has worked for two years to specifically rename a street after César Chávez. I would be proud to have any of the three streets in consideration named after this great man.
- ◆ People speak of living in neighborhoods such as Belmont, Woodstock and Laurelhurst. No one talks about living on 39th Avenue. It does not define a neighborhood or community.
- ◆ We're being asked to lay down a little bit of our privilege, not our lives to rename a street after César Chávez. Let's make history and have our city be a welcoming place for believers in justice.

In Opposition

- ◆ 39th has important navigational benefits that would be lost in renaming. It was a part of the street grid system developed by Portland city founders Asa Lovejoy and Francis Pettygrove. The street grid was based on the Philadelphia system of having numbered streets run North/South and named streets run East/West.
- ◆ 39th has vibrant neighborhoods and small businesses that drive the economic engine of the area. Eight business associations have branded themselves with respect to their location on or near 39th. There are other alternatives that should be considered to honor César Chávez.
- ◆ As early as 1870, 39th was shown on area maps as neighborhoods developed to the east of Portland. 39th was a part of the public transportation system as early as 1888 and starting in 1924, the first gasoline buses system ran on 39th.
- ◆ In 1909 land for Laurelhurst Park was purchased and in 1912 the park was created using the Olmstead plan. 39th was labeled as the entrance to the park. In February 2001

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Laurelhurst Park was named to the National Register of Historic Places, the first city park ever listed on the national register.

- ◆ 39th is important to my personal family history having lived and worked on it since the 1920's.