TO: HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: CITY MANAGER DEPARTMENT: COMMUNITY SERVICES

DATE: JUNE 7, 2004 CMR: 309:04

SUBJECT: PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION AND PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION RECOMMENDATION TO CITY COUNCIL TO NAME THE SOUTH OF FOREST AVENUE PARK AS PALO ALTO HERITAGE PARK

RECOMMENDATION
The Parks and Recreation Commission and the Palo Alto Historical Association (PAHA) and staff recommend that the City Council name the park land which is currently referred to as the South of Forest Avenue Park, the Palo Alto Heritage Park. If the City Council approves the Commission recommendation, staff will return at a later date with an ordinance for approval via the consent calendar dedicating the park land at the corner of Homer Avenue and Waverley Street as the Palo Alto Heritage Park.

BACKGROUND
When the Palo Alto Medical Foundation relocated its medical clinic and satellite facilities to El Camino Real from the South of Forest Avenue (SOFA) neighborhood in 1999, the company which purchased the property for development, Summerhill Homes, agreed to cede 2.41 acres of land to the City of Palo Alto as public park land. In December 2003, Council dedicated the land bounded by Homer Avenue, Waverley Street, the City-owned Roth Building on Bryant Street, and behind new homes along Channing Avenue, as park. The park has been planned with an interim design that provides recreational turf and some minimal amenities.

At its April 12, 2004 meeting, Council adopted a revised park naming policy that included detailed criteria for the naming and re-naming of parks (and recreational facilities) and established a role for the Parks and Recreation Commission, or other appropriate commissions, in the public review of park and facility names. As with the original City policy, the process of evaluating suggested names begins with a review by PAHA to consider the historical appropriateness of names.
COMMISSION REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS
At its May 5, 2004 regular meeting, the Board of Directors of the Palo Alto Historical Association received a report from the Association’s Landmarks and Street Names Committee. The Committee reviewed 66 different name suggestions from the public (Attachment B).

The Committee recommended five names to the Board of Directors: Joseph Davis Park; Russel Van A. Lee Park; Anna Zschokke Park; Birge Clark Park; and Palo Alto Heritage Park. Because there was not a consensus of the committee on preferred names, the list was not ranked by preference.

The Board approved a motion that the name Palo Alto Heritage Park be recommended to the City Council, and that the names Dr. Joseph Davis Park, Anna Zschokke Park and Dr. Russel Van A. Lee Park be provided for consideration as historically appropriate names. (Attachment C).

In reviewing the list of suggested names from the PAHA Landmarks and Street Names Committee, the Board discussed the many historical merits of Dr. Lee, Dr. Davis and Anna Zschokke, but did not reach a consensus on whose contributions had been most significant to the City of Palo Alto. After some discussion, the Board decided to remove the name of Birge Clark from the list because of the confusion having two City parks named ‘Clark Park’ would cause to Police and Fire personnel responding to emergency calls.

Some members of the Board felt the name Palo Alto Heritage Park would be inclusive of all of the people nominated for their contributions to the community, including the Ohlone indigenous people.

At its May 25, 2004 regular meeting, the Parks and Recreation Commission (Commission) conducted a public hearing on the naming of the park. The Commission reviewed four names forwarded by PAHA and the historical rational that was used to support these recommendations. The Commission determined that none of the names were incompatible with the intended use of the park, and voted unanimously to recommend naming the name Palo Alto Heritage Park to Council. In review of the recommendations of PAHA, the Parks and Recreation Commission concurred that Palo Alto Heritage Park was inclusive in recognition of the contributions of the pioneers of Palo Alto, including the specific individuals suggested by PAHA. Although the Commission did not find any of the suggested names incompatible with the intended use of the park, the Commission felt that suggested individuals might be recognized by plaques on park benches or walkways within the park.
RESOURCE IMPACT
The cost of erecting a sign with the name of the park has been included in the anticipated
development costs of the park. There are no other resource impacts associated with this
recommendation.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS
These recommendations are consistent with existing City policy and furthers Policy and
Procedure 1-15.

ALTERNATIVES
In the alternative, the City Council may refer this matter to the Policy and Services
Committee for recommendation or reject the proposed name.

ATTACHMENTS
Attachment A: List of Nominated Names and number of votes
Attachment B: Report from the PAHA Board of Directors
Attachment C: Draft Parks and Recreation Commission Minutes, May 25, 2004

PREPARED BY:____________________________________________________
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