

1 [Initiating Landmark Designation - Mel's Drive-In]

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3 **Resolution initiating a landmark designation under Article 10 of the Planning Code for**
4 **the Mel's Diner, located at 3355 Geary Boulevard, Assessor's Parcel Block No. 1086,**
5 **Lot No. 025.**

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7 WHEREAS, under Planning Code, Section 1004.1, the Board of Supervisors may by
8 Resolution initiate landmark designation; and

9 WHEREAS, Planning Code, Section 1004.2(b), requires the Historic Preservation
10 Commission to respond to landmark designation initiations from the Board within 90 days, but
11 that the Board of Supervisors may, by Resolution, extend the time within which the Historic
12 Preservation Commission is to render its decision; and

13 WHEREAS, 3355 Geary Boulevard is significant as the location of the San Francisco
14 Bay Area's Civil Rights movement's first mass sit-in in 1963; and

15 WHEREAS, A Mel's Drive-In franchise opened at the subject property in the 1950's;
16 and

17 WHEREAS, Mel's Drive-In is a popular California based chain restaurant which began
18 in San Francisco in the late 1940's; and

19 WHEREAS, A hiring practice investigation, started by a San Francisco State College
20 student, determined that African American employees of Mel's Drive-in were only given
21 behind the scenes positions such as janitors and dishwashers; and

22 WHEREAS, In response to the investigation, in October 1963, a picketing campaign
23 began at several San Francisco Bay Area Mel's Diner locations due to the restaurant's racial
24 discriminatory practices in hiring; and

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1 WHEREAS, The Ad Hoc Committee to End Discrimination was a driving organizational
2 force behind the Mel's Diner protests; and

3 WHEREAS, On November 3, 1963, the picketing was performed inside of Mel's Drive-
4 In at the subject property as a mass sit-in with every empty stool and booth filled with
5 protestors; and

6 WHEREAS, Protestors included some of San Francisco's most prominent African
7 American leaders, and a protest also took place outside of the residence of Harold Dobbs,
8 City Supervisor, Mayoral Candidate, and Mel's Diner co-owner; and

9 WHEREAS, The sit-in lasted a few days and resulted in over one hundred protestors
10 being arrested by the San Francisco police; and

11 WHEREAS, The protest was successful and is directly credited as leading to the
12 restaurant's agreement to hire Black workers for all positions, including "front-of-the-house"
13 roles; and

14 WHEREAS, Following the success of the Mel's Drive-In protests, activists continued to
15 protest hiring practices at other establishments, including hotels and grocery stores, including
16 a highly visible protest at the Sheraton-Palace Hotel in 1964; and

17 WHEREAS, The action has been recognized as a key site of San Francisco civil rights
18 protests, which called greater attention to race-based employment discrimination and led to
19 changes in employment practices for African American residents; and

20 WHEREAS, The Ad Hoc Committee to End Discrimination is credited as having
21 provided an innovative framework for civil rights protesting amongst a variety of groups; and

22 WHEREAS, In 2024, the San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission adopted the
23 African American Citywide Historic Context Statements, which provided frameworks for
24 identifying and evaluating sites for historical significance and integrity associated with San
25 Francisco's diverse and robust African American histories; and

1 WHEREAS, The African American Citywide Historic Context Statement was prepared
2 by qualified historians in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards; and

3 WHEREAS, Through applying the evaluative framework outlined in the African
4 American Citywide Historic Context Statement, the property can be considered as an
5 individually eligible historic resource based on its strong association with African American
6 History; and

7 WHEREAS, The African American Citywide Historic Context Statement identifies the
8 Mel's Drive-In as a property which may be eligible for landmark designation; and

9 WHEREAS, The building exterior retains integrity of setting, location, feeling, and
10 association as the location of the Mel's Drive-In in 1963; now, therefore, be it

11 RESOLVED, The Board of Supervisors hereby initiates landmark designation of the
12 Mel's Drive-In under Planning Code, Section 1004.1; and, be it

13 FURTHER RESOLVED, The Board requests that the Planning Department prepare a
14 landmark designation report to submit to the Historic Preservation Commission for its
15 consideration of the full historical, architectural, aesthetic, and cultural interest and value of
16 the Mel's Drive-In; and, be it

17 FURTHER RESOLVED, The Board of Supervisors requests that the Historic
18 Preservation Commission consider whether the Mel's Drive-In warrants landmark designation
19 and submit its recommendation to the Board according to Article 10 of the Planning Code.

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