

File No. 230230 Committee Item No. 7
Board Item No. _____

COMMITTEE/BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
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Committee: Land Use and Transportation Committee Date April 3, 2023

Board of Supervisors Meeting Date _____

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OTHER (Use back side if additional space is needed)

- Hearing Notice 040323
- PW Affidavit 032423
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Completed by: Erica Major Date March 30, 2023

Completed by: Erica Major Date _____

1 [Commemorative Street Name Designation - "Emperor Norton Place" - 600 Block of
2 Commercial Street]

3

4 **Resolution adding the Commemorative Street Name "Emperor Norton Place" to the 600**
5 **block of Commercial Street in recognition of his contribution to San Francisco as a**
6 **celebrated figure in American history.**

7

8 WHEREAS, Emperor Norton, also known as Joshua A. Norton, was a historical figure
9 who lived in San Francisco in the mid-19th century. He declared himself the Emperor of the
10 United States and Protector of Mexico in 1859, and held this self-proclaimed title until his
11 death in 1880; and

12 WHEREAS, Emperor Norton, is a celebrated example of individualism and eccentricity.
13 He rejected the conventions of his time and created his own identity, challenging the norms
14 and expectations of society. His unusual behavior, including issuing his own currency and
15 decrees, inspired many people and made him a beloved figure in San Francisco; and

16 WHEREAS, Norton was born in England but spent most of his early life in South Africa.
17 Leaving Cape Town, probably in late 1845, he arrived in San Francisco in late 1849, and
18 subsequently lived in a boarding house called the Eureka Lodgings at 624 Commercial St.,
19 from 1863-1880; and

20 WHEREAS, For the first few years after arriving in San Francisco, Norton made a
21 successful living as a commodities trader and real estate speculator. However, he was
22 financially ruined following a failed bid to corner the rice market during a shortage prompted
23 by a famine in China; and

24 WHEREAS, Norton had no formal political power; but nevertheless, was treated
25 deferentially in San Francisco, and currency issued in his name was honored in some
establishments that he frequented. Some considered Norton to be insane or eccentric, but

1 residents of San Francisco enjoyed his imperial presence and took note of his frequent
2 newspaper proclamations; and

3 WHEREAS, On January 8, 1880, Norton collapsed at the corner of California and
4 Dupont (now Grant Avenue) streets and died before he could be given medical treatment.
5 According to the San Francisco Chronicle, upwards of 10,000 people lined the streets of San
6 Francisco to pay him homage at his funeral; and

7 WHEREAS, Norton has been immortalized as the basis of characters in the literature of
8 Mark Twain, Robert Louis Stevenson, Christopher Moore, Morris and and René Goscinny,
9 Selma Lagerlöf, Neil Gaiman, Mircea Cărtărescu and Charles Bukowski; and

10 WHEREAS, Today, Emperor Norton is a beloved figure in San Francisco, remembered
11 as a humanitarian and visionary. He was known to advocate for equality for all minorities,
12 extending the vote to women, and proposed the San Francisco and Oakland Bay Bridge, the
13 Transbay Tube, the United Nations, and more; and

14 WHEREAS, Emperor Norton's legacy also highlights the importance of mental health
15 and how society should treat those suffering from mental illness. His case is a reminder that
16 mental health disorders should not be a source of shame or isolation, and that people with
17 these disorders can still make significant contributions to their communities; now therefore, be
18 it

19 RESOLVED, That to celebrate the legacy and contributions of Emperor Norton, there
20 shall be an honorary naming of “Emperor Norton Place” on Commercial Street between
21 Montgomery Street and Kearny Street; and, be it

22 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Department of Public Works is directed to add the
23 honorary street name to its official list of Commemorative Street Names in accordance with
24 Public Works Code, Section 789 et seq.

25

BOARD of SUPERVISORS



City Hall
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 244
San Francisco, CA 94102-4689
Tel. No. (415) 554-5184
Fax No. (415) 554-5163
TDD/TTY No. (415) 554-5227

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT the Land Use and Transportation Committee of the City and County of San Francisco will hold a public hearing to consider the following hearing matter and said public hearing will be held as follows, at which time all interested parties may attend and be heard:

Date: April 3, 2023

Time: 1:30 p.m.

Location: **IN-PERSON MEETING INFORMATION**
Legislative Chamber, Room 250, located at City Hall
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, San Francisco, CA

REMOTE ACCESS

Watch: www.sfgovtv.org

Watch: SF Cable Channel 26, 28, 78, or 99 (*depending on your provider*) once the meeting starts, the telephone number and Meeting ID will be displayed on the screen.

Public Comment Call-In: <https://sfbos.org/remote-meeting-call>

Subject: **File No. 230230.** Resolution adding the Commemorative Street Name "Emperor Norton Place" to the 600 block of Commercial Street in recognition of his contribution to San Francisco as a celebrated figure in American history.

In accordance with Administrative Code, Section 67.7-1, persons who are unable to attend the hearing on this matter may submit written comments prior to the time the hearing begins. These comments will be made as part of the official public record in this matter and shall be brought to the attention of the Board of Supervisors. Written comments should be addressed to Angela Calvillo, Clerk of the Board, City Hall, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 244, San Francisco, CA, 94102 or sent via email (board.of.supervisors@sfgov.org). Information relating to this matter is available in the Office of the Clerk of the Board or the Board of Supervisors' Legislative Research Center (<https://sfbos.org/legislative-research-center-lrc>). Agenda information relating to this matter will be available for public review on Friday, March 31, 2023.

For any questions about this hearing, please contact the Assistant Clerk for the Land Use and Transportation Committee:

Erica Major (Erica.Major@sfgov.org) ~ (415) 554-4441)

Please Note: *The Department is open for business, but employees are working from home. Please allow 24 hours for us to return your call or email.*


f Angela Calvillo
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
City and County of San Francisco

em:sc:ams

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PROOF OF POSTING

Legislative File No. (230230) Commemorative Street Name Designation - "Emperor Norton Place" - 600 Block of Commercial Street

Description of Items:

Resolution adding the Commemorative Street Name "Emperor Norton Place" to the 600 block of Commercial Street in recognition of his contribution to San Francisco as a celebrated figure in American history.

WE, T. WELDETENSAE & J. ZHOU, an employee of the City and County of San Francisco, posted the above-described document(s) along the street(s) to be affected at least ten (10) days in advance of the hearing (pursuant to Public Works Code Sec. 789, et seq.).

Date: 03-24-2023

Time: 8:10 am

Location: COMMERCIAL ST BTWN KEARNY ST & MONTGOMERY ST

Signature:  

Instructions: Upon completion, original must be filed in the above referenced file.