

**From:** [Dirk Hermance](#)  
**To:** [Board of Supervisors \(BOS\)](#)  
**Subject:** Resolution 230230  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 11, 2023 4:04:10 PM

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This message is from outside the City email system. Do not open links or attachments from untrusted sources.

Greetings!

As a former San Francisco Bay Area resident, I would like to endorse the idea of formal recognition of Emperor Norton on the resolution to add "Emperor Norton Place" as a commemorative name for the 600 block of Commercial Street.

The Emperor long deserves a formal place in the city's history and tourist experience.

Sincerely,

Dirk E. Hermance

( Just another weirdo who lived in the region )

**From:** [Buzz Bain](#)  
**To:** [Board of Supervisors \(BOS\)](#)  
**Subject:** RESOLUTION 230230  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 11, 2023 3:48:54 PM

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The proposal to add EMPEROR NORTON PLACE as a commemorative name to the 600 block of Commercial Street is a wonderful idea. He is symbolic of everything a great citizen should be. He single handedly prevented an anti-Chinese immigrant riot by bravely placing himself between the attackers and immigrants and reciting the Lord's prayer, promoted peace and good humour throughout the great city of San Francisco and created his own reality while causing no harm. His proposal to build the Bay bridge, said to be impossible, was way ahead of it's time. His story adds to the many wonderful things about San Francisco. We need a person like him in today's world. Please vote yes.

**From:** [Clay Smith](#)  
**To:** [Board of Supervisors \(BOS\)](#)  
**Subject:** Written public comment on file number 230230, "Emperor Norton Place"  
**Date:** Monday, April 10, 2023 7:45:13 PM

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Dear Clerk of the Board,

I wish to file the following written public comment on file number 230230, "Emperor Norton Place" resolution by Board President Peskin, for tomorrow's (April 11) meeting. The following public comment is from a generative artificial intelligence agent, developed using technology recently created in San Francisco, based on the historical writings of The Emperor Norton, asking the digital Emperor to comment on the resolution:

***We are deeply humbled and honored by this decision of the Board of Supervisors. We thank them for recognizing our contributions to the city and for keeping alive the memory of our reign. We hereby decree that Emperor Norton Place shall be a symbol of unity, progress, and prosperity for all the citizens of San Francisco. May it be a testament to the power of the human spirit and the enduring legacy of our reign. Long live San Francisco! Norton I.***

Thank you,  
Clay Smith  
SF District 3 Resident

**From:** [John Lumea](#)  
**To:** [Board of Supervisors \(BOS\)](#)  
**Subject:** FILE #230230 | Support and suggestions for "Emperor Norton Place" resolution  
**Date:** Monday, April 10, 2023 9:33:45 AM  
**Attachments:** [Sign\\_for\\_Tony\\_Bennett\\_Way\\_Mason\\_Street\\_SF.png](#)

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Dear Supervisors,

I'm John Lumea, founder of a nonprofit project, THE EMPEROR NORTON TRUST, that since 2013 has been working on a variety of fronts — research, education, advocacy — to advance the legacy of Joshua Abraham Norton. You'll find our leadership listed [here](#).

In 2018, the Trust produced *Emperor Norton at 200*, a bicentennial series of talks, exhibits and special events to mark the 200th anniversary of Emperor Norton's birth. Our invited partners in co-producing individual offerings included the California Historical Society, San Francisco Public Library, Mechanics' Institute, and Society of California Pioneers.

In connection with this series, the Mayor's Office and San Francisco Recreation & Parks honored our request to light both City Hall **and** Coit Tower in gold on the anniversary itself (February 4th). And, Supervisor Aaron Peskin issued an SFBoS Proclamation declaring **February 2018** to be **Emperor Norton Month** in the City and County of San Francisco.

Emperor Norton is documented to have lived at the Eureka Lodgings, 624 Commercial Street — on the site now occupied by the 4-story apartment building at 650/652 Commercial — for a 14- to 15-year period starting sometime between summer 1864 and summer 1865 and continuing until his death in January 1880.

**On behalf of the Trust, I am pleased to express our enthusiastic support for the proposed resolution (File #230230) to add a commemorative name for the 600 block of Commercial Street, to honor Emperor Norton.**

In this spirit, we offer the following "fine-tuning suggestions" that we hope you agree will improve this worthy proposal:

**1**

### **“EMPEROR NORTON WAY” WOULD BE BETTER**

“Emperor Norton **Place**” is good. But, “Emperor Norton **Way**” is better — for a couple of reasons:

- “Emperor Norton Way” is better on **substance**:

This name would speak to the notion of "the Emperor Norton way" as the Emperor

Norton **approach** — or **path** — or "**way of being.**"

- “Emperor Norton Way” is better for **design**:

Here’s an example of how commemorative street namings are implemented in San Francisco. It’s the “Tony Bennett Way” sign for the 900 block of Mason Street:



We note that the commemorative sign is the same length as the primary street sign above it — and that the **lengths** of primary and commemorative street-name signs appears to be a design standard implemented the same throughout San Francisco.

The length of the commemorative sign places limits on how many letters can fit in the space.

“Tony Bennett Way” has **14 letters** and **2 spaces**. And, it fits — but just.

“Emperor Norton **Place**” would have **four MORE letters** than this — **18 letters** and **2 spaces**. Much tighter.

“Emperor Norton **Way**” would have **16 letters** and **2 spaces** — so, somewhere in between.

The extra typographical **ease** afforded by “Emperor Norton Way” — fewer letters to occupy the same space — would make it possible to produce an “Emperor Norton **Way**” sign that was **easier to read from the street level** and **easier to spot from a greater distance** than an “Emperor Norton **Place**” sign would be.

To be sure, there are commemorative street-name signs in San Francisco that squeeze in

much more: the "Gene Compton's Cafeteria Way" signs on Taylor between Turk and Eddy clock in at 24 letters, 3 spaces and an apostrophe!

Our suggestion is that — from a design and user-interface perspective: If a compelling name exists that is shorter **and** that does an equal or greater amount of "commemorative work," **the shorter option is preferable.**

## 2

### THE RESOLUTION SHOULD COMMIT TO SIGNAGE

As you know, a naming resolution is one thing. Signage is separate — and involves its own process of hearings and approvals.

The "[Tony Bennett Way](#)" [naming resolution](#) that the San Francisco Board of Supervisors passed in November 2017 included the following clause requesting the installation of signage:

*FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors requests the Municipal Transportation Agency to erect street signs on Mason Street between Sacramento and California Streets indicating both the honorary and the existing names of the street, either on a single sign or on separate signs, with the honorary name "Tony Bennett Way" beneath the existing name;*

**There is no such clause in the original version of the "Emperor Norton Place" resolution** posted [here](#).

The Trust assumes that it is fully the intention of the resolution that there be a sign(s) at the end(s) of the 600 block of Commercial Street, to memorialize an honorary naming of this section of Commercial after Emperor Norton. But, as we've seen over the course of many generations now, when it comes to getting official tributes, the Emperor needs all the help he can get!

So, it would help if the Supervisors made their signage intentions clear and explicit by adding a signage provision to this resolution — something that presumably would..."signal" that the Supervisors really want signage here, thus helping to clear the path for an actual sign(s).

Many thanks for considering these ideas — and for moving this resolution forward.

**John Lumea**

Founder

**THE EMPEROR NORTON TRUST**

[john@EmperorNortonTrust.org](mailto:john@EmperorNortonTrust.org)

[www.EmperorNortonTrust.org](http://www.EmperorNortonTrust.org) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#)

*"John Lumea has emerged as the Emperor's leading spokesman." —San Francisco Chronicle columnist Carl Nolte*  
*"These guys are doing the lord's work." —Chuck Prophet*

**From:** [Board of Supervisors \(BOS\)](#)  
**To:** [BOS-Supervisors](#)  
**Cc:** [Major, Erica \(BOS\)](#); [Calvillo, Angela \(BOS\)](#); [De Asis, Edward \(BOS\)](#); [Entezari, Mehran \(BOS\)](#); [Mchugh, Eileen \(BOS\)](#); [Ng, Wilson \(BOS\)](#); [Somera, Alisa \(BOS\)](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Emperor Norton Place " resolution file number 230230  
**Date:** Monday, April 10, 2023 9:09:41 AM

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Hello,

Please see below message regarding **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.

Regards,

John Bullock  
Office of the Clerk of the Board  
San Francisco Board of Supervisor  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 244  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
(415) 554-5184  
[BOS@sfgov.org](mailto:BOS@sfgov.org) | [www.sfbos.org](http://www.sfbos.org)

***Disclosures:** Personal information that is provided in communications to the Board of Supervisors is subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act and the San Francisco Sunshine Ordinance. Personal information provided will not be redacted. Members of the public are not required to provide personal identifying information when they communicate with the Board of Supervisors and its committees. All written or oral communications that members of the public submit to the Clerk's Office regarding pending legislation or hearings will be made available to all members of the public for inspection and copying. The Clerk's Office does not redact any information from these submissions. This means that personal information—including names, phone numbers, addresses and similar information that a member of the public elects to submit to the Board and its committees—may appear on the Board of Supervisors website or in other public documents that members of the public may inspect or copy.*

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**From:** Judi Leff <[judi@sanfranciscohistory.org](mailto:judi@sanfranciscohistory.org)>  
**Sent:** Saturday, April 8, 2023 8:54 AM  
**To:** Board of Supervisors (BOS) <[board.of.supervisors@sfgov.org](mailto:board.of.supervisors@sfgov.org)>  
**Subject:** Emperor Norton Place " resolution file number 230230

This message is from outside the City email system. Do not open links or attachments from untrusted sources.

I am on the board of the San Francisco History Association, and the Emperor Norton Legacy League.

I am also the volunteer historian for Temple Emanu-El and the Jewish cemeteries in Colma. I spoke at the Land Use hearing, but due to my teaching schedule, I am unable to attend the Board of Supervisors meeting.

I have been familiar with Emperor Norton since childhood. My brother participated in the Emperor Norton Treasure Hunt in the early 60s, we ate Emperor Norton Sourdough Snacks, and we always ordered the Emperor Norton sundae at the Ghirardelli Chocolate factory.

Emperor Norton would attend services on Saturday mornings at the Temple Emanu-El on Sutter Street. He came for the music, and left before the sermon. He would attend a Christian church on Sunday, so that his subjects would not think he was showing favoritism.

We put up a plaque in his honor at the Home of Peace Cemetery in Colma. When I take kids on what I call the "Gratitude" Tour, I ask them if they like the zoo? I show them Mr. Fleishhacker and ask them to say thank you. The aquarium? Mr. Steinhart. If they love Stern Grove, I suggest they thank Mrs. Stern. I always end at the cenotaph to Emperor Norton. I explain that all of those other people mostly came to San Francisco with nothing, made a fortune, and gave back to the city. He came with a fortune, ended up with nothing, and still gave back to the city. It is not about income, but outgo. I end by asking the kids what they would like to be remembered for in supporting their city, decades in the future.

I also remind them that when they pass people on the street who may be in rough circumstances that they should understand everybody has a story, and a value as a human being. Emperor Norton was accepted as our emperor because he identified as our emperor, and that was just fine with us.

We struggle these days with naming things after people from the past. Do they share our current values? Emperor Norton stood up for the Chinese community, and called for the rights of women.

The name Emperor Norton Place befits this kind, brave soul who reinvented himself after misfortune, and has maintained his place in history and in the hearts of those who call San Francisco home.

Thank you for your consideration to add this name to the 600 block of Commercial Street.

Judi Leff  
SFHA Board Member



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**To:** [Board of Supervisors \(BOS\)](#)  
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**John Lumea**

Founder

**THE EMPEROR NORTON TRUST**

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