

BOARD of SUPERVISORS



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## MEMORANDUM

TO: Margaret McArthur, Commission Liaison, Recreation and Parks  
Commission  
Phil Ginsburg, General Manager, Recreation and Parks Department  
Sheryl Evans Davis, Director, Human Rights Department

FROM: Erica Major, Assistant Clerk, Land Use and Transportation Committee

DATE: August 2, 2017

SUBJECT: LEGISLATION INTRODUCED

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The Board of Supervisors' Land Use and Transportation Committee has received the following proposed legislation, introduced by Supervisor Peskin on July 25, 2017:

**File No. 170884**

**Resolution urging the Recreation and Parks Commission to remove the name of Justin Herman from the plaza located at the intersection of The Embarcadero and Market Street.**

If you have comments or reports to be included with the file, please forward them to me at the Board of Supervisors, City Hall, Room 244, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, San Francisco, CA 94102 or by email at: [erica.major@sfgov.org](mailto:erica.major@sfgov.org).

c: Sarah Madland, Recreation and Parks Department

1 [Urging the Recreation and Parks Commission to Remove the Name of Justin Herman from  
2 the Plaza on The Embarcadero]

3 **Resolution urging the Recreation and Parks Commission to remove the name of Justin**  
4 **Herman from the plaza located at the intersection of The Embarcadero and Market**  
5 **Street.**

6  
7 WHEREAS, In 1972, the plaza at the foot of Market Street, adjacent to The  
8 Embarcadero was opened and named after Justin Herman; and

9 WHEREAS, Justin Herman was the executive director of the San Francisco  
10 Redevelopment Agency between 1959 and 1971; and

11 WHEREAS, The San Francisco Redevelopment Agency relied on funding from the  
12 federal government’s Housing and Home Finance Agency (now known as the Department of  
13 Housing and Urban Development); and

14 WHEREAS, The California Redevelopment Act of 1945 allowed cities and counties to  
15 create redevelopment areas to combat so-called “urban blight”, which was defined by income  
16 level of residents, dilapidation of building structures and social conditions, including the size of  
17 non-white populations; and

18 WHEREAS, To combat “urban blight”, the redevelopment agencies promoted “urban  
19 renewal” which assumed that the method to “improve” a neighborhood was to destroy it, and  
20 accumulated properties through eminent domain; and

21 WHEREAS, These misguided development projects, called “slum removal”, did not  
22 recognize and value the existing vibrant neighborhoods – mostly, low-income and of people of  
23 color – being destroyed; and

24  
25

1           WHEREAS, During Herman’s tenure as director, he oversaw the second phase of the  
2 redevelopment of the Western Addition, that displaced approximately 4,000 residents, small  
3 businesses, and bull-dozed 60 square blocks of the City; and

4           WHEREAS, In 1970, Herman said “This land is too valuable to permit poor people to  
5 park on it”; to give credibility to this “urban renewal” project that sought to buy up buildings  
6 and evict people who were poor, old, black and brown; and

7           WHEREAS, The redevelopment of the Western Addition also included the building of  
8 the Geary Expressway that divided and separated the largely African-American Fillmore  
9 District from the Japanese community to its east; and

10           WHEREAS, Not only did the Japanese community suffer displacement during  
11 redevelopment but it had recently reestablished its roots in the City after being forcibly  
12 removed to internment camps during World War II; and

13           WHEREAS, Despite robust African-American community opposition and litigation,  
14 Phase 2 of the Western Addition redevelopment was implemented; now, therefore, be it

15           RESOLVED, That given its location, the plaza on The Embarcadero, particularly since  
16 the demolition of the Central Freeway in 1991, is a key public space for residents and tourists,  
17 and provides an important connection between downtown and the waterfront; and, be it

18           RESOLVED, That if the plaza on The Embarcadero be named for a honored resident,  
19 that this person should embody San Francisco values of equity, inclusion and forward-  
20 thinking; and, be it

21           FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges the Recreation and  
22 Parks Commission to remove the name of Justin Herman from the plaza at The Embarcadero  
23 and Market Street; and, be it

24           FURTHER RESOLVED, That the plaza be known as the “Embarcadero Plaza” until a  
25 suitable honoree has been agreed upon.