



Executive Director's
Report to the
Board of Harbor Commissioners

DATE: APRIL 19, 2016

FROM: WATERFRONT & COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE

SUBJECT: RESOLUTION NO. _____ – APPROVAL OF AN AGREEMENT WITH THE SAN PEDRO BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY FOR THE JOE HILL MEMORIAL AT 100 W. 5TH STREET IN SAN PEDRO

SUMMARY:

The Los Angeles Harbor Department (Harbor Department) staff requests that the Board of Harbor Commissioners (Board) approve an Agreement with the San Pedro Bay Historical Society (Historical Society) for the Joe Hill Memorial. The memorial will consist of an 8-foot wide, 3.5-foot tall, 1-inch thick bronze plaque commemorating 20th century labor icon Joe Hill, and a second smaller plaque identifying donor names and artist credits. The proposed location is an existing freestanding wall located outside Liberty Plaza at 100 W. 5th Street in San Pedro. The Historical Society is responsible for all costs related to the fabrication and erection of the memorial, and is currently raising funds for the estimated total project cost of \$36,700. If approved, the Harbor Department would be responsible for ongoing maintenance at an estimated annual cost of \$400. The procedures and standards used to review the proposal are consistent with the Commemorative Art Policy (Policy).

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board of Harbor Commissioners:

1. Find that the proposed action is exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under Article III Class 1(1) of the Los Angeles City CEQA Guidelines as determined by the Director of Environmental Management;
2. Approve the Agreement with the San Pedro Bay Historical Society; and
3. Direct the Board Secretary to transmit the proposed Agreement to the Los Angeles City Council for approval pursuant to Charter Section 373 and Section 10.5 of the City's Administrative Code;

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4. Authorize the Executive Director to execute and the Board Secretary to attest to the proposed Agreement; and
5. Adopt Resolution No. _____.

DISCUSSION:

Background/Context – The Historical Society submitted to the Harbor Department, Application #201501 (Application) for a proposed Joe Hill Memorial on July 14, 2015. Joe Hill, having lived from October 7, 1879 to November 19, 1915, was a Swedish-American labor activist, songwriter, and member of the Industrial Workers of the World while working on the docks in San Pedro, California. His most famous song was "The Preacher and the Slave" in which he popularized the phrase "pie in the sky." His songs were included in union song cards and song books and were considered a unifying element of the labor movement. Strikers who were jailed would sing Joe Hill songs to attract attention to their cause and to the conditions under which they were held. Joe Hill lived in San Pedro during the years 1910 to 1913. He was tried, convicted, and executed for murder in Utah in 1915. However, the case is considered controversial as some historians believe the evidence supports his innocence.

Joe Hill's societal contributions and support for workers' rights has made him a labor icon. The Application included support letters from Congresswoman Janice Hahn, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 13, the ILWU Convention, the Southern California Pensioner Group, the Marine Clerks Association Local 63, and the Warehouse Processing & Distribution Workers' Union Local 26.

Proposal – The Application (Transmittal 1) proposes two bronze plaques designed by Suzanne Matsumiya and anticipated to be sculpted by Eugene Daub, both San Pedro residents. The first plaque (Transmittal 2) would be approximately 8 feet wide, 3.5 feet tall, and 1 inch thick, displaying a collage of images including Joe Hill with his guitar, a representation of historic San Pedro, and various moments in early labor struggles against anti-organizing sentiments such as disputes with law enforcement. The second, smaller plaque would contain credits, names and logos of contributors and donors to the memorial's creation and be approximately 18 inches wide, 25 inches tall, and 0.5 inches thick. The proposed memorial would be placed on an existing freestanding wall outside Liberty Plaza at 100 W. 5th Street in San Pedro (Transmittal 3). The Harbor Department owned site was requested because it is located directly behind an existing Liberty Hill Monument and due to its proximity to the place where Joe Hill once resided in San Pedro (Transmittal 4).

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Commemorative Art Policy – The proposal was reviewed and found to be consistent with the Commemorative Art Policy approved by the Board on January 22, 2015. Staff determined that the proposal is feasible and an Advisory Panel (Panel) reviewed the Proposal. The Panel consisted of a City Council District 15 staff person, a Harbor Department Historic Preservation expert, and a local community artist. Each member of the Panel scored the Application based on two categories: aesthetics and historical significance, both on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being the highest, 1 being the lowest). On August 3, 2015, the Panel convened and met with representatives of the Historical Society. The Panel formally submitted a recommendation of approval, and gave a total score of 15 out of 15 for aesthetics and 13 out of 15 for historical significance.

Memorial Agreement – Staff recommends the Board approve the Agreement (Transmittal 5) between the Harbor Department and San Pedro Bay Historical Society and the artists. Under the Agreement, the Historical Society would be allowed one year from the MOU's effective date to complete fundraising, fabricate the plaques, and donate them to the Harbor Department. Installation of the plaques and any related fees would be paid for by the Historical Society and is still subject to Harbor Department Engineering Division review (and may require a Harbor Engineer's Permit). Ongoing maintenance would be the responsibility of the Harbor Department at an estimated annual cost of \$400. Under the Agreement, the Historical Society and/or the artists would retain the right to take possession of the plaque if the Harbor Department chooses to move or remove the Joe Hill Memorial.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT:

The proposed action is approval of an Agreement for the installation of a Joe Hill Memorial plaque on a freestanding wall outside of Liberty Plaza. As an activity involving minor exterior construction with negligible or no expansion of use, the Director of Environmental Management has determined that the proposed action is exempt from the requirements of CEQA in accordance with Article III Class 1(1) of the Los Angeles City CEQA Guidelines.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

In addition to the staff time and costs associated with processing the proposed memorial, the Harbor Department will be responsible for ongoing maintenance of the memorial subsequent to erection. An estimated annual cost of \$400 to maintain the Joe Hill memorial would be accounted for under the annual maintenance budget for the Construction & Maintenance division.

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CITY ATTORNEY:

The Agreement has been reviewed and approved as to form and legality by the Office of the City Attorney.

TRANSMITTALS:

1. Application #201501
2. Plaque Design
3. Site Map
4. Conceptual Plan
5. Agreement



MICHAEL J. GALVIN
Director of Waterfront & Commercial Real Estate

FIS Approval: MB (initials)
CA Approval: MB (initials)



MICHAEL DiBERNARDO
Deputy Executive Director

APPROVED:



EUGENE D. SEROKA
Executive Director

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