



STAFF REPORT

AGENDA NO:

MEETING DATE: February 21, 2017

To: Honorable Mayor and City Council

Date: February 21, 2017

From: Margaret Glomstad, Parks and Recreation Director – (650) 558-7307

Subject: Study Session for a Public Art Display to Honor Anson Burlingame

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Council provide input regarding a public art display to honor Anson Burlingame.

BACKGROUND

The City of Burlingame was named for Anson Burlingame (1820-1870). During Mr. Burlingame's life, he was a Massachusetts State Senator from 1853-54 and a member of the US House of Representatives from 1855-61. During his House service, he took a stand against slavery. In 1861, President Abraham Lincoln appointed him as the Minister to China, a post which he held for six years.

In 1866, Anson Burlingame purchased a large tract of land in present day Burlingame and Hillsborough at the suggestion of his banker friend, William Ralston, for \$54,757, likely intending to return later.

Due to his excellent service with China, Emperor Tongzhi appointed him as Minister Plenipotentiary to the United States and other Treaty European nations, 1867-1870. He is the first and only person to become an envoy from the country to which he was originally assigned. While he was in Beijing, he developed a "Cooperative Policy" that advocated common interests among the Treaty Powers and China; helped introduce mining, telegraph and other technologies, as well as international law; and demonstrated his belief in the equality of all people.

In 1868, on a tour of the U.S, he stressed equal treatment of the Chinese. He was responsible for the Burlingame Treaty, a policy of non-interference that established China's territorial integrity and led in part to the controversial immigration of thousands of Chinese to America.

The tract of land that Burlingame purchased was surveyed in 1868. Though Burlingame's name remained on the map, he would never return to this area. He died of pneumonia in St. Petersburg, Russia, on February 23, 1870.

In 1893, 23 years after his death, a group of wealthy men from San Francisco started organizing an exclusive country club. They were inspired by the name Burlingame, still found on county

maps of the area, and they decided to call the club, “The Burlingame Country Club.” A few years later in 1908, the town would be incorporated, and the name Burlingame would remain.

DISCUSSION

Staff and a subcommittee comprised of Vice Mayor Brownrigg and Councilmember Colson have discussed honoring Anson Burlingame with some type of commissioned art piece in Washington Park (two potential locations), at the Burlingame Avenue Train Station, or as part of the Post Office development.

Although the City does not have a process in place for commissioning works of art, there is an Art in Public Places (Exhibit A) policy that covers donated or loaned artwork. This policy could be used as a baseline to develop a commissioned art policy. The subcommittee discussed the potential of following a process similar to the one the Peninsula Hospital used in which they put out a national call for design submissions and had a selection committee choose the winning design.

FISCAL IMPACT

No funding has been allocated at the present time; however, donations, City funding, developer funding, or a combination could be used to finance the project.

Exhibit:

- Art in Public Places Policy