

CITY COUNCIL/REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2010
AGENDA ITEM No. 17**

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

- A. PUBLIC NOTICE – ANNOUNCEMENT OF RECRUITMENT OF PUBLIC MEMBER FOR LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION (LAFCO) – (MARTHA POYATAS, EXECUTIVE OFFICE – LAFCO)**

- B. Request to Council re: Naming Martin L. King, Jr park Baseball field in honor of the Late Mr. Tommie Roberts (William Webster – EPACT Education Fund)**

Please Post

For Immediate Release

San Mateo Local Agency Formation Commission

Contact: Martha Poyatos, Executive Officer
San Mateo Local Agency Formation Commission
455 County Center, 2nd Floor, Redwood City, CA
(650) 363-4224

February 2, 2010

Announcement of Recruitment of Public Member

~~Applications for Public Member and Alternate Public Member~~
of the San Mateo Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo)
are now being accepted.

LAFCo was created by the State Legislature to make decisions on the boundaries and organization of the cities and special districts in San Mateo County. LAFCo is an independent commission composed of two members of the Board of Supervisors chosen by the Board, two members of city councils chosen by the mayors of the 20 cities in the county, two members of special district boards chosen by the presiding officers of the special districts in the county and the Public Member appointed by the other six Commissioners. Each member category has an Alternate.

The Commission meets on the third Wednesday of each month at 2:30 p.m. in the Board of Supervisors Chambers at 400 County Center, Redwood City. Additional special meetings may also be held as needed.

To be eligible to serve as Public Member or Alternate Public Member, a person must be a resident of San Mateo County and may not be an officer or employee of the county, a city, special district or school district with territory in the county. The term of office for both positions is four years expiring in May 2014.

The deadline for receipt of applications is April 5, 2010. Applications and additional information may be obtained from Martha Poyatos, Executive Officer, 455 County Center, Redwood City, at (650) 363-4224.

For more information please visit www.sanmateolafco.org

EPACT Education Fund

East Palo Alto Council of Tenants Education Fund
P.O. Box 50142
East Palo Alto, CA 94303

Thursday, 11 February 2010

Mayor David E. Woods and
Members of the City Council
City of East Palo Alto
2415 University Avenue
East Palo Alto, CA 94303

Dear Mayor Woods and Members of the City Council:

The Board of Directors of the East Palo Alto Council of Tenants (EPACT) Education Fund, the educational arm of the East Palo Alto Council of Tenants (EPACT), on behalf of a multitude of residents of the City of East Palo Alto urge the East Palo Alto City Council to consider naming the athletic field in the Martin Luther King, Jr., Park after the late Tommie Roberts, the indefatigable driving force behind the Ravenswood Little League since 1970, who just entered into Eternity on 28 January 2010.

Following the quiet hour in memory of Mr. Roberts this past Sunday, 7 February 2010, held in the sanctuary of St. Johns Missionary Baptist Church, Dennis Parker approached me and insisted that something be done to memorialize Tommie Roberts in view of his service to the youth of the community as the mainstay of the Ravenswood Little League as well as his other community service such as his years on the Planning Commission. I concurred that something needed to be done to ensure that this paramount guiding light of our community be not soon forgotten. Stewart Hyland, who joined the conversation, suggested that the athletic field where the baseball games of the Ravenswood Little League have taken place for many years be named after Mr. Roberts. The park, whose resuscitation was a major project Mr. Roberts pursued thanklessly for years after many years of neglect, especially with respect to the on-site facilities, is named after the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., but the athletic field and the building that houses the concessions could be named after others who have made significant contributions to the youth of the community.

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I do not believe that any financial burden would be incurred by the City of East Palo Alto were the City Council to name the athletic field after Tommie Roberts. I suspect that it would require nothing more than a resolution of the City Council to approve the naming of the athletic field after Tommie Roberts. It would be a simple matter for the City Attorney Vincent Ewing to research the obstacles if any to naming the athletic field after Mr. Roberts.

I would urge the City Council to consider memorializing Tommie Roberts while the community feels the weight of his recent loss so heavily and while the trauma occasioned by his passing is so fresh in the memory of all who care about East Palo Alto and the enrichment of the lives of several generations of our youth thanks to Tommie Roberts's refusal to let the Ravenswood Little League die despite years of difficulty in recruiting adults, especially fathers, to volunteer to provide the adult infrastructure essential to the functioning of Little League.

Over the past more than twenty years I have witnessed waves of grief over the passing of luminaries of our community whose dauntless efforts contributed to the well-being of tens of thousands of East Palo Alto residents inspire calls for the naming of buildings, parks, and streets after these illustrious citizens. After the passing of Solomon Tucker, who served on the East Palo Alto Sanitary Board of Directors among services to the community too numerous to mention, and after the passing of Ed Becks, a resident of East Palo Alto since 1948 who spearheaded numerous nonprofit projects to benefit the community for nearly half a century, the City Council entertained naming either housing developments or other buildings or open spaces after these worthies. The City Council seriously considered naming the public park at the center of the University Square housing development after Ed Becks that subsequently and quite appropriately was named after Officer Joel M. Davis, who like Officer Richard May fell in the line of duty.

Tommie Roberts's indefatigable energy in recruiting parents for the Ravenswood Little League and his many appearances over the past two decades that I observed personally as a regular attendee of probably more than 90% of all regular City Council meetings and a high percentage of special meetings since mid-January 1989 in order to cajole a succession of City Councils to upgrade the quality of Martin Luther King, Jr., Park have made all the difference in the world to generations of youth, many of whom lacked active father figures in their lives and who found positive male role models in the caring figure of Mr. Roberts and others he was able to recruit. (Not to be forgotten are the many years your colleague City Council Member A. Peter Evans devoted to the Ravenswood Little League along with Tommie Roberts and other dedicated residents.)

On behalf of the EPACT Education Fund in the years between 1992 and 2001 I wrote the East Palo Alto Community Bulletin Board that regularly appeared each week in the Palo Alto Weekly and that was also a source of information of East Palo Alto community events for the San Jose Mercury News, the San Francisco Chronicle, and the San Mateo County Times. During those years I had an especially close relationship with Mr.

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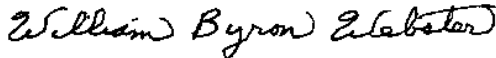
Roberts because the annual parade initiating the Ravenswood Little League baseball season, the sign-up of youth for the teams, and the scheduling of games were prominently featured in the East Palo Alto Community Bulletin Board so as to reach a wide public interested in positive events in East Palo Alto. Tommie Roberts frequently confided his frustrations in securing support to serve the generally underserved youth of this community and at times despaired that the Ravenswood Little League would survive.

Thanks to the indomitable perseverance and intensity of his commitment to seeing to it that all youngsters who wanted to play Little League would have that opportunity, he has left behind a permanent legacy in the beautiful athletic field and building and restroom facilities of Martin Luther King, Jr., Park, of which East Palo Alto residents are rightly proud. Martin Luther King, Jr., Park will be helped to maintain the excellence that was the fruit of decades of fervent appeals by Tommie Roberts that the City Council make the youth of this community their priority by naming preferably the field after him.

The example that Tommie Roberts set in his determination that the youth of this community not be consigned to malign neglect, but be provided with positive sporting experiences and adult role models to develop life skills can best be kept alive to inspire future generations of parents to become Little League coaches by keeping the name of Tommie Roberts alive through naming the athletic field at Martin Luther King, Jr. Park after him.

The Board of Directors of the East Palo Alto Council of Tenants Education Fund are also prepared to contribute at least \$1,000 towards a plaque that memorializes Tommie Roberts and his example to be placed in an appropriate location so that his heroic dedication to the youth of our community may not be forgotten, but continue to inspire long after all of us who knew Tommie Roberts personally are no longer here to sing his praises to future generations.

Very sincerely,



William Byron Webster
President and Chair
EPACT Education Fund
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