

City Council Study Session - Bruce's Beach Park Plaque Language - March 10, 2022

Meeting Time: 03-10-22 18:00

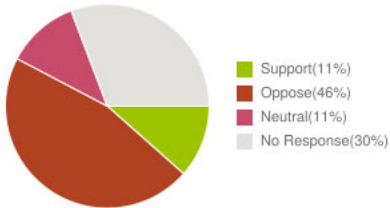
eComments Report

Meetings	Meeting Time	Agenda Items	Comments	Support	Oppose	Neutral
City Council Study Session - Bruce's Beach Park Plaque Language - March 10, 2022	03-10-22 18:00	10	26	3	12	3

Sentiments for All Meetings

The following graphs display sentiments for comments that have location data. Only locations of users who have commented will be shown.

Overall Sentiment



City Council Study Session - Bruce's Beach Park Plaque Language - March 10, 2022

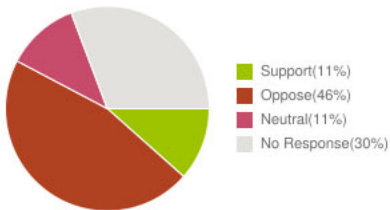
03-10-22 18:00

Agenda Name	Comments	Support	Oppose	Neutral
D. PUBLIC COMMENTS (3 MINUTES PER PERSON)	1	0	1	0
1. 22-0112 Consideration of the Language for and Placement of Plaques at Bruce's Beach (City Manager Moe). DISCUSS AND PROVIDE DIRECTION	24	3	11	3
F. ADJOURNMENT	1	0	0	0

Sentiments for All Agenda Items

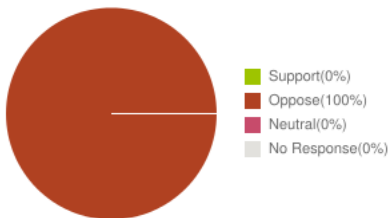
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Overall Sentiment



Agenda Item: eComments for D. PUBLIC COMMENTS (3 MINUTES PER PERSON)

Overall Sentiment



Jason Cole

Location:

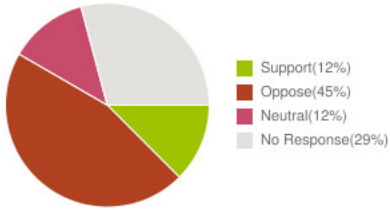
Submitted At: 7:11am 03-07-22

I am a resident of Manhattan Beach. I urge the city council to use the language for the Bruce's Beach plaque that was developed by the resident committee that you appointed. The committee was careful to repair language that accurately reflects the history of the park and it sounds a strong message about social justice. The alternative language prepared by councilmember Hadley should be rejected. Thank you for listening.

Jason Cole

30 year resident

Overall Sentiment



Michele Reniche

Location:

Submitted At: 5:29pm 03-10-22

The council should move forward with the recommendations of the history advisory board. These volunteers, working in good faith, have crafted a richly-detailed and compelling narrative that accurately describes the racially motivated eminent domain action and its consequences. The alternate language proposed by Councilmember Hadley is wholly inadequate— basically a rehash of the same tired arguments made by those who insist racism played no role in the city's actions. So far, the council has been bending over backwards to appease this faction which ironically has done more damage to MB's reputation than a true accounting of the facts ever would.

Dina Doill

Location:

Submitted At: 5:19pm 03-10-22

I think the plaque focusing on the Bruce's property should include a mention that the Bruce's argued in Court that Manhattan Beach's eminent domain action was racially based and therefore illegal. The court denied that claim, which allowed the City to take over the land. Not only is it an important piece of this history, but it further reflects the more systemic racism that the Bruce family and others faced. It also perhaps explains why the City didn't recognize the wrong of its actions until 2006 when it finally revisited the history.

Lucia aMES

Location:

Submitted At: 4:49pm 03-10-22

I hope that the city would reconsider the location of the plaque. The plaque should be located where the lot belonging the Bruce family was. The county has already decided to adopt the language of the BB History Task Force: that should take care of all the issues raised by other comments - even if they were well founded and proven, and not contentious and disputable as they are. I hope you might approve the rational and posed language proposed by Council Member Hadley for the plaque of Manhattan Beach. Please do not place it in the park. Thanks

Elyse Gura

Location:

Submitted At: 4:48pm 03-10-22

This abbreviates my email to city council & city clerk: I urge City Council to discard the Bruce's Beach plaque language proposed by Suzanne Hadley. That language is uninspiring, often factually inaccurate or irrelevant & otherwise misleading. Plaque language must include the accomplishments of the Bruces while Manhattan Beach residents, honestly relate the history of hateful acts of local opposition to Black residents & visitors, acknowledge racial motivation for seizing Bruce's Beach property by eminent domain, admit inequities in property owners' compensation. Material from the HAB Report of 10/25/21 will help constructing this narrative.

Plaque language must also indicate these historical events do not reflect our city today Bruce's Beach is significant not only in Manhattan Beach history, but also in civil rights history. Through honesty, we gain the

respect and admiration of all those who visit our city & this historic location.

Jen Dohner

Location:

Submitted At: 4:46pm 03-10-22

Please reject Council Member Hadley's Plaque language and do not use it or any part of it as a template for what to put on the plaque. It's revisionist memory politics and does not belong in the consideration set. Furthermore, having attended cultural events at the park I can confidently say that these have been deeply mischaracterized by those opposed to them. Please do not engage in efforts afoot to strip relevant cultural significance from this park. Whatever you think might be achieved in doing this, it will backfire in any case. If you'd really like to honor the Bruces and others that were wrongfully driven from this park, then make it a place where, in the words of Willa Bruce, "...all are welcome." You just might do a slight repair to the reputation of Manhattan Beach in the process.

Also Council member Franklin's version works too hard to cast doubt on the well documented racial motivations behind the city's action. Whatever we set in stone ought to be the honest truth.

Kim Muller

Location:

Submitted At: 4:37pm 03-10-22

I respectfully ask that Council oppose all 3 "rewrites" of Bruce's Beach history and, instead, utilize the language already introduced by the BB History Task Force. Thousands of volunteer hours were spent researching, fact-checking, and writing the content created by the task force, as directed by Council.

All three of these rewrites whitewash the real truth and continue to diminish the incredible efforts of the BB Task Force as a whole. Use the existing language, and let others decide for themselves based on facts rather than a desire to avoid acknowledging and apologizing for the racially motivated seizure of black-owned property 100 years ago.

We are better than this. Do the right thing!

Ann Gotthoffer

Location:

Submitted At: 4:05pm 03-10-22

I strongly urge the City Council to adopt the HAB recommended language following their exhaustive work and deliberation. Literally "whitewashing" and denying our history doesn't change it, and will only send the message that racism lives on in the city. Please reject the language proposed by Councilwoman Hadley. Besides contradicting her own previous statements, it is a misleading attempt to sanitize the truth. The eminent domain law of 1924 was racially motivated and that's important to acknowledge. Though I do live a few doors "south of the border" in Hermosa Beach, your actions and the plaque will reflect on the area as a whole. Please do the right thing, don't embarrass your City further, and let us move forward.

Alissa Marquis

Location:

Submitted At: 4:05pm 03-10-22

I ask our City Council to finish the work it begun and accept the language chosen by the History Advisory Board of the Council-commissioned Bruce's Beach Task Force. This language has been thoroughly researched and sourced according to accepted historical standards by Manhattan Beach residents who generously gave their time to compile the requested report. The unwillingness of some Councilmembers to accept historical facts has been most disheartening, leading to today's "Study Session" when this matter should have been decided months ago. Councilmember Hadley's proposed language is a sad attempt to whitewash the history, and is factually incorrect in saying that "thirty white families" also had their property condemned (there were 10 presumably white landowners, with one entity owning 14 lots). We are not responsible for the actions of past residents of MB, but we are responsible for the action we take -- or fail to take -- today to work to mitigate racism. Please do the right thing!

Fred Taylor

Location:

Submitted At: 3:37pm 03-10-22

After reading the HAB's two proposals, I want to move out of Manhattan Beach. What an ugly racist past. Yet, if I were merely judged upon the first 20 years of my life, no one would want to go near me either. There is nothing redemptive about either of these two proposals. No acknowledgement of our city embracing everyone who chooses to live here. Furthermore, neither proposal INCLUDES the most important truth of this whole story: That is 4 of the 5 black families repurchased in MB. So, was the city "racist" or were residents uncomfortable about a black business on the beach? To truly communicate the inclusion of MB in 1927, we MUST tell that part of the story.

So I ask, do we want to gravel in the the mis-steps of the past or tell the real truth....the real issue was the black commercial enterprise on the beach, not the black resident. And, to conclude, another inconvenient truth is, today, we have NO commercial enterprises on the beach, black or white.

Bill Fournell

Location:

Submitted At: 2:22pm 03-10-22

I strongly encourage the city council to utilize the well-researched language proposed by the History Advisory Board as the starting point for creating the language on the plaque. As noted in the City Council Statement of Acknowledgment, Condemnation, and Empathy regarding Bruce's Beach, which you approved on April 6, 2021, you accepted that the eminent domain action was racially motivated. This fact should be included on the plaque. Councilmember Hadley's draft language is a completely unacceptable whitewashing of the truth. I encourage you to draft language that is direct, frank, and fact based.

Kim Brant-Lucich

Location:

Submitted At: 1:34pm 03-10-22

Please adopt truthful and accurate Bruce's Beach plaque language that reflects the "racially motivated eminent domain action" memorialized by City Council on April 6 of last year with the Statement of Acknowledgment, Condemnation, and Empathy regarding Bruce's Beach. Consider using the History Advisory Board's meticulously crafted language as the starting point; it is based on intensive research and an impressive bibliography of credible sources.

PLEASE DO NOT ACCEPT PLAQUE LANGUAGE PROPOSED BY COUNCILMEMBER HADLEY. It is a distortion of facts, a deliberate erasure and denial of history, and an utter contradiction to Hadley's own words on March 16 when she said "I agree that racism was the primary reason for the city council of Manhattan Beach to start eminent domain proceedings against these families...." Please adopt an honest, reflective and apologetic account of the Bruce's Beach history. Let us move forward as a welcoming and inclusive community.

Diana Skaar

Location:

Submitted At: 12:10pm 03-10-22

Please reject Councilmember's Hadley proposal for the Bruce's Beach Plaque which is a whitewashed attempt at sticking to "just the facts."

As a minority, I know how awful it feels to have your truths sugar-coated into feel-good stories of "and yet she persisted."

The Manhattan Beach of 2022 is not the Manhattan Beach of 100 years ago. Do not be afraid of embracing the truths that have been uncovered by the Bruce's Beach History Report which the City Council adopted. You have an opportunity to educate and inspire with our city's self-awareness in acknowledging and condemning our painful racist pasts, so that we can move forward and unite to do better. That is the American way.

Helen Codron

Location:

Submitted At: 11:33am 03-10-22

I urge City Council to vote down the language proposed by Councilmember Hadley for the Bruce's Beach plaque and instead use the exhaustively researched and documented language proposed by the HAB as its starting point. Rather than being an unbiased, well-balanced recounting of history, Hadley's language is a distortion and

obfuscation of the reality—acknowledged by City Council on 4-6-21—that the City's eminent domain action was racially motivated. Phrases like: "Despite opposition to Blacks' (sic) owning land elsewhere in California, Willa and her husband purchased two lots..." imply that in Manhattan Beach, the Bruces found opportunity not available elsewhere. This hijacks the entire purpose of the plaque: to bring to light the obstacles and discrimination Black people faced in our community. An honest and complete accounting of the facts, of course, reveals that after purchasing the land and establishing a thriving business, the Bruces were forced out.

Scott Chambers

Location:

Submitted At: 10:53am 03-10-22

I support a plaque that states the history Bruce's Beach that can be proved. There are a lot of half truths floating around on both sides. The HAB worked hard on this but they are not professionals. I strongly suggest hiring an outside firm to do a proper study.

Taylor Gamble

Location:

Submitted At: 10:48am 03-10-22

The purpose of the plaque is to acknowledge the hard truths of the racially motivated actions of the past, honor the families, and assert our resolve as a welcoming and inclusive community, and the proposed plaque language falls deeply short of that. The Statement of Acknowledgment, Condemnation, and Empathy regarding Bruce's Beach, which Council approved on April 6, 2021, accepts that the eminent domain action was racially motivated, and therefore should obviously be included on the plaque. We must do better than the language proposed by Councilmember Hadley.

D Berger

Location:

Submitted At: 10:29am 03-10-22

The language up for approval at the moment is not satisfactory. Bruce Beach Task Force painstakingly sought out all aspects to historical fact and the current language attempts to whitewash this and minimize what was previously acknowledged to be true.

Jason Boxer

Location:

Submitted At: 10:17am 03-10-22

I am commenting to encourage the Council to utilize the suggested plaque language crafted by the history advisory committee. Thank you for your service. Councilmember Hadley's own words help illustrate the importance of emphasizing racism and white supremacy in our telling of the Bruce's Beach story: "I agree that racism was the primary reason for the city council of Manhattan Beach to start eminent domain proceedings against these families." Our plaque must reflect this essential component of our City's grave mistake 100 years ago.

Michael Jenkins

Location:

Submitted At: 7:03am 03-10-22

For the reasons set forth in my email to the Council (which I request be made part of the public record), I urge the Council to reject Councilmember Hadley's proposed language, abandon this exercise and instead utilize the language crafted by the history advisory committee appointed by the City Council.

Ava Cato

Location:

Submitted At: 9:55pm 03-09-22

Please do not use the Hadley language for the plaque. It diminishes all the important work that this city has done

to face the past and move forward with transparency and honesty. The HAB language better reflects the honesty and transparency that this city has worked hard to achieve. Please use language that condemns actions of the past and speaks to how we as a city thrive for a better, more inclusive future.

Cindy Davidson

Location:

Submitted At: 9:38pm 03-09-22

Please adopt TRUTHFUL language about the actual historical events for the plaque at Bruce's Beach. It is well understood that the eminent domain act of 1924, which displaced Black property owners at Bruce's Beach, was racially motivated. Less than a year ago, you approved the Statement of Acknowledgment, Condemnation and Empathy Regarding Bruce's Beach. The History Advisory Board provided well-researched facts and language for the plaque. Sanitizing and distorting the truth about this shameful episode in Manhattan Beach history (as proposed by Councilmember Hadley) only doubles down on the wrong that occurred here almost 100 years ago. It's time to confront and take responsibility for the racially-motivated decisions of city leadership. If we do not acknowledge the racism behind the eminent domain act, we will be covering up the truth and committing yet another act of racism.

Amanda Park

Location:

Submitted At: 4:12pm 03-08-22

The plaque language as proposed by Councilmember Hadley should be denied. It is basic, missing important facts, provides no historical context, and would be an embarrassment to display on city property. 1) Hadley's statement "...several sources alleged the city's action was racially motivated..." implies this action may or may not have been racially motivated. Attorneys throw in the word alleged when we don't want to take any responsibility. The land was seized in 1924 and no park was built for 30 years. Telling an accurate history allows people to heal and move forward. 2) "All landowners were compensated for the seizure." Even assuming arguendo, they were paid FMV for their property (which they were not), the land was taken involuntarily, sent a message blacks were not welcome in Manhattan Beach nor to own ocean front property. Had they been allowed to keep their land and further develop their business, generations of the Bruce family would have had endless opportunities.

Paul Silva

Location:

Submitted At: 11:59am 03-08-22

I propose this language for the plaque. It's taken directly from a city official, Frank Doherty, who took part in the action and reflects the council's thinking at the time. (Posting in two comments because of length)
"At one time, we thought that the Negro problem was going to stop our progress. And they erected a large building at the end of 27th Street using the first floor for a dressing room for bathing and the entire second floor for a dining room and kitchen...They came here in truckloads with banners flying, Bound for Manhattan Beach. We tried to buy them out, but they would not sell. There were several families in the blocks between 26th and 27th streets and between Strand and Highland. We had to acquire these two blocks to solve the problem, so we voted to condemn them and make a city park there. We had to protect ourselves. Our attorney advised members of the council never to admit the real purpose and establishment of the park, especially during the council meetings."

Jason Cole

Location:

Submitted At: 7:14am 03-07-22

I am a resident of Manhattan Beach. I urge the city Council to use the language for the Bruce's Beach plaque that was developed by the resident committee that you approved. The committee was careful to prepare language that accurately reflects the history of the park and that sends a strong message about social justice. The alternative language prepared by councilmember Hadley should be rejected. Thank you for listening.

Jason Cole

30 year resident

Michelle Murphy

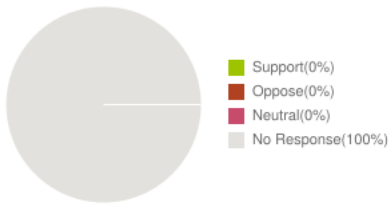
Location:

Submitted At: 4:37pm 03-04-22

Please don't embarrass our City more than Council already has. Please try to agree on honest language like that proposed by the hardworking committee instead of the head-in-the-sand approach the town's racists are urging. Manhattan Beach needs to take this opportunity to erect plaques telling the true story. An empathetic and honest history told boldly would go a long way towards rehabilitating the reputation Manhattan Beach has recently earned. Equivocating and mealy mouthed plaques will only solidify the notion spreading across our country and around the world that Manhattan Beach is a place that denies its past racism and thereby confirms its present sanctimonious white rightness. We can do better.

Agenda Item: eComments for F. ADJOURNMENT

Overall Sentiment



Paul Silva

Location:

Submitted At: 12:00pm 03-08-22

Second posting due to length:

“Those Negroes were Americans and had as much right to be here as we did. I always felt that it was a mean trick to make them leave their homes. But it was the only way out. Being a member of the board, I had to participate or give up Manhattan Beach. I always thought that was the meanest thing I ever did, but I suppose I had to, and always thought the same way about it.”

Frank Doherty

Manhattan Beach City Trustee (Dates)

Excerpt from newspaper article written by Doherty in 1945