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

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.

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

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, These misguided development projects, called “slum removal”, did not recognize and value the existing vibrant neighborhoods – mostly, low-income and of people of color – being destroyed; and
WHEREAS, During Herman's tenure as director, he oversaw the second phase of the redevelopment of the Western Addition, that displaced approximately 4,000 residents, small businesses, and bull-dozed 60 square blocks of the City; and

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, According to Recreation and Park Department officials, the estimated cost to change the name of Justin Herman Plaza is $5,200 which includes replacing two signs bearing the name of the Plaza and could be paid for from the Recreation and Park Department's materials and supplies budget.

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

RESOLVED, That if the plaza on The Embarcadero be named for a honored resident, that this person should embody San Francisco values of equity, inclusion and forward-thinking; and, be it
FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges the Recreation and Parks Commission to remove the name of Justin Herman from the plaza at The Embarcadero and Market Street; and, be it

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

September 11, 2017 Land Use and Transportation Committee - AMENDED

September 11, 2017 Land Use and Transportation Committee - RECOMMENDED AS AMENDED

September 19, 2017 Board of Supervisors - ADOPTED

Ayes: 7 - Breed, Fewer, Kim, Peskin, Ronen, Sheehy and Yee
Excused: 4 - Cohen, Farrell, Safai and Tang

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED on 9/19/2017 by the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco.

Angela Calvillo
Clerk of the Board

I hereby certify that the foregoing resolution, not being signed by the Mayor within the time limit as set forth in Section 3.103 of the Charter, or time waived pursuant to Board Rule 2.14.2, became effective without his approval in accordance with the provision of said Section 3.103 of the Charter or Board Rule 2.14.2.

Angela Calvillo
Clerk of the Board