



# City of San Antonio

## Agenda Memorandum

**File Number:**20-3979

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**Agenda Item Number:** 4.

**Agenda Date:** 6/30/2020

**In Control:** Governance Committee

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**DEPARTMENT:** Parks and Recreation

**DEPARTMENT HEAD:** Homer Garcia III

**COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED:** Council District 1

### **SUBJECT:**

Returning the Christopher Columbus Statue located at Columbus Park to the Christopher Columbus Italian Society.

### **SUMMARY:**

A Council Consideration Request (CCR) was sponsored by Councilmember Treviño on June 15, 2020 requesting the return of the Christopher Columbus statue located at Columbus Park to the Christopher Columbus Italian Society (Society). Councilman Treviño has worked diligently with the Society and local indigenous groups to reach an understanding that would unify the community. The proposed transfer of the Christopher Columbus statue is part of a proposed plan that includes renaming Columbus Park to Piazza Italia to commemorate the culture and heritage of the San Antonio Italian community. The Society has formally requested the transfer in a letter to the San Antonio City Manager sent June 22, 2020 (attached).

The Society will also work with the Office of Historic Preservation on the creation of a plaque marking the location of the Italian community which flourished on the northern edge of downtown in the area of Columbus Park. The plaque is to be placed on the plinth of the statue after the statue has been transferred.

Procedurally, the Council will approve the transfer of the statue and the renaming of the park or the transferring of the statue can be referred to the Historic & Design Review Commission (HDRC) at the next available date.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

The Society donated the statue to the City of San Antonio on October 12, 1957. The City placed the statue in

what is now Columbus Park where it has been located ever since. A number of local indigenous people have voiced concerns and opposition to a Christopher Columbus statue being located in a City Park. Council Treviño has worked with both sides on a proposed resolution that promotes a message of unity and understanding instead of divisiveness.

## **ISSUE:**

Under the City Code for the City of San Antonio, the preliminary removal of the statue from Columbus Park will require either 1) review and approval of the HDRC; or, 2) review and approval of the City Council to waive the HDRC process and directly authorize removal of the statue. The City Council will ultimately need to approve the transfer of ownership of the statue and the renaming of the park. Staff is looking for direction from the Governance Committee on the preferred path for approval.

## **ALTERNATIVES:**

Staff could make the request to the Historic & Design Review Commission at the next available date seeking approval to remove the statue and then follow the normal naming process as outlined by the City Code to rename the park.

## **FISCAL IMPACT:**

Funds of \$6,000.00 for the removal of the statue exist within in the adopted Fiscal Year 2020 Parks Department operating budget.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends proceeding with the direction of the Governance Committee.