



CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT



June 7, 2022

ITEM TITLE

Naming Of the City Building Located at 50 North Fourth Avenue as “Casa Casillas,” In Honor of Chula Vista Resident and Artist, Paula Casillas

Report Number: 22-0179

Location: 50 North Fourth Avenue, Chula Vista

Department: Community Services- Library

Environmental Notice: The proposed Project has been reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and it has been determined that the Project qualifies for a Categorical Exemption pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 Class 1 (Existing Facilities) and Section 15061(b)(3), because it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment. Thus, no further environmental review is required.

Recommended Action

Adopt a resolution approving the naming of the City building located at 50 North Fourth Avenue to be used as the City’s new intergenerational art gallery, as “Casa Casillas,” in honor of Chula Vista resident and artist, Paula Casillas **(Majority Vote Required)**.

SUMMARY

Chula Vista has a diverse array of artistic talent and creative assets. Through the revitalization of 50 North Fourth Avenue into an intergenerational arts space, to be named Casa Casillas, after painter and 80-year Chula Vista resident, Paula Casillas. Casa Casillas will support and leverage Chula Vista’s existing assets and develop a more robust creative industry through its program offerings and exhibitions. The development of the arts begins at the creation of spaces that nurture artistic abilities and skills and strengthen cultural arts in Chula Vista while connecting the community of all ages which provides the opportunity to sustain arts within our community for future generations.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

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BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

Not applicable.

DISCUSSION

There is a growing realization of how important lively and appealing gathering places are to every aspect of our lives. Creating public spaces where all segments of a community can meet, interact, celebrate, and enjoy, can activate areas that otherwise would sit empty or avoided. The revitalization of 50 North Fourth Avenue, Casa Casillas, provides the community a space dedicated to arts, for exhibition, incubation, and development of artistic capabilities.

Exposure to the arts has positive implications for the health and well-being for the Chula Vista community. Supporting programs and activities that provide community members with creative expression and social engagement have proven to be beneficial to both the individual and the community at large. A community that provides for cultural art opportunities for all ages of all abilities provides a better quality of life for everyone. Through Casa Casillas, the Chula Vista Public Library plans on providing arts classes, art exhibitions, and providing opportunities for artists in residence.

Chula Vista resident and artist, Paula Casillas, is a prime example of how a city can nurture the arts and develop artists from within its community. The Casillas family has deep roots in the City of Chula Vista. Paula Casillas, born Paula Silva, was born on the Pala Indian Reservation in 1923. Paula has lived in Chula Vista since 1942. She graduated from Sweetwater High School, purchased a home on Zenith Street, married and raised her family in Chula Vista.

The Casillas family also has a long history of service to the community and the country for generations that continue to this day. Paula supported the war efforts during World War II while working at Rohr Aircraft as a spot welder.

It was not until later in life, when Paula's artist talent was recognized as she delved into art as therapy from the loss of her husband, Nick Casillas. Paula's art showcased her expression of emotion and shared her view of the world, a talent was discovered through an art class offered by the Recreation Department.

Upon completion of the renovations at Casa Casillas, the opening exhibit of the arts space will feature the works completed by Paula Casillas over the years. While Paula Casillas no longer paints, this exhibit will be the first to showcase her talent and will honor the life and legacy of the Casillas family in Chula Vista.

DECISION-MAKER CONFLICT

Staff has reviewed the decision contemplated by this action and has determined that it is not site-specific and consequently, the real property holdings of the City Council members do not create a disqualifying real property-related financial conflict of interest under the Political Reform Act (Cal. Gov't Code § 87100, et seq.).

Staff is not independently aware and has not been informed by any City Council member, of any other fact that may constitute a basis for a decision-maker conflict of interest in this matter.

CURRENT-YEAR FISCAL IMPACT

No current General Fund impact.

ONGOING FISCAL IMPACT

No ongoing General Fund impacts are anticipated.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Resolution

Staff Contact: Staff Contact: Tracy Lamb, Director of Community Services and Joy Whatley, City Librarian.