



Item Number: 2

CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS AGENDA ACTION REQUEST

DATE: March 25, 2025

TO: Mark Washington, City Manager

COMMITTEE: Community Development Committee
LIAISON: Mary Kate Berens, Deputy City Manager

FROM: David Marquardt, Director of Parks and Recreation
Parks & Recreation

SUBJECT: **Resolution scheduling a public hearing for Tuesday, April 29, 2025, to consider naming new park space at 680 Cesar E Chavez Avenue SW "Navarro Plaza"**

The attached resolution sets Tuesday, April 29, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. as the date and time for a public hearing to consider naming new park space at 680 Cesar E Chavez Avenue, SW. Navarro Plaza was selected through a community engagement process described below. The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board voted to approve Navarro Plaza as the park name at their February 5, 2025 meeting.

In 2018, Habitat for Humanity of Kent County broke ground on the Plaza Roosevelt development with planned affordable housing, expanded health care facilities, a new public high school and commercial space. The City's Parks and Recreation Department (Parks) was brought into the development design in 2021 to manage the design of the greenspace located in the heart of the development. The 0.7 acre park space was designed with extensive community input including neighborhood leaders assisting with soliciting community input through surveys, canvassing, multiple community meetings and events. In addition to the physical improvements to the park, Parks embarked on an important journey to give Plaza Roosevelt an official name that truly reflects the community. Currently, the park is referred to as Plaza Roosevelt, as a temporary placeholder while the naming efforts proceeded.

Starting in the summer of 2024, Parks conducted a community-centered park naming process in accordance with City Commission Policy No. 1100-11, Naming and Renaming of Parks and Recreational Facilities, to determine an official name for the park.

The goal was to involve the community, balance neighborhood interests with city-wide support for the Grand Rapids' park system, and ensure the name represented what residents desired.

The process included the following steps:

- A stakeholder group of 10 Roosevelt Park neighbors was formed to oversee the process.
- City-wide name submissions were encouraged, with materials available in English, Spanish, and Swahili.
- Targeted outreach for the renaming process was sent to neighbors living within a 0.25-mile radius of the park.
- The stakeholder group reviewed 164 name suggestions and unanimously selected six finalists that they felt best represented the community:
 - Chief Blackbird Park
 - La Placita
 - Maurilia Ortiz Blakley Park
 - Navarro Plaza
 - Southwest Serenity Park
 - Unity Park
- A city-wide poll was held where community members were asked to select their top-choice of the list above and Navarro Plaza received the most votes.

Community members who submitted the name, “Navarro Plaza,” during the city-wide suggestion period provided the explanations to the significance of the name, which honors Miguel and Isabel Navarro, founders of El Matador Tortilla Chip Co. and prominent local entrepreneurs. The following explanations were included in the poll:

- "In honor of Miguel and Isabel Navarro, entrepreneurs and West Michigan Business Hall of Fame members who founded El Matador Tortilla Chip Co. in 1976. They were pioneering businesspeople who gave back by helping other Hispanic entrepreneurs and supporting cultural events."
- "Miguel was a founding member of the Mexican farming community who opened a very successful business."
- "Mr. Navarro, founder of El Matador, was a resident for decades; he supported his community by remaining to live in his home on the corner of Cesar Chavez and MLK. Mr. Navarro was a pillar of the community until his passing in 2012. I believe the memory of him and his commitment to serving the community would be fitting for this space."

The family of Isabel and Miguel Navarro, represented by their granddaughter Raquel Putnam, gave permission to propose Navarro Plaza as the potential park name.

Your COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE recommends the adoption of the following resolution scheduling a public hearing to consider naming a new park space at 680 Cesar E Chavez Avenue SW "Navarro Plaza".

WHEREAS, following City Commission Policy 1100-11 Naming and Renaming of Parks and Recreational Facilities, the City conducted a community-centered process to name a new park at 680 Cesar E Chavez Ave SW; therefore

RESOLVED that a public hearing for consideration of naming the new park at 680 Cesar E Chavez Ave SW "Navarro Plaza" will be held on April 29, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. The hearing will held at City Commission Chambers, 300 Monroe Ave NW, Grand Rapids MI 49503.

CORRECT IN FORM

DEPARTMENT OF LAW