

# Agenda Report

TO: CITY COUNCIL October 26, 2009  
FROM: CITY MANAGER  
SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF A MEMORIAL TO HONOR CANTO ROBLEDO AT VILLA-PARKE

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the City Council approve a proposal for a memorial to Canto Robledo at the Villa-Parke Community Center.

## **RECOMMENDATION OF THE RECREATION AND PARKS COMMISSION:**

At their October 6, 2009 meeting, the Recreation and Parks Commission voted unanimously to support the proposed project to honor Canto Robledo.

## **BACKGROUND:**

In 2007, the Pasadena Mexican American History Association submitted a proposal to construct a bronze memorial to honor Canto Robledo. The attached provides information about Mr. Robledo's involvement with the sport of boxing and his interaction with the youth of the Pasadena community. Through his interaction with the Police Department, local schools, Boys' home and other organizations, he was able to help and inspire many of Pasadena's youth.

The initial proposal called for a 9' x 7' x 2' base, 9' x 7' x 2' foundation and bronze monument that reached 6-7 feet at its highest point to be located within Memorial Park. Staff reviewed the proposal within the guidelines of the Park Monument Policy. Based on the size and location of the original proposal, staff worked with members of the Pasadena Mexican American History Association to develop an alternative memorial proposal at Villa-Parke. The present proposal is for a wall relief that is approximately 37 inches long and 25 inches tall with a plaque measuring approximately 10 inches tall by 16 inches wide below the monument. The monument is proposed to be located in the hallway adjacent to the Consumer Action Offices of the Villa-Parke Community Center.

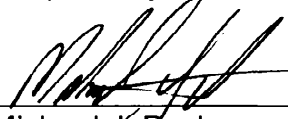
The applicant states that Mr. Robledo demonstrated a strong commitment to community values through his work with many Pasadena youth. Further, that his inspiration and guidance merit a monument in his honor within a Community Center where Pasadena youth continue to learn and develop boxing and life skills.

In an effort to notify potentially interested parties, prior to the Recreation and Parks Commission meeting, staff mailed 1,909 notifications about the proposed memorial to property owners within 1,000 feet of the park and submitted a press release about this agenda item to the Pasadena Star-News. At the Recreation and Parks Commission meeting of October 6, 2009 there were 15 speakers in support of the memorial and none opposed.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

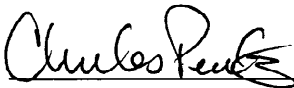
The applicant has committed to providing all funds associated with the acquisition and installation of the monument. In addition, the applicant is responsible for the maintenance of the memorial.

Respectfully Submitted,




Michael J. Beck  
City Manager

Prepared by:



Charles Peretz  
Management Analyst IV

Approved by:



*for*  
Martin Pastucha, Director  
Department of Public Works

**Attachments:**

Letter of Intent for Canto Robledo Memorial Project dated December 7, 2008

Letter of Endorsement for Canto Robledo Memorial Project dated October 1,  
2009

Canto Robledo's History Fact Sheet

Artistic rendering of the proposed monument

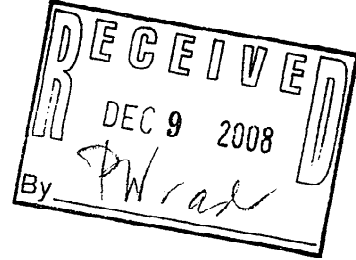


## PASADENA MEXICAN AMERICAN HISTORY ASSOCIATION

*A California Non-Profit Organization*

December 7, 2008

Martin Pastucha, Director of Public Works  
City of Pasadena  
100 North Garfield Ave. Room N334  
Pasadena, CA 91109-7215



Re: Canto Robledo Memorial Project/Letter of Intent

Dear Mr. Pastucha:

Pursuant to the City of Pasadena Public Park and Recreational Facility Park Monument Policy, we are submitting a request in the form of this letter of intent for placement of a monument in public spaces within the City of Pasadena through the Director of Public Works. A preliminary drawing of the proposed monument is enclosed.

Details for evaluation and the enclosed preliminary drawing include the compatible finishes, materials, height, and weight of the proposed monument. Following are the required guidelines that are consistent with our project;

- Community Values; Canto embraced the community and provided a safe haven for youths to join together in a sport that demands mental and physical challenges. Canto's interactions included local police department, schools, boys home, and individual families.
- Monuments and Memorials; Canto was an inspiration to the youth of Pasadena. He guided and directed individuals in his community. This monument will inspire the youth as well as others in Pasadena and surrounding communities. Canto gave the gift of values and self esteem to those in need and will continue his legacy through this monument.

The objective of the monument is to portray the interaction of Canto with the youth of Pasadena. His loss of sight did not hinder his devotion and commitment to improving their quality of life. We hope to provide an exemplary vision to the participants of the boxing program and others in our community through the depiction of a man who shared his talents.

It gives us great pleasure to be working with the City of Pasadena on this historical project. We are also providing you with the summary of Canto Robledo's biography for you reference and in support of meeting the required guidelines.

Should you have any questions, please call me at (626) 422-1908.

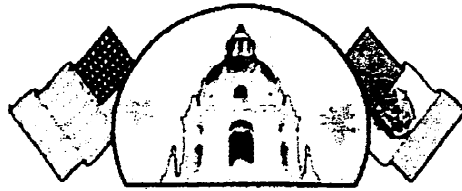
Sincerely,

Joseph C. Robledo, Director

TIN 20-8208651

P.O. Box 5142 Pasadena, CA 91117 • (626) 793-9252

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## PASADENA MEXICAN AMERICAN HISTORY ASSOCIATION

October 1, 2009

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### **Letter of Endorsement for the Canto Robledo Memorial Project**

On March 16, 2006 a motion was made by Rachel Heredia to the Board of Directors to adopt the Canto Robledo Memorial Project. The project was approved by a majority vote. The project would commemorate the life of Canto Robledo by placing a memorial statue of Canto in the City of Pasadena.

The Pasadena Mexican American History Association was founded in 1996. The association's mission is to preserve the history of Mexican Americans in the City of Pasadena. The endorsement of the Canto Robledo Memorial Project was accepted because of Canto Robledo's role in his efforts to provide an alternative to youths and deter them from gangs. Canto's perseverance provides a positive message to our community

Canto Robledo lost his sight in 1934, at the height of his career. This setback did not deter his passion of the boxing ring. Canto shared his talent and established the Crown City Boxing Stables in the City of Pasadena in 1949. The boxing stables were quickly embraced by the community as a recreation center where young boys could gather and be mentored by Canto. The Pasadena Police Department became aware of the stables and frequently brought young boys to Canto when they were picked up for minor infractions.

Today many men remember Canto and their experience with Canto, providing testimonials related to the positive impact Canto had on their lives. Some pursued boxing with successful careers.

This memorial will be the very first of its kind and will reflect the impact Canto made in our community. The memorial will provide inspiration to the young and adult individuals who take the opportunity to remind themselves that they too can overcome many obstacles and disabilities.

Regards,



Manuel Contreras, President



Sandra Mejia, Chairman of the Board

Cc: Joe Robledo, Committee Chair

*A California Non-Profit Organization*

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## *Canto Robledo's History*

- Canto Robledo was born in 1913, in Tyron, New Mexico, and he was of Mexican ancestry.
- Canto and the Robledo family moved to and settled in Pasadena, California in 1923.
- In 1932, at the age of 19, Canto wins the Pacific Batamweight Championship. He is ranked as a world contender.
- Canto loses his eyesight in 1934 due to detached retinas and possible resin contamination used in the boxing ring at that time.
- Several years later in 1940; Canto begins to train the youth of Pasadena, including his brothers.
- In 1943, Canto helps to train and condition his brother Joe Robledo to fight Manuel Ortiz for the WBA Worlds Championship.
- In 1949 history was made when Canto Robledo who is totally blind, receives his professional trainers' license in the sport of boxing. In fact, Canto was the only blind trainer in the State, perhaps in the world to hold a professional license in the sport of boxing. During this time, Crown City Boxing Stables was established in Pasadena and Canto begins to train the young men in the neighborhood. Canto's goals were to improve the quality of life, become a role model for the youth and to find a worlds champion. Canto was valued by the Pasadena Police Department because he helped so many young men who needed guidance and discipline to overcome their problems. Often the Pasadena Police Department would bring young delinquent boys to his boxing gym for his guidance, discipline and structure.
- During the mid 1950's Canto is asked by Channel 7 KABC to be featured in a short documentary film "You Asked for It" hosted by Mr. Art Baker.
- Canto continues to work with the community of Pasadena and the Pasadena Unified School District by sponsoring amateur boxing shows, at John Muir HS, Pasadena HS and Pasadena City College. His favorite time of the year was in November/Thanksgiving, he would team up with local merchants to donate to the winners and losers of the boxing show and turkey instead of a trophy. Often Canto would donate monies to the campus programs such as MECHA and the Black Student Union.
- In 1955 Canto receives the prized Orv- Mohler Memorial Award from the Pasadena Sports Ambassadors. In 1956 Canto also receives the Helms Athletic Foundation Award by the Southern California Boxing Writers for his continued endeavors in the sport of boxing for the betterment for the youth of Pasadena.