

September 28, 2015

Pasadena City Council
100 North Garfield
Pasadena, CA

RE: Agenda Item 16 – Proposed Enduring Heroes Memorial

Dear Mayor Tornek and Members of the Council,

With all respect to the families of local men lost in recent conflicts, I ask the Council not to approve the siting and design of the proposed Enduring Heroes memorial tonight due to the lack of meaningful public notice about its physical characteristics. The Council should hold off until Pasadena can honor fallen soldiers with a monument that meets accepted standards for war memorials and public involvement.

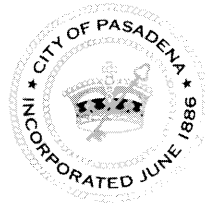
- The project as currently proposed is not pictured in tonight's staff report or supporting materials. Only the original design, which has since been altered several times according to the staff report, is included for the public to see. This is misleading.
- The most recent proposed project design was also not shown in the September 1st Recreation and Parks Commission agenda when endorsement was under consideration, nor on the second round of public notice postcards to affected property owners within 1,000 feet of the proposed site.
- How can members of the public weigh in on the design if they can't see it? How can the Council know what they are approving if they haven't evaluated a current rendering or model? Walking a new design into the Council meeting will not provide adequate public notice or an adequate opportunity for public comment or Council consideration.
- The staff report and all review materials to date do not depict the proposed memorial in relation to the Pasadena Founders Memorial and landmark oak, so that the public and the Council can comment on how the proposed memorial will impact the ambience of the existing one.
- The staff report should acknowledge public comments on the lack of public notice, as well as siting, design, and timing issues. Previous public comments and testimony to the Commissions that question the project and the manner in which it is being processed are ignored in the report.

Finally, note that the proposed memorial has advanced to the Council with minimal public awareness and the least possible amount of support from your appointed advisors: only 3 of 9 Recreation and Parks Commissioners voted to send the proposal to Council. The Arts and Culture Commissioners are on record with concerns about the design of such a significant war memorial.

Sincerely,

Carla Walecka
106 South Grand Ave.
Pasadena, CA 91105

09/28/2015
Item 16



PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
CULTURAL AFFAIRS DIVISION

September 24, 2015

The Honorable Mayor and City Council:

This letter is intended to provide input to the City Council from the Arts and Culture Commission regarding the proposed "Enduring Heroes" memorial. After an Information Only presentation and public comment at the June Arts and Culture Commission meeting and detailed discussion and deliberation in the months following, the Commission voted at our September meeting to communicate our thoughts and concerns to Council. Many of these were communicated previously to the Recreation and Parks Commission. The Commission acknowledges the terrible loss suffered by the Enduring Heroes committee and provides this input with the goal of finding the optimal solution for the entire city.

The Arts and Culture Commission's thoughts and concerns include:

- There was a significant lack of public input into the artist selection and design of this privately developed and privately funded project, despite the fact that the applicant seeks to place it on public land.
- Although the applicant stated that the memorial is intended to honor the five local service members, all the committee members had close, personal ties to just one of the deceased soldiers.
- The applicant has shown a lack of flexibility in reconsidering the proposed design.
- There were questions regarding the size and scale of the figure, as well as the feasibility of commemorating additional individuals on the sculpture.
- Defenders Park might not be an appropriate site for this work.
- The design concept may have benefitted from a more historical perspective.
- Is it appropriate to develop a memorial for an ongoing conflict?

While empathetic with the personal loss expressed by the Enduring Heroes committee, the Commission's opinion is that the best solution would be to consider placement of this memorial on private property. This would allow the applicants to honor their loved ones while avoiding the rigors of public scrutiny and community involvement.

We encourage the Council to consider this from a broader perspective: Is this the best way to honor our fallen heroes from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan? Pasadena has nearly 140,000 people, yet this monument was developed in private by a small group of only 6 individuals. Does this truly honor the democratic values for which our soldiers fight? The citizens of Pasadena and the loved ones that we lost in battle deserve better than this. When we, as a city, determine that we want to memorialize our fallen, we should do so with an inclusive, public process that yields a moving, timeless result. If the Mayor or any Councilmembers would like recommendations on ways that we might achieve that result, the Commission would be honored to assist.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "John McLean".

John McLean, Chair
Arts and Culture Commission

cc: Vincent P. Bertoni, AICP