



Friday, September 22, 2017

Mayor Falconer
San Diego City Council
San Diego AIDS Memorial Task Force
202 "C" Street
San Diego, CA 92101

Re: San Diego AIDS Memorial & Olive Street Park, Bankers Hill

Mayor Falconer, Councilmembers, and AIDS Task Force Members,

The Bankers Hill Community Group (BHCG) has serious concern regarding the chosen site for the San Diego AIDS Memorial in Olive Street Park. Not only does the AIDS Memorial warrant a more respectful and visible location within the San Diego region, but the lack of transparency and public process over the site selection, the shortage of funds available to build a memorial, and the insufficient integration between the park and memorial designs are not the ingredients that will create a worthy park plan or result in a beloved neighborhood park. Furthermore, the park priorities that emerged from a public workshop put on by the BHCG in July 2016 did not support an AIDS Memorial at this location.

The San Diego AIDS Memorial warrants a respectful and visible location within the region. The right location would include restrooms, vehicular and bike parking, and an adequate gathering space for special ceremonies such as the Memorial's dedication. Olive Street Park is tucked into the Bankers Hill neighborhood at a dead end street and is not intended to have restrooms or parking included on the site, nor is neighborhood parking readily available. Additionally, the Memorial is proposed to share the programming of this compact park site with a children's playground.

The lack of transparency and public process in choosing the Olive Street Park location for the memorial is also of significant issue. San Diego is home to one of the first AIDS Hospices within the country (Dr. Brad Truax House), because our city has been so hugely impacted by this disease and, as a result of this impact, the decisions about this memorial are of large public interest. The AIDS Task Force should be subject to the Brown Act and hold open public meetings that are noticed on the City's website, and the Task Force should be instructed to involve the public in their decision making process, such as site selection and memorial design. Further, as the Port Authority has previously agreed to house the memorial prominently along the waterfront, and other more respectful available locations have also been dismissed, it is important for the AIDS Task Force to make public the reasons why they believe Olive Street Park to be the right location for the San Diego AIDS Memorial.

With approximately \$40,000, the AIDS Task Force has not raised enough funds to design and build a San Diego AIDS Memorial. Due to the shortage of funding, this does not appear to be compatible with the Olive Street Park design and construction schedule, which is funded. Although there are news reports stating that funds for the memorial would come from the sale of the Dr. Brad Truax House, the BHCG understands these proceeds will have to revert to the gas tax fund and cannot be transferred to pay for the memorial. Further, this gas tax fund is taxpayer money, and therefore, not eligible to pay for a private AIDS Memorial. Eliminating this confusion and connecting these dots to

explain how this memorial will be financed would give the public confidence in this process and resolve some of the larger transparency issues that are haunting this Task Force.

Finally, the design for the San Diego AIDS Memorial is currently unknown and so cannot be integrated into the plan or design for Olive Street Park, which will have a third and final public meeting in October. The San Diego AIDS Memorial deserves to have a park or space specifically designed for this use. If located in Olive Street Park, the program and design of the park will be completed before the memorial is designed. These may or may not be compatible with each other. And since the compact nature and programming of this park is not going to support a sizable memorial, a contextual memorial at this site is likely one that is substantially subdued and/or smaller in scale, but this would not pay nearly enough respect to the many we have lost to AIDS.

Additionally, at the July 2016 meeting of the BHCG, a public workshop was held to specifically discuss priorities for Olive Street Park and a letter was submitted to Councilmember Gloria explaining those who will likely use the park most do not support locating a regional AIDS Memorial here. With approximately 50 people in attendance, including members of the family who donated this land long ago, the priorities that emerged were to pay tribute to the family and house that was once located here, provide access to Maple Canyon, and to develop a landscape that is for passive park uses, which would not include a children's playground.

The BHCG strongly encourages the Mayor, Councilmembers, and Task Force members to visit the Olive Street Park site to better understand and support these concerns about this location for a San Diego regional AIDS Memorial.

The BHCG fully supports an AIDS Memorial in San Diego that follows a transparent and open public process, but for the abundant reasons listed, we know Olive Street Park is not an appropriate location. Further, we request the AIDS Task Force make public their reasons for choosing the Olive Street Park site over the multiple other more respectful and available locations within San Diego.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amie Hayes". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Amie Hayes, President
Bankers Hill Community Group

Cc: Chair Wilson & Uptown Planners
Cc: LAMBDA Archives of San Diego
Cc: The Center, San Diego LGBT Community