



## REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL

Approved by:

John Scarborough, Parks & Community  
Services Director

Arnoldo Rodriguez, City Manager

Council Meeting of: August 19, 2020

Agenda Number: D-2

### SUBJECT:

Dedication of the Playground at Centennial Park in Honor of Thaddeus Sran

### RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt Resolution dedicating the playground at Centennial Park in honor of Thaddeus Sran.

### SUMMARY:

Last month, two-year-old Thaddeus Sran disappeared from his home. Under coordination and investigatory efforts led by the Madera Police Department, community members, local businesses, and City Parks and Public Works staff, aided by US Marshals, Madera County Sherriff's Office, City of Chowchilla Police Department, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, worked together to find Thaddeus. Sadly, his remains were discovered near an orchard just outside of the City. Numerous individuals and community groups have expressed a strong desire to memorialize the memory of Thaddeus. Community groups and elected officials have suggested that the playground at Centennial Park be dedicated in his honor.

### DISCUSSION:

On July 15, 2020, the parents of Thaddeus Sran reported his disappearance to the Madera Police Department. A countywide search began immediately with task forces from various agencies assisting. In addition, several groups comprised of community members, local businesses, and City staff participated in the search efforts. Unfortunately, the Madera community was shocked when on July 23<sup>rd</sup> his remains were discovered.

The Madera community has a long history of coming together in times of need and continued this tradition during this difficult and emotional period. During the search, both the business community and individuals volunteered their time and resources to aid in the efforts to locate

young Thaddeus. These contributions and support continue to this day. In addition, various memorials and murals dedicated to Thaddeus have been created around the City; vigils at these locations are common.

City staff have been approached by many individuals and community groups who have expressed interest in providing resources to honor Thaddeus' memory. Two particular groups, Warriors of Faith and Justice for Thaddeus, have suggested dedicating the playground at Centennial Park in memory of Thaddeus. These groups have committed to raising funds utilizing a motorcycle rally and community outreach to provide financial resources to properly dedicate the playground with a memorial plaque. Further, the groups have committed any excess proceeds beyond the cost of the memorial plaque for donation to Valley Children's Hospital in memory of Thaddeus.

The dedication of the playground at Centennial Park in Thaddeus' memory is particularly fitting because the playground itself was designed to be used by children with a wide range of physical abilities. Thaddeus had special needs; he was nonverbal and did not yet walk, among other challenges caused by his pre-term birth. The Centennial Park Playground was built specifically for children like Thaddeus. The goal of the playground was to create an environment where children of any ability and their families could enjoy the health, social, educational, and enhanced self-esteem benefits of outdoor physical play.

Elements of the playground include play areas specifically designed for children with disabilities, such as seating areas around, under, and on play structures that offer a place to socialize, rest, and observe. Play elements were designed to develop fine and gross motor skills by including activities that allow for varied motion and operating force. Textures, colors, and sounds were incorporated to stimulate senses, as were the spinning, rocking, and swinging motions of the play toys. All these amenities and their associated recreational opportunities make this site a perfect fit for this dedication in honor of Thaddeus.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

There will be a small amount of staff time associated with the installation of the memorial plaque and support during the dedication. Aside from these costs, the proposed action will have nominal to no financial impact to the City's General Fund.

#### **CONSISTENCY WITH THE VISION MADERA 2025 PLAN:**

While the recommended action does not specifically align with any Vision strategy, the support of community involvement and partnership in extraordinary circumstances, such as this, is generally consistent with the City's goals and objectives.

#### **ALTERNATIVE:**

1. Council may request staff bring additional information to a subsequent meeting.

#### **ATTACHMENT:**

## 1. Resolution – Dedicating Playground

**RESOLUTION NO. 20 - \_\_\_\_\_**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MADERA, CALIFORNIA  
DEDICATING THE PLAYGROUND AT CENTENNIAL PARK IN HONOR OF  
THADDEUS SRAN**

**WHEREAS**, during July 2020, the Madera community experienced the tragic disappearance and death of a young community member, Thaddeus Sran; and

**WHEREAS**, Thaddeus Sran was a two-year old child with special needs; and

**WHEREAS**, under the guidance and direction of the Madera Police Department, community members, local businesses, and City staff, aided by US Marshals, Madera County Sherriff's Office, City of Chowchilla Police Department, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, assisted with the search for Thaddeus for numerous days; and

**WHEREAS**, on July 23, 2020, young Thaddeus' was found to be deceased, the victim of a homicide; and

**WHEREAS**, there has been an outpouring from individuals and community groups expressing a strong desire to memorialize Thaddeus' memory; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Madera owns and operates Centennial Park at 701 East 5<sup>th</sup> Street; and

**WHEREAS**, the Centennial Park Playground was designed as an inclusive playground with features catering to children with varying abilities and mobility needs; and

**WHEREAS**, the unique and tragic circumstances surrounding the death of Thaddeus Sran represent the need to go beyond current Resolution No. 0008 regarding naming of City parks and facilities; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Madera wishes to dedicate the playground at Centennial Park in honor of Thaddeus Sran.

**NOW THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MADERA** finds, orders and resolves as follows:

1. The above recitals are true and correct.
2. The City Council approves the dedication of the playground at Centennial Park in honor of Thaddeus Sran.
3. The Director of Parks and Community Services is directed to work with interested community members and groups, including Warriors of Faith and Justice for Thaddeus, to design and install an appropriate plaque commemorating the dedication of the playground in honor of Thaddeus.
4. This Resolution is effective immediately upon adoption.

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