



MEMORANDUM Community Services Department – Memo No. 12-136

DATE: March 6, 2012
TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
THRU: RICH DLUGAS, CITY MANAGER RD
MARK M. EYNATTEN, COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTOR ME
FROM: MICKEY OHLAND, PARK DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATIONS M.O.
MANAGER
SUBJECT: 2011 CELEBRATION PLAZA HONOREE RECOMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION: The Chandler Parks and Recreation Board recommends the approval of the following Celebration Plaza honorees for 2011:

- Najeeby Basha – Ms. Basha was one of the most forceful and enterprising businesswomen and philanthropists in the history of Chandler. Najeeby’s family emigrated from Lebanon in 1897 and took up residence in New York City. In 1901, Najeeby married Najeeb Thomas Basha and in 1910 she persuaded him to go west to Ray, Arizona, for a better life. In 1920, Najeeby moved seven of their eight children to Chandler where she and her husband opened a general merchandise store on Boston Street. In June of 1932, Najeeb died and Najeeby was left with dependent children, doctor bills, a store to run and the Great Depression. That same year, Najeeby converted the merchandise store to a grocery store and, thus, became the founder of the first in a chain of Bashas supermarkets.

Najeeby’s charity was legendary in depression-era Chandler, and she set a precedent for the Basha family that continues to this day. The homeless and hungry of the 1930s knew they could always show up on Najeeby’s doorstep for a warm meal. When World War II arrived, Najeeby invited servicemen from the surrounding air bases to the family’s house for dinner and even chauffeured them to various destinations when they lacked transportation.

- Jerry Brooks – Mr. Brooks, longtime Chandler resident, former councilmember and mayor from 1984 to 1988 was instrumental in helping to create high standards and quality development during Chandler’s rapid growth period. It was Jerry’s vision and desire to help create a recognizable and unique community in which Chandler residents would be proud to live.

Mr. Brooks was essential in the implementation of Chandler's first development fees. The fees initially helped to expand water production, storage and distribution.

Jerry had significant input in the creation of the Chandler Center for the Arts (CCFA). He can be credited with rallying public support to build the facility as well as the development of an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between the City and the Chandler Unified School District for its shared use. This agreement saved substantial taxpayer dollars. Through the years, Jerry always looked out for the best interest of the City and its residents. He finds value in Chandler's history and believes there is much to be learned from the past.

BACKGROUND: Each year the City of Chandler accepts nominations from the public for inductees to Celebration Plaza, a permanent monument at Tumbleweed Park.

Constructed in 2006, Celebration Plaza features a fountain and a decorative wall used to display brass plaques honoring a select group of Chandler residents, living or deceased, who have displayed outstanding civic commitment, leadership, innovation, public outreach and service to the City. Individuals holding an elected City of Chandler office or serving on the Parks and Recreation Board are not eligible for nomination.

Staff received nominations for two individuals during this year's nomination process. These nominations were forwarded to the Celebration Plaza Nomination subcommittee for evaluation and recommendation. The subcommittee met and analyzed the nominees, then formulated their recommendations. The subcommittee based its evaluation on the following criteria:

- Community leader(s) whose outstanding personal service has resulted in significant and enduring contributions to the community.
- An individual or individuals who have made exceptional contributions to the City of Chandler.
- An individual or individuals who have added to the quality of life for Chandler residents through their involvement or financial contribution to short or long-term city projects or activities.
- An individual who has demonstrated leadership, innovation and creativity, which have made Chandler a better place to live and work.
- City of Chandler employees killed in the line of duty and local heroes.

The subcommittee recommendations were presented to the Parks and Recreation Board at their March 6, 2012 meeting. The Board endorsed the recommendations and unanimously voted to recommend them on to the City Council for approval.

The nominees selected for the 2011 induction will be honored at an induction ceremony this fall. Past inductions to Celebration Plaza include:

- 2007 - Lenford C. Calley, Officer Robert J. Nielsen, Henry Salinas
- 2008 - Chandler Service Club
- 2009 - Eddie Basha

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2010 - Patti Bruno, Marty Wright, Officer Carlos Ledesma, Dave McDowell, Lowell Huggins

PROPOSED MOTION: Move to approve the recommendation from the Parks and Recreation Board that the following individuals be recognized with plaques in Celebration Plaza at Tumbleweed Park for 2011:

Najeeby Basha

Jerry Brooks