



COUNCIL AGENDA: 05-15-07  
ITEM: 5.3

## Memorandum

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR AND  
CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** LEE PRICE, MMC  
CITY CLERK

**SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATION TO  
NAME A NEW SOCCER BOWL**

**DATE:** April 24, 2007

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### RECOMMENDATION

As recommended by the Parks and Recreation Commission, name a new Soccer Bowl at Watson Park, corner of Jackson Avenue and 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, as the Umberto Abronzino Soccer Bowl at Watson Park.

### BACKGROUND

Pursuant to Council Policy 7-5 the City Clerk receives nominations for naming of public facilities, which are forwarded to the appropriate Commission(s) for review and recommendation. The process calls for the Commission(s) to hold a public hearing on nominations prior to forwarding a recommendation to the City Council.

### ANALYSIS

On April 4, 2007, the Parks and Recreation Commission held a public hearing to consider nominations for the naming of a Soccer Bowl in Council District 3 located at Watson Park. At this meeting, the Commission voted unanimously to recommend to the City Council that the park be named Umberto Abronzino Soccer Bowl at Watson Park.

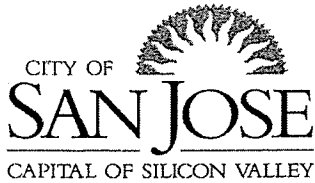
### PUBLIC OUTREACH

The Parks and Recreation Commission held the Public Hearing on April 4, 2007.

### COORDINATION

This item has been coordinated with the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services Department.

LEE PRICE, MMC  
CITY CLERK



*Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services*

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

April 16, 2007

Lee Price, City Clerk  
Office of the City Clerk  
City of San José  
200 East Santa Clara Street  
San José, CA 95113

Dear Lee Price:

Re: Recommendation to the City Council to name the new Soccer Bowl at Watson Park, corner of Jackson Avenue and 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, as the **Umberto Abronzino Soccer Bowl at Watson Park.**

RECEIVED  
San Jose City Clerk  
2007 APR 23 PM 3:25

On April 4, 2007, the Parks and Recreation Commission (hereafter, Commission) held a public hearing to consider the nominations for the naming of a Soccer Bowl in Council District 3 located at Watson Park, corner of Jackson Avenue and 22<sup>nd</sup> Street. At this meeting, the Commission voted unanimously to recommend to the City Council that the park be named Umberto Abronzino Soccer Bowl at Watson Park.

Therefore, I am requesting that this item be agendized for Council consideration at the May 8, 2007 (evening) Council meeting.

Thank you for your assistance with this matter. If you have any questions, please call Cristin James at 408-793-5553.

Sincerely,

Helen Chapman, Chair  
Parks and Recreation Commission

cc: Councilmember Sam Liccardo, Council District 3  
Albert Balagso, PRNS  
Julie Mark, PRNS  
Mike Will



# Memorandum

**TO:** Albert Balagso, Director  
Parks, Recreation and  
Neighborhood Services

**FROM:** Lee Price, MMC  
City Clerk

**SUBJECT: NAMING OF CITY-OWNED  
FACILITIES**

**DATE:** 11-28-06

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**PROPOSAL: City-Owned Facility Nomination for Umberto Abronzino Soccer Bowl located at Watson Park. Submitted by Northside Neighborhood Association, Peninsula Soccer League, South Bay Adult Soccer League and Soccer Silicon Valley dated November 17, 2006.**

Council Policy No. 7-5 entitled "Naming of City-Owned Land and Facilities" calls for a Nomination Form to be submitted to the City Clerk, who will then forward the information to the appropriate Commission for review. The Policy calls for a Public Hearing to be held to solicit public comment on the proposal after which the Commission's recommendation is submitted to the City Clerk who then forwards the recommendation to the City council for consideration.

Please initiate the process to consider the naming of this site by forwarding the attached information to the Parks and Recreation Commission and scheduling the matter for a public hearing. As soon as I receive the Commission's recommendation, I will forward it to the City Council for consideration.

Thank you in advance for your review of this Nomination and please let me know if you have any questions.

LEE PRICE, MMC  
CITY CLERK

LP:np



The Northside Neighborhood Association – P.O. Box 2317 – San Jose – CA – 95109-2317

RECEIVED  
San Jose City Clerk

(408) 291-2752

2006 NOV 20 P 4: 02

November 17, 2006

City Clerk  
San Jose City Hall  
200 E. Santa Clara Street  
San Jose, CA 95113

**Re: Nomination to Name Soccer Bowl in Watson Park  
“Umberto Abronzino Soccer Bowl”**

Dear Clerk:

Enclosed please find, on behalf of four organizations, (1) the Northside Neighborhood Association (NNA), (2) the Peninsula Soccer League (PSL), South Bay Adult Soccer League (SBASL) and (4) Soccer Silicon Valley (SSV), a Nomination Form for naming of a City-Owned Facility. **NNA, PSL, SBASL and SSV jointly seek to name the soccer bowl within Watson Park the “Umberto Abronzino Soccer Bowl”** to honor the late Umberto Abronzino, who is credited with virtually single-handedly establishing recreational soccer in the Santa Clara Valley where it thrives today, and who during his life spent much of his time nurturing the sport at the soccer bowl in Watson Park. The enclosed Nomination Form incorporates by reference the discussion in this letter.

Umberto Abronzino was born on November 16, 1920 in Sessa Aurunca, Italy. A former barber in Hartford, Connecticut, he emigrated from Italy in 1937 and played for and managed several Connecticut teams from 1937 to 1952. Abronzino later moved to California and helped form the Peninsula Soccer League nearly 50 years ago in 1957, at a time when organized soccer was unheard of in this region. Abronzino was “a major force in the development of youth soccer in the region,” according to the U.S. Soccer Hall of Fame, into which he was inducted in 1971. Abronzino was also inducted into the California Soccer Hall of Fame in 1964 and into the California Youth Soccer Association Hall of Fame in 1979. The “Abronzino League”, a youth soccer league in District 2 of the California Youth Soccer Association North (this region) is named for him.

Abronzino continued to referee games at the soccer bowl in Watson Park well into the 1990s (when he was in his seventies), and he was named an honorary ambassador of soccer, representing his native Italy (a perennial global soccer power) for the World Cup in 1994 when the games were held in the United States.

Abronzino recently passed away on July 1, 2006 at age 85 in San Jose. "Since arriving in San Jose . . . Abronzino helped establish the game [of soccer] where none existed," the *San Jose Mercury News* wrote in his obituary. "He created the Peninsula League . . . [and] established . . . the foundation for a youth soccer system that now numbers an estimated 50,000 players in Santa Clara County. The league produced teams such as the San Jose Lobos, the forerunners of the original San Jose Earthquakes professional team, and the San Jose Oaks, winner of the 1992 [U.S. Open Cup] national championship."

Although he lived in Willow Glen, "[h]is home, however, was truly at Watson Bowl, where the Peninsula League matches were held," according to the *Mercury News*. Indeed, the District 2 Referee Administration website, in eulogizing Abronzino, recounts:

From his box at the gate of Watson Bowl, Umberto ensured that only those who came to enjoy the game of soccer would pass. He welcomed referees with a warm and friendly handshake, and often asked those whom he hadn't seen in a while, 'Why you no come to the Watson Bowl no more?' He had a way of making you feel that you were important and needed.

Umberto encouraged referees and players to look their best upon entering the Watson Bowl. If he thought your hair was too long or scruffy, Umberto would say so and urge you to 'come down to the barber shop so I can fix you up.'

He was a great figure; a man of strong convictions, guided by a heart of gold. It will be difficult to imagine what we are going to do without him.

Former players and coaches also remember Abronzino with fondness. One named Rich, who was both, wrote:

I can remember when I was a young boy, sitting across the dinner table with my dad when he coached my Almaden youth select team, and he said to my mom, 'I have to go over to Abronzino's to get our passes.' I must have been 8 or 9, and 22 years later there I was managing the Grenadiers doing the same thing. . . . I was awestruck that he was still doing the same thing for that long, keeping soccer alive and well in the Bay Area.

\* \* \* \* \*

City Clerk  
November 17, 2006  
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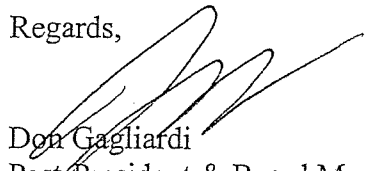
I got to know him through managing the Grenadiers, and I remember one time I got to the field early because we were the first game of the day and Umberto needed help setting up the field. It was around 7:30 am and Umberto was really old at this point and I got there and he was there already, slowly, slowly walking across the field, hardly moving really, with the nets and corner flags, methodic, determined and strong, to set up the field for the day. And I realized this is what he had been doing for all those years I was growing up, making it possible for thousands of people just like me to keep playing soccer at the bowl. It was humbling.

He was one of a kind – I believe a true American who saw a great opportunity to do something he loves and excel at it. The least we can do I believe is to name the field in honor of him. His name was and should always be synonymous with soccer in the Bay Area.

The local neighborhood surrounding Watson Park, represented by NNA, as well as the local soccer community, represented by PSL, SBASL and SSV, seek to honor Umberto Abronzino's memory and to nurture an appreciation for the history of the development of the world's favorite sport in this area by naming in his honor the soccer bowl for which Abronzino is largely responsible and at which he spent most of his time.

Thank you in advance for the City's consideration of this nomination.

Regards,



Don Gagliardi  
Past President & Board Member, NNA  
President, SSV  
Authorized Spokesperson, PSL & SBASL

Enclosure

cc: Mary Beth Carter, Dept. Parks, Recreation & Neighborhood Services  
Sam Liccardo, Councilmember-Elect, District 3  
Cindy Chavez, Councilmember, District 3



**CITY OF SAN JOSÉ**  
**Naming of City-Owned Facilities**  
**NOMINATION FORM**

- (1) Northside Neighborhood Assn. (NNA)  
(2) Peninsula Soccer League (PSL)

Person Submitting Nomination: (3) South Bay Adult Soccer League (SBASL)  
(4) Soccer Silicon Valley (SSV)

Address: c/o Donald P. Gagliardi Daytime Phone: 408-291-2752  
303 Almaden Blvd., Suite 500, San Jose, CA 95110

Name Proposed for Facility: Umberto Abronzino Soccer Bowl

Location of Facility: Watson Park  
(Include street address, cross street)

Nature of Facility to be Named: (Describe use, clientele and any special geographic or historic characteristics)

See attached letter

Is this site/structure of potential historic significance? Yes  No

If yes, please submit parcel number and a summary of bibliographical resources.

See attached letter

Appropriateness of Name to Facility: (Briefly characterize the nominated individual, group, event or feature. Describe why naming would be appropriate. If the facility is proposed to be named after an individual, attach no more than one page outlining a brief biography and significant contributions to the community.)

See attached letter

Submit Nomination to: City Clerk, San José City Hall, 200 E. Santa Clara Street, San José, CA 95113

**FOR CITY CLERK'S USE ONLY**

Referred to the following Commission or Committee:

Airport \_\_\_ Arts \_\_\_ Child Care \_\_\_ Disability Advisory \_\_\_ Historic Landmarks \_\_\_  
Library \_\_\_ Parking Advisory \_\_\_ Parks & Recreation \_\_\_ Senior Citizens \_\_\_ Youth \_\_\_  
Other \_\_\_\_\_