

Fw: Removal of the Thomas Fallon Statue - Rules Agenda Item: G.5

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To: Rules and Open Government Committee Agendas <rulescommitteeagenda@sanjoseca.gov>

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From: April Halberstadt [REDACTED]

Sent: Wednesday, February 10, 2021 8:53 AM

To: City Clerk <city.clerk@sanjoseca.gov>

Subject: Removal of the Thomas Fallon Statue - Rules Agenda Item: G.5

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Like many other local historians, I have watched the debate on public art and the Fallon statue from a distance. At this moment, many areas of our nation seems to be under siege from various types of anarchy. Public hearings quickly turn into shouting matches and violent demonstrations. Sadly, San Jose is no exception and many who are interested in community affairs are now reluctant to participate.

Truth was the major casualty of the recent debate. Mayor Liccardo's subsequent Memorandum attempted to discuss the major points of the Fallon hearing, but it appears that a decision has already been made.

Therefore I respectfully request that as this recommendation moves forward, the City of San Jose accompanies this Memorandum with two other documents. One document should be a formal request by a legitimate group, perhaps a local Mexican-American nonprofit, outlining their reasons for asserting that Fallon was guilty of genocide and requesting removal. Since Fallon appears to be a symbol of various types of perceived racial oppression, it would be helpful to get those incidents into the public record as this moves forward. The second document should be a short biography of Thomas Fallon, written by a certified historian.

Dozens of community members spoke at the recent meeting hosted by the Department of Cultural Affairs, all of them with angry words expressing hatred of alleged white racist oppression. Many recalled tales of local Native American genocide at the hands Thomas Fallon and others. Not one

person spoke in favor of the statue, or even dared to speak. The angry group gathered to vent, not listen.

As I recall the statue was originally created to provide San Jose with a focal point for what historians call our "origin myth", the story of how San Jose came to be. Visitors frequently want to know why San Jose claims to be the oldest city in California, *Pueblo Uno*. Years ago the Redevelopment Agency, in conjunction with the Downtown Association and local business interests, worked to create an interesting enclave for visitors.

The visitor area was focused on San Jose's only remaining pueblo adobe, known as the Peralta adobe and nearby Pellier Park. Sadly there are no remnants remaining of San Jose's original pueblo, which was located at what is now the County building. Since San Jose was the site of an early flag-raising, it seemed appropriate to include commemorating California's addition to America.

Neither the City of San Jose nor Santa Clara County has a history museum. Local heritage is maintained by various nonprofits. So as this only remaining public symbol of San Jose's founding disappears, it is important to add the circumstances to the public record.

Historically Yours,
April Halberstadt, Historian



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