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MEDIA ALERT:

Statement from Mayor Lisa Middleton regarding Section 14 displacements

Nov. 29, 2022

“The City of Palm Springs is deeply sorry about the action taken toward those affected by the Section 14 displacement in the 1950s and 60s. Over the past two years, the City Council and Staff have set out on a course aimed at making right what happened during that period. While this process may seem to be taking longer than some might like, the City has an obligation, not only to those who were displaced, but also to its residents, businesses and taxpayers, to thoroughly investigate the history as it develops remedial programs that are fair to everyone. Below is a summary of the steps that the City has taken, to date, in order to address the Section 14 displacements.

July 18, 2020– The Palm Springs City Council hosted a listening session on Policing, Racism, Discrimination, and other related issues. The virtual meeting was attended by more than 100 participants.

August 6, 2020 - The Palm Springs City Council adopted a resolution, “Declaring that systemic racism is a human rights and public health crisis that results in disparities in family stability, health and mental wellness, education, employment, environmental justice, economic development, transportation, public safety, incarceration, and housing, and reaffirming the Council’s commitment to advancing justice, equity, diversity and inclusion in the City of Palm Springs.”

The Council declared its intent to end racial and social disparities, strengthen the way it engages and convenes to protect and expand community voice and power, and work with others to close the gap of racial injustice and better serve the City’s communities of color.

March 8, 2021 – The Palm Springs Human Rights Commission discussed the history of Section 14 at its meeting, and approved a draft resolution entitled, “City of Palm Springs Apology for its Role in the Destruction of Section 14,” for City Council’s consideration.

April 12, 2021 – The Palm Springs Human Rights Commission discussed the statue of former mayor Frank Bogert, which was installed in the front of Palm Springs City Hall on March 31, 1990. The Commission further discussed the City’s actions associated with Section 14 and reviewed a draft resolution, which recommended its removal. Bogert served as mayor during the time of removal of families from Section 14.



May 5, 2021 – The Palm Springs Human Rights Commission approved a resolution recommending the removal of the statue of former Mayor Frank Bogert from the front of City Hall. The resolution would go to City Council for consideration.

September 29, 2021 – The Palm Springs City Council adopted a resolution formally apologizing for the City’s role in the forced evictions from Section 14; at the same meeting, the Council directed staff to begin the legal process of removing the statue of former Mayor Frank Bogert from the front of City Hall.

Staff was also asked to bring back recommendations on how the City could address the financial impact of those affected by their removal from Section 14.

November 18, 2021 – The City Council discussed a reparations program related to Section 14 evictions. Monetary allocations and programs designed to close the attainment gap in education, income, healthcare, and housing were among the programs Council could consider.

February 24, 2022 – The City Council voted to approve the removal of the Frank Bogert statue from City Hall. The City was subsequently sued by a group of local residents, who challenged the City Council’s action. Following the City’s defense of that lawsuit, the lawsuit was dismissed.

April 11, 2022 - Discussion on Section 14 reparations (Zoom meeting) was attended by members of the Desert Highland Gateway Community Action Association, Section 14 Survivors, including the chair of the organization, Pearl Devers, Black History Committee, and Where is My Land. Where is My Land is an organization that Section 14 Survivors were working with and is dedicated to helping Black Americans reclaim stolen land and secure restitution.

July 13, 2022 – The statue of former Mayor Frank Bogert was removed from Palm Springs City Hall.

November 21, 2022 – The City of Palm Springs posted a request for proposals for reparations program consultant services. The scope of work consists of reviewing and verifying the historical context of residents displaced from Section 14 and helping the City develop a reparations program to enhance the quality of life for those affected by the displacement.

The City of Palm Springs prides itself on being one of the most inclusive and welcoming communities in the nation. We are committed to equity, social justice and doing what is right on behalf of our citizens.”

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