

APPROVED
JAN 04 2024

**BOARD OF RECREATION
AND PARK COMMISSIONERS**

BOARD REPORT

NO. 24-002

DATE January 04, 2024

C.D. 15

BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSIONERS

SUBJECT: PECK PARK – RENAMING OF GYMNASIUM BUILDING AS “MEL BOBICH GYMNASIUM” – CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION FROM THE PROVISIONS OF THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA) PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 19, SECTION 15311(a) [ON PREMISE SIGN] OF CALIFORNIA CEQA GUIDELINES AND ARTICLE III, SECTION 1, CLASS 11(5) OF CITY CEQA GUIDELINES

B. Aguirre _____	for M. Rudnick _____
B. Jones _____	* C. Santo Domingo <u>DF</u>
B. Jackson _____	N. Williams _____



General Manager

Approved X Disapproved _____ Withdrawn _____

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Approve the renaming of the gymnasium building at Peck Park as “Mel Bobich Gymnasium” as more fully set forth in this Report;
2. Authorize the installation of the appropriate building signage (Project);
3. Determine that the Project is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Article 19, Section 15311(a) [On premise sign] of California CEQA Guidelines and Article III, Section 1, Class 11(5) of City CEQA Guidelines and direct staff to file a Notice of Exemption (NOE) with the Los Angeles County Clerk;
4. Direct the Department of Recreation and Parks’ (RAP) Chief Accounting Employee or designee to prepare a check to the Los Angeles County Clerk in the amount of Seventy-Five Dollars (\$75.00) in order to file a NOE with the County of Los Angeles; and,
5. Authorize RAP staff to make technical corrections as necessary to carry out the intent of this Report.

BOARD REPORT

PG. 2 NO. 24-002

SUMMARY

Peck Park

Peck Park is located at 560 North Western Avenue in the San Pedro community of the City. This 74.52-acre facility provides a children's play area, community center building, gymnasium building, volleyball courts indoor/outdoor basketball courts, three baseball diamonds, a swimming pool and hiking trails for the use of the surrounding community. Approximately 6,127 City residents live within a one-half mile of Peck Park. Due to the size of the park, and the facilities, features, and programs it provides, Peck Park currently meets the standard for a Community Park, as defined in the City's Public Recreation Plan.

Peck Park was named after its benefactor, Mr. George H. Peck, an early real estate developer, who deeded the site to the City through a series of grant deeds starting in 1929. A stipulation of the grant deeds called for the land to be used for park purposes, thus dedicating the land at the time of land acquisition. In addition, a few adjacent parcels were either granted in fee title to the City or purchased by the City as tax deeded parcels.

A portion of Peck Park is named "Hernandez Ranch" in honor of Albert Hernandez, a local community contributor who kept ponies and small farm animals in this park area for local adults and children to enjoy and appreciate (Report No. 10-005). The hiking trails at Peck Park are named "Ray Patricio Hiking Trails" in honor of Ray Patricio, who was one of the original members of the Northwest San Pedro Neighborhood Council (Report No. 13-074).

Naming Request

On August 31, 2022, the Los Angeles City Council (City Council) approved a motion requesting that the Board of Recreation and Park Commissioners (Board) rename Peck Park Community Center, located at 560 North Western Avenue, 90732, to "Mel Bobich Community Center", in memory of Mel Bobich and in recognition of his advocacy for the San Pedro community (Council File (CF) No. 22-0880).

On November 7, 2023, the City Council approved an additional motion requesting that the Board rename Peck Park Gymnasium, located at 560 North Western Avenue, 90732, to "Mel Bobich Gymnasium", in memory of Mel Bobich and in recognition of his advocacy for the San Pedro community. This motion has not yet been approved by the City Council (CF No. 23-1121).

The proposed renaming was presented to the RAP Facility Repair and Maintenance Task Force on November 2, 2023. The task force gave approval to move the proposed naming forward to the full RAP Board for consideration.

The Council Office of Council District 15 has expressed support for the proposed name change, and has provided letters of support from the following: Mel Bobich's family, former 15th Council District Councilmember Rudy Svorinich, and Raymond Regalado, President Northwest San Pedro Neighborhood Council. (Attachment 2).

BOARD REPORT

PG. 3 NO. 24-002

Background on Mel Bobich.

Mel Bobich was born on March 15, 1927 in a house that still stands just blocks away from the working waterfront in San Pedro. In a 2003 letter, he recalled how his childhood playground consisted of the mud flats south of Crescent A venue where the neighborhood vacant lot became the impromptu baseball diamond or football field. When he retired, he devoted his time to making sure the youth of his hometown had a place to play. He fiercely worked to seek after the sports fields and other facilities he believed San Pedro's youth needed.

Mr. Bobich passed away on June 5, 2018 and is remembered as a beloved husband, father, grandfather, friend and mentor, as well as a San Pedro community leader.

Mel Bobich and his wife, Katie, were founding members of the San Pedro Youth Coalition which has been serving the needs of youth recreation in the San Pedro community for over 35 years. Mr. Bobich was an active member of its leadership team for over 25 years.

The Office of Council District 15 compiled various articles about the life of Mel Bobich, as well as his obituary (Attachment 3).

BOARD NAMING POLICY

On June 5, 2013, the RAP adopted a Naming Policy, Procedures and Guidelines for Parks and Recreational Facilities (Policy) for the naming of parks, recreation facilities, park amenities, landmarks and other park assets (Report No. 13-161). This Policy enumerates the criteria and guidelines for use when evaluating proposed park names (Attachment 5). Several of the adopted guidelines applicable to this application are as follows:

- The Naming of parks after individuals shall be limited to those who are deceased and have made exceptional contributions to the park or community within which the park is located.
- The Naming engenders a positive public image which does not unduly commercialize the park or recreational facility.
- The proposed name for the park or recreational facility, and/or contributor, must be compatible with the Mission of RAP.

CONCLUSION

For all the reasons stated in this Report, RAP staff recommends the renaming of the Peck Park Gymnasium to "Mel Bobich Gymnasium" and installing appropriate signage.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The proposed Project consists of adding a sign to an existing public structure

BOARD REPORT

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According to the parcel profile report retrieved on December 7, 2023 this area does not reside in a liquefaction, methane, coastal or historic zone, so there is no reasonable possibility that the proposed Project may impact on an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern or have a significant effect due to unusual circumstances. No other known projects would involve cumulatively significant impacts, and no future projects would result from the proposed Project. As of December 7, 2023, the State Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) (Envirostor at www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov) and the State Water Resources Control Board (SWCB) (Geotracker at <https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/>) have not listed the Project site or any contaminated sites near the Project area (within 1,000 feet). According to the Caltrans Scenic Highway Map there is no scenic highway located within the vicinity of the proposed Project or within its site. Furthermore, the proposed Project is not located in proximity of a known historical resources and will not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of any historical resource.

Based in this information, RAP staff recommends that the Board determines that the proposed Project is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Article 19, Section 15311(a) of California CEQA Guidelines and Article III, Section 1, Class 11(5) of City CEQA Guidelines. Staff will file a Notice of Exemption with the Los Angeles County Clerk upon Board's approval.

FISCAL IMPACT

The approval of this Report will have no impact of RAP's General Fund. RAP staff is currently working to identify the cost for the new signage and will be coordinating with CD 15 to identify a source of funds to pay for its installation.

This Report was prepared by Robert Eastland, Management Assistant, Planning, Maintenance and Construction Branch.

LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

- 1) Attachment 1 - City Council Motions Proposing "Mel Bobich Gymnasium"
- 2) Attachment 2 - Letters of Support from Various Persons & Organizations
- 3) Attachment 3 - Articles about Mel Bobich & Obituary
- 4) Attachment 4 - RAP Naming Policy and Guidelines

MOTION

Mel Bobich was born on March 15, 1927 in a house that still stands just blocks away from the working waterfront in San Pedro. In a 2003 letter, he recalled how his childhood playground consisted of the mud flats south of Crescent Avenue where the neighborhood vacant lot became the impromptu baseball diamond or football field. When he retired, he devoted his time to making sure the youth of his home town had a place to play. He fiercely went after the sports fields and other facilities he believed San Pedro's youth needed.

Mr. Bobich leaves behind a legacy that impacted generations of young people in the San Pedro community through facilities he helped bring to life including the Bogdanovich Park baseball fields and gymnasium, Peck Park Gymnasium, the San Pedro High School Gymnasium, 22nd Street Park and the Field of Dreams.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Board of Recreation and Parks Commissioners be requested to rename Peck Park Community Center, located at 560 North Western Avenue, 90732, to Mel Bobich Community Center, in memory of Mel Bobich and in recognition of his advocacy for the San Pedro community.

PRESENTED BY: Joe Buscaino
JOE BUSCAINO
Councilmember, 15th District

SECONDED BY: [Signature]

ORIGINAL

AUG 02 2022

[Signature]

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MOTION

NEIGHBORHOOD & COMMUNITY ENRICHMENT

Mel Bobich was born on March 15, 1927 in a house that still stands just blocks away from the working waterfront in San Pedro. In a 2003 letter, he recalled how his childhood playground consisted of the mud flats south of Crescent Avenue where the neighborhood vacant lot became the impromptu baseball diamond or football field. When he retired, he devoted his time to making sure the youth of his hometown had a place to play. He fiercely worked to seek after the sports fields and other facilities he believed San Pedro's youth needed.

Mr. Bobich passed away on June 5, 2018 and is remembered as a beloved husband, father, grandfather, friend and mentor, as well as a San Pedro community leader.

Mel Bobich and his wife, Katie, were founding members of the San Pedro Youth Coalition which has been serving the needs of youth recreation in the San Pedro community for over 35 years. Mr. Bobich was an active member of its leadership team for over 25 years.

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PRESENTED BY:



TIM McOSKER
Councilmember, 15th District

SECONDED BY:



ORIGINAL

OCT 11 2023

PK

September 13, 2023

To: Tim McOsker, Councilmember, CD 1 5

From: Northwest San Pedro Neighborhood Council

Re: Rename Peck Park Community Center, located at 560 North Western Avenue, 90732, to
Mel Bobich Community Center

Councilmember McOsker,

The Northwest San Pedro Neighborhood Council is honored to support the renaming of the Peck Park Community Center to the Mel Bobich Community Center.

Mr. Bobich strived to enhance the recreational opportunities for the youth of San Pedro by advocating for and partnering in the development of the Bogdanovich Park baseball fields and gymnasium, the Peck Park gymnasium, the San Pedro High School gymnasium, 22nd Street Park and the Field of Dreams. Not only did these locations provide settings for athletic programming for young and old, they also provided safe spaces for children.

Supporting the renaming of the Peck Park Community Center to the Mel Bobich Community Center is Northwest San Pedro Neighborhood Council's way of saying thank you for his dedication to our youth for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Raymond Regalado

President, Northwest San Pedro Neighborhood Council



Honorable

Rudy Svorinich, Jr.

President Pro Tempore of the Los Angeles City Council (ret.)
Councilman, 15th (Greater Harbor Area), District, City of Los Angeles (ret.)

October 23, 2023

Prior Civic Appointments:

Assistant LA City Council
President Pro Tempore

Committee Chairman:

Transportation
Housing & Community
Redevelopment
Information Technology
Waterfront Development
Alameda Corridor
Board of Governors

Committee Vice-Chairman:

Commerce, Energy &
Natural Resources
(Airports, Harbor, Water
& Power Oversight)
Staples Center Development
Executive Employee Relations
Alameda Corridor
Board of Governors

LA City Representative to:

LA County Sanitation Districts
National League of Cities
California League of Cities
Southern California
Association
of Governments
South Bay Council
of Governments

Present Executive Affiliations:

President & CEO:

Svorinich Companies, Inc., dba
Svorinich Government Affairs
Svorinich Political Services
Victory Campaign Consulting

VIA EMAIL

Honorable Members of the Neighborhood
& Community Enrichment Committee of the
Los Angeles City Council
c/o Office of the City Clerk, 200 North Spring Street, City Hall, Room 360
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Members of the Board of Recreation & Parks Commission
City of Los Angeles
221 North Figueroa Street, Suite 350
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Councilmembers and Commissioners:

It is with great pleasure and pride that I offer my whole-hearted support of renaming the Peck Park Gymnasium in San Pedro after the late Mel Bobich.

For over thirty (30) years, Mel Bobich kept the dream alive of north San Pedro obtaining a first-rate gymnasium as south San Pedro possessed (and for which he also worked tirelessly). During my campaign for City Council in 1992, he brought this issue to my attention and was the driving force in ensuring the gym's funding, design and construction after my assuming office.

Through Mel Bobich's tremendous effort for the next few years, the gym was finally built and dedicated in the late 1990's. During his life, he repeatedly rejected our attempts to name the facility after him due to his unassuming and humble nature, but now would be a most appropriate time to honor him.

I can think of no other person who truly deserves their name being placed in honor as the namesake of this beautiful facility. I am not only immensely proud of his decades of community involvement for the benefit of local youth, but also to be his great-nephew as he and my maternal grandmother were siblings. Great-Uncle Mel is one of San Pedro's and my heroes. Sincere gratitude is extended to Councilman Tim McOsker for bringing this issue forward and your unanimous consent in approving the council motion's request would be most appreciated.

Very Truly and Gratefully Yours,

Rudy Svorinich, Jr.

HONORABLE RUDY SVORINICH, JR.,
President Pro Tempore of the Los Angeles City Council (ret.)
Councilman, 15th (Greater Harbor Area/Watts) District, City of Los Angeles (ret.)

Katherine Bobich
1346 W. 26th Place
San Pedro, CA 90732
(310) 548-6189

August 8, 2023

Board of Recreation and Park Commissioners
Department of Recreation and Parks
221 N. Figueroa Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Peck Park facility honoring Mel Bobich (Council File: 22-0880)

Dear Recreation & Parks Commissioners:

We are humbled to know that Joe Buscaino requested to honor Mel Bobich by placing his name on one of the buildings at Peck Park.

As Mr. Buscaino mentioned in his motion, from the 1960s to the 2000s, Mel Bobich spearheaded so many committees as a volunteer in the San Pedro community to help save recreation facilities and establish others to provide options for the community.

Councilmember Tim McOsker supported the motion and our family is in agreement that the renaming of Peck Park Gym to recognize Mel Bobich would be a fitting tribute in the San Pedro community of Los Angeles. Due to his efforts alongside so many other volunteers, many fields and facilities in the area were developed in his lifetime. In the summer of 1971, Mel Bobich urged City officials to develop specific facilities in San Pedro including a gymnasium at San Pedro Park and Peck Park. Within a few years, a gym was completed at San Pedro Park (what is now known as Martin J. Bogdanovich Recreation Center). After 25 years of letters, committees, and meetings, the Peck Park Gym was eventually built in 1997.

Thousands of people have experienced the benefits of the efforts of Mel Bobich including the Buscaino family and the McOsker family. He was a humble man and would have refused the recognition for his volunteer work, but we are proud of his accomplishments and support this motion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Katherine Bobich". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and legible.

The Bobich family

Katherine (Mel's wife) and children: Tom, Anne, John, Mary, Jim, Chrissy, Robert

Katherine Bobich
1346 W. 26th Place
San Pedro, CA 90732
(310) 548-6189

August 15, 2023

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Department of Recreation and Parks
221 N. Figueroa Street
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Sincerely,

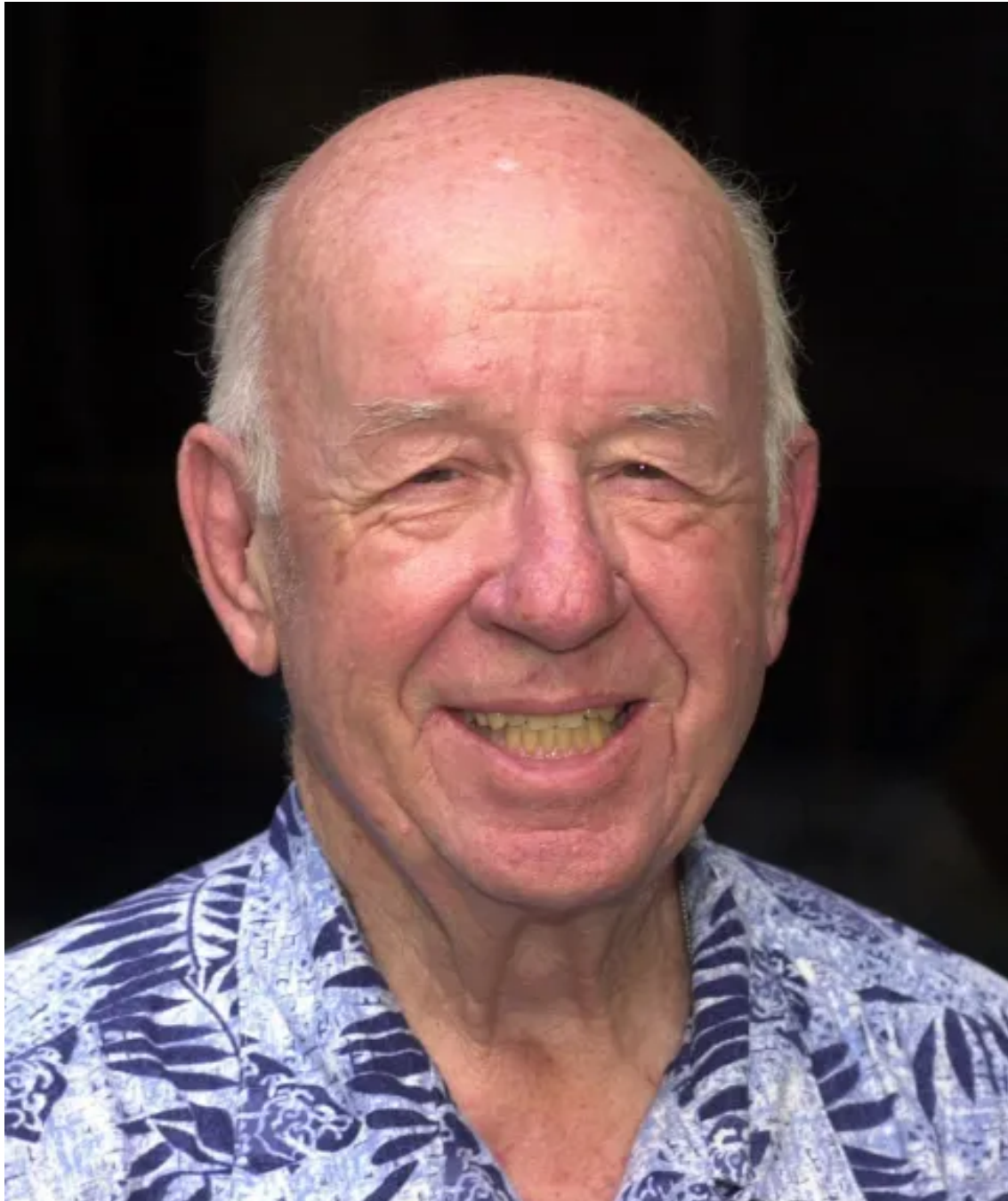


The Bobich family

Katherine (Mel's wife) and children: Tom, Anne, John, Mary, Jim, Chrissy, Robert

LOCAL NEWS

Obituary: San Pedro's Mel Bobich scored fields and gymnasiums for area's youth



Mel Bobich (File photo)



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By **DONNA LITTLEJOHN** | dlittlejohn@scng.com | Daily Breeze
 PUBLISHED: June 8, 2018 at 6:06 p.m. | UPDATED: June 8, 2018 at 10:42 p.m.

Accolades poured in this week following news of the death of San Pedro's Mel Bobich, a tireless advocate for youth sports fields and park space in the port community where he was well known and long respected.

Bobich was 91 years old when he died on June 5 and leaves behind a legacy that impacted generations of young people in the port community through facilities he helped spearhead including the Bogdanovich Park baseball fields and gymnasium, Peck Park Gymnasium, the San Pedro High School Gymnasium, 22nd Street Park and the Field of Dreams.

"You'd be hard pressed to find anyone in their 40s and younger who hasn't used those facilities as a parent or a child," said Scott Lane, president of the San Pedro youth Coalition where he met Bobich some 15 years ago. "I was louder and younger and he was just this quiet, soft-spoken guy. Every time I went into a room with him, (the reaction) was just pure respect for him."

Bobich was one of San Pedro's humble old guard, said San Pedro film producer Jack Baric.

"He's truly one of San Pedro's icons," he said. "You think of the John Olguins and the Mel Bobiches in that category of San Pedro's 'founding fathers' who made our community such a great place."

Grew up near the waterfront

Born on March 15, 1927, in a house on 16th Street (the house still stands), just blocks from the working waterfront, Bobich, the youngest of five, was the son of Evanica and Tom Bobich, immigrants from Rava, Croatia.

Growing up in those days, the neighborhood vacant lot became the impromptu baseball diamond or football field, depending on the season. Writing in a 2003 letter to the editor to the Daily Breeze, Bobich recalled his childhood playground consisted of the "mud flats south of Crescent Avenue."

Bobich attended 15th Street Elementary School, Dana Junior High School and graduated from San Pedro High in 1945. His first job was picking celery, lettuce and string beans on the Palos Verdes hillsides during World War II. He also worked as a casual longshoreman unloading bananas — "Toughest job ever," he said.

After high school, he went into the military on the day the war ended and was assigned to the Army Air Corps Love Field Dallas and then stationed in Brazil.

Bobich attended UCLA on the G.I. Bill where he wrote for the Daily Bruin, graduating with a degree in political science.

The 'San Pedran'

Shortly after the war, he and a group of buddies started their own local newspaper, called the San Pedran. The editor was the late Sam Domancich and Bobich was the staff's "senior citizen" at 20 years old. Subscriptions were 20 cents a month.

"I recently looked at all those issues of the San Pedran," Bobich wrote in a 2003 Daily Breeze guest column. "You know, there wasn't one crime story, not one obituary, vandalism or child abuse (story). ... It was a great newspaper. Well, at least we thought it was great."

On Feb. 8, 1958, he married Katie Reskusich at the old Mary Star of the Sea Catholic Church (they had met on 16th Street when Bobich was looking to borrow a hammer from a neighbor). They had seven children.

In 2008, they joined with two other couples who had been married on the same day to celebrate their [50th wedding anniversaries](#).

Bobich worked in management for the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad company for 37 years and when he retired he devoted his time to making sure the youth of his home town had a place to play.

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"The bottom line was that Mel wanted to do whatever he could (for the youth) and he did it in a very quiet and humble way without bringing attention to himself," said Mike Lansing, executive director of the Boys and Girls Clubs of the Los Angeles Harbor. "He focused on finding solutions and not getting caught up in all the politics. He was a finisher, he got things completed."

One of his grassroots endeavors was to create baseball fields at what is now known as Bogdanovich Park.

"Mel led the charge, they just went out there with wheelbarrows and shovels and dirt and build a baseball field," Baric said.

While he fiercely went after the sports fields and other facilities he believed San Pedro's youth needed, he always maintained a calm and easy-going manner, those who knew him said.

"He wasn't a chest-thumper," Lansing said. "He didn't grandstand, he did it in a quiet, respectful way. But he wasn't going to let go until he got it done."

No fuss

He resisted any fussy accolades for his many victories, Lane said.

"We were constantly trying to get Mel to agree to let us go out and name something after him or award a scholarship in his name, but he absolutely refused, he would not allow it," Lane said.

In a question-and-answer sheet Bobich filled out a while back, Bobich listed his "most frightening experience" as a harrowing ride on Disneyland's Space Mountain with his 7-year-old daughter. "During the ride, she screamed, 'I think we're going to die.' I screamed back, 'I think you're right! I think you're right!'"

His philosophy of life? Matthew 6, in which Jesus teaches his followers to practice their good deeds in secret and not for public recognition.

Baric said Bobich's family is testament to the kind of man he was.

"If you've met any of his kids and grandkids, they're just the nicest people who love San Pedro and that comes from their dad," he said. "He created a great tribe."

Bobich's oldest son Tom said of his father: "I don't know of a person who had higher ideals or higher integrity."

Rosary and visitation will be at 7 p.m. Thursday at McNerney's Mortuary, 570 W. Fifth St., San Pedro. A funeral Mass will be said at 10 a.m. Friday at Mary Star of the Sea Catholic Church, 870 W. Eighth St., San Pedro.

Bobich is survived by his wife of 60 years, Katie; a sister, Ruby Pecarich of San Pedro; seven children, Tom of Alamo, Calif., Anne Asher of San Pedro, John of San Pedro, Mary McLachlan of San Pedro, Jim of San Carlos, Calif., Chrissy Paley of Clovis, Calif., and Robert of San Pedro; and 18 grandchildren.

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 Sections

Los Angeles Times

CALIFORNIA

South Bay : 25 Years of Lobbying Finally Earn Gym

L.A. TIMES ARCHIVES

FEB. 1, 1996 12 AM PT

After lobbying for 25 years, residents in the Peck Park area of San Pedro are finally getting a gymnasium.

Ground has already been broken for the 12,000-square-foot facility and construction is expected to begin in a month.

The \$1.2-million gymnasium will come with a full-size basketball court, retractable bleachers and two locker rooms. Gym advocates said local youths and adults are eager for the new facility because San Pedro's current handful of recreation centers are considered some of the most crowded in Los Angeles.

“This is a great thing for San Pedro,” said local resident Mel Bobich.

The city Parks and Recreation Commission first promised to erect the facility 25 years ago but only when “funds became available,” Bobich said.

During the ensuing years of tight budgets, that promise became more of a wish until the money finally materialized through the efforts of City Councilman Rudy Svorinich Jr. and the community’s resident-run Recreation Task Force.

THU, OCT 26, 2023

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COMMUNITY VOICES



Mel Bobich.

The Marathon Man

It's time to name the Mel Bobich Gymnasium.

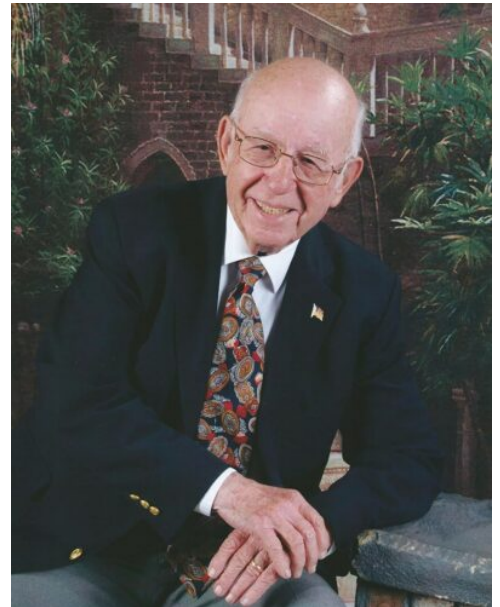
Mike Lansing—August 31, 2023

Over the course of a lifetime, we all have encountered those rare individuals who have committed themselves over years and decades to improve the lives of others without attempting to secure any financial or any other personal gain or attention.

For me, the “Marathon Man” was one of those special few, and I was most fortunate to see him in action up close and personal over so many years before he passed away not so long ago. His name — Mel Bobich.

While I knew Mel previously, I truly got to know him when the two of us — along with Joe Marino, Dave Legacki, Alice Sandoval, and Ray Vaudo — banded together in 1987 to establish a volunteer nonprofit called the San Pedro Youth Coalition. We had all been active in local youth athletics and were tired of battling the lack of youth athletic facilities in our San Pedro community. Over the years, the Youth Coalition engaged in additional youth-related efforts. It became an advocacy group and sponsor for many other youth needs and opportunities besides sports, including starting our monthly youth advocacy newsletter called *Youth Times*. We also sponsored free daily tutoring at the San Pedro Library and other free annual youth events open to all young people, including a track meet, an annual talent show at San Pedro High School, poetry and short story contests at the library, and the popular “Future Leaders of San Pedro” recognition dinner. All these efforts and events were great, but the issue that initially brought us together and continued to be our priority was finding additional youth recreational facilities in our community so children could play, compete, and grow without baseball and soccer teams having to battle over practice space. (At one point, the lack of space was so great that when I had baseball practices at Peck Park, I would often give batting helmets to the soccer team attempting to practice right next to us — true story.)

While I was the impatient and too-often-confrontational advocate as the initial president of the coalition and writer/editor of the *Youth Times*, Mel was my advisor and often took me to task over articles I would write and public positions and statements I would make. He constantly advised and sometimes lectured me on the value of patience, consistent advocacy, and less confrontational statements as the components needed to accomplish our larger goals of securing much-needed athletic and recreational facilities in our community. He had played the long game previously and successfully even before the Youth Coalition was established as the lead and sometimes sole force in getting the City of Los Angeles to build the gymnasium at then Friendship Park (now Bogdanovich). So, while I was the president, Mel was our indisputable leader on any of our efforts to secure additional facilities for our kids, as he had already successfully battled the city bureaucracy to get that now-Bogdanovich gymnasium publicly funded and built.



Mel Bobich.

Downtown San Pedro's
Cabaret Theatre



Grand Annex

TICKETS ►

Getting a gym built at Peck Park became our coalition's most important effort over the decades, and of course, Mel was our leader and key strategist. Eventually, we would get the extremely large and essential Field of Dreams established for youth soccer. We also secured open space on 22nd Street, where the oil tanks used to be, and we were major advocates for Eastview Little League to be established on Knoll Hill. But Peck Park in the 1990s had no gym and was the largest youth recreational program in our city. Getting that funded and established was a major coup, and Mel Bobich is the one person who made it happen. He coordinated between City Councilman Rudy Svorinich and the Recreation & Parks Department to ensure the gym was funded and built, leading dozens of strategy meetings and city discussions with many individuals and departments over many years. Mel would not be deterred nor give up when confronted with numerous bureaucratic roadblocks over so many years — and the Peck Park gym was finally established.

I gave Mel the title "The Marathon Man" when I spoke at his rosary a few years ago. I explained to the audience what I knew to be obvious — that Mel taught us all that strategic planning and perseverance, no matter how long it took, was why he was so successful as an advocate and why the Peck Park gymnasium (and several other facilities) was finally established. He truly deserves to have the gym he built renamed the Mel Bobich Gymnasium.

If you agree, please contact Councilman Tim McOsker's office, as they are looking for additional advocates for this renaming.

The Marathon Man was my friend and mentor, but more importantly, he was a lifetime friend of our community and especially our youth and truly deserves this public recognition. Mel was the epitome of patience and determination, but three-plus decades after he waged a gentleman's war on the bureaucracy is long enough — even for the Marathon Man. [spt](#)

🔍 Search by Name

Mel Bobich

1927 - 2018



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570 W 5th St.

San Pedro, California

MEL BOBICH OBITUARY

Mel (Milenko) Bobich

Mel (Milenko) Bobich completed his 91-year contribution to this world on June 5, 2018, surrounded by family. He was well-known as a San Pedro community leader, as well as a beloved husband, father, grandfather, friend, and mentor. Born March 15, 1927, Mel was the youngest of five children of Tom and Evanica Bobich. He attended 15th Street School, Dana Junior High School, and San Pedro High School. Upon graduating in 1945, Mel was drafted during World War II and served in the Army Air Corps. After his discharge as a Staff Sergeant, he attended UCLA and became a lifelong Bruin fan, eventually teaching his grandkids at a very young age the UCLA eight-clap cheer. He graduated and joined Santa Fe Railway, where he would work for 37 years in various management roles until his retirement in 1987. In 1958, Mel took "the best advice I've ever received" and married his neighbor, Katie Reskusich. The couple spent five years in Topeka and Chicago due to career moves with the railroad before they returned to San Pedro for good. They were blessed with seven children, who arrived in an alternating boy/girl pattern that Mel enjoyed highlighting. Mel was a knowledgeable sports fan and, despite attending few professional games, enjoyed the distinction of personally witnessing two Major League Baseball perfect games. He considered one of his lifelong thrills to be attending Don Larsen's perfect game in the 1956 World Series and he later was in the stands for Sandy Koufax's perfect game in 1965. As his children engaged in sports, especially baseball, he became a dedicated coach and league organizer, though he rarely chose to coach his own children to avoid playing favorites. His coaching mantra became a life lesson for all who knew him: "Participate. Learn something. Have fun." As he saw the sports facilities of his youth disappear as San Pedro grew, Mel became an active advocate for sports facilities and opportunities for youth and had a tremendous impact on generations of San Pedro youth. He was instrumental in the building of gymnasiums at Bogdanovich Park, Peck Park, and San Pedro High School and also facilitated the development of the Field of Dreams, Pirate Stadium, and various other recreation sites. Mel was also a co-founder of the San Pedro Youth Coalition, serving in the group's leadership for over 25 years until retiring a few years ago. He helped chair the organization's Future Leaders of San Pedro recognition program. Mel was known as a gentle man with high ideals, unmatched integrity, a quick wit, and a deep love of San Pedro. In 1988, he served on the San Pedro Centennial Committee and also led the effort to recognize the

Top 100 Athletes of San Pedro. He was also active in numerous roles in Mary Star of the Sea parish, where he and Katie were married and where all seven of his children attended 12 years of Catholic school. He was a leader of the Holy Names Society, was a legendary bingo caller when the parish initiated that fundraising effort and helped secure a new high school campus site. Mel Bobich is survived by his wife of 60 years, Katie, his sister Ruby Pecarich, children Tom (Kitte) Bobich, Anne Bobich Asher, John (Anne) Bobich, Mary (Mike) McLachlan, Jim (Diane) Bobich, Chrissy Bobich Paley, Robert (Jeana) Bobich, 18 grandchildren: Michael (Molly), Ellen (Sean), Laura, Aaron, Rachel, Ryan, AJ, Kayla, Bryan, Mark, Sarah, Adam, Matthew, Luke, Alyssa, Brenna, Cameron, and Ella; and many nieces, nephews, and cousins. Rosary and visitation will be at 7 p.m. Thursday at McNerney's Mortuary, 570 W. Fifth St., San Pedro. A funeral Mass will be celebrated at 10 a.m. Friday at Mary Star of the Sea Catholic Church, 870 W. Eighth St., San Pedro followed by interment at Green Hills Memorial Park. In lieu of flowers, please consider donations to the San Pedro Youth Coalition Mel Bobich Memorial Scholarship Fund or The Mary Star of the Sea High School building fund. Please sign the guestbook at mcnerneymortuary.com.

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FOR MEL BOBICH**

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Please accept my late condolences. Mr. Bobich was a kind man who epitomized the best of San Pedro. I was lucky enough to see him and Mrs Bobich during a fundraising walk a while back, and his determination and sense of humor was inspiring. God Bless you Mr. Bobich.

sam mircovich

June 19, 2018

To all the family Mel was an Iconic man who's quiet and passionate love for San Pedro and its young athletes will never be forgotten .The Good Lord needed him now. Sorry I was unable to attend his services. His legacy the ball fields will serve the youth for many generations . May your pain and hurt be short for he was such an awesome man.

Vito Gioiello

June 17, 2018

Dear Katie,

We just learned the sad news about Mel's passing.

Our most heartfelt condolences go out to you, your children and grandchildren.

Mel was one of a kind and will remain in our hearts forever and the hearts of many. May his memories sustain and comfort you at this difficult time. All of you are in our thoughts and prayersMay he Rest In Peace!

Love,

Cousin Zemira, Bob & Family - Croatia

As you remember your love one, may your treasured memories continue to bring you peace, comfort, and strength to endure.

June 14, 2018

Mel, will always be remembered as a good father to their children. Specially when I ask him Advice he had a good sence of humor. He reminds me of my father. It was blessing to be included as part of the Bobich Family .

Evelyn Fajardo

June 14, 2018

Dear Family, our hearts are saddened by the passing of Barba Mel, he was loved by all. His legacy lives on through his beloved children and grandchildren. We will always keep him in our hearts. May he Rest In Peace. Bobby and Phyllis

June 13, 2018

Dear John & Annie Bobich,

Our deepest sympathy on the passing of your Dad!May God give you strength at this difficult time and help you cherish your family memories!

Love, Dennis, Michelle, & Jacob Graff

Michelle Graff

June 13, 2018

I met Mel many years ago, when I received the privilege to serve on the committee to organize the retirement party for Coach John Santschi. What a fantastic, fun and memorable time it was, among this wonderful group of people from another generation; the Domancich brothers, Joe Marino, Barabara Trani, Fred Ihde, Bob Keith, Elvy Jerkovich, and of course, Mel Bobich. And then, me. What an honor to be considered important among these special friends! Mel, in particular, stood out to me, with his gentle demeanor and sense of humor, and in the years that followed, it was always a joy to run into him

from time to time. I always admired him for his enthusiasm and support at the community meetings for San Pedro redevelopment, and only wish that this could have occurred in his lifetime. I am so saddened by this news, but know that he is in terrific company with some of our old friends from one of the best experiences of my life. Love to Katie, and sincere condolences to your family.

Shari Tipich

June 13, 2018

My condolences are with the Girolama family. Please accept my heartfelt sympathies. John
6:40

Candace

June 13, 2018

my sincere condolences to Katie to her seven children and grandchildren for the passing of my dear friend Mel. He left a legacy of humanitarian works in our community that he will be forever remembered by all of us MAY HE REST IN PEACE , I had the honor to work with Mel and others on the San Pedro Area Reuse Committee to obtain from HUD the property for our new Mary Star of the Sea High School, his obituary column is so very short of what he really did for San Pedro all his life. REQUIEM SCAT IN PACEM .

Tony De Girolamo

June 12, 2018

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City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks
Naming Policy, Procedures and Guidelines for
Parks and Recreational Facilities

The mission of the Department of Recreation and Parks (“RAP”) is to enrich the lives of the residents of Los Angeles by providing safe, welcoming parks and recreational facilities and affordable, diverse recreation and human services activities for people of all ages to play, learn, contemplate, build community and be good stewards of our environment.

One of RAP’s objectives under the Mission is to enhance and expand recreational programs, services, and significant financial support and contributions through public and private collaborations.

Policy:

RAP recognizes that parks and recreational facilities are an essential and integral part of the communities they serve, and that the names of parks and recreational facilities, and park amenities within them, play a significant role in fostering identities in the surrounding communities. This Naming Policy (“Policy”) establishes the criteria and requirements, and sets forth the guidelines and procedures, for the naming and renaming (collectively, “Naming”) of parks, recreational facilities, landmarks and any other assets determined appropriate by RAP (collectively referred to herein as “Park Assets”), which are owned, managed or controlled by RAP.

Pursuant to this Policy, the initial name of a new park or recreational facility, which may be temporary for purposes of administration and accounting, shall be administratively assigned by RAP staff in the traditional manner utilized prior to the establishment of this Policy, based on geographic features such as street and community names or prominent features. In addition, the Naming of existing Park Assets, pursuant to a RAP recommendation relevant to a Naming proposal received from a private or public entity, shall be subject to the approval of the Board of Recreation and Park Commissioners (“Board”), as described herein. In accordance with this Policy and pursuant to RAP recommendations, the Board shall consider the following two types of Naming proposals. The first type encompasses situations in which RAP receives or is offered a donation, gift, sponsorship, and/or other contribution from an outside entity that presents a decisive benefit and shows a direct connection to a Park Asset and serves the interests of the City and its residents. This type of Naming proposal would require a Naming Agreement to summarize the terms and conditions necessary to effectuate the financial or other benefits connected to the Naming proposal with a term (time period) recommended by the GM and approved by the Board, depending on the scope or nature of the agreement, and value, visibility, and lifespan of the donation, gift, sponsorship and or other contribution. The second type comprises Naming proposals to use a major historic event and/or unique significance of a specific place or person, as the basis for the proposed Name; again with the requirement that there be compelling and impressive substantiation demonstrating how the interests of City and its residents were served or impacted. The key in both types of Naming proposals is the importance of demonstrating direct connections to the Park Asset and clear community benefits as a foundation for considering any Naming proposal.

For purposes of this Policy, and with the exception of the temporary Naming of new Park Assets, the authority to approve the Naming of existing Park Assets shall be solely with the Board. Any exceptions to this Policy shall be subject to the prior approval of the Board.

Criteria and Guidelines for Evaluating Park Asset Naming Proposals:

For purposes of this Policy, the following shall be considered when evaluating the appropriateness, feasibility, and implementation of Naming proposals:

- The Naming of parks after individuals shall be limited to those who are deceased and have made exceptional contributions to the park or community within which the park is located.
- Parks shall only be named after living persons under circumstances requiring such naming as a condition precedent of a grant deed or covenant.
- The Naming of a park after a major historic event must be based on a direct connection between the park and such event.
- The Naming engenders a positive public image which does not unduly commercialize the park or recreational facility.
- The proposed name for the park or recreational facility, and/or contributor, must be compatible with the Mission of RAP.
- Park Assets that are held by RAP through a lease or use agreement may be considered for Naming under this Policy, subject to any requirements or restrictions contained in such document.
- RAP reserves the right to limit the duration of time a Name will be in place and/or in effect.
- No specialized signage or advertisement containing a commercial message to purchase a good or service shall be authorized for use on park property.
- All forms of signage placed on or within a Park Asset shall meet RAP's graphic and sign standards.
- There shall be no religious symbols included on Naming signage.
- Park Assets not under the operation of RAP (shared or exclusive), although under the ownership or jurisdiction of RAP, shall not be subject to this Policy; such as for example, the Los Angeles Zoo in Griffith Park.
- Parks should not be subdivided for purposes of Naming, unless there are readily-identifiable physical divisions in the park (major roads, waterways, hillsides, etc.) which facilitate or warrant a subdivision; or there exist other compelling reasons for having more than one name connected to a park. This should not prevent independently Naming a recreational facility or amenity located within a park, as long as the selected name will not cause confusion for park patrons.
- RAP shall seek to inform the public with regard to the Naming of a park in their community.
- Any exception to the above shall be subject to the Naming criteria contained herein, and the Board's prior approval.

Procedures:

The Board retains the authority to name or rename Park Assets situated on park property. The following shall be the protocol for evaluating, considering and denying or approving Naming proposals:

1. A written proposal for the Naming of a Park Asset must be initially submitted to the RAP Board Office, to the attention of the Board Secretary. In accordance with this Policy, the Board Office shall forward the proposal to the RAP General Manager (“GM”) for consideration.
2. Prior to any form of Naming Policy being implemented, sponsorship proposals shall be evaluated by RAP staff, with recommendations to the GM for possible consideration.