

**MOORPARK CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA REPORT**

TO: Honorable City Council

FROM: Hugh R. Riley, Assistant City Manager 
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DATE: July 21, 2006 (CC Meeting of August 2, 2006)

SUBJECT: Consider Designation of a Site for a New Veterans Memorial for Moorpark

SUMMARY

There are currently two recognized sites in the City of Moorpark to honor Moorpark Veterans who have made the ultimate sacrifice to protect the freedoms of Americans. A Veterans Memorial Advisory Group has developed recommendations for three potential sites for a Moorpark Veterans Memorial.

BACKGROUND

It has always been the interest of Moorpark Veterans and Veterans Groups, within the City of Moorpark, to have a single site to honor Moorpark Veterans. The site should ideally allow for a relatively quiet, solemn, and dignified atmosphere to honor fallen veterans.

Representatives of Moorpark's American Legion Post 502 and Veterans of Foreign Wars have expressed an interest in developing a respectable, visible, and safe location for a City of Moorpark Veterans Memorial. Currently there are two locations within the City of Moorpark that are used by veterans as memorials to fallen Moorpark veterans:

1. Moorpark Avenue at Los Angeles Avenue at the NW corner near the Grinder Restaurant on Cal Trans property, and
2. Poindexter Park located at 500 Poindexter Avenue at the S/E corner of Poindexter Avenue and Gisler Road on City property.

Moorpark Avenue/Los Angeles Avenue - This location is the primary location of the American Legion's Veterans Memorial. The Memorial was dedicated in 1986 and consists of three large stone slabs (approximately 3' X 6') donated by the Janss Corporation, a single flagpole and three stands for candles, or a lighted flame. There is a walkway leading from the public side walk for pedestrians to walk into the Memorial. The Memorial is on a raised grass mound and encircled with a rope barrier separating the Memorial from the remainder of the landscaping.

The intersection is heavily traveled by commercial truck traffic, commuters and local residents. The Memorial is either not seen, or can be a distraction to passing motorists attempting to see what is going on at the location. Additionally, it is noisy when ceremonies are occurring there (speakers cannot be heard over the traffic noise) and dangerous to those attending any event due to the lack of a safe viewing area and the heavy volume of vehicles and commercial trucks either passing or stopping at the signalized intersection. There is also a strong presence of vehicle emission fumes in the air.

This location does not offer a quiet, solemn, or dignified atmosphere to honor the fallen local veterans listed on the stone monuments.

Poindexter Park - The "Veteran's Memorial Grove," dedicated in 1996, is located at Poindexter Park and consists of a single raised monument with a brass face. It is placed in a location of the park that is not easily visible to the public unless they are pedestrians in the park, or using the gazebo located just a few feet away from the monument. The location, however, does offer a safe and quiet location for ceremonies. One drawback to this location is that it is vulnerable to vandalism, as is the rest of the park.

Efforts by the City of Moorpark

City Staff initiated a Veterans Memorial Advisory Group. The Group consists of Moorpark Veterans; Pete Duncan, Jim Carpenter, John Wozniak and Doug Bryant, representing the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars and City staff. A number of meetings have been held and various topics have been discussed as well as visits to other memorials sites. The Group discussed the level of interest in creating a new memorial and possible sites and designs for a project. It was determined there was interest by both the veterans and City of Moorpark to build a new primary Veterans Memorial. Five local Memorials were visited by members of the Group to stimulate ideas for a design for Moorpark's Veterans Memorial:

1. The Santa Barbara County Veterans Memorial Walk and Terrace of Remembrance located in Elings Park, 298 Las Positas Road, Santa Barbara.
2. City of Simi Valley, Rancho Tapo Community Park Veterans Plaza.
3. Ventura County Government Center Veterans Memorial.
4. City of Camarillo, Constitution Park Veterans Memorial.
5. City of Thousand Oaks, Conejo Creek North Park.

Common/Desired Features

The Group generally agreed on the following desired design features for the memorial site:

1. Some recognition of five service branches; flags, or emblems (*Camarillo, Government Center, Thousand Oaks and Simi Valley*).
2. Recognition/acknowledgement of specific named service members killed in service to our country (*Simi Valley and Santa Barbara*).
3. General recognition/acknowledgement of all service members killed in the line of duty (*Camarillo, Thousand Oaks and Government Center*).
4. General recognition of all wars fought by Americans (*Santa Barbara, Government Center, Camarillo, Simi Valley*).
5. Prominent display of the American Flag near the Memorial (*Camarillo, Simi Valley, Thousand Oaks and Government Center*).
6. Prominent display of POW Flag (*Government Center, Thousand Oaks, Simi Valley and Camarillo*).
7. A "ceremonial circle" around the monument (*four of the five Memorials*).
8. An assembly area (*Simi Valley, Government Center, Camarillo and Santa Barbara*).
9. An area for seating (*Camarillo, Government Center, Thousand Oaks and Santa Barbara*).
10. Ample parking (*Simi Valley, Camarillo, Thousand Oaks and Santa Barbara*).
11. Restroom facilities (*Simi Valley, Camarillo, Thousand Oaks and Santa Barbara*).
12. Water feature (*Simi Valley*).
13. Quiet location for reflection (*Santa Barbara, Thousand Oaks and Simi Valley*)

Project Sites

The most readily available property for the construction of a Memorial is property owned by the City of Moorpark. The City-owned sites that could best provide for the desired atmosphere and design features are:

1. Remnant parcel Spring Road/Flinn Avenue across from the Moorpark Police Services Center. There is no appropriation at this time for improvements (approx. ¾ acre).

NOTE: The City Council previously approved \$60,000 for the public art at this site. There has been no expenditure to date. In June 2005 staff retained a landscape architect to design a conceptual landscape plan for the site. The contract amount was not-to-exceed \$9,700. To date, \$2,700 has been paid to the architect. There was no funding in the FY 2005/06 budget for the architect services and it was necessary to amend the FY 2005/06 budget to allocate \$7,000 for the remaining architectural services.

2. S/W corner of Spring Road and Charles Street to be dedicated to the City by Pardee Homes as part of the intersection improvements (approx. ½ acre).
3. S/E corners of Moorpark Avenue /High Street the former location of the City's Building and Safety offices.
4. New City Hall/Civic Center complex to be built in the near future.
5. Expanded site within Poindexter Park.

Project Financing

The Group determined early on that the various veterans' organizations did not have the means to fund a new location, or the memorial and assistance would be needed.

1. Grants are not available for this type of a project.
2. Donations are one of the primary sources of funding.
3. Corporate sponsors are another source of funding.
4. Joint City/Veteran's Organization funding.
5. City/Agency funding is a possibility including the use of art in public places funds

Maintenance of Site

In all of the five sites reviewed, the City of Moorpark has existing or proposed improvements at those locations and maintenance of the Memorial Site would be done by the City. The veterans groups would maintain their traditional role of supporting and funding replacement of the flags twice a year. However, the veteran's groups asked that the City of Moorpark agree to continue replacing the flags in the event the veterans groups were unable to continue their traditional role.

DISCUSSION

After review of the five mentioned City-owned sites, the Group agreed that three of the sites would best accommodate the desired features of a new Veterans Memorial within the City of Moorpark. The three sites are: (1) the Remnant Parcel at Flinn Avenue and Spring Road; (2) the parcel at the southwest corner of Charles Street and Spring Road, and (3) a site to be identified within the expansion of Poindexter Park.

1. Flinn Avenue at Spring Road (approximately ½ acre) - This site has the following advantages and disadvantages:
 - a. It is across from the Police Services Center, has sufficient parking, access to restrooms, size of the parcel offers flexibility in design. This location also

supports enhancement of the downtown area and would be a destination point for visitors.

b. Funding is available for landscaping and maintenance through an existing project funded by the City. Additionally, staff believes Pardee Homes would extend the same offer, as they did with intersection improvement parcel at Spring Road and Charles Street, to any of the potential sites.

c. A disadvantage is the site could potentially be hampered by noise from passing vehicle traffic on Spring Road, or entering or leaving the Moorpark Police Services Center and the adjacent business park.

d. The public safety theme public art planned for this location could be placed on the patio of the Police Services Center, or changed to a Veterans theme.

2. SW corner of Spring Road and Charles Street (approximately ½ acre):

a. Advantages are that this is an existing project required to be improved and funded by Pardee Homes. Additionally, staff recognized there was an opportunity at this location and Pardee Homes came forward to fund the purchase of three flagpoles and some form of a memorial.

b. A memorial at this site could include landscaping, three flagpoles and some form of a memorial yet to be designed. This location also lends itself to the development of the downtown area and would be a destination point for visitors.

c. A disadvantage is parking would be limited to residential streets or at the Metrolink lot on High Street. The site could potentially be hampered by noise from passing vehicle traffic entering or leaving the new housing development.

3. Poindexter Park (size to be determined):

a. Advantages are this project is already City funded for landscaping and maintenance and could include three flagpoles and some form of a memorial yet to be designed. There is sufficient parking and restrooms available. The location is currently used for Veteran ceremonies.

b. Disadvantages are that it is located adjacent to Chaparral Middle School and there is a possibility that a skate park may be located here in the future. This location currently experiences a vandalism problem though staff is optimistic that the park expansion project will help to reduce such problems.

The two remaining sites have the following features and were not recommended by the Group:

1. New City Hall/Civic Center Campus (size to be determined)
 - a. The advantage of this site is that the project is three to five years out and would allow time for the development of a Veterans Memorial designed into the master plan of this project. This location also lends itself to the enhancement of the downtown area and would be a destination point for visitors.
 - b. The disadvantage is that the commercial traffic at this location is heavy and will be as disruptive as is the current site at Moorpark Avenue and Los Angeles Avenue.
2. S/E corner of Moorpark Avenue/High Street: (size to be determined)
 - a. The advantage of this site is that the plans for this site will allow time for development of a Veterans Memorial design as a key component of a future project. This location also lends itself to the enhancement of the downtown area and would be a destination point for visitors.
 - b. The disadvantage is the commercial traffic at this location is heavy and will be as disruptive as the current site at Moorpark Avenue and Los Angeles Avenue. There is also no time line for any development of this site and would only prolong the placing of a Veterans Memorial there.

The consensus of the Group was that the parcel at Flinn Avenue and Spring Road across from the Moorpark Police Services Center is recommended. Regardless of which site is selected, staff will need to return with a conceptual design and request for funding.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Approve recommendation of the Veterans Memorial Advisory Group for the development of a new Moorpark Veterans Memorial at the Remnant Parcel across from the Moorpark Police Services Center at the southeast corner of Flinn Avenue and Spring Road.