



BOARD RECOMMENDATION

PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD

Recommendation Number: (20190625-07): Renaming Indiangrass Wildlife Sanctuary to the Louis René Barrera Indiangrass Wildlife Sanctuary

WHEREAS, on April 15, 2019, the Austin environmental and parks community lost an important catalyst and steward of the Austin Nature Preserve System in the passing of Louis René Barrera, an Austin resident and longtime member of the Austin Parks and Recreation Department; and

WHEREAS, Louis René Barrera started his career with the Austin Parks and Recreation Department in January 1996 as a temporary employee and began managing the Austin Nature Preserve System as a fulltime permanent employee in August of 1998; and

WHEREAS, the Austin nature preserves are sanctuaries for native plants, animals and their habitats and for unique natural features. Nature preserves are managed primarily for the protection of these species and features. They also provide educational, scientific, and aesthetic benefits for the people of Austin; and

WHEREAS, René worked for more than twenty years working on and caring for the 2,200-acre 15 parcel Austin Nature Preserve System; and

WHEREAS, his work on the Austin Nature Preserve System earned the Keep America Beautiful Award and the Keep Austin Beautiful Award; and

WHEREAS, René was a Five Who Care Community Service Award finalist by KVUE and AMD in 2000; and

WHEREAS, he was recognized for his work on the Blunn Creek Nature Preserve by the Student Service Council of St. Edward's University for his lasting contribution to the attainment of social justice for all in April 2008; and

WHEREAS, he was received the Austin Land Steward award by Save Barton Creek Association Awards in November 2017; and

WHEREAS, René was recognized in by Mayor Adler for his trailblazing work managing the Austin Nature Preserve System in March 2019; and

WHEREAS, he gave his career to Austin's nature preserves while also volunteering as a preserve guardian, monitoring Blunn Creek Nature Preserve for many years; and

WHEREAS, René's work also included the eradication of millions in invasive species over his 20 plus years serving the nature preserves as noted in a December 2005 Austin Chronicle article stating, "[t]he city of Austin is home to roughly 1 gazillion waxleaf ligustrum plants, and only one René Barrera."; and

WHEREAS, René helped to protect and restore native habitat while educating many of his fellow citizens about their community and the natural world; and

WHEREAS, Rene's passing the City of Austin has lost a steward, educator, and mentor who was quick to explain the importance of protecting the natural world in an ever-changing urban environment.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Austin Parks and Recreation Board recommends to the Austin City Council to direct the City Manager to initiate proceedings under City Code Section 14-1-39 for the renaming of the Indiangrass Wildlife Sanctuary to the Louis René Barrera Indiangrass Wildlife Sanctuary.

Date of Approval: _____

Record of the vote:

Attest: _____

(Staff or board member can sign)