

December 21, 2011

To: Councilman Jose Huizar, District 14, City of Los Angeles
cc: LA-32 NC Members

From: Pedro Cazuela

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that as a stakeholder and constituent of El Sereno's community, I am opposed to motion (11-2057) you presented on December 9, 2011 to the Arts, Parks, and Neighborhoods Committee <http://cityclerk.lacity.org/lacityclerkconnect/index.cfm?fa=ccfi.viewrecord&cfnumber=11-2057>. Essentially, what motion 11-2057 states is that due to some vague historical evidence, a piece of El Sereno's community will be sliced off and renamed "Rose Hills". The motion claims that the proposed boundaries for "Rose Hills" be officially recognized due to historical evidence proving the existence of a "community" within those proposed boundaries since Spanish colonial times. This claim is not factually correct. There exist historical data which can refute the claims presented in the motion. There is no historical precedence proving that the specific area outlined in the motion was the original site from which the name Rancho Rosa de Castilla is derived. Nor is there any historical precedence which proves that the area proposed to be renamed "Rose Hills" has been in existence for hundreds of years, as current LA-32 president and "Rose Hills" advocate Mr. A. Manzano claims <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/nelalist/message/33157>.

In order to clear up any misinformation, allow me share with you some brief and recorded historical facts concerning the history of Rancho Rosa de Castilla.

Prior to the arrival of the Spanish missionaries, the area around Rosemead was populated by Native Americans of the Tongva Nation. The Spanish renamed them the Gabrielinos. The founding of the San Gabriel Mission by Spanish Franciscans took place in 1771, in the area that is now known as Whittier Narrows on the border between Montebello and Rosemead. The small river flowing nearby was dubbed El Rio Rosa de Castillo. In 1775, the mission was moved to avoid the spring floods that ruined the first crops, to its present location in San Gabriel. Historically, the name is **first** used in 1771 in what is now Whittier Narrows, between Rosemead and Montebello.

In 1831, land was granted to the prominent Californio Juan Ballestros by Governor Manuel Victoria. The 3,283-acre (13.29 square km) land grant owned by Juan Ballestros was christened Rancho Rosa de Castilla in 1831. Rancho Rosa de Castilla included what is today's Lincoln Heights, City Terrace and parts of South Pasadena, Alhambra, and Monterey Park. Thus, it becomes the **second** time the name Rancho Rosa de Castilla is used.

Following the Mexican-American War, California became part of the United States. A land claim for Rancho Rosa de Castilla was filed with the Public Land Commission in 1852, but was rejected by the Board

of Land Commissioners. Since Rancho Rosa de Castilla had failed to receive confirmation, parts of it were sold off, creating a few smaller historical Ranchos.

In 1852, Basque émigré Jean-Baptiste Batz bought a quarter of a section of land of what was once Rancho Rosa de Castilla. The Batz's family settled in an adobe home in what is now a parking lot on the Cal State L.A. campus. Mr. Batz renamed the land Rancho Rosa Castilla, for the wild roses that grew in the area. A creek that once flowed south across the middle of the Rancho area, and never named, is today enclosed in a flood control channel that parallels the eastern boundary of the campus, alongside the 710 freeway. In 1882, after both Jean-Baptiste and wife Catalina had died, the Rancho was sub-divided among 6 of their children. This concludes the **third** and final time that the name Rancho Rosa de Castilla/Rosa Castilla is used, as is recorded in the annals of California's history.

As historical documents can prove, the name and use of Rancho Rosa de Castilla began **far** from what is presently proposed as the "historic community of Rose Hills". The name was originally derived and used to describe a river that flowed nearby the initial settlement of the San Gabriel Mission, within the present day borders of Rosemead and Montebello. The name Rosa De Castilla then continues to be used to describe a huge land grant given to a Californio in 1831. When it is again used in 1852, the name Rancho Rosa Castilla was derived from the geographical characteristics of an area in what is now Cal State L.A., **not** from the area proposed in motion 11-2057. If any part of El Sereno is warranted to be renamed after Rancho Rosa Castilla, "Rose Hills", it would best be suited for the area currently labeled "University Hills", which lies adjacent to Cal State L.A.'s campus.

Furthermore, the area in question, under motion 11-2057, is within the boundaries of the Historical Community of El Sereno.

I am also opposed to motion 11-2057 based on the fact that under the grandfather rule, the City of Los Angeles's Policy for Naming/Renaming a Community will be circumvented (<http://cityclerk.lacity.org/>). This would mean that the majority of El Sereno's community stakeholders (40,000+) will be denied their right to have access to and review any and all information pertaining to this motion. It also means that as stakeholders their opinions on the matter will never be heard, essentially marginalizing their voice on this community issue.

I urge you Councilman J. Huizar, as the community representative for El Sereno, to reconsider the historical facts presented to you and withdraw motion 11-2057. The stakeholders of El Sereno's community deserve to have access to and review all the information pertaining to the community. The need for government transparency, as well as fair and equal access to important information needs to be upheld. The fact that neither District's 14 nor LA-32 NC's official websites provide any information, access, or news concerning motion 11-2057 is disturbing(<http://cd14.lacity.org/index.htm>), (<http://la32nc.org/news.html>).