



## **PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD RECOMMENDATION 20240226-5**

Date: February 26, 2024

Subject: Renaming the Barton Springs Bathhouse to the “Joan Means Khabele Bathhouse at Barton Springs Pool”

Motioned By: Pedro Villalobos

Seconded By: Holly Reed

### **Recommendation**

The Parks and Recreation Board Recommends that the Austin City Council rename the Barton Springs Bathhouse to the “Joan Means Khabele Bathhouse at Barton Springs Pool”

### **Rationale:**

Whereas Joan Means Khabele was born in Austin, Texas, during a time when the City of Austin segregated the city’s neighborhoods and public amenities through the systematic enactment of racist policies;

Whereas Parks were segregated by race during this era, and Black Austinites were not permitted to swim at Barton Springs;

Whereas in 1956, Ms. Khabele was one of the first Black students to enroll at all-white Austin High School and when Ms. Khabele and other Black students were denied the opportunity to swim at Barton Springs during the Austin High School annual senior picnic, she protested by jumping in the pool despite policies forbidding Black people to swim in a pool designated for only white people;

Whereas Ms. Khabele, along with other activists, bravely defied the segregationist policies of the time during these “swim ins,” which eventually led to the integration of Barton Springs pool and other recreational facilities in the city;

Whereas community survey results show significant support for renaming the facility the “Joan Means Khabele Bathhouse” with 86% of respondents endorsing the renaming;

Whereas a review of the 204 comments on the survey indicates overwhelming support of the proposal to rename the bathhouse after Joan Means Khabele. Comments primarily touch on the positive qualities of Ms. Khabele and the ways she influenced people’s lives;

Whereas the Bathhouse Working Group of the Parks and Recreation Board suggested “Joan Means Khabele Bathhouse” as one of the options for the bathhouse;

Whereas the American Historical Association states, “History comprises both facts and interpretations of those facts...to change the name of a school or street, is not to erase history, but rather to alter or call attention to a previous interpretation of history. A monument is not history itself; a monument

commemorates an aspect of history, representing a moment in the past when a public or private decision defined who would be honored in a community's public spaces."

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Austin Parks and Recreation Board:

1. Recommends that the Austin City Council rename the Barton Springs Bathhouse to the "Joan Means Khabele Bathhouse at Barton Springs Pool".

**Vote**        **The motion to recommend that the Austin City Council rename the Barton Springs Bathhouse to the "Joan Means Khabele Bathhouse at Barton Springs Pool" was approved on Chair Villalobos' motion, Board Member Reed's second on a 9-0 vote. Board Members Hayes and Orme absent.**

For:        Pedro Villalobos, Kathryn Flowers, Stephanie Bazan, Lane Becker, Jennifer Franklin, Lisa Hugman, Nicole Merritt, Holly Reed and Kim Taylor.

Against:    None.

Abstain:    None.

Absent:     Julie Jayes and Shelby Orme.

Attest:     Tim Dombeck, Board and Council Liaison, Parks and Recreation Department.

*Tim Dombeck* \_\_\_\_\_