



NEWPORT BEACH

City Council Staff Report

June 9, 2026
Agenda Item No. 16

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

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TITLE: Newport Beach Lecture Hall Naming Rights Agreements

ABSTRACT:

On August 23, 2022, the City Council approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that allows naming rights for donors that contributed towards the construction of the Newport Beach Lecture Hall (Lecture Hall), now known as Witte Hall. Per the MOU, the City of Newport Beach (City) and the Newport Beach Public Library Foundation (NBPLF) request approval of two Naming Rights Donation Agreements for both the control room and the green room.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- a) Determine this action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2) and 15060(c)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines because this action will not result in a physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly;
- b) Approve the Newport Beach Lecture Hall Naming Rights Agreement between the City of Newport Beach, Newport Beach Public Library Foundation, and Jill and Larry Tucker for the control room;
- c) Approve the Newport Beach Lecture Hall Naming Rights Agreement between the City of Newport Beach, Newport Beach Public Library Foundation, Stephanie and Kenneth Grody, and Susan and Spencer B. Croul for the green room; and
- d) Waive Council Policy B-9 (Naming of City Parks and Facilities) and B-17 (Parks, Facilities and Recreation Program Donations) for the naming of various components of the Lecture Hall.

DISCUSSION:

At the August 23, 2022, meeting, the City Council approved the Lecture Hall naming rights donation agreement document associated with the Lecture Hall, a state-of-the-art facility to accommodate City and NBPLF, cultural, information, entertainment, civic and community focused events. With this action, the City Council adopted an MOU between the City and the NBPLF related to fundraising for the Lecture Hall project. The NBPLF has been actively fundraising for the project. As a result, the NBPLF recently received three donation commitments in the amount of \$250,000 from Jill and Larry Tucker, Stephanie Jones Grody

and Kenneth Bruce Grody, and Susan and Spencer B. Croul, totaling \$750,000. The Lecture Hall control room will be named the “Jill and Larry Tucker Control Room” and the green room “The Croul and Grody Families Green Room.” The naming rights will be finalized through the Naming Rights Donation Agreements included as Attachments A and B.

Council Policies B-9 (Naming of City Parks and Facilities) and B-17 (Parks, Facilities and Recreation Program Donations) set forth specific criteria for naming of parks and facilities within the City of Newport Beach. However, the Lecture Hall creates a unique opportunity for the City to gain a contemporary facility to be paid for, in part, by private donors. Thus, it is recommended that the City Council waive Council Policies B-9 and B-17 as they apply to the naming rights for the Lecture Hall in recognition of both Jill and Larry Tucker, Stephanie Jones Grody and Kenneth Bruce Grody, and Susan and Spencer B. Croul. Future naming rights agreements for other locations within the Lecture Hall would require a similar action.

FISCAL IMPACT:

On January 9, 2024, the City and Newport Beach Public Library Foundation entered into a revised MOU for funding the Lecture Hall project. This revised MOU raised the City’s funding 50-50 commitment to \$11,743,968. As part of the MOU agreement, approval of the Newport Beach Public Lecture Hall Naming Rights Donation Agreement identifies naming rights contributions for the NBPLF’s funding commitment for the lecture hall project.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

Staff recommends the City Council find this action is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2) (the activity will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment) and 15060(c)(3) (the activity is not a project as defined in Section 15378) of the CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, because it has no potential for resulting in physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly

NOTICING:

The agenda item has been noticed according to the Brown Act (72 hours in advance of the meeting at which the City Council considers the item).

ATTACHMENTS:

- Attachment A - Witte Hall Naming Rights Donation Agreement – Tucker
- Attachment B - Witte Hall Naming Rights Donation Agreement – Croul & Grody