



MEMORANDUM

To: Board of Commissioners
Date: October 17, 2023

From: Monica Foucher
Associate Director of Public
Relations
503.802.8422
Subject: Naming of 3000 SE Powell
Hazel Ying Lee
Resolution 23-10-03

Amanda Saul
Assistant Director of General
Obligation Bond Development
503.802.8552

The Board of Commissioners is requested to adopt a resolution naming the new affordable housing development (located at 3000 SE Powell) “Hazel Ying Lee Apartments”, as recommended by the naming workgroup, consisting of staff, board, and community. When we contacted Ms. Lee’s family, we were met with excitement, honor, and ultimately their approval. Hazel Ying Lee is remembered as an American pilot who flew for the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) during World War II. She is also remembered for her legacy of fighting toward equality and inclusion, for her bravery, and for record of service.

BACKGROUND

The Board of Commissioners adopted a new naming policy in January 2020, that strives to honor the contributions of underrepresented people who have made a significant contribution to our community. The committee followed both the criteria and process for naming which are outlined in the resolution to reach a unanimous decision on the name for this new housing.

OVERVIEW

Home Forward's development of the property at 3000 SE Powell, will provide 206 homes. Rents will be affordable at multiple ranges: 138 homes will be priced at or below 60% AMI (area median income), 68 at or below 30% AMI, 50 of these 30% AMI homes will be supported with Project-based Section 8 rental assistance. Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) services will be available for 30 families who have experienced homelessness where one person has a disabling condition. A full range of resident services and supportive services will be provided by IRCO.

A naming workgroup was formed with an IRCO staff/community member, a Home Forward Board member, and Home Forward staff. In addition, names that were originally provided for another project by a volunteer member of the Oregon Black Pioneers were considered by the workgroup. After several meetings, the workgroup considered a list of 7 potential names and were unanimous on the choice of Hazel Ying Lee, given her connection to the area and her biography. Remaining nominees remain excellent choices for naming/renaming upcoming and existing buildings in Home Forward's portfolio.

Hazel Ying Lee (1912-1944) was born in Portland, Oregon. Her parents were first generation Chinese Americans who immigrated from Taishan, Guangdong. The family owned a Chinese restaurant in Portland's Old Town Chinatown neighborhood. Despite the widespread anti-Chinese bias of her time, Hazel led a full and active life. Following graduation from Commerce High School (Now Cleveland High School) in 1929, she found a job as an elevator operator at Liebes Department Store in downtown Portland. It was one of the few jobs that a Chinese American woman could hold during this time.

In 1932, Hazel became one of the first Chinese American women to earn a pilot's license, demonstrating her ability to compete in a male-dominated field. Before World War II, however, she struggled to be accepted as a pilot and rarely found work in her field. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Women Airforce Service Pilots or "WASP," was created in 1943. Experienced women pilots like Hazel were eager to join the WASP and she was accepted into the 4th class, 43 W 4. She was the first Chinese American woman to fly for the United States military. Upon graduation, she was assigned to the Third Ferrying Group at Romulus, Michigan. Their assignment was critical to the war effort. she quickly emerged as a leader among the WASPs. A fellow pilot summed up Hazel's attitude in her own words: "I'll take and deliver anything." She was described by her fellow pilots as "calm and fearless" and was a favorite with her fellow pilots, known for her sense of humor and for

being mischievous. Hazel was also known as a great cook and used Chinese cuisine to introduce WASP pilots to Chinese culture.

Sadly, on the morning of November 23, 1944, control tower confusion resulted in Hazel's plane colliding with another plane. Two days later, on November 25, 1944, she died of injuries from the crash. She and her family continued to see injustices from her death; even though she flew under military command, the pilots of the WASP were classified as civilians. No military benefits were offered, and when WASP pilots died in the line of duty, no military funerals were allowed. Furthermore, as the family prepared to bury her in a plot they had chosen in a Portland cemetery, the cemetery refused to allow it, citing a policy that did not allow Asians to be buried "in the white section." After a lengthy battle, the Lee family prevailed. Hazel was laid to rest in a non-military funeral at River View Cemetery.

WASP pilots finally received retroactive military status in 1977. In 2004, Hazel Ying Lee was inducted into Oregon's Aviation Hall of Honor. In 2010, all WASP pilots, living and deceased, received a Congressional Gold Medal.

CONCLUSION

Home Forward staff requests that the Board of Commissioners approve the resolution naming the "Hazel Ying Lee Apartments".

The Real Estate and Development (READ) Committee of Home Forward's Board of Commissioners reviewed a draft of this resolution at its October 6, 2023 meeting.



RESOLUTION 23-10-03

RESOLUTION 23-10-03 AUTHORIZES THE NAMING OF THE “HAZEL YING LEE APARTMENTS”, AN AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT, LOCATED AT 3000 SE POWELL

WHEREAS, Home Forward, a housing authority and a public body corporate and politic of the State of Oregon, seeks to encourage the provision of long term housing for persons with low income persons residing in Multnomah county, Oregon; and

WHEREAS, Home Forward is developing new affordable housing located on the Portland block fronting SE Powell Boulevard and SE 30th Avenue; and

WHEREAS, Home Forward will ensure the new 206 apartments meet the needs of those at the income levels and demographics specified; and

WHEREAS, Home Forward’s Naming Policy, adopted by the Board of Commissioners in January 2020, was utilized to arrive at this recommendation; and


WHEREAS, a naming workgroup was convened (comprised of a diverse group of IRCO staff/community member, Home Forward Board member, and Home Forward staff), who reviewed and prioritized the recommended building name to honor Hazel Ying Lee; and

WHEREAS, the family of Hazel Ying Lee supports the workgroup’s recommendation and approves the building name to be the Hazel Ying Lee Apartments;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Commissioners of Home Forward approves the name of the new housing development (formerly referred to as the 3000 SE Powell site) as the Hazel Ying Lee Apartments.

ADOPTED: OCTOBER 17, 2023

Attest:


Ivory N. Mathews, Secretary

Home Forward:


Damien R. Hall, Chair