

**ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT
CITY OF CARMEL-BY-THE-SEA**

TO: Chip Rerig, City Administrator and Maxine Gullo, Assistant City Administrator

FROM: Emily Garay, Administrative Analyst

DATE: September 16, 2022

SUBJECT: Street Addresses in the City of Carmel-by-the-Sea

SUMMARY

In its 106-year history, Carmel-by-the-Sea has not implemented a formal street address system. Tradition and preservation of the City's charm, unique look, and culture have been at the forefront of its governing body and residents' preference in the past to reject implementing a street addressing system have maintained the absence of house street numbers until this day. Based on community feedback and the placement of street addresses on City Council's 2022-2023 priority project list, City staff presents historical context, residents' and Council's approach in consideration of street addresses in the past, and reasons to reconsider the issue out of contemporary necessity. With the presentation of its preliminary research, City staff looks for direction from City Council on how to proceed with the topic of street addresses in Carmel-by-the-Sea.

BRIEF HISTORY TIMELINE

- 1888** Santiago Duckworth begins promoting "Carmel City" as a (Catholic) retreat
- 1892** Santiago Duckworth works with Abbie Jane Hunter to promote Carmel-by-the-Sea
- 1902** Partners J. Franklin Devendorf and Frank Powers form the Carmel Development Company and begin to develop Carmel-by-the-Sea
- 1904** The City gets its first Post Office; L.S. Slevin becomes the first Postmaster of Carmel-by-the-Sea; **A.F. Horn** was the first mail-carrier between Carmel and Monterey
- 1916** City of Carmel-by-the-Sea was incorporated
- 1925** Postmaster asks for houses to be numbered
- 1925** Citizens form resolution against houses being numbered
- 1925** Trustees direct house numbering map to be prepared
- 1926** Trustees pass house numbering ordinance (Ord. 68)
- 1926** Postal inspector rejects idea of home mail delivery in Carmel
- 1940** House number ordinance repealed (by Ord. 228)
- 1953** Council protests potential state bill for house numbers
- 1953** Carmel threatens to secede from the state of California when the state considered insisting on house numbers in every community
- 2000** Council receives staff report and votes to table discussion on street delivery
- 2021** Council and staff discuss the need to start discussion and process related to assigning addresses

BACKGROUND

Carmel's Beginnings

In 1888, Santiago J. Duckworth acquired 324 acres from landowner Honor Escolle with the intention of developing Carmel City into a Catholic summer retreat.¹ Duckworth had the land surveyed by Monterey city engineer, W.C. Little and a map of the City was filed in May of 1888.² Little's map divided 135 blocks into four tracks and Duckworth began advertising lots for sale in July of 1888 for \$20.00 and \$25.00 for corner lots.³ Working with San Francisco businesswoman Abbie Jane Hunter, Duckworth continued advertising the lots for sale and in 1892 Hunter mailed promotional postcards advertising the City as "Carmel-by-the-Sea" for the first time.⁴ By late 1892, Duckworth prioritized his political aspirations and consequently ending his involvement with the promotion and development Carmel-by-the-Sea.

Carmel Development Company

In 1901, "two far-seeing idealistic men", James Franklin Devendorf and Frank Powers arrived in Carmel City and soon purchased Escolle and Duckworth's land holdings in the City.⁵ The pair founded the Carmel Development Company in 1902, with Powers providing financial backing and legal work and Devendorf managing the company and development of the land.⁶ They were "lovers of natural beauty and it meant more to them to get settlers who were interested in its preservation than to seek profitable expansion."⁷ Devendorf and Powers envisioned a unique community next to the Pacific Ocean, "a seaside town on Carmel Beach in the pine forest alongside Carmel Mission."⁸

Devendorf and Powers have long been considered the visionaries that developed the land in Carmel-by-the-Sea and along with it built a unique make up of residents with a penchant for the outdoors and community involvement. They sought to bring in residents "of small means who were interested in the arts", the makeup of the residency was integral to Devendorf's vision, so much so that the company sold lots for "nothing down, pay-when-you-can" to artists and performers wanting to live in Carmel-by-the-Sea.⁹ After a devastating earthquake and fire in San Francisco "left a group of artists, writers, and musicians homeless...many of them decided to settle in Carmel...their coming was set the future for the development of Carmel as a cultural

¹ "Carmel-by-the-Sea Historically Speaking...", *Game & Gossip Magazine*, December 7, 1966, 8-10.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Harold Gilliam, Ann Gilliam, *Creating Carmel: The Enduring Vision*, (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith Books, 1992) 16, 185-186.

⁵ "Unlike Most Subdivisions – Carmel Was Not Started as a Place to Make Money," *Monterey Peninsula Herald*, August 27, 1949.

⁶ Harold Gilliam, Ann Gilliam, *Creating Carmel: The Enduring Vision*, (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith Books, 1992) 16, 185-186.

⁷ "Unlike Most Subdivisions – Carmel was Not started as a Place to Make Money," *Monterey Peninsula Herald*, August 27, 1949.

⁸ James Franklin Devendorf to School Teachers of California and other Brain workers at in-door employment, Carmel-by-the-Sea, May 21, 1903.

⁹ "First Subdivision Map for Carmel Filed in 1902," *Monterey Peninsula Herald*, June 1, 1970.

community inhabited by persons of vision who wished to preserve the natural beauty of their surroundings and the unique charm of a village in a forest above a white sand beach.”¹⁰

City of Carmel-by-the-Sea

The City of Carmel-by-the-Sea was incorporated in 1916, the same year voters chose members of the City’s first governing body.¹¹ That first governing body focused on framing laws to protect the new City of Carmel-by-the-Sea with special attention to the protection of City trees.¹² Political and cultural battles between residents and a growing business presence were common for years, the need to preserve the culture and character of Carmel-by-the-Sea was a driving motivation for residents and elected trustees. In 1929, a zoning law was passed stating that “business development should forever be subordinate to the residential character of the community,” still a concept today guarded deeply by residents and the City’s governing body.¹³ The uniqueness and charm of Carmel has been credited to resident and its governing body for preserving that vision of a town in a pine forest, after incorporation there was the notion that “Carmel belonged to the people...it was theirs to develop as they saw fit” with some wanting to keep Carmel “a simple village with as few earmarks of a city as possible.”¹⁴ The concept of preserving the City’s character, with that 1929 ordinance, can be lauded as the impetus for Carmel keeping residential streets free of sidewalks, street lights, no “high rise buildings to mar the outline of these pines against the sky,” forbidding of neon signs, and no street addresses or mailboxes lining the streets.¹⁵

Street Addresses

Walking down almost any street within the one-square-mile of Carmel-by-the-Sea something becomes obvious, there are no street addresses. There are no numbers on the exterior walls of houses, no displayed numbering system identifying a particular house or building. The absence of street addresses is perhaps more obvious when one attempts to have their GPS route their car to a particular house or building in Carmel-by-the-Sea. Modern GPS systems do not recognize the “descriptive” street addresses that Carmel-by-the-Sea residents use to identify their house; a mobile phone or car’s GPS will not recognize “Monte Verde 3 SE of Ocean”. Even though GPS devices do not recognize the descriptive street addresses residents use, residents and business owners often use signs to make their house or building identifiable by someone on the street. The signs in front of houses with a particular phrase, “name” of the house, or residents’ last names are also something that becomes obvious to anyone walking a residential street in Carmel-by-the-Sea. The topic of the City adopting a formal addressing system has been considered before and met with varying degrees of opinions, such as former mayor and trustee Perry Newberry

¹⁰ Marjory Lloyd, “The History of Carmel,” *The Carmel Pine Cone*, February 3, 1975.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Carol Card, “Memory Lane Through The Years With Ocean Avenue,” *The Carmel Pine Cone*, April 8, 1949.

¹⁵ Marjory Lloyd, “The History of Carmel,” *The Carmel Pine Cone*, February 3, 1975.

("arguably [Carmel's] best known, and certainly most outspoken, citizen") firmly against numbering houses and keeping Carmel-by-the-Sea "different from every other small town."¹⁶¹⁷

Throughout its history in consideration of street addresses Carmel-by-the-Sea residents and its governing body have responded with varied support or opposition to implementing street addresses. In 1926, City trustees passed an ordinance for house numbering of Carmel-by-the-Sea properties.¹⁸¹⁹ The ordinance made it unlawful for the owner of any real property in the City to "maintain any house, building, or structure...without posting securely...visible to passerby...a number plate showing in legible figures the number of said premises."²⁰ The ordinance was passed by a unanimous vote but the City did not implement or enforce the posting of house numbers, in 1940 the house number ordinance was officially repealed.²¹ In 2002, when the issue of mail delivery was at the center of attention, Council Member Barbara Livingston advocated to pass an ordinance to "specifically ban street addresses."²² In its 106 year history, Carmel-by-the-Sea has not assigned or displayed street addresses, it is one of the more unique attributes of the City that has been considered for discussion throughout the years. The issue of street addresses was brought up again in the July 2021 City Council meeting with Council Members stating a "need to start the discussion and process relating to assigning addresses."²³

Carmel-the-Sea has not always been alone in not implementing street addresses after seemingly most of the country adopted a numbering address system. Until the early 2000's, some rural towns in West Virginia remained without street addresses with a house numbering system only instituted in 2001 based in the concept of security and referred to as the "911 addressing system."²⁴ In places like McDowell County, West Virginia, residents picked up their mail at the local post office and had Amazon packages delivered to City Hall or the local bank.²⁵ Unsurprisingly, not everyone wanted a house number assigned to their property, some residents expressed not necessarily wanting to be "found" or that they did not mind their current workarounds in not having a street address as it had become a part of everyday life.²⁶ The need to be findable in emergencies proved a crucial aspect in implementing a house numbering system with accounts of firefighters' "chaotic attempts to locate frantic callers who can't give an address."²⁷

¹⁶ Neal Hotelling, "Perry Newberry's final editorial is unfinished," *The Carmel Pine Cone*, February 14, 2020.

¹⁷ Neal Hotelling, "For a successful, thoroughly modern city, don't vote for Perry," *The Carmel Pine Cone*, February 7, 2020.

¹⁸ Carmel-by-the-Sea, Cal., Ord. 68.

¹⁹ Ordinance 68 stated, "house numbering system for the City of Carmel-by-the-Sea is hereby adopted as and for the house-numbering Map Book of said City."

²⁰ Carmel-by-the-Sea, Cal., Ord. 68 §2.

²¹ Carmel-by-the-Sea, Cal., Ord. 228.

²² Kevin Howe, "Carmel Residents Adapt to Mail Delivery," *The Carmel Pine Cone*, March 29, 2002.

²³ Carmel-by-the-Sea City Council Regular Meeting, July 6, 2021.

²⁴ Anton Tantner, *House Numbers* (London: Reaktion Books, 2005), 28.

²⁵ Deirdre Mask, "Where the Streets Have No Name," *The Atlantic*, January/February 2013.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

Consideration for Street Addresses

As times change, as financial and governmental institutions change their requirements for filing paperwork, as the COVID-19 pandemic spurred a turn to online ordering and delivery of essential necessities, the notion of exploring a street address system has made its way to the City Council's 2022-2023 priority project list. The reasoning behind making this a priority item comes from the changing times and residents expressing difficulties in opening or maintaining financial accounts, securing loans, obtaining a REAL ID Driver's license or passport, activating or changing basic utilities like wireless internet, having packages delivered to the correct house, or being "findable" in an emergency as a matter of public safety. Some Carmel-by-the-Sea residents have expressed frustration with the difficulty in establishing financial accounts or records without a traditional street address to provide to financial institutions who will not accept a PO Box as the address on record. Increased due diligence requirements for United States financial institutions post 9/11 have affected the information financial institutions are required to collect.²⁸ Staying in compliance with federal law requires banks to "collect and verify customer-provided information, such as birth dates, addresses and copies of drivers' licenses or passports."²⁹³⁰ For matters not involving financial records requirements, Carmel-by-the-Sea residents provide new neighbors with workarounds and look out for each other's packages when a new UPS or FedEx driver accidentally delivers a package to the wrong house. The current descriptive address system, the use of unique house "names" on a sign outside of residents' houses, and use of the US Post Office's physical address for vendors that do not ship to PO Boxes can prove to be efficient and straightforward to many Carmel-by-the-Sea residents. The City's proposal of exploring the idea of street addresses for its one square mile is rooted in listening to residents who have exhausted the workarounds and expressed the need to be findable in emergencies, to have an address to which they can reliably receive packages containing medical necessities, and maintain financial affairs in order.

Exploring Street Addresses for Carmel-by-the-Sea, What It Means for the Local Post Office

The City administration recognizes the topics of implementing street addresses and at-home mail delivery as two separate issues with the intention of exclusively exploring consideration of the former. At-home mail delivery for all residents in Carmel-by-the-Sea by the US Postal Service is not an action City staff will advocate for or pursue with the possible implementation of street addresses. The local post office has a long history in Carmel-by-the-Sea as being a local hub to where residents can make a daily visit to check their PO boxes, pick up packages from the friendly faces at the counter who many residents know by name, and catch up with other neighbors making the visit that day. Carmel-by-the-Sea's downtown post office is one of about 4,400 independent post offices in the United States that do not have carrier delivery and not a status the City wants to change.³¹ City staff has established a line of communication with the Carmel Postmaster and plans to continue the discussion and communication of the City's hardline stand

²⁸ Richard Newman, "9/11 and Patriot Act Changed the Way You Bank", APP, September 8, 2016, <https://www.app.com/story/money/business/main-street/2016/09/08/911-patriot-act-banks/90003828/>.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Section 312 and Section 326 of the USA PATRIOT Act required financial institutions to establish heightened due diligence and verification of identification procedures.

³¹ Patricia Lee Brown, "Fighting for a Carrier-Free Zone," *The New York Times*, September 6, 2000.

of not wanting at-home mail delivery for Carmel-by-the-Sea and maintaining the downtown post office open and operational.

Tradition Considered in Street Address Project Exploration

Since Duckworth's arrival and later Devendorf and Powers' visionary development of the City of Carmel-by-the-Sea, the absence of street addresses has been intentional. Throughout its 106-year history, the City and its resident have expressed a sense of pride in the idiosyncrasies that make Carmel-by-the-Sea unique and unlike any other, at the center is often the storied absence of street addresses within the City limits. Changing the longstanding tradition is not an idea to take lightly as plenty of Carmel-by-the-Sea residents have expressed in the past, stating "we don't like numbers on our homes, neon signs, and we like to get our mail at the post office."³² With attention to tradition, the challenges that come with the absence of street addresses should be weighed against the changing world and the need for street addresses for ease-of-access to essential necessities and public safety issues identified by Carmel-by-the-Sea residents.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

Priorities in exploring a street address development process would include ensuring and maintaining the downtown post office in operation, a clear stand against implementing at-home mail delivery, and any consideration of street address signs would be subject to specifically developed design standards. Additionally, there is the possible consideration of implementing street addresses solely for purpose of being findable on a map or GPS device without exterior display of house numbers, a choice for residents to decide, or approaching the system with the expectation of design standards-approved street number signs outside every house and building in Carmel-by-the-Sea. At Council's direction, City staff can meet with the Carmel Postmaster, research different options for a street address program, including non-traditional systems of street addressing such as Google Plus codes or varying alpha numeric addressing systems. The implementation of street addresses has been considered by City Council before and with a wide spectrum of opinions on the topic, City staff looks to Council for direction to begin exploring a street address implementation process or maintain the status quo.

³² Frank Bruno, "Whither the Carmel post office?," *The Carmel Pine Cone*, July 5, 1973.