

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL

No. 247

Approved May 22, 2023

WHEREAS, Mr. Orlando Mateus, Honorable Joseph Lima, the Rhode Island Day of Portugal along with the City of Providence, justifies renaming India Street to Portugal Parkway.

WHEREAS, The Portuguese are a significant group, and they deserve our attention. The renaming of India Street to Portugal Parkway is a dignified tribute to the Portuguese heritage which pioneered and helped build the Fox Point neighborhood.

WHEREAS, From 1865 to the 1930s Fox Point and India Point Park became the heart of Portuguese immigration in the State of Rhode Island. Portuguese immigration began with modest numbers in the eighteenth century to the increasing influx in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By the early 1900s, the Portuguese were the tapestry of the Fox Point neighborhood.

WHEREAS, The Fabre Line and its fleet of steamships began operating the Mediterranean trade in 1865 and continued until the 1930s. Its ports of call were Providence, Boston, New York, and between transatlantic stops at various ports in the Azores, Lisbon Portugal, and throughout the Mediterranean. Most Portuguese immigrants arriving in Rhode Island were from the Azores. It wasn't until 1910 that continentals facing social and political upheaval began emigrating to Rhode Island and New England.

WHEREAS, The Portuguese came, and they settled. They played a vital role in the economy of Rhode Island. These immigrant families came for a stable life, asking little from the state except for the opportunity to work and prosper. They bought homes, worked the lands, and shared their artisanship and hardy workforce in the whaleling, fishing, textile, and jewelry industries. Portuguese families grew and flourished, children attended schools, and churches and clubs sprung up throughout Fox Point and the state.

WHEREAS, Religion unified the Portuguese immigrant community in the new land, and it still plays a vital role in the Portuguese community and culture. The church provided more than religious services and hope, it reinforced values and family structure. In 1886 the first Portuguese-American parish, Our Lady of the Rosary, was established on Wickenden Street. In 1897 the construction for a larger church began, and in 1906 the church was consecrated at its current location on Traverse Street. Our Lady of the Rosary Church has become the beacon of the Portuguese community, (the oldest active Portuguese-American parish in North America) which proudly towers beside Interstate 195, a geographical icon in the landscape of the City of Providence.

WHEREAS, The Portuguese are a resilient culture, as with most immigrants, Portuguese were, are, looked down upon, called “greenhorns,” “portagees” ridiculed, and made to feel inferior for their speech and dress. They have endured and prospered. Today, young Portuguese is part of the states and nation’s framework. Today they are witnessing tremendous growth of the Portuguese middle class that is making a presence felt in politics, professional services, and in all sectors of Rhode Island’s economy.

WHEREAS, Growth, economic and urban development, has brought a much deserved appeal to Fox Point and the City of Providence, but at a cost of displacement to neighborhood families which has slowly eroded the Portuguese language, and heritage in Fox Point.

WHEREAS, Urban growth is vital to city neighborhoods but equally valuable is the preservation of history and traditions. The Portuguese are a significant group, and they deserve our attention. Fox Point and India Point Park became the core of Portuguese immigration. The Fox Point neighborhood was home to many generations of Portuguese immigrants. India Point Park is the site for many “Day of Portugal-June 10th” Portuguese Heritage Festivals. The NRP Sagres, a Portuguese navy tall ship, has docked several times at India Point to commemorate June 10th, the official holiday commemorating Portuguese culture.

WHEREAS, The establishment of a Ceremonial Designation along India Street to Portugal Parkway is a dignified commemoration of the Portuguese heritage which pioneered and helped build the Fox Point neighborhood and brought strength and economic prosperity to the State of Rhode Island.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the City Council of the City of Providence does hereby acknowledge the historic significance and contributions of the Portuguese population to the Fox Point neighborhood, by establishing a Ceremonial Designation along India Street as Portugal Parkway.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the City Council requests that the Department of Public Works work to manufacture, install, and maintain one or more signs at prominent and appropriate locations, which shall reflect the Ceremonial Designation of Portugal Parkway.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That upon passage, copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Mayor of Providence, the Department of Public Works, the Traffic Engineer, Mr. Orlando Mateus, Honorable Joseph Lima, and the Rhode Island Day of Portugal Nonprofit Organization.

IN CITY COUNCIL

MAY 18 2023

READ AND PASSED

Rachel M. Miller
 RACHEL M. MILLER, PRESIDENT
Sina L. Mostaessini
 CLERK

I HEREBY APPROVE.

Brett P. Smith
 Mayor

Date: *5/22/2023*