

By: Hernandez

H.C.R. No. 81

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, The Denver Harbor neighborhood, in northeast
2 Houston, is one of the oldest communities in the Bayou City; and

3 WHEREAS, Bounded on the north by Wallisville Road, on the
4 west by the Houston Belt and Terminal Railroad, on the south by the
5 Southern Pacific Railroad, and on the east by the Port Authority
6 Railroad, the area was first settled in the 1890s; platting in 1911
7 and again in 1913 created what were originally four distinct
8 subdivisions: Denver, Harbor, Harbordale, and Liberty Heights; and

9 WHEREAS, Many early residents were Texans who had left
10 hardscrabble farms for the city in hopes of making a better life for
11 themselves and their families; these citizens found work on the
12 railroads and at various industrial companies that sprang up along
13 the Houston Ship Channel; and

14 WHEREAS, Those who put down roots in Denver Harbor found it a
15 good place to raise a family; among the neighborhood's amenities
16 were Charles Eliot Elementary School, churches, drug stores, and
17 the Globe Theater, where children could watch the latest Hollywood
18 westerns for the sum of nine cents; and

19 WHEREAS, The Great Depression hit Denver Harbor hard, and
20 many families in the neighborhood lost their homes; as the 1930s
21 drew to an end, however, a curious occurrence did much to lift the
22 spirits of the beleaguered community: on June 1, 1939, the morning
23 sun revealed the word "Podunk" emblazoned on the formerly blank
24 side of the local water tower; though the city tried repeatedly to

1 cover over the word, the name would always reappear within a few
2 days; and

3 WHEREAS, Inspired by the spunky defiance of the sign's
4 unknown painter, area residents soon began asserting their identity
5 as Podunkers, and the name was even adopted by a youth basketball
6 team, the Podunk Skunks; and

7 WHEREAS, Today, Denver Harbor reflects the ethnic diversity
8 of Houston itself, with Hispanics forming the core of its
9 population; the community is currently undergoing revitalization,
10 especially along Lyons Avenue, where a new fire station has opened
11 and a number of new businesses have set up shop; residents are also
12 served by four elementary schools, a middle school, and a private
13 school; and

14 WHEREAS, The story of this resilient neighborhood is told in
15 the book *Where the Hell Is Podunk, Texas?*, which won an honorable
16 mention at the 2006 Independent Publisher Book Awards; Dr. Jay
17 Grady, the volume's author, grew up in Denver Harbor; and

18 WHEREAS, Following the publication of Dr. Grady's historical
19 account, a Podunk reunion brought together many present and former
20 residents aged 80 and older; and

21 WHEREAS, The citizens of Denver Harbor take great pride in
22 the heritage of their community and in the unpretentious name that
23 earlier residents made their own, and it is fitting that this
24 neighborhood's identification with that simple but enduring locale
25 of the imagination be appropriately recognized; now, therefore, be
26 it

27 RESOLVED, That the 80th Legislature of the State of Texas

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1 hereby designate Denver Harbor, aka Podunk, as the official
2 Mythical Town of Texas.