

MIAMI BEACH

OFFICE OF THE CITY ATTORNEY

RAFAEL PAZ, CITY ATTORNEY

COMMISSION MEMORANDUM

TO: MAYOR DAN GELBER
MEMBERS OF THE CITY COMMISSION FIRST READING
ALINA HUDAK, CITY MANAGER

FROM: RAFAEL PAZ, CITY ATTORNEY 

DATE: January 20, 2022

SUBJECT: AN ORDINANCE OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA, AMENDING CHAPTER 82 OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF MIAMI BEACH, ENTITLED "PUBLIC PROPERTY," BY AMENDING ARTICLE VI, ENTITLED "NAMING OF PUBLIC FACILITIES AND ESTABLISHMENT OF MONUMENTS OR MEMORIALS," BY AMENDING SECTION 82-503 THEREOF, ENTITLED "NAMING OF PUBLIC FACILITIES; CO-NAMING AND RE-NAMING OF STREETS," BY AMENDING SUBSECTIONS (C)(1)(A) AND (C)(2)(A) TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES FOR THE CO-NAMING OF STREETS IN HONOR OF A DECEASED PHOTOGRAPHER WHO DOCUMENTED THE LIFE AND RESIDENTS OF MIAMI BEACH; AND PROVIDING FOR REPEALER, SEVERABILITY, CODIFICATION, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Pursuant to the request of Commissioner Alex Fernandez, the above-referenced Ordinance is submitted on First Reading for consideration by the Mayor and City Commission at the January 20, 2022 City Commission meeting.

Under existing criteria in Section 82-503 of the City Code, City streets may only be co-named of (1) Miami Beach police officers who died or were killed in the line of duty; (2) a public facility located on the street to be co-named; (3) private not-for-profit organizations with significant historic value to the city and associated with structures which have a significant historical value or architectural significance to the city; (4) geographic areas within the city; (5) a commercial establishment that has been in business in the City of Miami Beach for 100 or more years and which is located on the street to be co-named; or (6) deceased person who served as the spiritual leader of a prominent religious institution in the City of Miami Beach for 35 or more years and resided in the City of Miami Beach.

The proposed Ordinance seeks to amend Section 82-503 of the City Code to allow the Mayor and City Commission to co-name a portion of 30th Street from Indian Creek to Collins Avenue in honor of Andy Sweet.

Andrew John Sweet was an American photographer known for his documentary photography and street photography of the life and residents of South Beach, with a particular focus on the Jewish community, many of them Holocaust survivors.

Sweet was born in Miami Beach and attended Miami Beach Senior High School. Sweet returned home to Miami Beach after receiving a Masters degree in Fine Arts from the University of Colorado at Boulder in 1977, to photograph the old world Jewish culture that then distinguished South Beach.

In 1982, Sweet's life and his art were cut tragically short when he was murdered at the age of 29. The Miami Herald Tropic Magazine ran a cover story on his death and documentary photography, writing that "[t]hough young, Sweet was virtually an institution on the Beach, having made thousands of images of the place and the people."

Sweet's work was appreciated by other documentary photographers --- nationally famed photographer Mary Ellen Mark praised his "strong, humorous, and beautiful images," and wrote that his body of work was "unprecedented for someone so young...He definitely would have gone on to make many more wonderful images and to become a real photographic force."

On December 14, 2016, the Mayor and City Commission voted to erect a plaque in the Art Deco District in Mr. Sweet's honor.

Sweet left an extensive body of work that exhibits a level of creative maturity far beyond his years, and his photographs are a testimony to a rich but often overlooked period of Miami Beach's cultural heritage.

Co-naming a portion of 30th Street from India Creek to Collins Avenue would be fitting because Andy Sweet resided on 215 30th Street until his death.

RAP/FA/ag