

1 By: .C.R. No.

2
3 CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

4 WHEREAS, For thousands of years, the mermaid has been one of the most
5 striking symbols of humanity's connection with the natural world, and over the past
6 century, this legendary figure has come to represent the city of San Marcos and its
7 special relationship to the water resources of Central Texas; and

8 WHEREAS, The story of the mermaid in San Marcos begins with the abundant
9 springs that every day release 100 million gallons of freshwater from the Edwards
10 Aquifer into the San Marcos River; considered a sacred place by Native Americans,
11 and regarded as the creation site of the Coahuiltecans, the springs have drawn people
12 to their banks for more than 11,500 years, making this area what is thought to be one
13 of the oldest continually inhabited sites in North America; and

14 WHEREAS, In 1845, Edward Burleson, a former vice president of the Republic
15 of Texas, dammed the headwaters of the San Marcos, thereby creating Spring Lake;
16 over the ensuing years, the water from the lake powered gristmills, sawmills, an ice
17 factory, and an electric light works; the San Marcos River also constituted an
18 important water stop along the Chisholm Trail; and

19 WHEREAS, A. B. Rogers bought Burleson's homestead in the 1920s and built
20 a resort hotel on the shore of the lake; he later began offering rides in glass-bottomed
21 boats that allowed visitors to see through the crystal water to the bubbling springs
22 beneath; his son Paul, who succeeded him, established the Aquarena Springs
23 amusement park on the property and in 1950 built an underwater theater, where young
24 women known as "aquamaids" staged exhibitions of synchronized swimming and
25 underwater ballet; at the peak of its popularity, the park drew up to 350,000 visitors
26 every year and was featured in Life magazine, with the submerged theater making it
27 to the cover of Popular Mechanics; in time, the show came to include Glurpo, a pipe-
28 smoking clown, and a swimming pig named Ralph; and

1 WHEREAS, The performances continued until the 1990s, when Texas State
2 University acquired the park and set a new course for the property; today, the site
3 hosts the Meadows Center for Water and the Environment, which conducts research
4 and educational programs focused on promoting sustainable water management and
5 environmental stewardship; the critical nature of its work is underscored by the fact
6 that the Edwards Aquifer supplies drinking water to several million people and
7 serves as the principal source of water for agriculture and industry throughout the
8 region, while waters discharged by the aquifer also support recreation and tourism; in
9 addition, the aquifer system sustains over 40 highly adapted species and a number that
10 are either threatened or endangered, including five found in the San Marcos Springs
11 and a stretch of river just below; and

12 WHEREAS, In 2016, the Mermaid Society of San Marcos was created to foster
13 harmony between environmental suitability, the arts, and economic growth; the
14 society has established an annual Mermaid Week, which includes a parade, the
15 Mermaid Society Ball, and the Mermaid SPLASH Festival; and

16 WHEREAS, the city has funded through its Hotel Occupancy Tax supported
17 Arts Program mermaid-themed works of public art, including a mural and series of
18 seven-foot-tall statues each decorated by different artist; and

19 WHEREAS, by adopting the mermaid as symbol of the city, the people of San
20 Marcos are encouraging public interest in the natural environment and highlighting
21 the central role their community is playing in preserving the water resources of Lone
22 Star State; now, therefore, be it

23 RESOLVED, That, in accordance with the provisions of Section 391.003 (e),
24 Government Code, this designation remain in effect until the 10th anniversary of its
25 designation.

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