

## 2004 PROPOSED RESOLUTION

His Majesty Norton I, Emperor of the United States and Protector of Mexico (1818-1880), did reside on Commercial Street in District 3. Therefore I, Aaron Peskin, current Supervisor of District 3 and representative of my former constituent Joshua Norton, request permission to introduce a

### RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE EMPEROR NORTON BRIDGE

Whereas, Joshua Abraham Norton, an upstanding member of Gold Rush San Francisco's business community, social set and the Committee of Vigilance did, due to a total reversal of fortunes in the early 1850s, become mentally imbalanced and in that state did supplant a pursuit of wealth with, instead, a care for people, became in essence, the Conscience of the City; and

Whereas, on September 17, 1859, Joshua Abraham Norton did proclaim himself Norton I, Emperor of the United States in order to calm public fear of national political crisis; and

Whereas, His Majesty did recognize early in his reign that the American nation had become composed of all nations and almost all religions and that in spite of being

*difficult to please all groups, did rule benevolently until his untimely death on January 8, 1880; and*

*Whereas, during his peaceful reign of twenty years, Emperor Norton did speak for the oppressed of all creeds, condition and color, knowing that "great aches from little toe-corns grow"; and*

*Whereas, His Majesty did work for universal religious tolerance by attending all churches and did prohibit the enforcement of state Sunday Laws, which discriminated against Germans and Jews; and*

*Whereas, Emperor Norton did fight for cultural diversity in schools when he decreed teaching students French and German was absolutely necessary to preserve the language of their parents; and*

*Whereas, when iron men who sailed wooden ships went on strike for a living wage, His Majesty did anticipate legendary Harry Bridges and did call upon ship owners to do justice, thereby enabling San Francisco to emerge as a strong union town; and*

*Whereas, in 1862 Emperor Norton did support President Benito Juarez by becoming Protector of Mexico when an insidious occupier of the Throne of France did invade our Sister Republic; and*

*Whereas, His Majesty did work tirelessly for civil rights when he commanded the arrest of all who refused to allow African Americans to ride public streetcars, demanded their admission to the public schools, and did name the African-American newspaper Pacific Appeal his Imperial Gazette; and*

*Whereas, Emperor Norton did precede the state five full years when he commanded that the evidence of Chinese be taken in all our Courts of Law and Justice, and furthermore pronounced that "the eyes of the EMPEROR will be upon anyone who shall council any outrage or wrong on the Chinese"; and*

*Whereas, when His Majesty did see that great injustice had been done to Native Americans, he did make known his intention to have publicly punished, before as many Indian chiefs as could be assembled together, all Indian agents and other parties connected with frauds against the Indian tribes; and*

*Whereas, the tolerant spirit of Emperor Norton did inspire outspoken Jose Julio Sarria to proclaim himself Empress Jose I, Widow Norton, who did in 1961 became the first openly gay man to run for office in the United States - a seat on this Honorable Board of Supervisors; and*

*Whereas, His Majesty did establish San Francisco as his Imperial City and did protect by a strength stronger than the mightiest fortifications when he did decree that anyone who shall be heard to utter the abominable word "Frisco" would be deemed*

guilty of High Misdemeanor, and would pay into the Imperial Treasury, as penalty, the sum of \$25 gold; and

Whereas, on March 23, 1872, Emperor Norton did order in a newspaper decree "that a suspension bridge be built from Oakland Point to Goat [Yerba Buena] Island and thence to Telegraph Hill" by the citizens of San Francisco and Oakland; and

Whereas, when the governing councils of both cities neglected this directed duty, His Majesty did justly and irately "command the arrest by the army of both Boards of City Fathers" and

Whereas, this Honorable Board of Supervisors does need to escape incarceration on Fort Alcatraz, atone for a sixty-four-year lapse in the construction of His Majesty's indispensable artery of transportation, and especially honor Emperor Norton's embodiment of the spirit of the gentle City of St. Francis; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that this board decrees that the bay-spanning bridge be designated "The Emperor Norton Bridge" and

RESOLVED, that this Board urges the City of Oakland, which His Majesty frequently and enjoyably visited, to join in this endeavor; and

RESOLVED, that this board requests Bay Area legislators, operating on our behalf in Sacramento, see to its accomplishment in the State Legislature.