

LOCAL

OCTOBER 14, 2014

Citizens urge Olympia to recognize Indigenous People's Day in 2015



Several people are urging the Olympia City Council to establish Indigenous People's Day.

By Andy Hobbs - Staff writer

Several people are urging the Olympia City Council to dump Columbus Day and establish Indigenous People's Day.

Olympia resident Lucas Anderson helped organize Tuesday's impromptu presentation to the council. Anderson said he was inspired by cities such as Seattle, Bellingham, Portland and Minneapolis that have adopted similar resolutions.

He hopes to someday see a national movement to change the holiday's name and recognize the ancestry of Native Americans.

"This really seems right in line with our community," Anderson told The Olympian. "It seems like a logical step for us."

Several local tribes were represented at Tuesday's meeting. Nearly two-dozen people participated in a blessing and sang Native American songs outside City Hall before the meeting began.

At the council meeting, supporters of renaming the holiday referred to Christopher Columbus as an explorer with a troublesome legacy – a brutal conqueror who brought slavery to the continent and exploited Native Americans. The supporters urged the council to begin recognizing Indigenous People's Day starting Oct. 12, 2015.

City Manager Steve Hall said the city does not officially recognize or celebrate Columbus Day, even though banks and some businesses close, and the city offers free parking downtown on that day.

"We have very strong and meaningful relationships with indigenous people in this area," Hall said, citing examples such as a recent partnership with the Nisqually Tribe for the city's drinking water source.

In 1992, the city of Berkeley, Calif., replaced Columbus Day with Indigenous People's Day. A committee has organized a celebration every year with a pow-wow and market. [According to the committee's website](#), the Berkeley City Council set up a task force to investigate the historical record of Columbus. The task force concluded that "Columbus's expedition was not a scientific voyage of discovery, but a scouting mission for a scheme of imperialism and conquest.

Read more here: <http://www.theolympian.com/news/local/article26083903.html#storylink=cpy>