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JUN 19 2025

CITY OF ATASCADERO
CITY CLERK'S OFFICE

Dennis Lovejoy

[REDACTED]
Lincoln, CA 95648

June 10, 2025

Leila Touati
Telegram-Tribune
3940-7 Broad St. PMB 325
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Dear Ms. Touati,

I read your story on the renaming and rebranding of the Charles Paddock Zoo, and I believe the City Council and others involved have made a very sound and appropriate decision.

I'd like to share some historical context regarding Charles Paddock. While Mr. Paddock was a military veteran and served for many years as a County Ranger at Atascadero Lake Park—which included oversight of the zoo—he was also a pedophile and child rapist.

I was a long time Atascadero resident. In the early 1980s, while serving with the Sheriff's Department, I investigated a sexual assault complaint made by a 14-year-old girl who identified Charles Paddock as the suspect. Before the investigation could be completed, Mr. Paddock contacted a local newspaper in Atascadero and threatened to take his own life. The reporter contacted me, and I responded immediately to Mr. Paddock's residence. Tragically, just prior to my arrival, he took his own life by shooting himself with a long rifle in his front yard. It appeared he could not face the pending accusations.

For reasons that remain unclear, this incident—and the serious allegations against Mr. Paddock—were concealed from the public for decades. While he may have played a role in founding the zoo, he should not be memorialized as a community hero. Honoring him by name has never been appropriate, and I fully support the move to change it.

I believe the name "Central Coast Zoo" is an excellent choice and a much more suitable reflection of the community's values today.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

cc: Mayor Charles Bourbeau, City of Atascadero

From: Judie Magonacelaya <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, June 20, 2025 3:19 PM
To: City Council <CityCouncil@atascadero.org>
Subject: Chuck Paddock

Council Members,

I have to agree with the article n this weeks Atascadero News
regarding Chuck Paddock.

Chuck put a lot of effort in developing the Zoo.

In Addition his two son's volunteered to serve in Viet Nam .

Sadly one of his sons was killed the the war stepping on a mine.

He lost both legs and chose to die rather that be without legs.

He was a help to his dad in developing the Zoo.

Joe Magonacelaya

ATTENTION:

This email originated from outside the City's network. Use caution when opening links and attachments.

From: Maria Cagnina <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, June 20, 2025 5:14 PM
To: City Council <CityCouncil@atascadero.org>
Subject: Charles Paddock

To the city council,

I realize that you are busy but I would like to know how the decision to change the name of the zoo came about.

I'm assuming it had to be a city council decision. If so, would you please tell me what the date of the meeting was so that I can look at the minutes and see how the public was involved. If not, would you please tell me what group made the decision so that I can access their minutes.

Thank you for your time.

Maria Cagnina

ATTENTION:

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From: Gail Seminara <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, June 24, 2025 2:11 PM
To: City Clerk
Subject: PLEASE Change ZOO name back

Hello,

I am emailing to let you know how disgusted I am at how this sly move to change our Zoo's name to anything other than Charles Paddock Zoo.

I have lived in Atascadero for 36 years. I have built our home and raised our family here. I remember fondly visiting the zoo back in the days when they just had a donation box and some sad looking animals. It has always been special to us.

Let me address some of the bogus reasons that were given to change the name .

To make it easier for people to find the zoo?? Oh com'on! In this day and age anyone googling, Where is the nearest zoo ? will easily find it popping up in their phone.

There is a history and a reason that this Zoo was called that and I feel it is unjust to erase that part of the history. The statue has already been there for years , so no its NOT enough to mention Charles Paddock as a slight reference to its start.

Let's talk about the \$40,000 that is earmarked to rebrand it..... What in the world?? That money should be spent on improvements to the zoo, and to the ANIMALS that are in there or to obtain more.

It should not be to erase the original name from everything that it's currently on! They could have spent SOME of that money on Advertising the Charles Paddock Zoo and leaving brochures and pamphlets at every hotel in the South and North County with perhaps a coupon attached for a discount.

Why are there more than 1,000 people who signed the petition to change the name back? Because we were not informed that it was on the chopping block. How many people did you ask out of the 29,000 population here in Atascadero??? Not enough I can you that.

I can tell you that because of this sly move the citizens now no longer trust city management. Something underhanded is going on. Where is all the money that they collected from their fundraisers for the Zoo?? So many questions and we are receiving vague or bogus responses.

Very disappointed .

Gail & Mike Seminara

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