

To: City Council
From: John A. Haila, Mayor
Date: October 25, 2022
Subject: Downtown Plaza Naming

From time to time Council has considered and taken action on naming City-owned properties, recently naming the new park located at the former Edwards School site as Tahira and Labh Hira Park in west Ames, and is considering renaming the Ames Municipal Airport. **With the new Downtown Plaza now under construction and planned for completion in mid-2023, I intend to bring up for Council consideration a proposed naming opportunity for the Downtown Plaza.** The specific rationale and name will be presented during the City Council meeting.

The Downtown Plaza will be managed as a Parks and Recreation facility once complete. The Parks and Recreation Commission has adopted an official Naming Policy with specific criteria contained therein relative to both naming criteria and procedure/process (attached). This policy states:

“3. POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the City of Ames Parks and Recreation Department to reserve the name or renaming of parks, recreational facilities, and/or major features for circumstances that will best serve the interests of the city and ensure a worthy and enduring legacy for the City’s park and recreation system.

To this end, the City of Ames Parks and Recreation Department supports consideration of naming requests within the following broad categories.

- a. **Historic Events, People, and Places** The history of a major event, place or person may play an important role in the naming or renaming of a park as communities often wish to preserve and honor the history of a city, its founders, other historical figures, its Native American heritage, local landmarks and prominent geographical locations, and natural and geological features through the naming of parks.

- b. **Outstanding Individuals** The City has benefited, through its evolution, from the contributions made by many outstanding individuals. This category is designed to acknowledge the sustained contribution that has been made by such individuals to the City and/or the development and management of the City's park and recreation system.

- c. **Major Donations** Over the years, the City of Ames Parks and Recreation Department has benefited from the generosity of some of its residents, businesses, and foundations. On occasion, the significance of such donations may warrant consideration being given to requests from either the donor or another party to acknowledge such donations by naming.”

As I will detail during the City Council meeting on October 25th, the person being considered to name the Downtown Plaza after qualifies under both 3.a. and 3.b.

The Parks and Recreation Naming Policy indicates that the typical procedure is for an application to be: 1) submitted to the Parks and Recreation Director who then evaluates the request and makes a recommendation to the Parks and Recreation Commission, 2) the Commission evaluates and develops a recommendation for City Council to consider, and 3) City Council takes final action on the request.

In this instance, there are unique circumstances surrounding the particular naming opportunity that will be proposed which I believe warrants waiving the typical procedure. Additionally, since this naming initiative originates within the City Council, it would seem reasonable for the Council itself to decide this matter rather than referring it to the Parks and Recreation Commission and then returning it to the City Council for the final decision. **Given these factors, I will be asking the City Council to waive section 5 (Procedures), subparagraphs a and b of the Parks and Recreation Naming Policy.** Other aspects of the Policy, in general, are being followed.

I have discussed the actions proposed in this memo with both the Director of Parks and Recreation and the City Attorney. Both are in agreement with the general direction I have outlined, including the proposed waiver of the procedures in the Naming Policy.

Therefore, I will be asking the City Council to make and approve the following motion on October 25, 2022:

Move to:

- A) Waive the Parks & Recreation Naming Policy Procedures Section 5, subsections “a” and “b,” and,
- B) Direct staff to present a resolution for Council consideration at the November 8, 2022 meeting to name the City of Ames Downtown Plaza after _____.

PARKS AND RECREATION NAMING POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

The naming or renaming of parks and recreational facilities is a complex and sometimes emotionally evocative since assigning a name is a powerful and permanent identity for a public place and/or facility. The naming and renaming of parks and/or recreational facilities often requires significant resources in terms of changing names on signs, maps, and literature. In addition, excessive and constant name changing can be the source of confusion to the public. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to those that have an interest in the naming and or renaming of the City's parks and/or recreational facilities.

2. DEFINITIONS

a. **Naming:**

The permanent name assigned by City Council to a given park or recreational facility.

b. **Parks:**

All traditionally designed parks, gardens, natural open spaces, woodlands, and specialized parks under the stewardship of the City of Ames Parks and Recreation Department.

c. **Recreational Facilities:**

Major structures such as community centers, swimming pools, and enclosed pavilions located within lands under the stewardship of City of Ames Parks and Recreation Department.

d. **Major Features:**

Major permanent components of park and recreational facilities, e.g. sports fields, tennis courts, playgrounds, shelters, fountains, artwork, or physical features (lakes). Rooms within buildings are considered to be Major Features.

e. **Amenities:**

Smaller furnishings and facilities in the parks and recreation system (e.g. benches, drinking fountains, tables, etc.). Amenities are not formally named. Recognition for donated amenities is possible.

f. **Donations:**

A donation of property, goods or cash generally with no expectation of return. If the gift is contingent upon a special request, it is made subject to "condition."

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c. Major Donations

Over the years, the City of Ames Parks and Recreation Department has benefited from the generosity of some of its residents, businesses, and foundations. On occasion, the significance of such donations may warrant consideration being given to requests from either the donor or another party to acknowledge such donations by naming.

4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

a. Naming/renaming for Historic Events, People, and Places

When considering naming a park, recreational facility, or major feature after events, people and places of historic, cultural or social significance, requests must demonstrate this significance through research and documentation and show there is continued importance to the city, region, state, and/or nation.

b. Naming/renaming for Outstanding Individuals

A park, recreational facility, or major feature may be named for an outstanding individual who has made a significant contribution to the Ames parks and recreation system, the City of Ames, the State of Iowa, or the nation. In addition to societal contributions, the moral character of the individual must be considered. When considering requests, it is preferred that the individual has a connection to the park, recreational facility, or major feature being requested to be named.

c. Naming/Renaming for Major Donations

From time to time, a significant donation may be made to the City that will add considerable value to the City's park and recreation system. On such occasions, recognition of this donation by naming/renaming a park, recreation facility, and/or major feature in honor of or at the request of the donor will be considered.

The City Council may use its discretion as to what dollar amount is worthy of naming rights for individual projects, on a case by case basis. Likewise, City Council can use its discretion as to whether or not to allow for corporate naming/renaming rights. Corporate logos, insignias, brands or direct advertising text shall not be permitted.

Donors seeking naming rights for major donations with respect to an individual should follow the principles outlined in 4.b. Exceptions to this will be considered on their own merits.

d. Renaming a park, recreational facility, and/or major feature

Proposals to rename parks, recreational facilities, and/or major features whether for a major gift or community request are not encouraged. Likewise, names that have become widely accepted by the community will not be abandoned unless there are compelling reasons and strong public sentiment from the broader community for doing so. Historical or commonly used place names will be preserved wherever possible.

e. Other Considerations

When naming/renaming a park, recreational facility, and/or major feature, does the proposed name engender a strong positive image, have historical, cultural or social significance for future generations, and have broad public support?

To minimize confusion, parks will not be subdivided for the purpose of naming unless there are readily identifiable physical divisions such as roads or waterways. However, naming of specific major recreational facilities within parks will be permitted; under these circumstances such names should be different to the park name to avoid user confusion.

All signs that indicate the name of a park and/or recreational facility shall comply with City of Ames graphic and design standards. Specialized naming signage will not be permitted.

City of Ames Parks and Recreation Department reserves the right to rename any park, recreational facility, and/or major feature if the person for whom it is named turns out to be disreputable or subsequently acts in a disreputable way.

5. PROCEDURES

These procedures have been established to ensure that the naming or renaming of parks, recreational facilities, and/or major features is approached in a consistent manner.

a. Requests for naming/renaming of parks, recreational facilities and/or major features

All requests for the naming or renaming of a park, recreational facility, and/or major feature shall be made by submitting a Naming Application to the Director of Ames Parks and Recreation.

The Naming Application will contain the following minimum information:

1. The proposed name
2. Reasons for the proposed name
3. Written documentation indicating a certification of character and community support for the proposed name (e.g. letters of support, petitions, etc.)
4. If proposing to name a park, include a description/map showing location and boundaries of the park
5. If proposing to name a recreational facility or major feature within a park, include a description/map showing the location of the facility.
6. If proposing to rename a park, recreational facility, or major feature, include justification for changing an established name.
7. If proposing to name a park, recreational facility, or major feature for an outstanding individual, include documentation of that individual's significant contribution in regards to the Ames park system, the City, State and/or Nation

b. Assessing and approving naming/renaming requests

Upon receipt of a naming request by Ames Parks and Recreation, the Parks and Recreation Director shall:

1. Review the proposed request for its adherence to the Parks and Recreation Naming Policy.
2. Ensure that supporting information has been authenticated, particularly when an individual's name is proposed
3. Seek input from relevant neighborhood association(s), historical groups, and other organizations, if deemed appropriate

The Parks and Recreation Director will then present a recommendation regarding the naming request at a public meeting to the Parks and Recreation Commission. At this meeting, the Parks and Recreation Commission will develop their own recommendation regarding the request to be presented to City Council.

c. Final decision by City Council

The Parks and Recreation Commission's recommendation regarding the naming/renaming request, along with the Parks and Recreation Director's recommendation if different, will be presented to the City Council at a public meeting for a final decision.