

**COUNCIL ACTION FORM**

**SUBJECT:**      **PARKS AND RECREATION NAMING POLICY**

**BACKGROUND:**

On July 28, 2015, City Council referred to staff a request to name the City's Skate Park in honor of Georgie Tsushima, who passed away July 19, 2015. This item was then brought before the Parks and Recreation Commission at its August 20, 2015 meeting.

The City does not have a policy or formal guidelines related to naming parks, recreational facilities or amenities. This can be viewed as a positive from the standpoint that it allows City officials flexibility in making a decision. However, it can also be viewed as a negative since with no guidelines decisions could be inconsistent as Commission and Council members change.

On initial investigation, City staff noted a policy currently exists for naming City streets. Commissioners asked whether an adopted naming policy should encompass all City facilities and not just parks, recreational facilities, or amenities. Staff discussed this with the City Manager and it was determined to just focus on parks, recreational facilities, or amenities as these are the items having the greatest potential for naming opportunities. The Commission felt strongly that a policy was needed for direction when naming requests were brought before them. Staff was then directed to draft a policy to guide City officials in making a decision.

Staff researched multiple naming policies from departments throughout the country and brought a draft policy to the Commission at its February 18, 2016 meeting. Based on comments regarding the draft from Commissioners and the public, staff reviewed the input and brought a revised draft policy to the March meeting. At that meeting the Commission recommended that City Council approve the policy with a modification stating that preference will be given to a request in which the individual has a tie to the park being requested to be named.

The policy as approved by the Commission was presented to City Council on April 12, 2016. After hearing input from the public, the Council discussed multiple items related to the proposed policy. Staff was then directed to make changes and present a revised draft at a future Council meeting.

Council comments were shared with the Parks and Recreation Commission at its April 21, 2016 meeting. One Commissioner expressed disappointment the policy was not coming back to the Commission, felt that the detail was being taken out of the policy, and questioned whether that put us any further ahead than operating without a policy. Another Commissioner agreed with the process whereby the Commission's role would be a filter when requests are brought forth.

**POLICY OVERVIEW:**

The attached policy has been revised to reflect Council comments received on April 12. Below is a summary of the changes.

<b><u>Section</u></b>	<b><u>Changes</u></b>
1	No changes
2	No changes
3	Included “and/or major features” to the first paragraph
3.a	No changes
3.b	No changes
3.c	No changes
4.a	No changes
4.b	Rewrote this entire section and deleted all waiting period requirements. Clarified the requirements for outstanding individuals include significant contributions to the Ames park system, City, State, or Nation and the moral character of the individual must be considered. In addition, the Commission wanted the statement regarding an individual having a connection to the place being requested to be named.
4.c	Included “and/or major feature” in the first paragraph.  Removed all references to requiring a percentage of project cost for naming rights. Replaced it with a statement giving Council discretion as to what dollar amount is worthy of naming rights for a particular project.  Reworded the paragraph related to naming rights for Major Donations, indicating that the principles outlined in 4.b should be followed when considering naming rights associated with a major donation.  The last paragraph does retain language related to not permitting the naming of parks and recreational facilities with a company name. However, it does allow company names to be considered for major features.
4.d	Included “and/or major feature” to the paragraph.
4.e	Included “and/or major feature” to the first and fourth paragraphs. The second and third paragraphs are unchanged.
5.a.3	Included a requirement for “a certification of character” and proof support.

- 5.a.4 Added “If proposing to name a park”.
- 5.a.6 Included “and/or major feature”.
- 5.a.7 Deleted good reputation since a certification of character was added to 5.a.3.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

1. Approve the attached Parks and Recreation Naming Policy.
2. Direct staff to incorporate further changes into the Naming Policy.
3. Do not adopt a Naming Policy.

**CITY MANAGER’S RECOMMENDATION:**

City parks and facilities are commonly named for specific individuals. City staff believes that having a policy to guide the decision-making process would be a valuable tool for the Parks and Recreation Commission and the City Council in addressing not only the immediate request to rename the Skate Park, but in future situations where naming a park or facility is under consideration. Such a policy would also help maintain transparency for community members regarding the process and guidelines to name a space.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative #1, thereby approving the attached Parks and Recreation Naming Policy.

## 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."

### 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.

**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.

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.

Naming parks and/or recreational facilities with a company name is not permitted, however, company names will be considered for Major Features. Corporate logos, insignias, brands or direct advertising text shall not be permitted

**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.