

Staff Report

RECOMMENDATION TO ESTABLISH A CHILDREN'S MEMORIAL PARK

December 17, 2013

BACKGROUND:

The City Council referred a request from Angie DeWaard to consider constructing a Children's Memorial Park. Her idea is for a quiet place to reflect and find hope for parents and families who grieve the loss of a child along with being able to purchase a tree, brick, stone, or bench in their child's memory. Ms. DeWaard suggested that the memorial area could be a new park or created within an existing park.

The Parks and Recreation Commission discussed this concept at its CIP workshop on December 5, 2013. The Commission expressed support for the development of a children's memorial area within Moore Memorial Park. This park has a natural area with a pond suitable for this use and memorials have already been placed in this location. By placing the children's memorial area in this existing park, minimal funds will be needed (e.g., staff time, advertising) to make this request a reality. It should be understood that there are other parks within the system that have memorial benches and trees. This practice will continue even when Moore Parks becomes the official children's memorial area.

The Parks and Recreation Department currently has a Commemorative Tree Program established and has included park bench memorials. This program will be expanded to include other memorials such as bricks, stones, and plaques.

STAFF COMMENTS:

Staff believes formally dedicating a place within the park system for parents and families to grieve the loss of a child would be a wonderful addition to our park system. Because the Moore Memorial Park pond is currently being renovated, this is an opportune time to establish a children's memorial area at this location. It should be noted that this project will be funded mainly through donations. Therefore, staff intends to move ahead to formalize this area as a children's memorial area.