

Staff Report

NAMING OF PARKS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

April 12, 2016

BACKGROUND:

On July 28, 2015, City Council referred to staff a request to name the Skate Park in honor of Georgie Tsushima, who passed away July 19, 2015. This item was 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 it allows City officials flexibility in making a decision. However, it can also be viewed as a negative as there are no guidelines and 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 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 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 is attached.

POLICY OVERVIEW:

Generally, policy is developed to provide guidance to decision makers and ensure a consistent process is being followed for those affected by the policy. This policy development is more difficult due to a specific naming request having been presented to City Council and referred to the Parks & Recreation Commission. As this policy has been developed, staff has tried to do so with a broad scope in mind and to not tailor it to the specific request for the skate park.

Below is an overview of the five sections contained within the policy.

1. **Introduction** – Provides a brief overview and purpose of the policy.

2. **Definitions** – These are included to provide a clear understanding when reading the policy.
3. **Policy Statement** – This section defines the broad categories considered for naming parks and/or recreational facilities. These categories are:
 - a. Historic Events, People, and Places
 - b. Outstanding Individuals
 - c. Major Donations
4. **Guiding Principles** – These principles provide guidance as to whether or not a request meets the naming criteria listed for each category.
5. **Procedures** – The process for submitting a request, as well as, the responsibilities of staff, the Commission, and City Council are outlined. Please note the Commission may make a recommendation to City Council with the Council making the final decision as to a naming request.

OPTIONS:

1. **Direct staff to bring the attached Naming Policy to the City Council for approval at its next meeting.**

If the City Council is satisfied with the policy as developed by City staff and approved by the Parks and Recreation Commission, it could direct that the attached policy be returned to the City Council to consider approval at the April 26 City Council meeting. If the City Council adopted the Naming Policy, the specific request to name the Skate Park in honor of Georgie Tsushima would then be brought to the Parks and Recreation Commission through the process and guidance outlined in the policy.

2. **Direct staff to incorporate changes into the Naming Policy.**

The City Council could choose this option if it felt changes needed to be made to the draft policy. City staff would need to know what specific changes the City Council desires to see in the Naming Policy. After making those changes, City staff would present the policy to the City Council to consider approval at a subsequent meeting.

3. **Refer the Naming Policy back to staff with a request for further research.**

If the City Council feels that further research is necessary regarding naming policies in place in other communities or other subjects, it could refer the policy back to staff. City staff would conduct the research, and if necessary consult with the Parks and Recreation Commission, before bringing the policy back to the City Council for consideration.

4. Accept the report and do not adopt a Naming Policy.

If the City Council did not agree with the concept of a naming policy, it could decline to consider the policy further. The specific request to name the Skate Park for Georgie Tsushima would then be considered by the Parks and Recreation Commission without any guidelines established beforehand.

STAFF COMMENTS:

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 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 a consideration. Such a policy would also help to maintain transparency for community members regarding the process and guidelines to name a space.

NAMING OF PARKS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

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 and/or recreational facilities 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 and/or recreational facility 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 parks and/or recreational facilities for Outstanding Individuals

Naming or renaming a park and/or recreational facility for an outstanding individual is encouraged only for those who have been deceased for at least three years in order to ensure that person's significance and good reputation have been accepted in the City's, State's and/or Nation's history. This provision can be waived at Council's directive.

In considering the naming/renaming of a park and/or recreational facility after a deceased person, priority will be given to those who made a sustained and lasting contribution to:

- i. The Ames park and recreation system
- ii. The City of Ames
- iii. The State of Iowa
- iv. The Nation

Preference will be given to a request in which the individual has a tie to the park being requested to be named.

The naming of a park and/or recreational facility after people who may have lost their lives due to war or a tragic event will be considered only after the shock of such event, a minimum of three years, has lessened within the community.

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 and/or recreation facility in honor of or at the request of the donor will be considered.

As a guideline, the threshold for considering the naming/renaming of a park and/or recreational facility will include one or more of the following:

- i. Land for the majority of the park was deeded to the city.
- ii. Contribution of a minimum of 50% of the capital construction costs associated with developing the park/recreational facility.
- iii. Establishment of a minimum 20-year endowment for the continued maintenance and/or programming of the park/recreational facility.

Likewise, as a guideline but not a limitation, the threshold for naming rights on Major Features would include one or preferably more of the following:

- i. Contribution of 100% of the capital construction costs associated with developing the Major Feature.
- ii. Establishment of a long-term endowment for the repair and maintenance of the donated Major Feature

Donors seeking naming rights for major donations with respect to an individual will be encouraged to follow the principles that apply to naming a park for an outstanding individual. 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 used in park and/or recreational facility naming text.

d. Renaming a park and/or recreational facility

Proposals to rename parks and/or recreational facilities 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 and/or recreational facility, 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 and/or recreational facility 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:

- i. The proposed name
- ii. Reasons for the proposed name

- iii. Written documentation indicating community support for the proposed name
- iv. Description/map showing location and boundaries of the park
- v. If proposing to name a facility or major feature within a park, include a description/map showing the location of the facility.
- vi. If proposing to rename a park or facility, include justification for changing an established name.
- vii. If proposing to name a park or facility after an outstanding person, include documentation of that person's significance and good reputation in the City's, State's or Nation's history.

b. Assessing and approving naming/renaming requests

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

- i. Review the proposed request for its adherence to the policies of the City of Ames Parks and Recreation Department
- ii. Ensure that supporting information has been authenticated, particularly when an individual's name is proposed
- iii. 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.