

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: NAMING POLICY FOR CITY PLACES, FACILITIES, AND STRUCTURES

BACKGROUND:

At the February 8, 2022 City Council meeting, the City Council directed staff to place on a future Council agenda a proposed naming policy for municipal properties, similar to the existing Parks & Recreation Policy. Using the Parks and Recreation Naming Policy as a guide, staff has drafted a policy that would be applicable to City facilities that are not related to Parks and Recreation features.

The proposed policy divides properties that may be named into three categories: facilities, major features, and amenities. Naming proposals may be considered for historic events, people, or places, outstanding individuals, or major donations. Criteria are included to review the proposed naming and record the reasons for the proposal. Although naming proposals can be submitted by the public, the City Council and City Manager may also submit naming proposals to the City Council for consideration.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve the attached “City of Ames Naming Policy”
2. Modify the attached policy
3. Do not approve a naming policy

CITY MANAGER’S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

The attached policy provides guidance to accept and consider proposals for the naming of City property. The provisions included largely reflect the similar policy in place for Parks and Recreation features. Adopting this policy will provide for a standardized, thorough, and accessible path for naming proposals to be considered and approved.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1 as described above.

CITY OF AMES NAMING POLICY

(For non-Parks and Recreation Facilities, Major Features, and Amenities)

1. INTRODUCTION

The naming or renaming of city facilities, major features, or amenities is a complex and sometimes emotionally evocative since assigning a name is a powerful and permanent identity for public property. The naming and renaming of facilities, major features, or amenities 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 facilities, major features, or amenities.

2. OTHER APPLICABLE POLICIES

In some circumstances, naming of a facility, major feature, or amenity is subject to another policy the City has adopted. These include:

a. **Parks and Recreational Facilities:**

The naming of parks and recreational facilities, major features, and amenities is subject to the separate *Parks and Recreation Naming Policy*. These include all traditionally designed parks, gardens, natural open spaces, woodlands, and specialized parks, and all major structures such as community centers, swimming pools, and enclosed pavilions located on lands under the stewardship of the City of Ames Parks and Recreation Department.

b. **Streets:**

The naming of streets is subject to specific criteria separate from this policy, which are outlined in the City's *Administrative Program for Street Naming and Addressing*. However, a roadway feature such as a bridge or tunnel is subject to the *City of Ames Naming Policy*.

3. DEFINITIONS

a. **Naming:**

The permanent name assigned by City Council to a given facility, major feature, or amenity.

b. **Facilities:**

Buildings or structures such as fire stations, utility plants, bridges, City office buildings, community centers, swimming pools, plaza, electric substations, and enclosed pavilions.

- c. **Major Features:**
Permanent areas or objects, such as rooms within facilities or roadway features.
- d. **Amenities:**
Smaller features, such as equipment or furnishings (e.g., training apparatus, boardroom tables, benches, etc.). Recognition for donated amenities is possible.
- e. **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.”

4. POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the City of Ames to reserve the naming or renaming of facilities, major features, and/or amenities for circumstances that will best serve the interests of the City and ensure a worthy and enduring legacy for the City.

To this end, the City of Ames 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 place 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.
- c. **Major Donations**
Over the years, the City of Ames 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.

5. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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

When considering naming a facility, major feature, or amenity 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 facility, major feature, or amenity may be named for an outstanding individual who has made a significant contribution to 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 facility, major feature, or amenity 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 resources and/or services. On such occasions, recognition of this donation by naming/renaming a facility, major feature, or amenity 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. (Outstanding Individuals). Exceptions to this will be considered on their own merits.

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

d. **Renaming a facility, major feature, or amenity**

Proposals to rename facilities, major features, or amenities, regardless of the rationale for the original naming, 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 facility, major feature, or amenity, 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, individual facilities or features will not be subdivided for the purpose of naming unless there are readily identifiable physical divisions. Major features should be named differently from the facilities in which they exist to avoid user confusion.

All signs that indicate the name of a facility, major feature, or amenity shall comply with City of Ames graphic and design standards. Specialized naming signage will not be permitted.

The City of Ames reserves the right to rename any facility, major feature, or amenity if the person or entity for whom it is named turns out to be disreputable or subsequently acts in a disreputable way.

6. PROCEDURES

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

a. Requests from the public to name/rename facilities, major features, and/or amenities

All requests for the naming or renaming of a facility, major feature, or amenity shall be made by submitting a Naming Application to the City Manager.

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 specific area within a facility or major feature, include a description/map showing the location within the larger area.
5. If proposing to rename a facility, major feature, or amenity, include justification for changing an established name.

6. If proposing to name a facility, major feature, or amenity for an outstanding individual, include documentation of that individual's significant contribution to the City, State and/or Nation

b. Assessing and approving naming/renaming requests

Upon receipt of a naming request, the City Manager shall:

1. Review the proposed request for its adherence to the City of Ames 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 City Manager will then present a recommendation regarding the naming request at a public meeting to the City Council.

c. Independently of a request from the public, the City Manager or the City Council itself may submit naming proposals for City Council consideration.

d. Final decision by City Council

The decision by the City Council to approve or deny a name change shall be considered final.