

CITY OF ROCHESTER HILLS

Naming/Renaming of City Parks, Buildings, Green Space and Facilities Policy

Introduction

The naming or renaming of City parks, buildings, green space and facilities can be challenging and controversial since assigning a name is a permanent identity for a public place and/or facility. The naming and renaming of City parks, buildings, green space, and facilities may require significant resources in terms of changing names on signs, maps, and literature. In addition, excessive and frequent name changing can be the source of confusion to the public. The purpose of this policy, which is designed to replace any existing naming policy, is to provide guidance to those interested in the naming and or renaming of the City's parks, buildings, green space, and/or facilities.

Policy Statement

It is the policy of the City of Rochester Hills to reserve the naming or renaming of City parks, buildings, green space, and facilities 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 Rochester Hills supports consideration of naming requests within the following broad categories.

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 City park, building, green space, or facility as communities often desire to preserve and honor the history of a city, its founders, other historical figures, its heritage, local landmarks and prominent geographical locations, and natural and geological features through the naming.

Outstanding Individuals

The City has benefited, throughout its history, 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 the development and management of the City's parks, buildings, green space, and facilities.

Major Gifts

Over the years, the City of Rochester Hills has benefited from the generosity of some of its residents, businesses, and donors. On occasion, the significance of such donations may warrant consideration being given to requests from either the donor or another party to acknowledge such a gift by naming.

Guiding Principles

In considering proposals for the naming or renaming of a City park, building, green space, or facility, the following general principles will be taken into account:

When naming a new park, building, green space, or facility, the proposed name should:

- Engender a strong positive image;
- Be appropriate in regard to the park's, building's, green space's, or facility's location and/or history;
- Have historical, cultural or social significance for future generations;
- Commemorate places, people or events that are of continued importance to the city, region, state, and/or nation;
- Have symbolic value that transcends its ordinary meaning or use and enhances the character and identity of the park, building, green space, or facility;
- Have broad public support; and
- Shall not result in the undue commercialization of the park, building, green space, or facility if it accompanies a corporate gift. Naming a park, building, or facility with a company name is disfavored, but this shall not be construed to discourage recognition of donors on walls, plaques, monuments or similar means.

Renaming a City park, building, green space or facility

Proposals to rename parks, buildings, green space, or facilities whether for a major gift or community request are

disfavored. Likewise, names that have become widely accepted by the community should 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 should be preserved wherever possible.

Naming/renaming City parks, buildings, green space or facilities for Outstanding Individuals

Naming or renaming a park, building, green space, or facility for an outstanding individual is favored only for those who have been deceased for at least three years (This provision can be waived in Council's discretion) and where that person's significance and good reputation have been recognized in the City's, State's and/or Nation's history.

In considering the naming/renaming of a park, building, green space, or facility after a deceased person, priority will be given to those who made a sustained and lasting contribution to the City of Rochester Hills, the State of Michigan, or the Nation.

The naming of a park, building, green space, or facility after people who may have lost their lives due to war or a tragic event should be considered only after the shock of such event has lessened within the community.

Naming/renaming for Historic Events, People, and Places

When a City park, building, green space, or facility is associated with or located near events, people, and places of historic, cultural or social significance, consideration may be given to naming that park, building, green space, or facility after such events, people, and places. In considering such proposals, the relationship of the event, person or place to the park, building, green space, or facility should be demonstrated through research and documentation.

Naming for Major Donations

From time to time, a significant donation may be made to the City. On such occasions, recognition of this donation by naming a new park, building, green space, or facility in honor of or at the request of the donor may be considered.

As a guideline, the threshold for considering the naming of a park, building, green space, or facility may include one or more of the following:

- Land for the majority of the park, building, green space, or facility was deeded to the city.
- Contribution of a minimum of 60% of the capital construction costs associated with developing the park, building, green space, or facility.
- Provision of a minimum 20-year endowment for the continued maintenance and/or programming of the park, building, green space, or facility.

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, building, green space or facility for an outstanding person. Exceptions to this will be considered on their own merits.

Reservation of Right to Rename

The City reserves the right to rename any park, building, green space, or facility if the name, or the person or organization for whom it is named, is deemed to be offensive or disreputable.

Other Considerations

To minimize confusion, City parks, buildings, green space, and facilities will not be subdivided for the purpose of naming unless there are readily identifiable physical divisions. However, naming of specific facilities within parks, buildings, green space, or facilities will be permitted.

Procedures & Guidelines

These procedures and guidelines have been established to ensure the naming or renaming of City parks, buildings, green space, and facilities will be approached in a consistent and sensible manner.

Requests for naming/renaming of parks, buildings, green space, or facilities

All requests for the naming or renaming of a City park, building, green space, or facility shall be made in writing to the Mayor who shall initially determine, whether a naming proposal merits further consideration.

Requests should contain the following minimum information:

- The proposed name;
- Reasons for the proposed name;
- Description/map showing location and boundaries of the park, building, green space, or facility;
- If proposing to name a facility within a park or building, include a description/map showing the location of the facility;
- If proposing to rename a park, building, green space, or facility, include justification for changing an established name; and
- If proposing to name a park, building, green space, or facility after an outstanding person or organization, include documentation of that person's or organization's significance and good reputation in the City's, State's or Nation's history.

Assessing and approving naming/renaming requests

Each proposal the Mayor determines to be worthy of consideration will be referred to a standing committee that is comprised of the Mayor or his/her representative, and the Director of Rochester Hills Parks Department, a member of the Historic Districts Commission, a City Councilmember, and one or more City resident volunteers. This committee shall:

- Review the proposed request for its adherence to this policy;
- Ensure that supporting information has been authenticated, particularly when an individual's or organization's name is proposed; and
- Elicit and consider public input.

The standing committee will then present a recommendation to the City Council for a final decision.