

City of Rockville, Maryland
DRAFT
PUBLIC PROPERTY NAMING AND COMMEMORATION POLICY
August 11, 2016

1. Public Property Naming

A. Purpose:

The Mayor and Council of the City of Rockville believe that the naming of public property such as buildings, bridges, stormwater ponds, parks, or features or spaces within those properties is a matter of great importance and deserves careful consideration. The Mayor and Council, therefore, enact this policy to establish a systematic and consistent methodology for the naming of City-owned property. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines and recommendations for decisions to name or rename City of Rockville public property.

This policy applies to the initial naming of a new city property, as well as requests to rename existing city property.

This policy does not address naming of streets, which is under the purview of the Planning Commission. The city offers a Memorial Program that provides the opportunity to dedicate a tree or bench in memory of a loved one, which is a separate program under the purview of the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board.

B. Procedures:

Requests for naming or renaming of City property (“Request”) shall be filed with the City Clerk by an individual or an organization. The Clerk will subsequently forward the Request to the appropriate Department Director. The Department Director or designee will present the Request to the respective Advisory Board (Board) at their next meeting. The Recreation and Parks Advisory Board will receive requests for naming parks and recreation facilities. The Traffic and Transportation Commission shall receive requests for naming bridges. The Environment Commission will receive requests for naming stormwater management ponds.

The Board associated with the specific naming request shall review the Request and make a recommendation to the Mayor and Council for its consideration, in accordance with the following process:

1. The Chair of the Board may appoint a member of the Board to conduct a review of the Request, using the guidelines outlined in this policy.
2. A recommendation by the Board requires a majority vote of the members present. Any vote requires the presence of a quorum.
3. Upon a majority vote of the Board, the Staff Liaison will prepare a letter to the Mayor and Council with the recommendation for consideration. The recommendation will be provided to the Mayor and Council within three (3) months of receipt of the request.
4. The Staff Liaison will file the letter with the City Clerk. The City Clerk shall provide a copy to each member of the Mayor and Council and the City Manager.

5. City staff will share information on Board recommended approvals in Rockville Reports and with neighborhood associations.
6. For Board recommended approvals, staff will schedule an agenda item for Mayor and Council consideration.
7. For Board recommended denials, staff will not schedule an agenda item unless requested by the Mayor and Council.
8. The Mayor and Council have final decision making authority. The Mayor and Council have sixty (60) days from receipt of the letter from the City Clerk to act on the Board recommendation. In the event no action is taken by the Mayor and Council within 60 days, the Request is denied.
9. City staff will inform the applicant of the decision.

C. Guidelines:

When considering naming of any City-owned property, the following guidelines shall apply:

1. Supporting documentation will be submitted with a naming request.
2. Priority should be given to names carrying geographical, historical, or cultural significance to the area in which the property is located, or to the City as a whole.
3. Property may be named after an individual when the individual has an association with the property, or the area in which it is located within the City.
4. Property may be named after an individual, living or deceased, or a group that has either:
 - a) Made significant financial or civic contributions to the City, or
 - b) Made a significant financial or civic contribution to the particular property/area being named, including property donation, and
 - c) The good reputation of the individual or group has been confirmed.
5. Consideration for the naming of a property honoring a deceased individual should not occur until the person has been deceased for at least one (1) year, and the person's historical significance has been secured in the history of the City.
6. Names should be chosen in a manner that avoids duplication, similarity, or inappropriateness.
7. Suggestions for names for new City property may be solicited from organizations, residents, and individuals.
8. The Board should carefully consider the most appropriate level of recognition commensurate with the individual's contribution to the Neighborhood, Subdivision, Community, City, County, State, Nation, and/or World.
9. The Board may seek concurrence and advice from a historical society, particularly if the name is intended to commemorate a historical event or cause.
10. An existing property should not be considered for renaming if the current name was designated within the past ten years; however the Board may propose a waiver to the ten year criterion.
11. If the Mayor and Council determines, in its reasonable and good faith opinion, that the circumstances have changed since the naming of a City-owned property such that continued association of the City with the name would adversely impact the reputation, image, mission, or integrity of the City, the Mayor and Council may change the name of the City-owned property with consultation with the respective Advisory Board.

2. Commemoration Policy

A. Purpose

The Mayor and Council believe that it is important to commemorate individuals who have made significant contributions to the City of Rockville. The Mayor and Council, therefore, enact this policy to establish a systematic and consistent methodology for addressing requests for commemoration.

B. Procedures

Commemoration requests (“Request”) shall be filed with the City Clerk by an individual or organization. The Clerk will forward the Request to the appropriate Department Director to present (or to ask a designee to present) the request and staff recommendations to the respective Advisory Board (Board) at their next meeting. The Board shall review the Request and make a recommendation to the Mayor and Council for its consideration, in accordance with the following process.

1. The Board reviews the Request and staff recommendations, using the guidelines outlined in this policy.
2. A recommendation by the Board requires a majority vote of the members present. Any vote requires a presence of a quorum.
3. Upon a majority vote of the Board, the Staff Liaison will prepare a letter to the Mayor and Council with the recommendation for consideration. The recommendation will be provided to the Mayor and Council within three (3) months of receipt of the request.
4. The Staff Liaison will file the letter with the City Clerk. The City Clerk shall provide a copy to each member of the Mayor and Council and the City Manager.
5. City staff will share information on Board recommended approvals in Rockville Reports and with neighborhood associations.
6. For Board recommended approvals, staff will schedule an agenda item for Mayor and Council consideration.
7. For Board recommended denials, staff will not schedule an agenda item unless requested by the Mayor and Council.
8. The Mayor and Council have final decision making authority. The Mayor and Council have sixty (60) days from receipt of the letter from the City Clerk to act on the Board recommendation. In the event no action is taken by the Mayor and Council within 60 days, the Request is denied.
9. City staff will inform the applicant of the decision.

C. Guidelines:

1. Commemoration shall be established for individuals or groups.
2. Supporting documentation will be submitted with a request for commemoration.
3. Staff will present recommendations to the Board for their consideration, as to the size, scope and location of the commemoration.
4. Alternative options, based on level and range of contribution, should be considered, including but not limited to:
 - a) Plaque in a prominent location within a public property

- b) A plaque on an honor wall in a community center, or other City building
- c) Naming an award

Mayor and Council Discretion

This policy is only a guide. Nothing in this policy limits the Mayor and Council's ultimate authority to vary from the terms of this policy, and to use its discretion in naming a City-owned property or commemorating an individual or group based on the unique facts of a particular circumstance.