

Memorandum No. M15-162

To: Board of Commissioners
From: Dean R. Bostrom, Executive Director
Date: November 20, 2015
RE: Renaming of Victoria Park Playground

Background

Board policy 5.01, Naming and Renaming of Park Sites, outlines the guidelines and process involved when a “park” is either named or renamed. The policy is noted below:

Board Policy 5.01, Naming and Renaming of Park Sites

The Board shall select names for new parks, buildings, facilities, athletic fields, or, when appropriate, to change the name(s) of existing parks, buildings, facilities, or athletic fields of the district that have not been dedicated. The Board may consider the following elements in determining the naming or renaming of parks, buildings, etc. (for purposes of this section only, "parks" shall means parks, buildings, facilities, athletic fields, or other "namable" property of the District):

- A. Parks may be named after streets, geographical locations, historical figures, events, concepts or as otherwise determined by the Board.*
- B. Parks may be named for individuals or groups that have donated land or facilities to the District or made a significant financial contribution toward the development of parks.*
- C. Parks may be named for individuals or groups that have made exceptional contributions to the community. Names of individuals, including, but not limited to, District Commissioners or other public officials, may not be given to a park, building, facility or athletic field unless the individual is deceased.
 - 1) The Board at public meeting should first announce the proposed name of the park, building, facility or athletic fields (requires a 5/7 vote).*
 - 2) A park site should only be confirmed and the name made official after a waiting period of at least sixty (60) days before the confirmation vote.*
 - 3) A 5/7 vote by the Board is required to name a park, building, facility, or athletic field or to change the name of an undedicated park, building, facility or athletic field of the District.**

The district currently has three such “parks” named after a deceased individual who made exceptional contributions to the community. In 1999 Kelly Park was renamed Cannon Crossing Park in recognition of Bill Cannon. Bill was a very active volunteer in the Hoffman Estates community and longtime park district volunteer for various youth athletic programs. In December of 2010, the Community Center and Ice Arena was renamed the Scott R. Triphahn Community Center and Ice Arena in recognition of Scott Triphahn. Scott was a highly influential park district commissioner for 12 years, a passionate volunteer youth athletic coach, founding president of Friends of H.E. Parks Foundation and steadfast pillar of Hoffman Estates.

In January 2015, Highpoint Park was officially renamed Joseph L. Fabbrini Park. Joseph L. Fabbrini was an individual who made exceptional contributions to the community and was one of several early community leaders who had a vision of creating a park district for Hoffman Estates. Joe served as one of the first park district’s commissioners and the first Director through 1967.

Implications

Peter Smith was a true champion and advocate for promoting equal access for all individuals with disabilities. Locally, Peter Smith was credited with being responsible for creating the Village of Hoffman Estates model accessibility ordinance. This ordinance was the first of its kind in Illinois and required that all public buildings be architecturally accessible to the handicapped. Eleven years before Peter was first elected to serve as Commissioner on the Hoffman Estates park district board, he served on the park district's Special Recreation Committee and was instrumental in spearheading the district's drop-in center for physically handicapped adults. Peter served as an active member of the Hoffman Estates Commission on Seniors and Disabled.

Beyond Hoffman Estates at the state level, Peter served as an Area Counsel Coordinator for the Governor's Committee on the Handicapped and was appointed to the Governor's Commission on Employment of the Handicapped. He played a lead role in the promotional short film "The Balance Sheet" sponsored by the Governor's Commission on Employment of the Handicapped as well as numerous TV public service announcements to promote equal opportunities for disabled individuals.

Nationally, Peter served on President Gerald Ford's Commission on the Employment of the Handicapped representing Hoffman Estates and the State of Illinois to advance equal employment opportunities for disabled individuals.

In addition to his contributions as an advocate for individuals with physical disabilities, Peter Smith was also elected twice to serve 4 year terms as a Hoffman Estates Park District Commissioner. Peter served the initial 4 year term from 1989-1993 and 1 additional year in his second term before he moved out of the Hoffman Estates boundaries to serve as Founder and President of NW Independent Living Group. Peter was also a member of the Hoffman Estates Zoning Board, President of Hoffman Estates High School Loyal Parents and member of the Hoffman Estates Jaycees.

Attached is a collection of newspaper articles, photographs, letters written and received by Peter Smith as well as his Obituary provided by his daughter Susan O'Sullivan and resident Diane Lawrence. Combined they provided a glimpse of Peter Smith's life in Hoffman Estates and the impact that he made as a community leader.

Included in the attached newspaper clippings is an article by Diane Jensen, staff writer for the Lerner Voice Newspaper, stating *Of all the things Pete has accomplished, it is with pride that he talks of his own community being the first in the state to adopt an accessibility ordinance. "I get a big thrill when I drive by the accessibility symbol on the Village Hall, Hoffman Estates High School, Church of the Cross and St. Hubert, knowing that it will be there at least 50 years. Maybe when my kids are grown, they will take their kids and show them the symbols and say that grandpa had something to do with it"*.

Peter Smith was a champion advocate for individuals with disabilities before the American's with Disabilities Act (ADA) became law. He is deserving of being recognized by the Hoffman Estates Park District for his exceptional contributions to advance the rights and opportunities of individuals with disabilities.

Peter's legacy to the community was his passion to advance equal opportunities for individuals with disabilities. As a Hoffman Estates resident Peter and his wife, Rosemary, raised their four

children on Kingsdale Drive, which is approximately ½ mile away from Victoria Park playground.

Victoria North playground is currently scheduled for renovation in the spring/early summer 2016. This playground is being designed to create the most ADA accessible playground in the district. Unique to this playground is the fact that the entire 6,000 sq. ft. play area will be covered with synthetic turf over solid engineered rubber surfacing. This synthetic turf surface will allow individuals easy access to the various play features. An extensive ramp system will allow equal access to above ground decks and play elements and transfer decks will provide assistance for those that need to get in and out of wheelchairs to use the equipment. When completed in the summer of 2016, this community playground will be the district's marquee accessible playground.

Recommendation

To recognize Peter Smith for his exceptional contributions as a champion advocate for individuals with disabilities, staff recommends that the board preliminarily approve the changing of the name of the Victoria North playground to **Peter M. Smith Playground**. If the board adopts the name with the required 5 out of 7 votes, the name can only be officially confirmed by the board 60 days after, or on January 26, 2016.

During the waiting period, the proposed name change would be presented to each of the park board's 3 standing committees, posted on the district's website and posted on a notification sign located at Victoria North playground. The website and notification sign will provide contact information regarding the proposed name change and the date/time of the park board meeting in which the confirmation will take place. The collective input received during the waiting period will be presented at that time.