



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS**  
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

MCPB Item 2  
December 1, 2011

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Montgomery County Planning Board and Parks Commission

**VIA:** Mary Bradford, Director of Parks  
Mike Riley, Deputy Director of Parks

**FROM:** Kate Stookey, Chief, Public Affairs and Community Partnerships Division  
David Tobin, Community Partnerships Manager, Foundation Liaison

**RE:** Individual Park Naming and Dedication Policy

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**Staff Recommendation:** Approve the Individual Park Naming and Dedication Policy as proposed.

### BACKGROUND:

In recent years M-NCPPC Montgomery Parks has faced increased demand for services while tax funding has steadily declined. Park systems all over the country are facing many of the same challenges. These anticipated funding challenges served to reinforce the Planning Board's decision in 2009 to revive the Montgomery County Parks Foundation (MCPF) and support a Strategic Development Fundraising Plan (Attachment A) which included, as a central component of the recommended fundraising strategies, the offering of naming opportunities to prospective philanthropic donors. While further cuts in the 2010 and 2011 operating budgets significantly reduced the ability of Parks to support MCPF fundraising, the MCPF has made significant progress with limited staff and is poised to implement a broad fundraising program. The ability of Montgomery Parks and the MCPF to generate non-tax based revenue to support the parks system through new relationships with prospective philanthropic donors depends in large measure on Planning Board approval of this policy.

The proposed Individual Park Naming and Dedication Policy is consistent with the philosophy outlined in the Strategic Development Fundraising Plan and the Memorandum of Understanding between the M-NCPPC and the MCPF ratified in February of 2010 (Attachment B). The proposed Policy provides for naming of parks, facilities, buildings, open space and natural areas, trails, programs, and other Park assets, in return for charitable contributions donated to the MCPF.

## **FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:**

Implementation of this policy has the potential to realize significant revenue for the Maryland-National Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) to develop, maintain, improve, expand, support, preserve, fund, encourage, and sustain Montgomery Parks for the benefit of its users and the community at large. A successful naming program can also help avoid the imposition or raising of user fees or delays in opening of new facilities due to shortfalls in operating funds (OBI).

## **LEGACY GIVING AND PARKS**

Legacy giving is the number one form of giving in the United States today, surpassing even estate considerations. Legacy endowment monies are typically utilized for new construction capital projects with a replacement and enhancement endowment, for existing facilities with a replacement and enhancement endowment, and in a few instances for endowing general operating expenses of strategic programs.

This proposed Policy provides a tool for the M-NCPPC and the MCPF to meet community demand for Parks and Park programs. Montgomery Parks will be able to emulate universities and hospitals who, for decades, have secured billions in private sector assistance through naming rights. The adoption of naming rights policies and fundraising programs by parks systems (see Attachment E) is relatively recent but has proven to be a significant source of alternative revenue for parks systems as close to home as Fairfax, Virginia and as far away as Bakersfield, California and Vancouver, Washington (see Attachment D).

The granting of naming opportunities is not new to Montgomery Parks. There are currently 30 park assets named for or dedicated to individuals (Attachment C). While only a handful were granted in exchange for financial contributions they are not insignificant, and include a \$100,000 gift to rename the Pauline Betz Addie Center at Cabin John Regional Park, a land gift plus \$250,000 to established the Dr. William Rickman Equestrian Center, and most recently a \$70,000 gift for park improvements and two individual dedications at Piney Branch Local Park from former NBA All-Star Steve Francis. Combined with new Public-Private partnerships and a longstanding "trees and benches" program, Montgomery Parks has made progress toward broadening the base of financial support needed to maintain an increasingly popular parks system.

The proposed naming opportunities program will offer prospective donors the opportunity to name, rename or dedicate parks and areas or facilities within parks (Park Assets) for an individual in recognition of significant charitable contributions. The purpose of the proposed Individual Park Naming and Dedication policy is to establish guidelines to assist the M-NCPPC, Montgomery Parks, the Planning Board, and the MCPF in the development and management of this program.

Historically, the majority of Montgomery County parks and areas or facilities within parks have been named for a geographic area or a natural or historic feature. In many cases a park name is assigned by staff at the time of acquisition and prior to adoption of a master plan. The 1998 Park Naming Policy

(Attachment F) allows Park assets to be named to reflect local folk usage, historic significance, persons of historic or exceptional civic service to the County or the Commission, or in exchange for charitable contributions. This proposed policy makes an important distinction between the criteria associated with park names that are granted in exchange for a philanthropic contribution and the requirements associated with those that are “commemorative” (no philanthropic contribution).

The proposed Individual Park Naming and Dedication Policy:

- Encourages the solicitation of charitable contributions by offering individuals the opportunity to name, rename or dedicate certain Park Assets for individuals in exchange for charitable contributions;
- Distinguishes between naming and dedications that are granted in exchange for a philanthropic contribution and dedications granted without regard for a philanthropic contribution;
- Focuses on individual naming and dedication opportunities (naming opportunities for organizations and corporations will be addressed in a separate Corporate Sponsorship and Naming Policy to be presented to the Planning Board later this year).

This policy also includes provisions taken from naming policies of similar organizations (see Attachment E) that have successfully raised alternative revenues to support parks.

### **ADMINISTRATION**

Pursuant to a binding memorandum of understanding approved by the Montgomery County Planning Board and MCPF for the purpose of incorporating and implementing this policy, the process for Philanthropic Naming will be administered by the Foundation in an effort to “...pursue endowment funds for maintenance and improvements of current facilities and programs.” This process includes, but is not limited to the marketing of Philanthropic Naming opportunities, renaming or dedications, negotiating terms of proposed naming agreements, and presenting those agreements to Foundation trustees and the Department for approval. The MCPF will collect all contributions associated with Philanthropic Naming opportunities. Park and MCPF staff will develop a separate agreement between M-NCPPC and MCPF that will determine precisely how those funds are used.

The process for commemorative requests will be administered by the Department.

Please note that the proposed policy ensures M-NCPPC retains final approval of all naming opportunities proposed by the Foundation and rests that authority with the Department of Parks instead of the M-NCPPC Executive Director. This appears to be the most appropriate approach for the following reasons:

- The Department of Parks is in the best position to identify ongoing priorities for available naming opportunities in collaboration with the Foundation;
- The Department of Parks is in the best position to quickly determine if the negotiated amount is sufficient to cover the annual maintenance and/or program expenses for the Park Asset during the full term of the agreement;

- **The Foundation is located within the Department of Parks' headquarters building, ensuring a quick and timely response to donors and any proposed naming opportunity.**

**Because the authority to delegate responsibility to sign contracts rests with the M-NCPPC Executive Director (Section 2-210), approval of this policy as drafted will equate to the Planning Board directing the Executive Director to delegate signature authority for individual naming opportunities to the Director of the Department of Parks.**

**The Department of Parks will present ongoing negotiations to the Planning Board during closed session as needed or appropriate to confirm terms and contract details. The M-NCPPC ED, Secretary-Treasurer and General Counsel will be invited to attend those sessions to provide input and guidance.**