



STAFF REPORT

Meeting Date: September 2, 2014
To: Honorable Mayor & City Council
From: Susan Healy Keene, AICP, Director of Community Development
William Crouch, AIA AICP, Urban Designer
Subject: Request by Cultural Heritage Commission to Discuss Proposed
Name Change for Fountain in Will Rogers Memorial Park
Attachments: 1. Request from Cultural Heritage Commission (email)

INTRODUCTION

At the request of the Cultural Heritage Commission, the following matter is before the City Council for discussion and direction. Cultural Heritage Commission Chair Maralee Beck has requested that the City consider dedicating an existing fountain in Will Rogers Memorial Park to the namesake of Margaret J. Anderson (see Attachment 1). This report outlines a path forward for review and approval of the proposed action by the applicable City departments, Commissions, and Council.



DISCUSSION

Will Rogers Memorial Park is a public park located at 9650 Sunset Boulevard, at the triangular intersection of N. Canon Drive and N. Beverly Drive. The park was the second developed in Beverly Hills (after Beverly Gardens Park) and was originally developed in 1912 as part of the grounds of the Beverly Hills Hotel, which was built in order to attract tourism and residential development to the early planned community of Beverly Hills. In 1915, hotelier and city pioneer Margaret J. Anderson and her son Stanley officially donated the land to the City, which then became the first municipal park following the City's incorporation. The park was known as "Sunset Municipal Park" until 1952, when it was rededicated for beloved resident and Honorary Mayor Will Rogers.

In the central area of the park sits a fountain which is proposed to be named for Margaret J. Anderson in recognition of her contributions to the Beverly Hills community and direct donation of the land that would become Will Rogers Memorial Park. No other historic name has been previously associated with the fountain. The request includes a commemorative plaque to be placed on site as a marker.

Suggested Proceedings

While no formal renaming procedures are outlined in the Beverly Hills Municipal Code (BHMC), a possible course of action for the naming could proceed as follows:

- 1) The Cultural Heritage Commission (CHC), in an advisory capacity to the Recreation and Parks Commission (RPC), could review the proposed name change for historical accuracy and appropriateness. The CHC, as authorized by BHMC §10-3-3208 (Powers and Duties of the Commission), could also be tasked with reviewing the plaque design. The CHC's recommendation would be then forwarded to the RPC for formal consideration;
- 2) The Recreation and Parks Commission, in an advisory capacity to the City Council, would review the details of the request, including plaque placement location, and make a formal recommendation to the Council;
- 3) The matter would be forwarded to the City Council by the Recreation and Parks Division for final determination.

Since this item is not currently included on any department work plans, staff is seeking direction from the City Council whether or not staff and Commissions should add the project to their respective work plans, and if so, to indicate the desired level of priority and to allocate funding for the fiscal impacts if necessary.

FISCAL IMPACT

The direct fiscal impacts associated with this request are minimal and might be able to be absorbed into existing department resources. The main cost that would be incurred would be the plaque to be placed on site. Plaque prices vary by size, ranging from approximately \$150 for a 4" x 6" plaque to approximately \$1000 for a 16" x 20" plaque in cast bronze with raised type (consistent with the plaques that are authorized for landmark properties listed on the Local Register of Historic Properties). In addition, the Community Services Department would need to update department materials such as websites and brochures reflecting the new name. A suitable account in the Community Services Department budget would need to be identified to fund these costs; if none exists, staff would need to return to the City Council requesting appropriation of budgetary funds.

Meeting Date: September 2, 2014
Study Session – Naming of Fountain

RECOMMENDATION

Staff seeks direction from the City Council.

Susan Healy Keene, AICP
Director of Community Development


Approved By



Attachment 1

Request from Cultural Heritage Commission (email)

From: Noah Furie [<mailto:noah@budgetmortgagecorp.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, August 05, 2014 3:34 PM
To: Mahdi Aluzri
Cc: mjb1chief@yahoo.com
Subject: RE: Noah Furie Proposal

Dear Mahdi:

Request

The following request is being made by Maralee Beck, chair of the Cultural Heritage Commission that the City Council pursuant to 10-3-3208(S) of Article 32, Chapter 3, Title 10 of the Beverly Hills Municipal Code direct the Cultural Heritage Commission to study the naming of the fountain at Will Rogers Memorial Park after Margaret J. Anderson, for her donation of the park to the City and her contributions to the early development of the community as the Beverly Hills Hotel's first owner and builder.

Background

Margaret J. Anderson, the Beverly Hills Hotel's first owner and builder played a major role in attracting tourists and prospective residents to the area. The hotel catered to wealthy Easterners who often spent several months in residence to avoid the chilly winters of their native states. It promised impeccable service, privacy, recreation and relaxation to its patrons.

Sunset Park, which is now "Will Rogers Memorial Park", was originally landscaped as part of the Beverly Hills Hotel grounds when it was constructed in 1912. It was one of two parks in the city until 1915, when it was officially given to the city by Margaret J. Anderson, the hotel owner.

Action

Direct the Cultural Heritage Commission to study the naming request and make a recommendation to the City Council, including proposed size, design and language for the plaque.
After the City Council takes action on this request, the Recreation & Parks Commission shall review and approve the location of the plaque.

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Commissioner
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