



MEMORANDUM

Council Agenda
Item No. IX.J.
10/11/2016

The City of OKLAHOMA CITY

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: James D. Couch, City Manager

Resolution designating as “Manuel Perez Park,” property located south of the Oklahoma River and east of South Robinson Avenue and including a portion of the park currently designated as “Wiley Post Park”; temporarily suspending the provision of The City of Oklahoma City Park Naming and Renaming Policy stating that parks, park areas, and park facilities named after individuals shall never be changed unless it is found that, because of the individual’s character, the continued use of their name would not be in the best interest of the community; and designating as unnamed park space the property currently known as “Manuel Perez Park,” located at 301 SW 14th Street. Wards 4, 6, and 7.

Location Near South Robinson Avenue and SE 17th Street.

Background In Summer 2016, community members requested that The City of Oklahoma City (City) reassign the designation of “Manuel Perez Park” to the park currently designated as “Wiley Post Park.” “Manuel Perez Park” is a neighborhood park located at 301 SW 14th Street. “Wiley Post Park” is a regional park located at 1700 South Robinson Avenue.

According to the Parks and Recreation Department archives, “Wiley Post Park” was constructed in 1934-35. Its name was chosen based on suggestions submitted by local school children. Wiley Post (1898-1935) was an Oklahoma resident and famed aviator.

The City acquired the property for “Manuel Perez Park” in multiple transactions between 1927 and 1948. According to The Oklahoman archives, the City Council designated it “Manuel Perez Park” in 1979. Mr. Perez (1923-1945) was an Oklahoma City native who posthumously received the Medal of Honor for his heroics during World War II.

The renaming request was introduced at the July 20, 2016, Oklahoma City Park Commission meeting (Item No. V.). Because it involved property leased to the Oklahoma City Riverfront Redevelopment Authority (OCRRA), that entity also considered the request on August 16, 2016 (Item No. V.C.). The naming policies of both the Park Commission and OCRRA provide for public-comment periods before formal recommendations to the City Council.

During the public-comment phase, the request was revised so that the new “Manuel Perez Park” would consist of the southeast portion of “Wiley Post Park” and additional, unnamed park property east of Shields Boulevard. (See Exhibit A, incorporated herein.) The remainder of “Wiley Post Park” would remain intact.

The new “Manuel Perez Park” would total 27 acres. It would include the Mat Hoffman Action Sports Park (which would retain its name) and the Compass Parking oval. The area currently designated as “Manuel Perez Park” (301 SW 14th Street) would become unnamed park space.

On August 17, 2016 (Item No.VI.), the Park Commission recommended approval of the modified renaming request. OCRRA did so on September 27, 2016 (Item No. V.D.).

Both the City and OCRRA naming policies stipulate that parks, park areas, and park facilities named after individuals shall not be changed unless, because of the person’s character, the continued use of their name would not be in the best interest of the community. However, the Park Commission recommended that the City Council temporarily suspend that portion of the City’s Park Naming and Renaming Policy. OCRRA did the same regarding its Policy on Naming of Areas and Facilities Along the Oklahoma River.

If the City Council adopts the Resolution, staff of the Parks and Recreation Department will install appropriate signage to identify the new “Manuel Perez Park” and will include it in updated online and print information about the Oklahoma City park system.

Review

Parks and Recreation Department

Recommendation: Resolution be adopted.