



AGENDA
SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING
40TH CITY COUNCIL
OAK PARK, MICHIGAN
NOVEMBER 3, 2025
5:00 PM

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. ROLL CALL

3. SPECIAL BUSINESS

- A. Discuss and consider the City's naming rights policy
- B. Discuss and consider the City's new branding options.

4. CALL TO THE AUDIENCE

Each speaker's remarks are a matter of public record; the speaker, alone, is responsible for his or her comments and the City of Oak Park does not, by permitting such remarks, support, endorse or accept the content, thereof, as being true or accurate. "Any person while being heard at a City Council Meeting may be called to order by the Chair, or any Council Member for failure to be germane to the business of the City, vulgarity, or personal attacks on persons or institutions." There is a three minute time limit per speaker.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The City of Oak Park will comply with the spirit and intent of the American with Disabilities Act. We will provide support and make reasonable accommodations to assist people with disabilities to access and participate in our programs, facilities and services. Accommodations to participate at a Council Meeting will be made with 7-day prior notice.

City of Oak Park, Michigan Naming Rights Policy

I. Purpose

The City of Oak Park is committed to providing a fair, consistent, and efficient process while respecting the important need for public consultation and legislative approval in regards to the naming of city-owned (municipal) properties parks, city-buildings, amenities and recreational facilities. The intent of this policy is intended to guide (a) any individual or community group that is interested in having a park, building, or recreation facility named for a significant person, event, or place; (b) any individual, group, or business that is interested in having their significant donation (park, building, recreation facility) recognized; (c) the advisory group that will be making a recommendation to the City in regard to these requests; and (d) City Council members that will be holding public hearings and approving the names of parks, buildings and recreation facilities;

II. Definitions

- **Applicant:** An individual, organization, or entity proposing a naming, co-naming, or renaming.
- **Naming Rights:** The granting of the right to name a city-owned facility in recognition of significant contributions, typically financial.
- **Commemorative Naming:** Naming granted to honor an individual or group for exceptional service or contributions, generally without financial consideration.
- **Naming Entity:** The individual, corporation, or organization to whom naming rights are granted.
- **Parks:** all City-owned parcels designated as public parks under the City Master Plan. This definition shall encompass any public parks subject to an Interlocal Agreement with another governmental entity, including, but not limited to Oakland County.
- **Buildings:** All significant park and recreation structures that house recreational programs and activities (e.g. pavilions and special event space).
- **Recreational Facilities:** Major, permanent components of City-owned parks (e.g. ball fields, swimming pools, playgrounds, trails). Rooms within Buildings may be considered separate and distinct recreational facilities.
- **Amenities:** Smaller furnishings and facilities in the City owned park and recreation system (e.g. benches, small fountains, tables, commemorative gardens).

III. Scope

This policy applies to: Naming rights to parks, buildings, recreation facilities, and amenities on real property owned by the City of Oak Park. The Oak Park City Council retains the authority to establish formal legal names for city-owned properties. The intent of this policy is to reserve the naming or renaming of parks, city-buildings, recreational amenities and facilities to those circumstances which are shown to best serve the interests of the City and assure a worthy and enduring legal for the City's parks and recreation system. To this end, the City will consider naming requests in the following three categories:

- a) Exceptional individuals. Recognition of an exceptional City leader or a dedicated supporter of the City may result in community supported renaming of an existing or naming of a new park, city building, recreational facility or amenity.
- b) Major Gifts. The City have benefited from a legacy of community generosity. Families, residents, and businesses have given gifts of their time and skills, resources and productions, and financial contributions.

General Principles

In considering any proposal to name or rename a park, building, recreational facility or amenity, the following questions shall be considered individually and collectively:

- a) Will the name have historical, cultural and social significance for generations to come?
- b) Will the name engender a strong and positive image for the community?
- c) Will the name memorialize or commemorate people, places or events that are of enduring importance to the community or the nation?
- d) Will the name engender significant ties of friendship and mutual recognition and support within the community or with those outside of the community?
- e) Will the name be identified with some major achievement or the advancement of the public good within the community or the nation?
- f) Will the name be particularly suitable for the park or recreational facility based on the location or history of the park, recreational facility or the surrounding neighborhood?
- g) Will the name have symbolic value that transcends its ordinary meaning or use and enhance the character and identity of the park or recreational facility?
- h) Will the naming request that accompanies a corporate gift result in the undue commercialization or politicization of the park or recreational facility?

Naming or Renaming for Exceptional Individuals

The following guidelines apply to naming requests that result from either a community process or major gift.

a) Naming of parks and recreational facilities is reserved only for persons who are deceased. Such naming after a person shall not occur until the person has been deceased for at least (1) years and that person's historical significance and good reputation have been secured in the history of the community or nation.

b) Priority for naming parks and recreational facilities after deceased persons should be given in the following order to those who have significant and lasting contributions 1) to Oak Park's system of parks and open spaces, 2) to the City of Oak Park, or 3) to the nation. Naming parks and buildings after national or international figures should be rare and only upon a substantial demonstration of the figure's connection to or special importance in the Oak Park community or the State of Michigan.

c) Naming of parks and recreational facilities after people or a group of people who perish in or survive a tragic event or war should be considered only well after the public shock generated by the tragic event or war has lessened. Potential sites for such memorials should be focused on parks or recreational facilities that are more known for their serene and contemplative nature rather than active recreational locations, such as playing fields. Emphasis should be placed on the contributions or heroic actions of these people during their lifetime, rather than the circumstances of their death or survivorship.

d) Exceptions for naming living persons may occur as described in sections pertaining to major gifts.

Naming and Renaming for Major Gifts

When a gift is made to the City of Oak Park that is of such magnitude and generosity that naming of such a new park or recreational facility in honor of or at the request of the benefactor, consideration to naming rights will be considered in addition to the other criteria outlined herein. As a guideline but not a limitation, the threshold for naming rights on parks and buildings would include one or preferably more of the following:

1) Deeding to the City of most, if not all, of the land on which the park or building to be named will be situated;

2) Payment of one-half or more of the capital costs of constructing a park or building to be named (depending on the availability of matching funds or grants);

3) Some long-term endowment for the repair and maintenance of a donated park or building; and

4) The provision of significant program costs for facilities that will serve parks and recreation program needs.

Likewise, as a guideline but not a limitation, the threshold for naming rights on major features would include one or preferably more of the following:

- 1) Payment of the capital costs for constructing and installing a major feature;
- 2) Some long-term endowment for the repair and maintenance of the donated major feature; and
- 3) The provision of significant program costs for any major feature giving rise to or supporting a parks and recreation program.

Naming for Persons

Benefactors seeking naming rights for major gifts shall follow the guidelines on “Persons” with respect to naming of parks and buildings after persons. An exception will be considered on its own merits. A major feature that has been donated or refurbished may be named for a living person(s) provided that said person(s) is of good reputation. Whatever contract accompanies the gift and naming rights should address all conditions applying to the naming, including time limits for naming of features. The City of Oak Park reserves the right to rename any park, building, or major feature if the person for whom it is named turns out to be disreputable, subsequently acts in a disreputable way, or fails to follow through with commitments made during the naming or renaming process.

Naming for Entities

A corporation, association, and other legally created entity making a major gift may request that the name of that entity be associated with the name of the park, building, or major feature which is the subject of the major gift. Each request is evaluated on its own merits and requires public input. The City of Oak Park reserves the right to remove an entity name association on a park or building or to rename a major feature if the entity turns out to be disreputable, subsequently acts in a disreputable way, or fails to follow through with commitments made during the naming or renaming process.

Other Considerations

Typically, a park should not be subdivided for the purposes of naming. This limitation should not prevent giving a different name for a trail, building, recreational facility or amenity located in or near the park. Facilities that are held by the department through a short-term lease or use agreement or improvements that have a limited life span or occupancy should not be named. All signs on parks and recreational facilities must meet and not depart from the City’s graphic and signage standards. No specialized signage will

be displayed. If a new park or building is completed and no suggestion for a name has come from the community or in association with a gift, the City Council will take advisement from the Naming Rights Advisory Committee on names using an organized public process.

IV. **Procedures for Requests to Name or Rename a Park, Building, Recreational Facility or Amenity.**

When an application is received, the City Manager and Department Directors shall review to provide input on the feasibility and logistics related to implementation, including cost estimates and historical information related to the requested site. After an administrative review the application will be sent to the “Naming Rights Review Committee for review, analysis and recommendation to City Council. Review of the application, letters and any documents submitted by the applicant and administration is designed to ensure the integrity and completeness of the naming process. The “Naming Rights Review Committee must deliver a response to the City Council within 90 days of the “Naming Rights Review Committee chairperson’s receipt of the application request. Within 45 days of receipt of the Naming Rights Review Committee recommendation the City Council will place the application on the City Council agenda for consideration. The opportunity for public comments shall be included prior to City Council action. After City Council determination, approved naming requests will be returned to City Administration for design, implementation and coordination with the applicant. Any application request not approved through the process or by City Council will have a waiting period of one year before resubmission of the same naming request

- Parks and recreational areas.
- Municipal buildings and facilities.

Note: This policy does not apply to city core services facilities such as City Hall, Fire Stations, or Police Stations, or City-owned parks or property subject to an Interlocal Agreement with another governmental entity. .

IV. **Criteria for Naming**

Naming proposals will be considered based on:

- **Geographical or Descriptive Significance:** Reflecting the location or features of the property.
- **Historical or Cultural Relevance:** Associating with notable events, individuals, or cultural heritage.
- **Community Contributions:** Recognizing individuals or groups who have made significant contributions to the city.
- **Financial Contributions:** Acknowledging substantial monetary donations that enable the development or enhancement of city properties.

Note: Naming proposals should not conflict with grant funding policies established by local, state, or federal programs.

V. Exclusions

Naming rights will not be granted for:

- Temporary or non-permanent structures or amenities.
- City property subject to an Interlocal Agreement with another governmental entity.
- Street Naming

Commented [CK1]: Recommend deletion due to First Amendment concerns. The City cannot regulate based upon content. Evaluation has to be based upon objective criteria.

VI. Application Process

1. **Submission:** Applicants must submit a completed application form to the City Manager's office.
2. **Review:** The City Manager will review the application and may consult relevant city departments or advisory boards.
3. **Recommendation:** The City Manager will forward the application, along with recommendations, to the City Council.
4. **Approval:** The City Council will consider the application and make a final decision. Naming rights may be granted by resolution.

Commented [CK2]: I recommend excluding street naming, which is within the sole discretion of Council under the current ordinance. There is also an issue with changing street names, reporting to the road commission, state, etc.

City staff, city residents, community leaders, and organizations interested in proposing a name for parks, recreation facilities, municipal buildings, and amenities must complete the City of Oak Park on-line application. Attaching a signed letter describing the basis for the naming request and any associated documents in support of the request is recommended. If determined there is a foreseeable impact on adjacent property owners, the requesting applicant may be required by the administration to communicate with the neighboring residents of the naming site and provide documentation of the contacts. Applications shall be reviewed by applicable City department managers to provide input on the feasibility and logistics related to the implementation of the request, including cost estimates and historical information related to the request site. If the naming request is approved by the City Council, a fee equal to 50% of the City Administration estimated cost will be due prior to design and implementation of the naming request. The naming application will be recorded and retained through the Clerks office once approved by City Council. If the established fee is not collected through the Clerk-Treasurer office within 60 days of City Council approval, the application will be closed. The City Council and applicant will be notified of closed applications. A waiting period of one year will be imposed before a new application is accepted for the same naming request. An endowment fund for ongoing maintenance (10% of total project cost*) shall be raised by the applicant and deposited before the design and implementation of the naming request. This endowment fund will be established through the City Finance Department and managed by the Finance Director or designee. In the event a previous approved naming location is impacted by a change of use the City Administration will advise the City Council and provide alternatives for appropriate relocation that meets the intent of the original

naming request. Any relocation of a previously approved naming location must be acted upon by the City Council through a majority vote. *10% is a baseline estimate to be reviewed and agreed upon by the City Engineer and City Administration to guarantee that upkeep does not exceed this built-in maintenance endowment

RENAMING

The renaming of city-owned properties is strongly discouraged. It is recommended that efforts to change a name be subject to the most crucial examination so as not to diminish the original justification for the naming or devalue the prior contributions. All application requests for the renaming of public-owned property will be reviewed by the City Administration and sent directly to City Council. The Oak Park City Council reserves the right to rename any and all public property. "Naming Rights Review Committee shall not review applications for the renaming of city-owned properties, unless requested by the City Council

RESCIND

The City Council reserves the right to rescind previously approved naming of all City public property. Information learned following the naming of public property that may bring disrepute upon the community may be sent to the Naming Rights Review Committee review and a recommendation sent to City Council within 90 days of receipt or the City Council may rescind without any further review

RENEWAL

Naming rights will stand for 10 years. The intent of a renewal is to afford the City Council an opportunity to review the relevance and condition of the named property. Naming records maintained by the Clerk's office will be presented to the City Council as a Council agenda item upon the renewal date. The named public property may be removed or left in place, at the City Council discretion through a majority vote. The condition of the named property will be reviewed by appropriate city staff, assessing the appearance, safety and maintenance history. A report will be provided to the City Manager and forwarded to the City Council before renewal. The relevance and continuation of the named property will be reviewed by the City Council. The City Council will make the determination, but may direct the Ethics Committee to review the renewal application. If a non-renewal is directed by the City Council, any remaining endowment funds shall be disbursed to the contributor, as previously established through the Finance Department.

VII. Naming Rights Agreement

Upon approval, a formal agreement will be executed between the City and the Naming Entity, outlining:

- The terms and duration of the naming rights.
- Financial or other obligations of the Naming Entity.
- Maintenance and signage responsibilities.
- Conditions for termination or modification of the agreement.

VIII. Conflicts of Interest

All naming decisions must align with the city's conflict-of-interest and nepotism policies. Employees of the City of Oak Park and City of Oak Park elected officials involved in the naming process shall not have personal or financial interests that could influence their decisions.



CITY OF OAK PARK, MI STAFF REPORT

3.B

AGENDA FOR: November 3, 2025

SUBJECT: Discuss and consider the City's new branding options.

DEPARTMENT: Communications and Public Information

FROM: Brittany Toth, Director of Communications

SUMMARY:

Background:

On August 21, 2025, the Communications and Public Information Department proposed exploring a potential rebrand to align Oak Park's digital and visual identity with its recent progress and future direction.

Initial Council Presentation (Review/Refresh):

In today's digital-first world, first impressions are often shaped by a city's website, logo, and social media presence. With a website redesign already budgeted, City Administration and Communications leadership recommend addressing the brand first—efficiently and effectively—to ensure consistency, responsibly steward resources, and strengthen engagement with residents, stakeholders, and the broader community. The case was made to leverage existing momentum and utilizing best practice application across both national and regional jurisdictions.

Next Steps:

Following direction from the August 21, 2025, special City Council meeting, staff have advanced efforts to refresh the City's visual identity in step with this ongoing momentum. At that meeting, Council requested exploration of a new logo, the potential conversion of the existing logo into an official City seal, and the development of a monogram option consistent with best practices and findings from prior case studies.

Staff have prepared the requested derivations and branding alternatives for review and consideration based on Council's prior direction. This meeting will present the requested design derivations, edits and alternatives for Council review and continued discussion. This meeting will present the requested revisions for Council review, with the goal of finalizing a unified vision to guide the City's branding and forthcoming website redesign.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT: N/A

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Finalize and vote on a unified vision to allow for expedient forward motion

EXHIBITS:

None