

Historical Resources Commission

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March 11, 2021

RE: Proposed Policy for Naming/Renaming of City Assets

On August 13th, 2020, a joint-commission meeting was held between three City of Reno commissions – the Historical Resources Commission (HRC), Human Rights Commission, and Recreation and Parks Commission. The meeting agenda item was to review, discuss, and consider recommendations to City Council regarding guidelines and policy relating to naming and renaming City of Reno assets, “streets, parks and other facilities”.

In follow-up to this meeting, the Historical Resources Commission has discussed this at our regular meetings and has drafted the following proposed policy:

Prologue: Renaming of City assets should not be taken lightly, regardless of the reason. History is important and names on the land matter.

The history of our city and community is tangible in locations, places, and through the names on the land. Place names are long established and associated with locations that are familiar and significant to the city and community. Renaming locations – be it streets, parks, neighborhoods, buildings, etcetera – would require the people affected to make significant efforts to change mailing addresses, business stationary, bank statements, credit card information, mapping information, to name just a few.

Additionally, renaming should not be used to cancel history. History is replete with complicated legacies of past historic figures. History reflects the occurrences and attitudes of past times and should be used as a milestone by which to compare present day – and plan for the future; it should not be obscured nor erased.

Authority of the Historical Resources Commission: Per the City of Reno Annexation and Land Development Code, adopted on January 13, 2021, Section 18.08.904, the duties of the Historical Resources

City of Reno, P. O. Box 1900, Reno, NV 89505

Commission are outlined. Section 18.08.904 (b) Powers and Duties of the Historical Resources Commission states the following: "The Historical Resources Commission shall have the following powers and duties: (1) Contribute to the development and review of plans, bylaws, rules, ordinances, regulations, and implementation programs affecting historic resources; Survey districts, areas, places, buildings, structures, sites, landscapes, objects, and properties having historic community architectural, archaeological, or aesthetic value;" and 18.08.904 (b) (3) states that the Historical Resources Commission shall: "Review and act upon applications for designation, demolition alteration and maintenance of historic resources".

From this duty and responsibility bestowed on the Historical Resources Commission by the City of Reno, it is appropriate that the Historical Resources Commission take the lead in proposing concepts and procedures and policies for addressing renaming and naming of City assets that do or may have historical aspects. The following considerations for renaming/naming have been developed by the Historical Resources Commission:

Tier 1 considerations: Sites without historic elements may be reviewed and approved by a committee comprised of representatives from appropriate City of Reno Commissions. A member of the Historical Resources Commission should be included on the committee.

Tier 2 considerations: Involves proposed renaming/naming of sites, buildings, venues, districts, etcetera that have historic considerations or names.

- The Historical Resources Commission should be the lead commission responsible for reviewing and commenting on the renaming application for historic districts, public facilities, parks, streets, landscapes, etc. The Historical Resources Commission will conduct public meetings and take public input regarding any proposed renaming.
- Any renaming of an existing historic landmark, building, district, etcetera, should first be reviewed and considered by the Historical Resources Commission initially and directly, which will hold hearings and take public comment. The Historical Resources Commission would vote on the approval of the renaming; a disapproval should cast significant doubt for approval by the City Council.
- Renaming an existing historic district and/or adjunct roads, parks, etcetera, should require special consideration and circumstances. The renaming application should be authored by an existing property owner that has at least ten years residence in the district.
- Whenever a renaming effort is proposed, the people who would be directly affected by the renaming should be consulted directly and their opinions should carry significant influence. The process must be as open and transparent as possible.
- The renaming of any facility should be considered with much deliberation. Any facility named through deed restriction should not be considered for renaming.

Respectfully,
City of Reno Historic Resources Commission



Bradley Carlson, AIA
Chairperson