Source: Parks and Recreation

To: City Council

From: City Manager and Staff

Council Meeting Date: Oct 7, 2013

Re: Report: Potential Renaming of Old 63 Roadside Park

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Parks & Recreation Department was approached by a representative of the Shepard Boulevard Neighborhood Association regarding the renaming of the Old 63 Roadside Park to Sterling Wyatt Park. In 2012, Army Specialist Sterling W. Wyatt lost his life while on patrol in Afghanistan. Historically, the department is hesitant to change park or trail names due to the number of requests received. However, with support from Councilperson Hoppe, park staff investigated options for renaming the park. Once staff established that there are no legal prohibitions, possible names of the park were submitted to the P&R Commission at their September 19, 2013 meeting for their consideration and recommendation to Council. As shown in the attached minutes, the Commission debated several names and voted to recommend three names to Council for their consideration. The recommended names in alphabetical order are: Old 63 Roadside Memorial Park, Patriot Memorial Park, and Sterling W. Wyatt Park. The authority to name a park is at the Council level so staff is seeking direction on how to proceed.

Agenda Item No: REP 148-13

DISCUSSION:

The P&R Department was approached by Mr. Rod Robison, who at the time was an officer with the Shepard Blvd Neighborhood Association, with a suggestion of renaming Old 63 Roadside Park, 1001 Old 63 South, to something that would recognize Army Specialist Sterling William Wyatt, a former Shepard resident who lost his life while on patrol in Afghanistan. Spc. Wyatt grew up in Columbia attending Shepard Elementary, Lange Middle School, Oakland Junior High and Rock Bridge High School.

Park staff has confirmed that there are no legal issues regarding the Old 63 Roadside Park name. There are no deed requirements nor were there federal funds used for the acquisition or development of the park. In fact, the park was among a list of 41 parks that was officially named by the City Council in 2010. Link: http://www.gocolumbiamo.com/ParksandRec/Council_Agenda_Items/documents/council_2010_01-19_parknames.pdf

In an effort to minimize the number of park or trail renaming requests, the department has adopted the attached Park & Facilities Naming Guidelines. Throughout the year, the department receives multiple requests for park or trail name changes based on the loss of loved ones, or significant service by veterans, politicians, educators, community leaders, etc. It makes it difficult for staff, the Parks & Recreation Commission and City Council to determine which name change gets approved and which one does not. There have been situations where staff has been approached about changing the name of a park or trail and in all of these cases, staff has indicated that we would not recommend renaming a park or trail, but suggested other ways to recognize the loss of a loved one including, but not limited to, memorial benches, trees, groves of trees, landscape gardens, viewing areas, shelters, athletic fields, etc. In many cases, the naming of park amenities after an individual, organization or company, includes some sort of financial donation. The only name change that the department has brought forward in the past 30 years is the renaming of Rockhill Park to Clyde Wilson Park. This was done in honor of Mr. Wilson being a former City of Columbia Mayor, Councilperson, involvement with a variety of commissions, and as a founder/leader of the East Campus Neighborhood Association. Link to this report may be found at:

http://www.gocolumbiamo.com/ParksandRec/Council_Agenda_Items/documents/council_2010_06-21_rockhill.pdf

If the council chooses to rename the park, staff supports changing the name of the park to something more generic than after an individual. The concern is that if the park was renamed to recognize Spc. Wyatt, then it may open the door for future parks or trails to be renamed. For example, in the last 10 years, an additional

five service men from Columbia have been killed in combat. They were recognized at a memorial back in 2011 as noted in the attached Tribune article.

There is a memorial wall located at the Boone County Courthouse dedicated to those that have lost their lives in support of our country. Staff has been told by some family members that they prefer a park setting where they might have lunch or conduct other recreational activities. With that in mind, staff proposed the following names to the P&R Commission for their consideration:

-Patriot Memorial Park -Freedom Point Park -Columbia Remembrance Park

-Patriot Point Park -Soldier Memorial Park -Veterans Memorial Park

Attached are the P&R Commission minutes from their September 19, 2013 meeting. After discussion, the Commission voted unanimously to recommend three names to the Council for their consideration:

- -Old 63 Roadside Memorial Park
- -Patriot Memorial Park
- -Sterling W. Wyatt Park

If the Council chooses to rename the park to either Old 63 Roadside Memorial Park or Patriot Park, a key amenity to the park could be a memorial wall or plaque that would allow past and future names to be added as appropriate.

If the park is renamed, there will be some financial impact as the department will have to construct new park signs and change all publications. New park signs range from \$1,250 for a wood sign to \$7,500 for a medium sized stone sign. The cost for a memorial wall varies from \$3,000 to \$15,000 depending on the size and type.

As established by ordinance, naming or renaming of a park is the authority of the City Council. Staff is seeking direction on how to proceed. If the Council wishes to rename the park, please select a name and direct staff to return to Council with an ordinance to officially rename the park.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no financial impact to this report. As noted in the discussion, there will be operating and capital costs if the park is renamed.

VISION IMPACT:

http://www.gocolumbiamo.com/Council/Meetings/visionimpact.php

NA

SUGGESTED COUNCIL ACTIONS:

Council may choose one of the following actions:

- 1. Keep the name Old 63 Roadside Park for historical reasons.
- 2. Rename the park to either Old 63 Roadside Memorial Park, Patriot Memorial Park or Sterling W. Wyatt Park.
- 3. Select another name for the park.

If the Council agrees to rename the park, please select a name and direct staff to return to Council with an ordinance to rename the park.

FISCAL and VISION NOTES:					
City Fiscal Impact Enter all that apply		Program Impact		Mandates	
City's current net FY cost	\$0.00	New Program/ Agency?	No	Federal or State mandated?	No
Amount of funds already appropriated	\$0.00	Duplicates/Expands an existing program?	No	Vision Implementation impact	
Amount of budget amendment needed	\$0.00	Fiscal Impact on any local political subdivision?	No	Enter all that apply: Refer to Web site	
Estimated 2 year net costs:		Resources Required		Vision Impact?	No
One Time	\$0.00	Requires add'l FTE Personnel?	No	Primary Vision, Strategy and/or Goal Item #	
Operating/ Ongoing	\$0.00	Requires add'l facilities?	No	Secondary Vision, Strategy and/or Goal Item #	
		Requires add'l capital equipment?	No	Fiscal year implementation Task #	

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Thursday, September 19, 2013 7 p.m. ARC, 1701 W. Ash

DRAFT MINUTES

Commission Present: Marin Blevins, Sue Davis, Dan Devine, Bill Pauls, Meredith

Donaldson, Linda Hutton

Commission Absent: Terry Kloeppel

Staff Present: Mike Griggs, Gabe Huffington, Erika Coffman, Tammy Miller

Agenda Item # 6

Renaming of Old 63 Roadside Park

Griggs told the Commission that a citizen, Rod Robison, approached the department about the possibility of renaming the Old 63 Roadside Park for Spc. Sterling W. Wyatt, a resident who was killed while in service in Afghanistan. Wyatt and his family live in the Shepard area around the park. Staff does not normally rename parks, Griggs said, however in this case, there are no deed restrictions or existence of federal funds which would prohibit the park's renaming.

Griggs pointed out to the Commission that many requests come in to staff regarding potential renamings. It is impossible to accommodate all requests, however, staff felt that perhaps the request from Mr. Robison would lead to several options. There is a memorial at the Boone County Courthouse that honors fallen veterans, but none that really exist in the City's parks system. Staff brainstormed some potential park names that would honor Spc. Wyatt and other veterans. In addition to renaming the park for Spc. Wyatt, other names proposed include Patriot Memorial Park or Patriot Point Park, Freedom Point Park, Soldier Memorial Park, Columbia Remembrance Park, or Veterans Memorial Park.

Griggs said Commission may consider one of those names or come up with another alternative.

Davis asked if the name Columbia Remembrance Park would honor anyone or just veterans?

Griggs said staff was open to suggestions; that it would be up to the Commission and Council.

Huffington said that staff's initial intention when they composed the list of possible names was to memorialize fallen soldiers.

Donaldson, who lives in the area, said she had spoken to Spc. Wyatt's family and they understand the reticence to name the park exclusively for their son. They liked the name Patriot Memorial Park, Donaldson said.

Blevins commented that having a type of memorial at the park with plaques engraved with names means a lot to veterans.

Hutton said that her perspective is a little different as a long-time resident of the area. She said that Old 63 used to be the main drag through the City and many would remember the Roadside Park from years ago. She said she would suggest naming it Old 63 Roadside Memorial Park, keeping its name but also adding memorial elements to the park.

Blevins invited public comment on the issue.

Rod Robison, 2504 Shepard, said he did not know Spc. Wyatt very well, but he remembered him from the neighborhood and from working at the gas station, which is just across the street from the Roadside Park. He said the family is very gracious and would appreciate any gesture of remembrance. He remembers the whole neighborhood honoring Spc. Wyatt with flags and lining the street for the procession shortly after his

death. He mentioned the hundreds of people who blocked the protestors from Kansas from disrupting his funeral.

Robison said he liked his original idea of naming the park for Spc. Wyatt, but he has confidence that staff and the Commission would do a good job with whatever decision is made.

Donaldson asked him from the other choices, which would be his preference? Robison said he liked Patriot Memorial Park, in going along with the parents and staying with a military theme.

Griggs said the process now is for the Commission to make their recommendations to Council with a report, then Council would make the final decision.

Blevins asked if Council would be receptive to benches or plaques being added to the park?

Griggs said he thought they would be, but staff would likely propose something. Davis asked if other military families would be receptive to adding their loved ones' names to plaques at Sterling Wyatt Park?

Griggs said his fear is that they would not be.

Devine commented that it is important to honor those who make such significant contributions, but you have to be careful not to honor someone so much more higher than others who made similar sacrifices. He likes the idea of Old 63 Roadside Memorial Park, then adding memorials.

Pauls said he thinks a local boy who lived there, played there and worked there, should be honored with his name on the park. He would like to see that park name go to Council for their consideration. Robison is the one who brought the matter to their attention to begin with. Pauls commented that he saw the Sterling Wyatt Park as not so much honoring him above other servicemen and servicewomen, but as being important to the Shepard neighborhood.

Donaldson made a motion, seconded by Devine, that the Commission propose to City Council the consideration of renaming Old 63 Roadside Park to one of three potential names: Sterling W. Wyatt Park, Patriot Memorial Park or Old 63 Roadside Memorial Park.

Motion passed 6-0.

PARK AND FACILITIES NAMING GUIDELINES Columbia Missouri Parks and Recreation Department

- I. Purpose: To establish guidelines for naming city parks and facilities in Columbia.
- II. Objectives:
 - A. Name should be associated with some real characteristic of the site.
 - B. Name should be imaginative and pleasant sounding.
 - C. Theme chosen should result in a relatively timeless name.
 - 1. Should not diminish in appropriateness with time.
 - 2. Current events aren't allowed to lead to frequently renaming a park.
 - a. Park name usage should be stabilized.
 - aa. To save cost of replacing printed material.
 - bb. Save double name confusion which can lag for many years after "official" name change.
 - cc. Prevent controversy with those that might suggest name change.

III. Suggested Procedures:

- A. Name after one or two chief boundary roads.
 - 1. Descriptive of location; easy to remember.
 - 2. Road names are frequently chosen for pleasant or characteristic nature.
 - 3. Road names are now controlled to eliminate duplication confusion.
 - 4. Most likely to eliminate controversy.
- B. Name after distinguishing feature of site or area.
 - 1. Easy to remember; may be geographically associated.
 - 2. Likely to result in a park sounding name (i.e. Twin Lakes, Gans Creek Recreation Area, etc.)
- C. Name in honor of distinguished individuals or organizations.
 - 1. Promote gifts or donations in honor of individuals.
 - a. Financial contributions should have a significant impact.
 - b. No standard amount or percentage is established, but a guideline is approximately 50% of cost of development or construction.
 - c. When a major contribution has been made by the person or organization to the enhancement of the quality of life in the community and/or was instrumental in acquiring or developing property or city owned facilities.
 - 2. Honor those individuals or organizations having the most influence on the betterment of the City.
 - 3. Current City of Columbia employees and officials are prohibited from having parks and facilities named after them.
- D. In order to respect the historical tradition and community values, which previous generations bestowed on these resources, no officially named park or facility shall be renamed without City Council approval.
 - 1. If renaming is considered, only those parks and facilities named for geographic location, outstanding feature or subdivision may be considered for renaming.
 - 2. Parks named by deed restriction cannot be considered for renaming.
- E. City Council has the authority to name all parks. Council may ask the Parks and Recreation Commission for recommendations.
- F. Specific facilities within parks may be named at the discretion of the Director.

Capitol exhibit honors Missouri's fallen

Rudi Keller | Posted: Thursday, July 28, 2011 2:00 pm

During 10 years of war in Afghanistan and Iraq, almost 130 Missourians have lost their lives in combat. Sometimes their deaths have attracted detailed news coverage of their lives and patriotic sacrifice. At other times, their deaths have been noted by few others than family members.

At 2 p.m. Sunday, a display called "Remembering Our Fallen" will open in the Capitol rotunda in Jefferson City to present those men and women in the context of their lives to show they are missed. Five panels, with more than 115 photos, will be unveiled as a roll call of the dead is read by their family members, said Bill Williams of Omaha, Neb., and organizer of the display program.

Official military photos often show an unsmiling recruit at the end of boot camp, Williams said. "But the picture of the kid in 4-H with their calf at 10 years old brings them to life," he said. "The whole point is these men and women should not be forgotten."

Five men from Columbia have been killed in combat during the past decade:

Sgt. Melvin Mora, 27, U.S. Army Reserve, killed June 6, 2004, in a mortar attack near Taji, Iraq.

Lt. William Edens, 29, U.S. Army, killed April 28, 2005, when a homemade bomb exploded near Tal Afar, Iraq.

Spc. Steven Fitzmorris, 26, U.S. Army, killed Aug. 25, 2008, by enemy fire in Iraq.

Spc. Jason Fingar, 24, U.S. Army, killed May 22, 2010, in a bomb explosion in Afghanistan.

Sgt. 1st Class Charles Sadell, 34, U.S. Army, died Oct. 24, 2010, of wounds suffered when a bomb exploded near Arif Kala, Afghanistan.

"When you see all those faces in front of you, you get the picture real fast," Williams said.

The display was inspired by a report on Nebraska's lost soldiers that appeared in the Omaha World-Herald, Williams said.

With the sponsorship of Bellevue University, which provides courses online to many soldiers, Williams said he hopes to create display panels for each state. The Missouri panels will be on display in the Capitol rotunda through Aug. 5, when it will move to Elsberry. It will be put on display in Columbia beginning Nov. 17 at Boone County National Bank.

During the opening ceremonies in Jefferson City, a member of almost every one of the fallen soldiers' families will step to the microphone to read that service member's name during the roll call, Williams said. The master of ceremonies will be retired Col. Don Ballard of Kansas City, who was awarded the Medal of Honor in Vietnam.

Along with honoring the dead, the display also is designed to make sure people remember the wars are still going on and that young men and women are still in danger, Williams said.

"The attention has moved off of it, and they are still dying," he said. "It is just so heartbreaking to see the latest news."

http://www.columbiatribune.com/news/local/capitol-exhibit-honors-missouri-s-fallen/article_9b0bd9c8-1692-5e66-9229-993dfdb42f88 html