



## PARKS DONATION AND NAMING POLICY

### INTRODUCTION

An important element of the Town of Williston's mission is to serve the community through safe and enjoyable parks and recreational opportunities which are carefully managed by the Williston Recreation & Parks Department. Donations are important to help the Department support these opportunities and are welcomed and encouraged. Occasionally, additional support opportunities may be offered in the form of naming requests.

### PURPOSE

The intent of this policy is to establish procedures and guidance for considering park donations in a way that is flexible and responsive to the needs of the donors. It also highlights important elements for donors to consider before making offers of such support.

In terms of naming requests, these are often complex and sometimes emotionally evocative as naming can create strong identities. The naming of park recreation facilities also requires significant resources in terms of changing names on signs, maps, and literature. In addition, frequent name changing can be the source of confusion to the public. These types of requests require particularly careful consideration for which this policy is intended to provide guidance.

### DEFINITIONS

Department:	Williston Recreation & Parks Department
Staff:	Williston Recreation & Parks Director or designee
Donation:	Donation of funds, land, facilities, equipment, and/or physical objects. Signage, display boards or banners are excluded.
Restricted Donation:	A donation for a specified or particular purpose as a result of designated giving for an asset or improvement
Unrestricted Donation:	A donation that may be used for any purpose related to the operations of the Town's park system
Memorial Plaque:	A specific type of donation in the form of a plaque installed at ground level or attached to an approved object
Park Amenity:	Park improvements that contribute to the traditional use of park land, including but not limited to benches, play structures, picnic tables/shelters, sport facilities, trails, small plaques, and the like
Community Park:	Any Town-owned Community Park, or facility managed for recreational use
Pathway:	Any on or off-road pathway located in a Community Park

### POLICY

The Recreation & Parks Department shall be responsible for administering this policy, including establishing a review process for approving and installing donations or naming of park facilities. The Department may coordinate with other Town departments as needed.

Donations can take the form of land, facilities, equipment, and/or physical objects to support the Community Parks. This policy **does not** cover signage, display boards or banners.

Donations will be considered from public and private sources for the purposes of enhancing all Community Parks and park pathways and will become the property of the Town.

Donations will be accepted for either, restricted or unrestricted use, per the wishes of the person, group, or business making the donation. Unrestricted donations will be dispersed to the area of greatest need at the sole discretion of the Williston Recreation & Parks Committee and the Department Director.

Donations will be considered for all Community Parks and Park Pathways except for those areas where human activity is discouraged to protect habitat and sensitive lands.

All costs associated with a donation will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

New recreation facilities within parks may be dedicated or named to acknowledge exceptional civic service or in return for significant financial contributions that will further the capacity to address the needs of the park system.

The Town reserves the right to deny any donation or naming request if it is not in the best interest of the Town or Town parks or if it does not fit the make up or proposed concepts of the park.

## **PROCEDURES**

### **Submissions**

Prior to offering a donation, donors shall meet with Department staff to share ideas regarding their proposal. Once this meeting has occurred, the donor must submit a completed Parks Donation & Naming Request Form to the Department. Department staff will review and determine the appropriateness of the proposal as measured by approval criteria.

### **Approval Process**

All donations meeting approval criteria will be managed administratively by the Department. For donations that require installation, appropriate approval of the donation must be obtained before installation may begin. Once installed, the donation becomes the property of the Town.

All gifts of real property and/or naming requests will be submitted through Department Staff and forwarded to the Recreation & Parks Committee for approval, and then to the Town's Selectboard for final approval. For gifts of real property, life insurance, securities or similar assets, the decision of the Town's Selectboard will be final. Certain types of gifts must be reviewed prior to acceptance due to financial liabilities they may pose for the Town.

If a proposal does not meet the approval criteria, the donor will receive written notification, within 60 days of submittal of the criteria the proposal does not meet. Denial of a donation may be appealed to the Williston Recreation & Parks Committee.

## **DAMAGES & TERM OF DONATIONS**

The term of a donation will be for the life of the asset. The Department will make every practical effort to repair damaged donations. However, the Department is not responsible for replacing donations due to excessive damage, loss, or vandalism. The Department will attempt to contact the donor to inform them of the loss. The donor may choose to replace the donation at their own expense.

## **NAMING**

For naming of major donations, a minimum donation amount will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Williston Recreation & Parks Committee, in consultation with the Recreation and Parks Director.

To be considered for naming, the following must be taken into account:

- Land for a park was deeded to the Town.
- Contribution for the costs associated with developing a park recreation facility.
- Provision of an endowment for the continued maintenance of a park recreation facility.

### **Renaming a Park and/or Recreation Facility**

Proposals to rename parks and/or recreation facilities, whether for a major donation or community request, are not encouraged. Likewise, names that have become widely accepted by the community will not be abandoned unless there are compelling reasons and strong public sentiment from the broader community for doing so. Historical or commonly used place names will be preserved wherever possible.

## **CRITERIA**

The following criteria must be met for **any** donation or naming request to be considered:

- Does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, ancestry, national origin, or physical or mental disability, in compliance with all federal, state, and local laws and statutes; and
- Does not have connotations that by contemporary community standards are derogatory or offensive.
- Does not promote environmental, work, or other practices that, if they took place in the Town, would violate U.S. or state law (i.e., dumping of hazardous waste, exploitation of child labor, etc.).
- Does not promote drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or marijuana.

- Does not constitute violations of law.
- Does not participate in unethical business practices as determined by a court of law.
- Does not exploit participants or staff members of the Department.

Proposed donations may be incorporated into the landscape and facilities of the Community Parks and pathways according to the following:

**General Criteria:**

- Donations must be compatible with and meet a specific Community Park facility or amenity need, and when applicable, identified in an approved park master plan.
- In areas not covered by master plans, compatibility with existing facilities and local conditions shall be considered if the donation meets a specific Community Park need.
- Age and anticipated general condition of the donation.
- Anticipated maintenance requirements.

**Specific Criteria:**

- **Memorial Plaques-** Memorial plaques will be permitted pursuant to the below procedures only in conjunction with the donation of a new item such as a bench, tree, rock, etc.
- **Cash Donations-** Unspecified cash donations may be used to build, repair, or upgrade existing or new Community Park facilities or amenities at the Department’s discretion.
- **Structures, Site Furnishings, Plants or Trees-** The Department has general aesthetic standards for the Community Parks. Donations will maintain these aesthetic standards.
- **Artwork-** Donations of art, or cash to purchase or commission art, must be pre-approved by the Recreation & Parks Committee with the location of installation approved by the Planning & Zoning Department.

**MEMORIAL PLAQUE GUIDELINES**

- Memorial plaques and installation components shall be provided by the donor and shall be a bronze marker either installed at ground level or attached to an approved object in a Community Park or facility.
- Department staff reserve the right to perform or supervise the installation.
- The plaque size will be established by specified use, with a maximum number of text lines and restricted font.
- Memorial Plaque variation will be allowed only upon approval of the Recreation & Parks Committee.

**Pre-approved Plaque Sizes:**

- 2.5” x 6.5” – No larger than 2.5 inches wide by 6.5 inches long with a limit of four lines of text. Drill holes must be located ¼ inch from each side edge. Typical application is directly affixed to a park bench.
- 10” x 10” – No larger than 10 inches wide by 10 inches long with a limit of 9 lines of text. Typical application is placement on a rock or concrete base.

**Pre-approved Text:**

- The Department must approve all text for Memorial Plaques.
- Suggested Text:                      In Honor of:              In Memory of:              In Celebration of:              Dedicated to:

**REMOVAL OF MEMORIAL PLAQUE OR REVOCATION OF NAMING OF A DONATION**

The Department, with approval by the Selectboard, may remove a memorial plaque or revoke the naming of a donation if one or more, but not limited to, the following situations occurs:

- It is determined that association with the donor or named person or group will materially damage the reputation of the Town.
- If the individual or group listed on the memorial plaque or for whom a donation is named is convicted of a felony or otherwise engages in conduct that is harmful to the reputation of the Town.
- If the donor fails to maintain payment on a pledge upon which the naming was bestowed.
- Other circumstances/situations may be considered to protect the best interest of the Town.

In the event such a decision to remove a memorial plaque or revoke a named donation is made, the Department will inform the donor in writing.

**GIFT RECEIPTS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Town provides donors a gift receipt in accordance with IRS regulations. The Town will provide a written acknowledgement to substantiate a charitable contribution of \$250 or more which will contain the following information:

- Amount of the cash contribution
- Date the contribution was received by the Town
- Description but not a value of non-cash contributions
- A statement that no goods or services were provided by the Town but if there were a description and good faith estimate of the value of goods or services, if any, that the Town provided in return for the contribution.

IRS rules stipulate that gifts of service cannot be considered a donation. As such, no receipt will be provided.

The Town holds all communications with donors and information concerning donors and prospective donors in strict confidence.

*This Policy is hereby approved and adopted by the Selectboard of the Town of Williston, Vermont, on January 3, 2023, and is effective as of this date until amended, replaced, or repealed.*


Terry Macaig, Chair



Ted Kenney, Vice Chair



Jeff Fehrs



Greta D'Agostino



Vacant

