

Renaming of Lynmont Park in honour of the late Mary Harker

Date: April 11, 2017

To: Etobicoke York Community Council

From: General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation

Wards: Ward 1 – Etobicoke North

SUMMARY

On February 18, 2015, a request was made to name or rename a park in the North Etobicoke area in honour of the late Mary Harker. After consultations with staff and community groups, it was suggested that Lynmont Park would be a suitable park for renaming. Property naming and renaming are a matter for which Community Council has delegated authority from City Council to make a final decision.

The Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division has reviewed the Council approved City of Toronto Property Naming Policy and found that this naming proposal meets the policy criteria and process.

The Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division is recommending that Lynmont Park located at 10 Four Leaf Drive be renamed to the Mary Harker Park.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division recommends that:

1. Etobicoke York Community Council adopt the renaming of Lynmont Park located at 10 Four Leaf Drive, to Mary Harker Park.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of February 18, 2015, Etobicoke York Community Council directed the General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division to investigate the feasibility of naming or renaming a park in the North Etobicoke area in honour of the late Mark Harker and report back to Etobicoke York Community Council with a recommendation based on the criteria and process outlined in the Property Naming Policy (EY4.50)

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2015.EY4.50>

COMMENTS

Mary Avis Harker (nee McNally) was born on November 7, 1932 in Georgetown, Ontario. At the age of 16, she moved to Toronto. In 1957, Mary and her husband Ron bought a house in Rexdale (North Etobicoke) which they lived in for the rest of their lives. For almost 60 years, Mary was legendary in her involvement and commitment to the Rexdale community.

Mary Harker's momentous contribution to the Rexdale community began when she helped create the Nightgown Brigade, which helped women fleeing abusive circumstances, day or night. She was also instrumental in establishing the Ernestine's Women's Shelter, an organization run by women, providing support and shelter for women and children escaping violence.

Mary served as a board member for the Rexdale Community Legal Clinic and worked in close association with Albion Neighbourhood Services. She actively supported the Dorothy Ley Hospice, Youth Without Shelter, Thistletown Multi-Service Centre, Rexdale Legal Clinic, and was devoted to, and served decades on the Community Police Liaison Committee.

Incredibly, Mary Harker also found time and energy to volunteer for organizations like the Heart and Stroke Foundation, Canadian Cancer Society, and the United Appeal. The community loved Mary and recognized her thousands of hours of volunteer services with numerous awards.

Mary Harker, passed away January 24, 2015, leaving behind her two daughters, Kathy and Wendy, son-in-laws, grandchildren Matthew, Cameron and Madeline, siblings Ruth, Shirley, Pat (Phil) and Charlyne, nieces, nephews, family and many friends.

After consultations with staff and community groups, including the Etobicoke Historical Society, it was suggested that Lynmont Park would be a suitable park in the North Etobicoke area for renaming. Lynmont Park is 3.3 acres and located in the heart of the area that Mary Harker devoted her time.

The Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division has reviewed the Council approved City of Toronto Property Naming Policy and found that this naming proposal meets the policy criteria and process.

Public Consultation

In accordance with the City of Toronto, Property Naming Policy, Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff produced and posted a temporary sign in the park advising the local community and parks users of the request to rename the Lynmont Park in honour of Mary Harker. The sign requested that anyone interested should send comments and feedback via email to parksnaming@toronto.ca.

In addition, the local Councillor presented this proposed park renaming request in his March 2017 community newsletter and asked residents to provide feedback (to the same email address). To date, Parks, Forestry and Recreation has not received any objections to this naming request; however there was one comment that a larger park should be renamed to honour Mary Harker.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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