

Request to rename Woodsy Park to Ethennonnhawahstihnen' (Etta-nonna wasti-nuh) Park

Date: September 24, 2019

To: North York Community Council (NYCC)

From: General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation

Wards: Ward 17

SUMMARY

This staff report is about a matter that Community Council has delegated authority to make a final decision, provided that it is not amended to be inconsistent with the City of Toronto Property Naming Policy.

On July 16, 2019, City Council passed a motion to direct the General Manager of Parks Forestry and Recreation, in consultation with the Manager, Indigenous Affairs Office, to investigate the feasibility of renaming Woodsy Park located at 80 McMahon Drive to Ethennonnhawahstihnen' (Etta-nonna wasti-nuh) Park and report back to the North York Community Council with a recommendation based on the criteria and process outlined in the Property Naming Policy.

City Council also waived Section 3.3.5 of the Property Policy which says City properties that have been named or renamed in the previous ten years will not be renamed. In 2016, City Council named the new park, Woodsy Park.

Toronto is one of the most diverse cities in the world and is home to approximately 100,000 First Nations, Metis and Inuit, making it one of the largest Indigenous urban populations in Canada. The traditional keepers of the land, the Wendat, Haudenosaunee, and Anishinaabe can trace their roots back thousands of years in Toronto and region. Thoughtfully considering Indigenous naming is a part of the City of Toronto's broader efforts in Indigenous place-making and truth and reconciliation.

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 Woodsy Park located at 80 McMahon Drive be renamed to Ethennonnhawahstihnen' (Etta-nonna wasti-nuh) Park.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. North York Community Council adopt renaming Woodsy Park located at 80 McMahon Drive to "Ethennonhawahstihnen' (Etta-nonna wasti-nuh) Park."

FINANCIAL IMPACT

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

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of July 16, 2019, City Council directed the General Manager of Parks Forestry and Recreation, in consultation with the Manager, Indigenous Affairs Office, to investigate the feasibility of renaming Woodsy Park located at 80 McMahon Drive to Ethennonhawahstihnen' (Etta-nonna wasti-nuh) Park and report back to the North York Community Council with a recommendation based on the criteria and process outlined in the Property Naming Policy (MM9.34)

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.MM9.34>

COMMENTS

City Council passed a motion to investigate the feasibility of renaming Woodsy Park located at 80 McMahon Drive to Ethennonhawahstihnen' (Etta-nonna wasti-nuh) Park which means 'where they had a good, beautiful life'. This park renaming request is aligned with the City of Toronto's broader efforts in Indigenous place-making. The place-making initiative emerges from ongoing work facilitated by City staff, agencies and Indigenous leaders and community members to meet the City's commitment to truth and reconciliation in parks and the public realm.

In considering the renaming the Indigenous Affairs Office explored the significance of the area and in conversations with the Wendat nation determined that Ethennonhawahstihnen' was appropriate.

Wendat place names typically reflect the geological features of the landscape or document events that occurred there. A significant Wendat archaeological site, the Moatfield Site, is only 500-800 metres from this park and adjacent street. One of the striking things about this site was the presence of many people who lived over the age of 50, which was not the case at many other sites. The inhabitants lived in good health, and there was less violence and warfare compared to other sites.

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 of the request to rename Woodsy Park to Ethennonnhawahstihnen' (Etta-nonna wasti-nuh) Park. The sign requested that anyone interested should send comments and feedback either through letters or by completing an online survey. This sign was posted at the park from August 8 to September 1. Parks, Forestry & Recreation received strong support for renaming the park and was able to identify that a majority of respondents had positive comments.

Respondents overwhelmingly indicated that this is an important step for the City to meaningfully recognize Indigenous place making and is a positive step towards advancing truth and reconciliation with Indigenous groups. Supporters also indicated opportunities to connect with Indigenous heritage and initiate dialogue to learn about the Wendat nation. Considerations were suggested in providing additional resources, such as interpretative signage and audio-visual material, to facilitate the pronunciation of the name and to increase understanding.

While community consultation demonstrated support for the renaming as an important piece in Indigenous place making, the City of Toronto will explore municipal best practices to assist with understanding the significance and meaning of the new park name. An important part of this will be working with the Wendat nation to ensure additional resources and information shared are accurate and appropriate.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS
