

Naming of Pathway from Westgate Boulevard into Earl Bales Ravine as "Gerald Spring Way"

Date: September 6, 2024

To: North York Community Council

From: General Manager, Economic Development and Culture, General Manager, Toronto Water

Wards: Ward 6 - York Centre

SUMMARY

This report recommends that the name "Gerald Spring Way" be approved to identify a pathway from Westgate Boulevard into Earl Bales Ravine.

This naming proposal complies with the City of Toronto Property Naming Policy, which can be found at <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2022/ex/bgrd/backgroundfile-228156.pdf>.

This naming proposal is in alignment with the objectives of the Guiding Principles for Commemoration in the Public Realm.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Economic Development and Culture and the General Manager, Toronto Water recommend that:

1. North York Community Council approve the name "Gerald Spring Way" for the pathway from Westgate Boulevard into Earl Bales Ravine.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no known financial impact resulting from the adoption of the recommendation in this report. Any future year financial implications will be accommodated through existing Operating Budgets.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the information as presented in the Financial Impact section.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on July 19, 2022, City Council adopted the City of Toronto Commemorative Framework and approved revisions to the Property Naming Policy. <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2022.EX34.6>

At its meeting on November 23, 2021, North York Community Council requested the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to consult the nearby community and report back on naming the pathway from Westgate Boulevard into the Earl Bales Ravine in memory of Mr. Gerald Spring.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2021.NY28.19>

COMMENTS

Community Councils have delegated authority to decide property naming matters which comply with the City of Toronto Property Naming Policy.

An application was received on March 1, 2023. The applicant requested to name the walking pathway in Earl Bales Ravine that commences at Westgate Boulevard as "Gerald Spring Way" honouring Mr. Gerald Spring, an active community member and architect. The concerned pathway is shown in Attachment 1.

Justification to Commemorate Gerald Spring

Gerald Spring Way commemorates Gerald Spring, a former resident of the Summit Heights neighbourhood. Mr. Spring was a Jewish man, architect, business owner, and highly active community member. Mr. Spring had a lifelong connection to Earl Bales Park, especially the pathway leading from Westgate Boulevard to the pond. His family regularly visited Earl Bales Park throughout his childhood. As a teenager, Mr. Spring and his friends often gathered at the base of the walking trail in the evenings.

As an adult, Mr. Spring and his family moved to the Summit Heights neighbourhood. The Spring family often walked the path into the park to enjoy nature and connect with other community members. Throughout his life, the park was an important place for Mr. Spring, both socially and as a natural space.

As part of his body of architectural work, Mr. Spring designed the banquet room of the Kiever Synagogue in Kensington Market. Additionally, Mr. Spring undertook commissions to renovate many Summit Heights houses. Mr. Spring was also involved in the family-run dance studio that provided a space for women and youth to exercise and foster community.

Mr. Spring brought the Summit Heights neighbourhood together through his annual block party known as Romney Fest. This was a community celebration to mark the end of summer. Mr. Spring organized and sponsored the festivities for everyone in the neighbourhood. The event included live music, food, and lots of children's activities.

Romney Fest enriched the community by bringing people together, resulting in many lasting friendships.

Mr. Spring's friends characterized him as follows: "Gerry was loved by so many people. He was a loyal friend with an infectious zest for life. He had a unique ability to make you feel that you mattered, you belonged. Gerry touched each and every person he met in a special way throughout his lifetime. Many of those he touched, many of his best friends still reside in the Summit Heights neighbourhood."

The community plans to create a rock garden or sitting area at the base of the trail near the pond. This tribute reflects Mr. Spring's tendency to create rock sculptures in this area. The intention of this space would be to create an area where community members could enjoy the beauty of nature.

A complete Historical Research Report is available upon request.

The proposed name has been circulated for comment and is acceptable to Toronto Police Service, Toronto Fire Services, and Toronto Paramedic Services.

Councillor James Pasternak, Ward 6 - York Centre, supports this naming.

Consent was provided by Sasha Spring, Gerald Spring's daughter.

Community support was demonstrated with a petition of signatures from the local community.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Patrick Tobin
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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Pathway from Westgate Boulevard into Earl Bales Ravine

Attachment 1 - Pathway from Westgate Boulevard into Earl Bales Ravine

