



Chicago Park District

Legislation Text

File #: 15-2265-0408, Version: 1

REQUEST TO OFFICIALLY RENAME BUCKTHORN PARK IN HONOR OF HADIYA PENDLETON

To the Honorable Board of Commissioners of the Chicago Park District

I. Recommendation

It is recommended that an order be entered authorizing the General Superintendent or his designee to officially rename Buckthorn Park in honor of Hadiya Pendleton.

II. Park Naming Information

Proposed Park: Buckthorn Park
Location: 4345 S. Calumet Ave., Chicago, IL. 60653
Community Area: 38- Grand Boulevard
Ward: #3
Proposed Name: Hadiya Pendleton Park

III. Park Naming Procedures

Pursuant to Chapter VII, Section E (1) of the Code of the Chicago Park District, this request to rename Buckthorn Park was forwarded to the Secretary of the Chicago Park District, who filed a copy of this request with the Committee on Programs and Recreation and initiated a notice period to solicit public input. Notices were posted in parks and sent to advisory councils located within a one-mile radius of the park site. Elected officials were also notified of the proposal, including the alderman of the ward in which the park is located.

The notice period of forty-five (45) days soliciting public input regarding the naming proposal was initiated on February 19, 2015. There has been positive support for this proposal from 3rd Ward Alderman Pat Dowell, Congressman Danny Davis, and Hadiya Pendleton's family. Staff recommends that the Board approve the request to rename Buckthorn Park as Hadiya Pendleton Park

IV. Explanation

In 2011, the Chicago Park District Board of Commissioners approved a proposal to enlarge Buckthorn Park. This expansion project increases the small playlot from less than a quarter acre in size to a 2 acre park. The Chicago Park District hired Planning Resources Inc. to develop plans for the expansion project. Working with the Alderman Pat Dowell, community groups, and the Park District, the consultant has created a design that honors the cultural heritage of Bronzeville and includes a new playground, interactive water feature, a walking path, and fitness stations. Bronzeville's significance as a hub for music, literature, and other arts will be highlighted through features such as a "musical staff path," sculptural seating to emulate books and musical instruments, and inscriptions in planters and knee walls.

The new park is considered a fitting tribute to Chicagoan Hadiya Pendleton (1997 - 2013). An honor student at King College Prep High School, Hadiya Pendleton was killed as the result of a senseless act of violence. While sitting under a shelter in Harsh Park, Hadiya and her friends came under fire by gang members who had mistaken them as rivals. Only a few weeks earlier, Hadiya had performed as a drum majorette in President Obama's second inauguration. Hadiya's murder has brought national attention to the widespread gun violence plaguing communities throughout America. Her parents Nathaniel and Cleopatra Pendleton attended

President Obama's State of the Union Address in which he spoke passionately about the need for gun control. Michelle Obama has also made powerful speeches in which Hadiya served as an important symbol for the need to stop this violence. In a speech to students at Chicago's Harper High School, the First Lady implored the audience to consider Hadiya a role model. She urged them to use their own lives to give meaning to Hadiya's life. Naming the expanded park in honor of Hadiya Pendelton is not only a fitting tribute to a talented high school student, but also an important symbol of Chicago galvanizing against gun violence and rallying in support of safer neighborhoods.