



# Chicago Park District

## Legislation Text

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File #: 18-3007-0411, Version: 2

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### REQUEST TO OFFICIALLY RENAME

#### GREEN BRIAR PARK

#### IN HONOR OF ED KELLY

### 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 name Green Briar Park in honor of Ed Kelly.

#### II. Park Naming Information

Park or feature: Green Briar Park

Location: 2650 West Peterson Avenue

Community Area: West Ridge

Ward: 40

Proposed Name: Ed Kelly Park

#### III. Park Naming Procedures

Pursuant to Chapter VII, Section E (1) of the Code of the Chicago Park District, this request to name Park #532 was forwarded to the Secretary of the Chicago Park District, who filed a copy of this request 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 14, 2018. There has been positive support for this proposal from the Executive Director of CALOR, and numerous community members, as well as Alderman Patrick J. O'Connor. Staff recommends that the Board approve the request to name Green Briar Park as Ed Kelly Park. Mr. Kelly has received five (5) letters of support (including those mentioned above), eight (8) emails, 804 petitions and 208 supportive measures (i.e likes), totaling 13 letters in favor and 1012

signatures and likes. The opposition to this naming that has been received includes four (4) emails, two (2) letters, and two (2) comments from the public participation section of the April 11, 2014 board meeting, totaling eight (8) opposed to the naming.

#### **IV. Explanation**

Chapter VII, Section E of the Code of the Chicago Park District, (the Naming Ordinance), states that if a proposed name honors a person, the (i) person shall have been deceased for a least one (1) year prior to consideration; and (ii) the person shall have demonstrated a continued commitment and made an extraordinary contribution to civic betterment, locally, nationally or internationally. Exceptions to the above criteria may be made upon a finding of an extraordinary circumstance by the General Superintendent. In this case, the General Superintendent has recognized just such an extraordinary circumstance in the proposed recommendation to name Green Briar Park and field house after Edmund L. Kelly is such a circumstance.

Ed Kelly was born and raised in the neighborhood around Seward Park. As a youth, he made extensive use of park programs, participating in a variety of sports and other programs. He attended DePaul University where he majored in Physical education. Shortly after, former Superintendent Kelly joined the Marine Corps. As a machine gunner in World War II, where he fought in the South Pacific and served in the occupation of China. During his military career, Kelly continued to nourish his love of sports by serving as a team member on the All Service Basketball Team and as a boxer, (including winning the welterweight boxing championship).

Kelly later played in the NBA as a professional basketball player for the Oshkosh All-Stars before embarking on a lengthy career in the public sector. His vocation with the District began as a physical education instructor in the late 1940s. During that time, Kelly was active in coaching sports at numerous parks and in increasing the participation levels of various programs. He rose through the ranks, becoming Assistant General Superintendent in 1969, Acting General Superintendent in 1972, and Superintendent in 1973. Former Superintendent Kelly is the second-longest seated General Superintendent in the history of the Park District since its inception. During his time as General Superintendent, acquired 337 acres of parkland, built 46 parks, 32 football and soccer fields, 2 lagoons, ice skating arenas, 83 tennis courts, 16 gymnasiums, 62 senior citizen centers, and started 13 mental disability camps and more.

His improvements to the parks include revamping the security in Grant Park Garage, spearheading the drive to build a new band shell in Grant Park (later known as the Petrillo Band Shell), and being the motivating force behind the first renovation of Soldier Field. Kelly has sponsored sports leagues, and provided the career beginnings for many boxers, basketball players, and other athletes. His accomplishments also include assisting in the location of the Museum of Mexican Art and the relocation of the DuSable Museum into the park system (now known as Museums in the Parks).

He dedicated over 40 years of service to the District. Some have credited him with starting the first Latino Umpire Association in Lincoln Park. He championed the anonymous donation of boxing gear from the late Muhammad Ali, which allowed him to launch what is now a thriving boxing program. Kelly also started a nonprofit organization, Ed Kelly Sports Program Inc., that has dedicated itself to providing recreational opportunities for youth and seniors since its inception over forty (40) years ago and raised \$20,000 for programs for the mentally disabled.

In 1999, Kelly was inducted into the 16 inch Softball Hall of Fame for his involvement with the sport of softball and in November of 2015, he was inducted into the Illinois Boxing Hall of Fame for his work with boxing in his personal life and with the District. He has coached at the high school and collegiate level, organized various sports clinics, and sat on the board of a professional league. He has received over 70 awards and recognitions for his dedication to sports and recreation. Finally, Kelly served the citizens of Chicago as the Ward Committeeman for the 47<sup>th</sup> Ward. His commitment to the people of Chicago, especially the young people, remains evident to this day. It is because of these extraordinary contributions that it is being requested that the provision requiring that the proposed be deceased for one (1) year be waived and that Green Briar park be renamed in his honor.