

 <p style="text-align: center;">Council Communication Office of the City Manager</p>	Date:	December 23, 2013
	Agenda Item No.	30
	Roll Call No.	[_____]
	Communication No.	<u>13-607</u>
	Submitted by:	Benjamin R. Page, Park and Recreation Director

AGENDA HEADING:

Approve the naming of the Union Park East Shelter, 830 Thompson Avenue, the Bill and Nellie Ritchie Shelter and the Union Park West Shelter, 625 Guthrie Avenue, the Margaret Swanson Shelter.

SYNOPSIS:

Approving a recommendation from the Park and Recreation Board on the naming of the Union Park East Shelter the Bill and Nellie Ritchie Shelter and the Union Park West Shelter the Margaret Swanson Shelter.

FISCAL IMPACT: NONE

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

At the October 21, 2013 City Council meeting, Council Member Mahaffey asked Council to receive, file and refer to the City Manager the Union Park Neighborhood Association’s request to consider naming the Union Park East Shelter for Bill and Nellie Ritchie and the West Shelter for Margaret Swanson; per Roll Call No. 13-1662 Council referred the matter to the City Manager and Park and Recreation Board for review and recommendation.

At the November 26, 2013 meeting, the Park and Recreation Board received and filed staff findings regarding the proposed naming and approved setting date of hearing for the board’s December meeting. On December 16, 2013 at a regularly scheduled meeting, the Park and Recreation Board voted unanimously (14-0 with one (1) board member absent) to recommend to City Council that it approve the designation of the enclosed shelters.

Bill and Nellie Ritchie lived in the same house in the Union Park Neighborhood for over 50 years. Bill’s favorite way of beautifying his neighborhood and city was to plant trees along streets, in parks and by schools and churches. When Bill died in April 2007, his obituary stated that he had raised funds to plant over 500 trees in the Union Park area.

Both Bill and Nellie were active in the Union Park Neighborhood Association (UPNA). Bill was one of the co-founders of UPNA and served as co-chair until around 1995. Nellie was likewise active in UPNA, serving as the group’s treasurer from its inception until her death in December 2005. She also handled memberships and renewals for most of those years. Bill and Nellie orchestrated neighborhood newsletter mailings, often assembling them at their dining room table. Bill spent hours navigating postal service rules and regulations to obtain UPNA’s bulk mailing permit that is in use today.

Bill was well respected within Des Moines City government and served on various committees. He and Nellie belonged to the Union Park Methodist Church for several decades, where he served as treasurer and financial advisor and Nellie as literature secretary. Bill and Nellie were honored by Des Moines Neighbors in 2001 with the Alice Rodine Citizen Award.

Margaret Swanson, was born and raised in Webster City, graduated from Iowa State University in 1941 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Institutional Management, and moved to Des Moines in 1949. The Swansons' home on the bluff overlooking "Thompson's Bend" of the Des Moines River and Union Park was an icon of the Union Park Neighborhood. She was one of the founders of the UPNA. She also served on the Des Moines Park and Recreation board, giving a voice to concerns about Union, McHenry, and Birdland Parks, and later to projects involving the area that was formerly Riverview Amusement Park.

Instrumental in founding the Des Moines Botanical Center, being the advocate that she was for the east side, Margaret was key to getting it located on the east side of the Des Moines River. She continued with her involvement with the Botanical Center by serving on its board for many years. Margaret was active in the East Des Moines Chamber of Commerce and served on the board of the East Des Moines Family Care Center. She devoted countless hours to Iowa Lutheran Hospital, and received the Iowa Lutheran Hospital Distinguished Service Award in 1978. She held leadership positions in Union Park Presbyterian Church, where she was a member from 1949 until her death in March 2011.

Active City-wide, Margaret served on the boards of many organizations, including the Des Moines Civic Center, Science Center of Iowa, Iowa Methodist Health Foundation, the Young Women's Resource Center, and the Des Moines Vision Plan. She also volunteered for local divisions of national organizations such as Girl Scouts of America, American Red Cross, League of Women Voters, and American Association of University Women. In 2000, she was inducted into the Iowa Women's Hall of Fame for her volunteer work with more than 20 organizations.

Park and Recreation staff agrees that naming the shelter houses to honor the memory of these devoted Union Park Neighborhood volunteers complies with the criteria in the City's policy for naming of a park facility. Staff is recommending the Union Park East Shelter be named the Bill and Nellie Ritchie Shelter and the Union Park West Shelter be named the Margaret Swanson Shelter and request that following a public hearing on this matter, the Park and Recreation Board approve a recommendation of this proposal to City Council.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S):

Date: October 21, 2013

Roll Call Number: [13-1662](#)

Action: [From](#) Council Member Mahaffey regarding letter from Union Park Neighborhood Association requesting naming of shelters at Union Park. Moved by Mahaffey to refer to the City Manager and Park and Recreation Board to begin the naming process. Motion Carried 7-0.

BOARD/COMMISSION ACTION(S):

Board: Park and Recreation Board

Date: December 16, 2013

Resolution Number: 13-098

Action: Hold public hearing and approve a recommendation that City Council name the Union Park East Shelter, 830 Thompson Avenue, the Bill and Nellie Ritchie Shelter and the Union Park West Shelter, 625 Guthrie Avenue, the Margaret Swanson Shelter.

Board: Park and Recreation Board

Date: November 26, 2013

Resolution Number: 13-089

Action: Receive and file staff findings and approve setting a date of hearing on naming the Union Park East Shelter, 830 Thompson Avenue, the Bill and Nellie Ritchie Shelter and the Union Park West Shelter, 625 Guthrie Avenue, the Margaret Swanson Shelter.

ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS: NONE

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