



Jefferson County Department of Public Works

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Policy Statement: Donation of Memorial Benches and Markers

June 3, 2015

Introduction

The following policy statement pertains to the donation of memorials and monuments for installation in Jefferson County Parks. This policy was prepared by staff and recommended by the Jefferson County Park and Recreation Advisory Board.

Background Information

By their nature, memorials such as monuments, markers, and memorial furniture are generally considered permanent by the donors of the memorial. The expectations of the donors, whether explicitly stated in an agreement or implied by the act of donation are: that the memorial should be maintained in-perpetuity and that the memorial should not be moved or disturbed. Memorials may be dedicated to groups of people such as veterans of a certain war, or they may be dedicated to an individual.

Current Inventory

The following is a list of memorials currently located in Jefferson County Parks.

1. Memorial Field
 - a. Vietnam Memorial
 - b. World War II Memorial
2. North Beach Park
 - a. Three separate bench memorials for individuals
3. HJ Carroll Park
 - a. Tom Yarr Field monument – stolen in June of 2015
 - b. Art McClarney Courts monument – dedicated to the basketball courts
 - c. Kyle Thies playground sign – dedicated to the playground
 - d. one individual park bench, and one individual stone monument

Policy Scope

This policy pertains only to dispersed, individual small memorials such as benches or markers for individuals that are not accompanied by major gift such as a basketball court or an athletic field. A program of donation of needed park furniture, and other park amenities not accompanied by a memorial or a monument is possible under this policy. This policy does not preclude the development of an appropriate donor recognition program. Such a program could include a centralized area at which many donors could be honored without negatively impacting park values.

Policy Considerations

1. Park space is highly limited, but requests to donate memorial benches and monuments are frequent and ongoing.
2. When benches or other furniture is needed, it can be purchased by the parks and recreation division or donated without a memorial or monument.
3. Memorial monuments that do not provide historical information, or recognize a key community figure have little or no interpretive or esthetic value to the general public.
4. Maintenance of monuments is expensive, and is a long lasting cost.
5. As a government agency, fairness and equity are paramount. Space in a park is a valuable and limited resource. Being allowed to place a memorial in a park has real value to those being allowed to place the memorial. There is no way to provide for the fair and equitable distribution of this value to the community as a whole.
6. The location of the monument is an issue, often the donor wishes to install it in a prominent location with a view, but where it is not needed.
7. The proliferation of memorials and monuments can detract from the look and feel of a park or facility – when people see one memorial, they often want to place an additional memorial of their own.
8. Benches and other furnishings wear out, become damaged, or need to be moved or removed. When such furnishings are also monuments or memorials, the donor and parks and recreation are placed in a difficult and often expensive situation.

Policy

Jefferson County Parks and Recreation does not accept donations of memorial benches, memorial monuments, and other memorial furnishings such as plaques or signs unless all of the following conditions apply:

1. The memorial is dedicated to a large donation such as an athletic field or a basketball court.
2. The memorial has interpretive and esthetic value and does not detract from the park as a whole.
3. The memorial is designed for: park esthetics, low maintenance, low crime, and is installed in a safe location.
4. An agreement is in place authorizing the donation of the memorial which has been reviewed by staff, recommended by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, and approved by the County Commissioners and which releases parks and recreation from the maintenance and replacement liability of the memorial, and grants parks and recreation the right to move or remove the memorial if required for safety or other park issues such as reconfiguration.
5. One centralized area for the entire parks system may be developed at which many donors are recognized and honored. Such an area would require additional planning and approval.