

Mayor and Council Communication

DATE: 04/06/21

M&C FILE NUMBER: M&C 21-0230

LOG NAME: 80NATURE CENTER BOARDWALK NAMING

SUBJECT

(CD 7) Authorize Naming the Lotus Marsh Boardwalk at the Fort Worth Nature Center and Refuge as the Marty Leonard Lotus Marsh Boardwalk

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council authorize the naming of the Lotus Marsh Boardwalk at the Fort Worth Nature Center and Refuge as the Marty Leonard Lotus Marsh Boardwalk.

DISCUSSION:

The Friends of the Fort Worth Nature Center and Refuge, Inc. (Friends) has requested that the City name the Lotus Marsh Boardwalk at the Fort Worth Nature Center and Refuge (FWNC&R) in honor of Marty Leonard.

Marty Leonard has dedicated a substantial portion of her time and energy over the years to conserving nature and the environment, both within Fort Worth and beyond. For more than two decades, Marty has also been a loyal, impassioned supporter of the FWNC&R. In 2004, she founded the FWNC&R Conservancy to advocate for improvements outlined in the Nature Center's 2003 Strategic Master Plan. She served as president of the Conservancy until 2011. At that time, the group merged with the Friends of the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge, Inc. She became president-elect of the newly merged organization and was elected president in 2013.

Ms. Leonard's generous support of conservation efforts has extended to the Great Plains Restoration Council as well in its efforts to conserve 1,000+ contiguous acres of native prairie in southwest Tarrant County.

Ms. Leonard's service on both boards has dramatically raised the profile of the Nature Center within the community, and funding for major improvements has been secured through her efforts, including the establishment of trail amenities for a Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) paddling trail, installation of interpretive and directional signage, donation of a mini-bus for outreach programming, and major reconstruction of infrastructure at the Nature Center's Lotus Marsh Boardwalk and Cross Timbers Trail. Most recently, her generosity and advocacy helped lead to improvements at Greer Island Trail through a \$200,000 TPWD Recreation grant and construction of the new Lotus Marsh Pavilion located adjacent to the Boardwalk.

The Park & Recreation Department Park and Facility Naming Policy stipulates that in order for an individual to be considered for naming of a park that person must have "contributed significantly to the acquisition or development of the individual park or facility or provided a service in the interest of the park system as a whole." In the case of other naming alternatives, Section VII, facilities within parks such as playgrounds, picnic shelters, trail heads, etc. can be considered as an alternative to the park naming subject to the review and recommendation of the Director, endorsement by the Park & Recreation Advisory Board and the approval by the City Council. The boardwalk at the FWNC&R qualifies within this policy section.

The recommended name typically must be received posthumously but "in very limited circumstances the naming of City-owned facilities after a living individual who has made extraordinary contributions for the betterment of all Fort Worth may be considered. These contributions should greatly advance the achievement of the City Council's vision for Fort Worth" (City Council Resolution No. 3253-09-2005, September 6, 2005).

The Park & Recreation Director recommends the waiver of the posthumous requirement in this case, given the extensive service that Ms. Leonard has donated to the FWNC&R and the Park & Recreation Department in general.

At its March 24, 2021 meeting, the Park & Recreation Advisory Board endorsed this recommendation to the City Council to name the boardwalk at the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge the Marty Leonard Lotus Marsh Boardwalk.

This facility is located in COUNCIL DISTRICT 7 and serves the entire CITY OF FORT WORTH.

A Form 1295 is not required because: This M&C does not request approval of a contract with a business entity.

FISCAL INFORMATION / CERTIFICATION:

The Financial Management Services Director certifies that this action will have no material effect on City funds.

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