



Hyattsville City Council Agenda Item Report

Meeting Date: March 18, 2019
Submitted by: Joseph Solomon, W5
Submitting Department: Legislative
Item Type: Legislative
Agenda Section:

SUBJECT

Authorizing the City Administrator to initiate necessary actions to advise the Hyattsville City Council on options to change the name of William Pinkney Magruder Park (20 minutes)

HCC-278-FY19

Recommendation:

I move that the Mayor and Council take the following actions to determine the feasibility of a name change of William Pinkney Magruder Park (hereafter referred to as Magruder Park):

a) Authorize the City Attorney to investigate the feasibility of and legal requirements for changing the name of Magruder Park without reverting ownership of the land back to the Magruder Family and/or Estate. The City Administrator and/or City Attorney will be required to report back their findings to the City Council within 120 days of passage of this motion. In the event additional research time is required, the City Administrator may request an extension from the City Council.

b) Authorize the City Attorney to investigate the feasibility of and legal requirements for updating the deed to exclude the offensive language as defined in the motion summary background details and effectively remove any restrictions on use of the public amenity that would be considered discriminatory as defined by the Hyattsville Human Rights Act. The City Administrator and/or City Attorney will be required to present its findings to the City Council within 120 days of passage of this motion. In the event additional research time is required, the City Administrator may request an extension from the City Council.

The City Administrator shall provide the City Council, in all regular status updates, the progress related to this research effort, including (but not be limited too) legal expenses (total expenses on this effort should be reported and council should be advised when and if these expenses reach \$10,000.00), partnership efforts, and any additional actions required by the Council to support investigating this matter.

Upon receipt of the work product resulting from parts a) and b) of this motion, the City Council shall devise an action plan to address the community implications associated with the property's history and the City's relationship with the donor (and/or his Estate). The action plan shall include measures the Council deems appropriate, as well as the supporting process, timeline, and community outreach and engagement. The City Administrator shall assist the City Council in this effort by preparing recommendations based on the tools available to the City of Hyattsville, Hyattsville historical precedent, models used by other governments or quasi government entities, and any recommended best practices.

Sponsor(s):

Solomon

Co-Sponsor(s):

Croslin, Spell, Wright, Haba, Ward, Suiter, Hollingsworth, Lawrence, Warner

ATTACHMENTS

Summary Background:

William Pinkney Magruder, as a public official, private land owner, benefactor to the City of Hyattsville and Prince George's County, and as a policy influencer, pursued a segregationist agenda contributing to a locally driven systemic attempt to prevent non-white people from owning homes and enjoying the pleasures of a municipal park. Among other examples, these actions are best evidenced by the following excerpt from Magruder's deed of Magruder Park to the City of Hyattsville, "... IN TRUST NEVERTHELESS to hold said land as a public recreation park and playground to be known as WILLIAM PINKNEY MAGRUDER PARK, for the Caucasian inhabitants only of the said town of Hyattsville," and, "... to issue permits permitting persons of the Caucasian race, not inhabitants of said town."

Next Steps:

Council Action

Fiscal Impact:

N/A

City Administrator Comments:

The City Attorney will review land records, deeds, and other relevant and available documents and report back to the Council. The staff can use available outreach methods to ensure a public process for obtaining community input as directed by the Council and if legal opinion supports.

Community Engagement:

Community is aware of the history of Magruder Park. Some community members have already expressed an interest in name change during reimagine Magruder Park community sessions. Worked with Hyattsville CDC Director, and HPA President in developing language. Received vote of support from HWRAC.

Strategic Goals:

Goal 5 – Strengthen the City's Identity as a Diverse, Creative, and Welcoming Community

Legal Review Required?

N/A