

TO:	CHAIR AND MEMBERS COMMUNITY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING ON FEBRUARY 22, 2017
FROM:	CATHY SAUNDERS CITY CLERK
SUBJECT:	REQUEST FOR RENAMING OF MILDRED BARONS PARK TO VIMY RIDGE PARK

RECOMMENDATION

That, on the recommendation of the Civic Administration, the request to rename Mildred Barons Park, located at 444 Kathleen Avenue, to “Vimy Ridge Park” BE DENIED as use of the park for military commemorative purposes may conflict with neighbourhood amenities and uses and its location is not as prominent as would be ideal for a recognition of this significance

PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER

None.

BACKGROUND

Councillor B. Armstrong has submitted a request to rename Mildred Barons Park, located at 444 Kathleen Avenue, to “Vimy Ridge Park”.

In support of the request, the following documentation has been submitted:

- A letter of support from the Argyle Business Improvement Area
- A petition signed by 20 individuals indicating support for the proposal

In addition, Councillor Armstrong indicates that he has sent letters to Kathleen Avenue residents, outlining his intention to request that Mildred Barons Park be renamed Vimy Ridge Park. Councillor Armstrong indicates that the letter invited the residents to contact him directly if they had any concerns with the proposal. He indicates that no phone calls or emails were received regarding this matter.

Councillor Armstrong also indicates that he undertook a survey of residents of the “east end” and indicates that of the responses received, 93.5% of the responses indicated “yes” to the following question: “Do you support changing the name of Mildred Barons Park to Vimy Ridge Park in honour of the 100th year of the Battle of Vimy Ridge? (located at 444 Kathleen Avenue)” He indicates that approximately 100 residents were surveyed and at least 90 percent of the respondents reside in Ward 2.

A letter from the Royal Canada Legion, Vimy Branch (#145) indicates support for initiatives that appropriately commemorate the heroic actions of more than 15,000 Canadians and notes that Councillor Bill Armstrong reached out to the Legion to advise them of his initiative with respect to remaining to Mildred Barons Park to Vimy Ridge Park.

Rationale in Support of the Application

The application submission and additional material indicate the following in support of the application:

- Re-naming the park would commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge in April 2017.
- The park could be dedicated in honour of Canadian Veterans, past, present and future.
- The park can serve the Argyle Business Improvement Area, its Members, other local businesses and the community by providing a location to host events that celebrate Canadians.

The Battle of Vimy Ridge

The Battle of Vimy Ridge marked the first time all four divisions of the Canadian Expeditionary Force participated in battle together, making the achievement and sacrifice a truly Canadian moment in history. The Battle of Vimy Ridge is one of the most important moments in our country's history. Many historians concede it was the birth of our nation, the first time our young nation was recognized on a worldwide perspective. The Canadian Corps suffered 10,602 casualties: 3,598 killed and 7,004 wounded. The cost was high, but the victory at Vimy Ridge changed the course of World War I and as a result the course of history.

History of Mildred Barons

Mildred Barons was a long-standing teacher in London, who was recognized for her involvement at Argyle School, renamed to Mildred B. Barons School in 1961. In 1972, the City of London acquired the school property to develop the property as a park to serve the neighbourhood. In December 1975, the school was demolished. After the school was demolished, the City chose to carry on the name of the park in Ms. Barons' honour.

There has been no indication that the applicant reached out to the family of Mildred Barons to determine if the family had any concerns with the possible renaming of the park to "Vimy Ridge Park".

Review of Council's Policy entitled "Naming/Re-naming or Dedicating of Municipal Property, Buildings and Park Elements"

The Council Policy entitled "Naming/Re-naming or Dedicating of Municipal Property, Buildings and Park Elements" states the following:

- (a) Priority (in order of preference) shall be given to continuing the current naming/re-naming practice of City of London property and buildings after:
1. the area or planning district in which the property or building is located to provide a geographical association to help the public to locate to a park, bridge or building more easily;
 2. the most dominant "constant feature either within or nearby" the selected site such as an associated significant ecological or natural resource feature;
 3. an historical name related to London's heritage and/or historical folklore;
 4. an event or person of international, national or provincial significance; or
 5. an organization (or individual, with the section of election officials currently in office) to recognize:
 - particular activities and significant contributions to the London community and/or society; and/or
 - outstanding contributions and/or sponsorships made toward the development and/or enhancement of a property or building.
- (b) Preference shall be given to naming City of London Elements (within parks or buildings) after an organization or an individual.

The Policy indicates that names shall be unique and name duplication and similar sounding names shall be avoided.

Applicants are to assume responsibility for securing consensus with the community with respect to the application. Opposition to the application must be addressed by the applicant.

The Policy further indicates that the applicant is to consult with external stakeholders in the community and identify possible objections and/or positive responses to determine the level of support for the requested civic naming. As noted previously in this report, we are receipt of a letter of support from the Argyle Business Improvement Area and a petition signed by 20 individuals indicating support for the proposal. Councillor Armstrong also indicates that he sent letters to Kathleen Avenue residents to advise them of the proposal and undertook a survey of the community.

Application Review

The Municipal Addressing Advisory Group (MAAG), which is comprised of representatives from Emergency Services, Utility Companies, the City’s Planning, Compliance Services, Clerk’s and Engineering Services has indicated no objection to the proposed park name “Vimy Ridge”.

Mildred Barons Park is a small (1 ha.) neighbourhood park on a dead end street serving the residential area north of Dundas Street and east of Third Street. The park is slated for upgrades to the existing ball diamond by 2018 to accommodate increased demand. Other park amenities are planned to be added in 2019 after consultations with the local community. A name change would not likely impact those plans, but may lead to expectations of park improvements of a military commemoration nature that may conflict with desirable neighbourhood amenities and uses.

The Civic Administration recognizes the importance of the 100th Anniversary of Vimy Ridge and there are a number of events and initiatives that the City will be undertaking to commemorate the Anniversary. The Civic Administration indicates that if a park were to be created to recognize this important event, a property in a more prominent location of the City would be more appropriate. The Civic Administration is working on a “Veterans” park to be located at Veterans Memorial Parkway and Oxford Street through the Veterans Memorial Parkway project, where future commemorative features and celebrations could occur.

The City of London wants to continue to honour its Canadian Veterans (past, present and future). The attached list (Appendix “C”) provides an example of a snapshot of a variety of commemoration initiatives and other contributions the City of London has been and is involved with to honour our Veterans and the Military. Throughout Canada’s sesquicentennial year, and over the 100th anniversary of Vimy Ridge in April 2017, we have a unique opportunity to bring awareness to these initiatives and recognize the contributions that Veterans have made to Canada and London.

Financial Implications

The Civic Administration has advised that the cost to place signage at the Park is minimal and can be absorbed within Planning’s annual budget.

The public may have higher expectations for the development and maintenance of any park that is established in recognition of our Veterans, and therefore could result in increased capital and operational costs. However, some cost efficiencies may be achievable by aligning a Vimy Park venue with the Veterans Memorial Parkway.

Conclusion

The Civic Administration has noted concerns with respect to request to rename Mildred Barons Park, located at 444 Kathleen Avenue, to “Vimy Ridge Park and is recommending that the request be denied.

PREPARED BY:
CATHY SAUNDERS CITY CLERK

APPENDIX "A"

October 28, 2016

Good afternoon Cathy,

Councillor Bill Armstrong would like to inquire about the re-naming of a public park.

The park in question is Mildred Barons Park located at 444 Kathleen Avenue. Through research provided by student researchers, a Council motion could not be found officially naming the park. Whether one exists or not is unknown at this time based on the research available.

We have letters from the Argyle Business Improvement Association (Argyle BIA) and the Royal Canadian Legion Vimy Branch #145 supporting the proposed re-naming of the park in light of commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge. We also have a survey completed by residents of the east end of the city with data showing a large percentage show support for the proposed re-naming.

Can you please advise Councillor Armstrong as to what the next steps would be in terms of submitting a request for re-naming?

Thank you

On behalf of Councillor Armstrong

Nyiri Karakas
Administrative Assistant

APPENDIX “C”

Examples of City of London Veterans Initiatives Involvement

Type of Initiative	Name
PARKS AND GARDENS development, enhancement and maintenance	Victoria Park including a Veterans Garden
	Veterans Memorial Parkway (VMP) including the National/Provincial Flag memorial and 8 commemorative features
	Veteran’s Garden on River Road
	Trooper Mark Wilson Park – small memorial plaque
	Lambeth Veterans Park
TREE PLANTING	VMP – Honour Guard blocks of trees
	Vimy Ridge Commemorative Tree Planting
PUBLIC ART AND MONUMENTS (creation and maintenance)	Boer War Monument
	Holy Roller Tank
	Charley Fox Memorial Monument
	LAV III Monument
	Victoria Park Cenotaph
	Victoria Park Cannons
	Lambeth Cenotaph
	Simcoe School War Memorial
	Sacrifice Memorial Public Art
	Byron Legion Public Art
	Dutch Carillon in Victoria Park
	Veterans Memorial Parkway (VMP)
STREET AND BRIDGE NAMING	Field Marshal Wolseley Bridge
	Charley Fox Memorial Overpass
	Trooper Wilson Place
	Streets of Honour Program
	Veterans Memorial Parkway (VMP)
	Trafalgar Street
CEREMONIES	Remembrance Day
	Veterans Memorial Graves
	Celebrate Canada 150
	Veterans Cemetery Decoration Day
MUNICIPAL GRANTS	Canada Day at the Forks
	Community Heritage Investment Program (CHIP) Grants e.g., funding to Secrets of Radar and RCR Museum
INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE PLAQUES AND DISPLAYS	Victoria Park Interpretive Signage and Plaques
	Canadian War Cemeteries in Victoria Park
	City Hall Lobby plaques and books (e.g., liberation of Holland, First Hussars) and Remembrance Books of our War Dead
	City of London Website and Map (Streets of Honour Program and Book of Remembrance)
	Western Counties Cultural Heritage Landscape Interpretive Signage
HERITAGE MUSEUMS AND HERITAGE BUILDINGS	1st Hussars Museum
	Eldon House
	Museum London
	T-Block (once part of Wolseley Barracks)