



Creating or Changing the Name Of Public Right-of-Ways

By

Entering the Council Process through the Public Works Administration

Department of Public Works

Richmond, Virginia

Various requirements or criteria relevant to naming “facilities” have been adopted through Council ordinance No. 2004-35-64 adopted April 13, 2004. Immediately below is a condensed list of the administration’s requests or requirements, which recognizes the ordinance requirements, for initiating a request to create a name or change the name of a public right-of-way through processing by the City Administration for Council approval considerations. Also, this process and requirements shall pertain to any road or right-of-way (i.e. public or private) for street name signage requests for new or changed names. These guidelines do not preclude a councilperson’s prerogative to patron his or her own naming resolution paper. The condensed list of requirements is as follows:

1. A letter of request to the Director of Public Works denoting the actual request, the purpose or reason(s) for the request, and a brief explanation of *why* the proposed name is being requested *and* what the proposed name stands for or represents (Address: Director of Public Works, City Hall, Room 701, 900 E. Broad Street, Richmond, Virginia, 23219 [804-646-6430]);
2. A \$300 non-refundable application and processing fee (payable to City of Richmond);
3. A plan or sketch showing the exact extent and location area to receive name;
4. Applicant required to gain approval from Richmond Regional Planning District Commission (RRPDC) (323-2033) for the proposed name prior to submitting letter of request
5. Applicant to provide a copy of “Street Name Clearinghouse Request” from RRPDC approval with letter of request
6. All adjoining landowners and affected civic groups and neighborhood teams are to be notified by the applicant of the proposed change.
7. Provide copy of written consents, objections, or (at a minimum) some evidence that all requested notification were delivered (i.e. copy of the certified mail receipts)
8. Provide background of notable actions, achievements, and reputation of any person’s name being recommended.

The policies, criteria, and guidelines as expressed in ordinance No. 2004-35-64 adopted April 13, 2004 must be followed and satisfied, which applies to Section 8 of the City Code. These code sections do not apply to street names designated through the subdivision or other land use processes pursuant to Chapters 26 or 32 of this Code.

They include, but are not limited to, the following: (Note: Reference to City Manager changed to Chief Administrative Officer in this document after adoption of ordinance)

Sec. 8-16. Policy

All naming or renaming of City Facilities shall be in accordance with the following policies and considerations:

- (a) The City Council may, at its sole discretion, approve or disapprove by resolution any and all proposals for naming or renaming City Facilities.
- (b) All citizens, especially parties affected by the naming or renaming, shall have the opportunity to participate in a public hearing on the naming or renaming resolution.
- (c) Once selected by the City Council for a City Facility, a name shall be bestowed with the intention that it will be permanent for that City Facility.
- (d) The names bestowed by the City Council shall be consistent with the values and character of the community served by the City Facility.
- (e) The City Council shall give due consideration to the potential financial impact involved in changing the addresses of abutting private and public properties related to any proposal to rename a City road or street.
- (f) Street names should not be changed more frequently than once every one hundred (-100) years.

Sec. 8-17. Criteria

Because the naming or renaming of City Facilities should be approached cautiously with forethought and deliberation, the evaluation and selection of names for City Facilities shall comply with the criteria set forth below:

- (a) In all cases, City Council shall have the prerogative of accepting or rejecting a naming or renaming proposal.
- (b) Once the name of a City Facility has been changed by City Council, renaming should be strongly resisted.
- (c) Names, which could be construed as advertising a particular business, shall be avoided.
- (d) Cumbersome, corrupted, or modified names and discriminatory or derogatory names from the point of view of race, sex, color, creed, political affiliation or other social factors, shall be avoided.
- (e) Proposed names shall be based upon a relationship to:
 - (1) Individuals who have made major and distinct social, cultural, historical, or civic contributions;
 - (2) Neighborhood or geographic identification;
 - (3) Historical figures, places, events or other instances of cultural significance; and
 - (4) Natural or geological features.
- (f) City Facilities shall be named after individuals only and not after multiple persons, groups or organizations.
- (g) Preference shall be given to the names of persons who are natives of the City of Richmond or who resided in the City during the time of their contributions.
- (h) With rare exception for individuals whose service or contributions are extraordinary, memorials shall only be made recognizing persons who have been deceased for five years or more in order to ensure that actions being recognized stand the test of time.
- (i) The naming of multiple facilities after the same individual shall be avoided.
- (j) Only surnames should be used unless additional identification is necessary to prevent duplication.
- (k) Historical names placed on designated landmarks listed on City, State or National Registers of Historic Places shall not be changed.

(l) Street names, plats, specific sites and places and natural features indicated on general usage maps for fifty years or more (i.e., age criteria applied by the National Register of Historic Places) should only be changed under exceptional circumstances.

(m) In the development of new City Facilities, address designations shall be used until City Council approves a naming proposal. To the extent possible, names shall be designated before opening new City Facilities to public use.

Sec. 8-18. Procedures

The submission, evaluation, approval and implementation of proposals for naming or renaming City Facilities shall comply with the procedures set forth below:

(a) All requests for naming or renaming a City Facility shall be made in writing and indicate the specific City Facility proposed for naming or name changes. Such written request, together with all other documentation required by this section, shall be submitted to the Chief Administrative Officer or to the Council member who patrons a naming resolution. Each request shall be accompanied by the payment of a fee in an amount set by the Chief Administrative Officer to cover the reasonable cost of administering these procedures.

(b) At the request of a citizen or interested group, either the Chief Administrative Officer or a Council member may introduce a resolution to name or rename a City Facility.

(c) Within ninety (90) days of the introduction of a naming resolution, the Chief Administrative Officer shall prepare and submit to the City Council a staff report that evaluates whether or not the proposal is consistent with the policies and criteria herein, and that indicates the financial impact of implementing the proposed naming or renaming.

(d) In cases where citizens or interested groups request to change the name of a street, which has an existing, approved name, the proponents of such name change shall file with their request a petition of the affected property owners. The petition must bear the signatures of the owners of at least fifty-one percent (51%) of the lots, tracts, or parcels of property (excluding federal, state, public utilities and municipal lands), which abut the street to be renamed. The percentage of owners shall be expressed in terms of both number of properties and land area.

(e) The City Council, upon receipt of the staff report, shall conduct a public hearing to review recommendations, suggestions and obtain public comments from affected parties prior to any final action on a naming resolution.

(f) The City Council may, at its sole discretion, approve or disapprove any and all proposals for naming or renaming a City Facility.

(g) The Chief Administrative Officer shall notify those who requested the name or name change as well as appropriate offices, departments and agencies of the Council's action on a proposed resolution. Upon the approval of a resolution, the Chief Administrative Officer shall take all action to implement the naming or name changes of City Facilities including, but not limited, to changing stationery and signs and the recovery of the costs thereof.

(h) The provisions of this procedure shall not apply to the application of recognition for benches, trees, refuse cans, flagpoles, water fountains, or other similar items of personal property.

General Information:

- Once we receive the required fee and requested information, all city agencies will review and provide their comments to Public Works.
- We encourage applicants to discuss their proposals with adjoining, Fire, Police, Refuse Collection, Utilities and any other interested parties prior to initiating a request
- Once the administration has given an initial approval of the request, Public Works will prepare a drawing and the preliminary Council papers.

- The Law Department will process the final ordinance for Council action.
- All costs associated with the name proposal (i.e. street or alley signage as deemed necessary by Public Works) are to be incurred by the applicant.
- If the requests is deemed acceptable and reasonable, the ordinance will be:
 - Introduced (2nd or 4th Monday) at one Council meeting (i.e. read into the minutes)
 - Reviewed by the Transportation, Land Use, and Housing Committee at their next meeting after a Council introduction
 - Returned to Council on the next Monday meeting for final action.
- Contacts Concerning Council Process: Division of Surveys in Room 600 City Hall, 900 E. Broad Street, at 646-0436
- On the average, the process takes approximately four to eight weeks.

(Amended last 10.03.06 BCJ)