

February 8, 2021

TO: Melvin Carter, Mayor  
Jamie Tincher, Deputy Mayor  
Amy Brendmoen, Council President  
Mitra Jalali Nelson, Councilmember  
Nelsie Yang, Councilmember  
Rebecca Noecker, Councilmember  
Jane Prince, Councilmember  
Dai Thao, Councilmember  
Chris Tolbert, Councilmember

FROM: Sara Chamberlain, Chair  
Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Commission

RE: Parks and Recreation Commission – Transmittal of Resolutions:

- Res 21-01 Renaming Lewis Park to Roy Wilkins Park
- 

On January 14, 2020 the Parks and Recreation Commission passed the following resolutions:

- Res 21-01 Renaming Lewis Park to Roy Wilkins Park
  - The Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Commission endorses the proposal to officially rename Lewis Park, with address at 900 North Marion Street, to Roy Wilkins Park.



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**RESOLUTION # 21-01**  
**Renaming Lewis Park to Roy Wilkins Park**

WHEREAS, the Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Commission (“Commission”) is an appointed body established to advise the Mayor and City Council on long-range and city-wide matters related to Parks and Recreation; and

WHEREAS, Lewis Park was created by plat in the 1880s and named after the real estate developer John P. Lewis; and

WHEREAS, Roy Wilkins spent his formative years in the home of his uncle Sam Williams, located one block west of Lewis Park on Galtier Street, and attended the former John Whittier Public School on the northern half of the current Lewis Park block; and

WHEREAS, Roy Wilkins campaigned tirelessly for civil rights both in Saint Paul and nationally as editor of the Saint Paul Appeal, an African-American newspaper, and later as executive director of the national NAACP; and

WHEREAS, the Williams/Wilkins home and the Whittier School were demolished in the late 1970s for the Lewis Park “blight clearance” and redevelopment project; and

WHEREAS, the North End Neighborhood Organization wishes to honor Roy Wilkins by officially changing the name of Lewis Park to Roy Wilkins Park; and

WHEREAS, the City of Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Commission Policy #7, Naming Parks and Recreation Sites, 2012 Update, provides criteria for naming of parks, and this recommendation complies with the spirit of the policy; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Commission endorses the proposal to officially rename Lewis Park, with address at 900 North Marion Street, to Roy Wilkins Park.

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Adopted by the Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Commission on January 14, 2020:

|           |         |          |
|-----------|---------|----------|
| Approved: | Yeas    | <u>8</u> |
|           | Nays    | <u>0</u> |
|           | Absent: | <u>1</u> |

Resolution #20-22

Attested to by:

*Elizabeth L. McDonald*

Staff to the Parks and Recreation Commission



**Minutes**  
**Virtual Meeting - Skype**  
**Thursday, January 14, 2021**  
**6:30 - 8:00 p.m. – meeting**  
**Call-in number: (651) 267-3988**  
**Conference id: 5087122**

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**Members present:** Sara Chamberlain, Choua Khang, Dan Marckel, Antonio Montez, Jazmine Glaser-Kelly, John Mountain, Eric Erickson, Mohamad Liban

**Members absent:** Rafael Espinosa

**Staff present:** Michael Hahm, Liz McDonald

**Guests:** Rich Holst, Michael-jon Pease, Ethan Osten

**1. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

- A. Public comments can be submitted to [liz.mcdonald@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:liz.mcdonald@ci.stpaul.mn.us) with “PRC PUBLIC COMMENT” in the subject line. Any comments and materials submitted by 12pm the day before the meeting will be provided to the Parks and Recreation Commission for their review.
  - i. One public comment was submitted and sent to the Commission.

**2. AGENDA, MINUTES, INTRODUCTIONS, ANNOUNCEMENTS – 6:30-6:35 p.m.**

- A. December 2020 Minutes
  - i. A motion to approve the December minutes was made by Commissioner Glaser-Kelly and seconded by Commissioner Mountain.
  - ii. Approved 7 Opposed 0 Absent 2
- B. January 2021 Agenda
  - i. A motion to approve the January agenda was made by Commissioner Mountain and seconded by Commissioner Marckel.
  - ii. Approved 6 Opposed 0 Absent 3

**3. DISCUSSION ITEMS – 6:35 –6:40 p.m.**

- A. Commission Bylaw Review

**4. ACTION ITEMS – 6:40 – 7:15 p.m.**

- A. Res 21-01 Renaming Lewis Park to Roy Wilkins Park
  - i. A motion to approve Res 21-01 was made by Commissioner Chamberlain and seconded by Commissioner Liban.
  - ii. Approved 8 Opposed 0 Absent 1

**5. DIRECTOR’S REPORT – 7:15 – 7:25 p.m.**

- A. COVID-19 Updates

**6. SUBCOMMITTEE AND TASK FORCE REPORTS – 7:25 - 7:45p.m.**

- A. Como Regional Park Committee – Commissioner Marckel
- B. Highland Bridge– Commissioner Mountain/Director Hahm

**7. COMMISSION ELECTIONS 7:45 - 8:00 p.m.**



- A. Commissioner Glaser-Kelly accepted nomination for Chair.
    - i. Approved 8 Opposed 0 Absent 1
  - B. Commissioner Montez accepted nomination for Vice-Chair.
    - i. Approved 8 Opposed 0 Absent 1
8. **ADJOURNMENT – 8:00 p.m.**

**NEXT PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING**  
**Thursday, February, 11 2021 from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. – Online meeting**





North End Neighborhood Organization (District 6)

171 Front Avenue  
Saint Paul, MN 55117  
651-488-4485  
[ed@nenostpaul.org](mailto:ed@nenostpaul.org)

November 2, 2020

Director Hahm,

I am writing on behalf of the North End Neighborhood Organization to express our support for the proposal to rename Lewis Park in honor of Roy Wilkins. NENO unanimously approved a motion supporting the change at our August 3rd, 2020 meeting.

Roy Wilkins lived in the North End throughout his youth at 906 Galtier St after he moved from St. Louis. Alongside Historic Rondo, this area of the North End was one of the few neighborhoods in St. Paul that had a substantial African American population in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, including Mr. Wilkins' uncle, who worked at the nearby railroad. Notably, the nearby Fire Station 22 at 293 Front Ave had an all-African American crew and was led by the city's first African American Fire Captain (William R. Godette). Today this neighborhood retains a substantial African American population as well as newer populations from around the world.

Few if any North End residents would know who Robert Porter Lewis was or why this park was named for him. I appreciate that Mr. Lewis donated the parcel of land that would, after significant enlargement through "urban renewal", become the Lewis Park of today. That is one story about this park, and it is one that should continue to be told in interpretive materials at the site. But there are other stories we can tell about Lewis Park too, stories of finding belonging in a segregated city, of the determination of working people to make good lives for their families, and of the "urban renewal" that all too often had mixed impacts for the neighborhoods they set out to renew. These stories need to be told, and there is no better place to tell them than here. Too few streets and parks throughout our city are named to recognize the contributions of people of color, and few children of St. Paul have been more deserving of our honor and appreciation than Roy Wilkins.

NENO submitted an application to the CIB Committee earlier this year requesting improved lighting, amenities, and signage at Lewis Park, which the CIB Committee included in its proposed list for 2021. This renaming should take place alongside these improvements. In combination, these changes will help maintain this park as a prized amenity for the neighborhood and as a symbol of the city's commitment to lifting up the North End.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karin Groening".

Karin Groening  
Chair  
North End Neighborhood Organization

# PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION POLICY # 7

**SUBJECT:        Naming Parks and Recreation Sites**

**POLICY:**

The naming of sites within the Saint Paul Parks and Recreation system shall be based on specific criteria and for a specific purpose. Saint Paul park sites include, but are not limited to parks, facilities, recreation centers, trails, open space, tot-lots, park roads, parkways, tennis courts, playing fields, gymnasiums, swimming pools and beaches, picnic grounds, and special feature facilities, such as the zoo, conservatory, or nature interpretive centers.

The following criteria and purposes shall be considered when selecting a name for a park site:

Geographic names shall be based on adjacent street names, surrounding neighborhood or community name, or the name of other prominent nearby features, such as a water body. The purpose for using a geographic name for a park site is to enable the public to identify the site's location.

Historic names shall be based on prominent historic people or events associated with the site's general area. Care shall be taken that historic name's reflect the City's multi-cultural diversity and traditions. The purpose of using a historic name for a park site is to enable the public to identify the site's location and to educate the public about the site's history.

Functional names shall be based on the use, service or programs provided at the site. The purpose of using a functional name for a park site is to enable the public to identify the purpose, services, or programs provided at the site.

Memorial names shall be based on names of an individual who made significant contributions to the Saint Paul Parks and Recreation system and who have been deceased for at least three years. Since the purpose of using an individual's name for a park site is primarily to honor that person and his or her contribution to the parks' system, consideration shall be given to alternative geographic, historic, or functional names, so that the park site name shall serve the greatest need of the general public.

The procedure for requesting the naming of a park site shall be as follows:

Any Saint Paul resident, organization, agency, or business may recommend names for new park sites or name changes for existing park sites. Such requests shall be made in writing to the Director of Parks and Recreation. The Director shall forward the request and the staff recommendation to the Parks and Recreation Commission for its review and comment. Parks which have had another name for at least 50 years shall also be submitted by the Parks and Recreation Commission to the St. Paul Historic Preservation Commission, for its review and comment before renaming.

The Parks and Recreation Commission shall present its recommendation to the Mayor and City Council for final action.

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POLICY TYPE:

GOVERNANCE PROCESS  
 COMMISSION RELATIONSHIPS

DATE APPROVED: September 11, 1991

DATE UPDATED: March 14, 2012

FURTHER ACTION TO BE TAKEN

NO  RESOLUTION/ORDINANCE

LEGAL REFERENCE AND DATE OF FINAL ACTION: September 11, 1991

TRANSMIT TO: Mayor, City Council, Commissioners, Department Managers