



Legislation Text

File #: 21-1938, **Version:** 1

Resolution to Rename Winchell Park to Dr. Harold J. Lockett Park

Residents approached the City about the prospect of renaming Winchell Park, after concerns were raised about Alexander Winchell, the parks namesake. Winchell was a University of Michigan professor of physics, civil engineering, geology and paleontology. A U of M committee reviewed Winchell's work and noted that "by both contemporary standards and even in the context of Winchell's day, his most notable work - the 1880 book titled, 'Preadamites, or a Demonstration of the Existence of Men before Adam' - was unambiguously racist and out of step with the university's own aspirations in those times."

This task of renaming Winchell Park became the assignment of a subcommittee of the Parks Advisory Commission (PAC). This subcommittee of PAC included staff, commission members, neighborhood and community residents, a member of the local NAACP chapter, and a staff person from the Office of Sustainability and Innovations. Individual committee members selected names for consideration and then the group voted on these initial candidates and selected six to put forth for public consideration. The subcommittee expressed an interest in selecting an individual who was not already commemorated on City of Ann Arbor property.

Voting took place during the month of August. Because Winchell is a neighborhood park, outreach was focused on residents within a ¼ mile of the park, consistent with how the City promotes a neighborhood park improvement meeting. Postcards were sent to all homes with a ¼ mile area of the park with information on the project, where to read biographies of the candidates, and how to vote. The park was also signed with this information. People were directed to a web page that has information on the exceptional individuals and a link to the survey.

Survey results showed Dr. Harold J. Lockett to be the clear winner. An attachment to this memorandum shares brief biographies of all the selected candidates.

The Park Advisory Commission unanimously recommended at their October 19th meeting to rename Winchell Park the Dr. Harold J. Lockett Park.

A rededication ceremony will be planned for the early summer of 2022.

Prepared by: Colin Smith, Manager, Parks and Recreation

Reviewed by: Derek Delacourt, Community Services Area Administrator

Approved by: Milton Dohoney Jr., Interim City Administrator

Whereas, Winchell Park may be named after Alexander Winchell, a U-M professor of physics, civil engineering, geology and paleontology;

Whereas, The Park Advisory Commission strives to provide exceptional experiences for all Park visitors and residents, regardless of race, age, gender, sexual orientation, income level, ethnicity, or ability;

Whereas, The Park Advisory Commission believes everyone should feel safe, welcome and respected in the City Parks and that renaming Winchell Park is consistent with this goal;

Whereas, The Park Advisory Commission established a special ad-hoc committee for the purpose of recommending a renaming of Winchell Park;

Whereas, The special ad-hoc committee met multiple times, identified numerous candidates for renaming consideration, and developed a method to engage the broader public to vote on the renaming;

Whereas, A renaming survey was released for a month, and residents within a ¼ mile of Winchell Park were notified by postcard of the renaming survey and the park was signed with the same information;

Whereas, The survey generated 321 votes;

Whereas, Dr. Harold J. Lockett received the most votes by a significant margin;

Whereas, The special ad-hoc committee met on Friday, October 1st and passed a resolution recommending to the Park Advisory Commission that Winchell Park be renamed Dr. Harold J. Lockett Park; and

Whereas, At their October 19, 2021 meeting the Park Advisory Commission unanimously recommended that Ann Arbor's Mayor and the Ann Arbor City Council officially rename and rededicate Winchell Park as Dr. Harold J. Lockett Park;

RESOLVED, That the Mayor and Council approve renaming Winchell Park to Dr. Harold J. Lockett Park.