Welcoming Winnipeg – Renaming Edison Park to Matheson Millstones Park

Feedback Summary

October 2023

Welcoming Winnipeg

The Welcoming Winnipeg initiative is just one aspect of the reconciliation process the City of Winnipeg is committed to, and will help ensure that the contributions, experiences, and perspectives of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit are reflected truthfully in our stories, historical markers, and place names.

To date, this has included Council passing a motion to adopt the Welcoming Winnipeg: Reconciling our History Policy. This policy was developed to guide the City in making decisions regarding requests to create new, add to or remove/rename historical markers and place names and resolve the absence of Indigenous perspectives, experiences and contributions in the stories remembered and commemorated.

This new process includes posting change requests on the City of Winnipeg website for two weeks, to provide the opportunity for residents to provide feedback by:

- Completing a short online survey;
- Calling 204-986-4549 and leaving a voice message;
- Registering to appear as a delegation before the Committee of Community Members.

Background

All City park renaming requests now go through the Welcoming Winnipeg process which is about ensuring a proactive lens of balance, inclusion and Indigenous perspectives is used when making changes to the City's historical markers and place names.

A request was submitted by a member of the public to rename Edison Park to Matheson Millstones Park. This park is located in the North Kildonan ward. Details of the request can be found here.

Residents were invited to provide feedback from February 3, 2023 to February 17, 2023.

Following the collection of feedback, input was provided to the Committee of Community Members to make a recommendation for Council's consideration.

Promotion

Opportunities to provide input on the renaming were promoted using the following methods:

- City of Winnipeg website – posted February 3, 2023
- Welcoming Winnipeg e-mail distribution list with over 200 recipients – February 3, 2023
- City of Winnipeg Facebook post with 36,000 followers – February 7, 2023
- City of Winnipeg Twitter post with 118,000 followers – February 7, 2023
- City of Winnipeg Instagram story with 1,600 followers – February 7, 2023
- Internal City of Winnipeg e-mail distribution list – February 8, 2023

What We Heard

24 responses were received through the online survey. 0 voice messages were received.

In response to the question: **Do you think the Committee of Community Members should support this request?**

- 20 respondents said yes
- 3 respondents said no
- 1 respondent said undecided

Examples of reasons identified for not supporting the change were:

"… the submission does not appear to make any attempt to reasonably consider Indigenous history within the area. The provided citation about the history of Selkirk's settlement has no relation to this specific site or to an Indigenous context whatsoever."

Examples of reasons identified for supporting the change were:

"The Matheson family was never properly acknowledged for their contributions in developing this area of the City and the renaming of the park would go a long way in recognizing the important and historic role they played."

To learn more about Welcoming Winnipeg please visit winnipeg.ca/WelcomingWinnipeg

Winnipeg

How Input was Considered

Below is a summary of changes that have been made, based on input.

What We Heard	How It Was Considered
Lack of Indigenous significance in the request.	The Welcoming Winnipeg Committee of Community Members agreed; in particular they felt the request was missing the history of First Nations and Métis agriculture practices in the area.
Support for the renaming in the public feedback references the work of the Matheson family in the area and the need for recognition.	The Committee members felt the potential renaming would be a further representation of Indigenous displacement in the area.