

Naming of County Property

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| Objective: | Naming County-owned property such as buildings, rooms, land, roads and other facilities or material items. | Policy/Procedure Number: | 01-32 |
| Reference: (All applicable federal, state, and local laws) | | Effective Date: | November 8, 2000 |
| Legislative Policy Statement: | The authority for officially naming County-owned buildings, rooms, roads, and other facilities or material items (i.e. podium, gavel, bench, garden, collection) rests with the County Legislature. | Responsible Department: | County Administration |
| | | Modified Date (s): | December 2004; May 2005; March 2019; November 2019 |
| General Information: | This policy is not intended to limit the ability to initiate a process to name County Property. This policy will be used as a guide for Tompkins County program committees and the County Legislature when a discussion is initiated to name or rename County property. | Resolution No.: | 236; 2019-54; 2019-255 |
| | | Next Scheduled Review: | November 2024 |

I. Definitions:

County Property - For the purpose of this policy, County Property refers to, but is not limited to all buildings, rooms, land, roads, bridges and other facilities or material items (i.e. podium, gavel, bench, garden, collections, etc.) leased, owned and maintained by Tompkins County.

Grandfathered - A clause creating an exemption based on circumstances previously existing.

Significant Contribution - Giving in a way that is noticeable or large; having or expressing a meaning; something that stands out, is different and important to the community (i.e. for outstanding and distinguished service or philanthropic giving).

- II. Policy:**
- A.** County property shall generally be named in a manner that identifies the ownership and/or the intended use of the property (i.e. park, greenway, library, animal control, administration) or according to the geographical, historical, cultural, or ecological relationships in which the property is located.
 - B.** The gesture of honoring a specific individual at a certain point in time by naming something after him/her is a natural impulse, but as time passes the significance of or reason for such naming can become forgotten; therefore, such naming shall be an exception evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
 - C.** County Property already named is considered "grandfathered".

III. Procedure

A. Naming County Property

1. Requests for naming designation shall be made in writing to the County Administrator and shall be referred to and reviewed by the Government Operations (GO) Committee, which will be responsible for making a recommendation to the full County Legislature. The GO Committee may request input from additional County program committees during the consideration of the naming request.

A written request for the naming of a County Property shall include:

- The County property to be named;
 - The proposed name;
 - Reasons for the proposed name and how the proposed name meets the criteria of this policy.
2. The following guidelines and standards will be used to consider naming requests:
- Only under exceptional circumstances will the County consider permanently naming a room or other County space to honor an individual or other entity;
 - The County Legislature is not obliged to act favorably on any such request, but only after due deliberation and consideration;
 - Building names will be related to the service(s) provided therein, the function(s) the building serves, the geographical location and/or the cultural or historical nature of the building insofar as possible;
 - Facilities will not normally be named for commercial enterprises.
3. When considering the naming of a facility, space, or material item, the Government Operations committee and full Legislature will utilize the following criteria:
- The significance of the individual's or group's contribution to the well-being and betterment of Tompkins County;
 - The relationship between the individual's or group's contribution and the nature of the County property to be named;
 - Any naming shall contain a review provision and be reexamined after ten (10) years at which time the name may be continued or changed;
 - Proposed names that are similar to other facility names in the County should not be considered in order to minimize confusion.

Note: If the request comes from staff or a department and the committee decides the request does not meet the criterion of County-wide importance, the staff of the affected department may informally name something for its own internal use.

B. Renaming County Property

The renaming of facilities is strongly discouraged. Renaming of facilities carries with it a much greater burden of process compared to initial naming. Tradition and continuity of name and community are important community values.

Renaming County property may occur if:

1. The above-stated policy criteria are met;
2. A valid justification for renaming the property is provided;
3. Changing the name will not cause undue confusion within the community;
4. An appropriate level of community support exists.