Park Naming Policy

August 31, 2017
Purpose

• Provide history and background on parks with Confederate names
  • Robert E. Lee Park
  • Confederate Cemetery
• Provide overview of Park and Recreation Department’s Naming Policy
Robert E. Lee Park

- Land purchased by Park Board in 1909
  - 17.5 acres purchased from the Dallas Street Railway Company for $38,000
- Named Oak Lawn Park
- Park became component of Turtle Creek Greenbelt
Robert E. Lee Park

- In 1928 Dallas Southern Memorial Association (DSMA) proposed placement of equestrian statue of Robert E. Lee at an unidentified Dallas park
  - Raised $50,000
- May 5, 1936
  - Park Board approved location of statue at Oak Lawn Park
  - Renamed Robert E. Lee Park
  - Also considered Dealey Plaza and Swiss Avenue as potential locations
  - Park Board appropriated $3,700 for sculpture base
    - Partially funded by Works Project Administration (WPA) grant
    - Designed by Dallas architect Mark Lemmon
    - Constructed by WPA
Robert E. Lee Park

• Robert E. Lee Monument unveiled June 12, 1936
  • Dedicated by President Franklin D. Roosevelt
• Arlington Hall
  • Groundbreaking ceremony on January 19, 1938
  • Designed by Mark Lemmon
    • Two-thirds-size replica of Arlington House, Custis-Lee family home located in Arlington National Cemetery
  • Cost: $29,648
  • Funded in part by WPA Park Improvement Program
• Dedicated October 24, 1939
Robert E. Lee Park

- 1991 – Lee Park and Arlington Hall designated with a Texas historical marker
- 1992 (August 6) – Park Board voted 14-0 to deny renaming of Lee Park and removal of the Robert E. Lee statue
- 1995 – Lee Park/Arlington Hall Conservancy (LP/AHC) formed
  - Executed development and operation agreement with Park and Recreation Department in 1998
  - Public-private effort between the City of Dallas and LP/AHC to rehab and expand Arlington Hall
    - Completed in December 2003
    - LP/AHC raised $2,150,000
    - City provided $500,000 in 1998 bond funds
Confederate Cemetery

• In 1901, Dallas County set aside 0.75 acres in South Dallas for the burial of indigent ex-Confederate soldiers
• Land transferred from Dallas County to City in 1936
• Maintained and operated by Park and Recreation Department since 1936
Park Naming Policy

• Park Board created in 1905 by City Council to have jurisdiction over public parks (*City Charter Chapter XVII*)
• Park Board evaluated the then-current Park Naming Policy in 2008
• Current Park Naming Policy was adopted by the Board on February 19, 2009
• Board authorized a moratorium on naming parks pending a future review of the policy in April 2011
• Park Board began review and revision process of current policy in May 2017
Park Naming Policy

• Naming duration
  • Duration of an official name shall be deemed, in all cases, to be 40 years unless a shorter or longer period is specifically stated in the Board’s naming or renaming decision

• Renaming can apply if:
  • Park has a placeholder name
  • Term of the official name expires
  • Current official name is “dishonored”
Park Naming Policy

- 137 parks officially named (396 parks in system)
- Park Naming Policy does not prevent City Council from naming parks
  - Practice has generally been that the Park and Recreation Board names parks on park land
  - During the 1980s, the City Council affirmed the Park Board’s naming of six parks
- Robert E. Lee Park officially named May 5, 1936
- Confederate Cemetery has placeholder name
Questions
Park Naming Policy

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