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TO: Goodhue County Parks, Trails, and Recreation Advisory Board

FROM: Jess Greenwood, Public Works Director

RE: 15 Aug 25 Park Board Meeting
Donation Acceptance & Donor Recognition Plan

Date: 30 Jul 25

Summary

It is requested that the Park Board review the first draft of a Goodhue County Byllesby Park Donation Acceptance and Donor Recognition Plan and determine the direction of the Plan.

Background

Requests for memorials and memorial benches at Goodhue County Byllesby Park has brought forward the matter of planning for donations, memorials, and partnerships at the park facilities. Park Board members have previously provided the following input:

- Donations of trees and other living memorials can be challenging. If the living item experiences damage from pests, extreme weather, etc. there would be an obligation to replace and re-establish the living memorial if it is donated specifically in honor of someone.
- Similarly, items such as structures, park benches, etc. could also become damaged and require replacement.
- One solution to would be having a type of monument (wall, sculpture, etc.) where donation plaques could be mounted to recognize donors. The donations would not be tied to a specific item at the park, allowing more flexibility in replacement.
- Park benches with a memorial plaque or engraving are common in parks. This may be one type of memorial that we could consider allowing, as the plaque is easy to replace. Replacement parameters would need to be established.

The Park Board requested that staff begin to work on a Donation Plan. As a draft plan has started to take shape, additional concerns surrounding this planning have surfaced:

- Should there be a policy specific to each facility, or one Plan for all parks and trails?
- Clearly discerning between a donation vs. a memorial
- What identification should be allowed from business donors to identify the donation, but not make it look like the County is promoting the business (name, logo, etc.)

Find your Good here.

- Goodhue County does not currently have a park volunteer program, a Friends group, or clearly outlined partnerships with philanthropic organizations. Should that potential growth be covered and planned for under the Plan?
- If we develop a volunteer plan, should we acknowledge in-kind services in the plan?
- Should we be working on an agreement for philanthropic partners? This would allow for several things:
 - Approval of recognition from crowdfunding
 - Approval of recognition from fundraising by other parties
 - Approval of fundraising materials

A draft Plan has been presented to Park Board members for their review and consideration. A direction for the plan should be determined. After final revisions have been made, the Plan will need to be reviewed by other County Departments and will require the approval of the County Board of Commissioners.

Alternatives

- Determine direction for the Donation Acceptance and Donor Recognition Plan and direct staff to continue developing the Plan.
- Research different directions for the Donation Acceptance and Donor Recognition Plan to discuss at the next Park Board meeting.
- Review and revise the Donation Acceptance and Donor Recognition Plan, approve the Plan with the revisions, and recommend County Board approval.

Recommendation

It is the recommendation of staff that the Park Board provide direction for the Donation Acceptance and Donor Recognition Plan and direct staff to continue developing the Plan.

DONATION ACCEPTANCE AND DONOR RECOGNITION PLAN

GOODHUE COUNTY BYLLESBY PARK

Goodhue County has been authorized to accept donations as outlined in the Donation Policy approved by the Board of County Commissioners on 21 December 2010. Donations and contributions come to Goodhue County Byllesby Park from individuals, families, organizations, foundations, corporations, businesses, and other entities as an expression of support, acknowledgment of a need, or the result of organized fundraising efforts. Timely and appropriate recognition of donations and contribution is an important step to acknowledge their generous support.

This Donation Acceptance and Donor Recognition Plan (Plan) defines the criteria for accepting donations, outlines procedures for thanking donors, and describes the form and duration of recognition for different types and levels of donations. The Plan will help guide park staff, donors, and philanthropic partners to understand the methods and levels of recognition Goodhue County Byllesby Park (Park) can give within the framework of Goodhue County ethics regulations.

I. Background

This Plan focuses on recognition for donations of cash, assets, and in-kind services directly to the Park or through Park partner organizations for the benefit of the Park. These organizations include, but are not limited to, the Cannon Falls Sportsman Club, Cannon Falls Lions Club, Lake Byllesby Improvement Association, and Friends of Byllesby Park. When mutually agreed upon by the Park and the philanthropic partner organization(s), donors to the Park's philanthropic partner(s) may be recognized according to the provisions established in this Plan.

The Park and its partners will comply with the Goodhue County Donation Policy and this Plan, including the standards for review of donations to maintain the integrity and impartiality of, and public confidence in, Goodhue County.

Gifts of land or easements help establish or enlarge many parks and trails, donated artifacts enrich park stories in interpretive exhibits, fundraising campaigns improve visitor facilities, and matching gifts increase the impact of programs.

Philanthropic support for parks, trails, and programs is an important supplement—not a replacement—for County appropriations. It creates opportunities for Goodhue County to react more quickly to resource protection or visitor needs than typical County, State, or Federal funding cycles may permit. Philanthropic support allows Goodhue County to undertake higher quality and more sustainable capital projects than might be possible with County appropriations alone. Private support for natural resource educational efforts and programs continues to grow, making it possible for parks to reach younger and more diverse populations, and be a more effective partner in communities. Philanthropic support comes in the form of donated funds, and as volunteerism, in-kind support, and the donation of talent to supplement the work of Park employees. Most importantly, private philanthropy in its many forms gives people opportunities to participate directly in the stewardship of our county's treasures.

II. Review and Acceptance Process

The minimum Park donation review process, in accordance with the Goodhue County Donation Policy approved by the Board of County Commissioners on 21 December 2010, is outlined as follows:

- A. Donations made to Goodhue County Byllesby Park of less than \$500 may be reviewed and accepted by the Public Works Director.
- B. Donations made to Goodhue County Byllesby Park between \$500 and \$1,000 may be reviewed by the Public Works Director and accepted by the County Administrator.
- C. Donations exceeding \$1,000 must be reviewed by the Parks, Trails, and Recreation Advisory Board (Park Board) and accepted by 2/3 majority of the County Board.
- D. Any donation of real property (regardless of value) must be reviewed by the Park Board and accepted by 2/3 majority of the County Board.
- E. County Administration will provide an annual report to the County Board at the last board meeting of the year detailing all donations accepted by the Public Works Director or the County Administrator during the calendar year.

Goodhue County reserves the right to conduct a more thorough donation review process, which may also include: in-depth vetting of donors, public meetings, public hearings, meetings with adjacent landowners, township meetings, Park Board meetings, joint meetings with boards and commissions in adjacent counties and/or municipalities, and other meetings as necessary.

III. Acceptance Considerations

Acceptance of donations must be done in a legally and ethically appropriate manner. This section provides considerations for the authorized employee to use in determining whether the circumstances of the donation and its acceptance would maintain the integrity and impartiality of Goodhue County and public confidence in the County. This list is neither intended to be exclusive nor to imply that any one of these factors absolutely requires acceptance or declination of a donation, but rather to illustrate what should be considered when evaluating the totality of circumstances and making donation-related decisions. The authorized employee must weigh the circumstances from the perspective of a reasonable person with knowledge of the relevant facts.

A. Maintaining the integrity of the County's programs and operations.

- (1) The donation is not, nor does not appear (such as by its size or circumstances) to be, an attempt to influence the exercise of any regulatory or other authority of the County.
- (2) The donation meets a legitimate need of the Park and does not require the commitment of funding that is not planned or available.
- (3) The donation is consistent with, and does not otherwise circumvent, law, regulation, or policy.
- (4) The County is able to properly utilize or manage any donated real property, including land or interests in land, or personal property within policy, programmatic, and management goals.
- (5) Any conditions on the donation are consistent with authorized purposes and any relevant policy or planning documents.
- (6) The donation will not be used by the donor to state or imply endorsement by the County of the donor or the donor's product or services.
- ~~(7) The donation, if it consists of personnel or funding to hire personnel, is structured such that the donated or funded personnel do not inappropriately influence any County regulatory action or other significant decision.~~

B. Maintaining the impartiality, and appearance of impartiality, of the County and its employees.

- (1) The proposed donation is made in an amount that would not influence or appear to influence any pending County decision or action involving the donor's interests.

- (2) There is neither an actual nor an implied commitment to take an action favorable to the donor in exchange for the donation.
 - (3) The donor will not obtain or appear to obtain special treatment in dealing with the Department.
- C. Maintaining public confidence in the County, its programs, and its personnel.
 - (1) Acceptance would not likely result in public controversy.
 - (2) Any conditions on donations are consistent with the County's policies, goals, and programs.
 - (3) The donation does not involve any inappropriate goods or services.
- D. Goodhue County retains the discretion to decline any particular donation.

IV. Donor Recognition Levels and Duration

[A Park may choose to establish different recognition levels and durations for both annual and cumulative giving.

In crafting this section, it may be more helpful to finalize Articles V and VI before this section. The below donor recognition levels only include a sampling of the possible forms of on-site and off-site recognition, which are listed in Articles V and VI.

Please note that the table should indicate if each higher donor level includes the preceding forms of donor recognition. For example, if a donor gives \$1,500 to a park with a low level of anticipated annual giving, then the donor would be recognized with a Thank You Letter, Recognition on the Electronic Donor Board, and Recognition in the Park Newsletter.]

Donors will be recognized by the following levels, and recognition will include the following methods which may be cumulative:

Form of Donor Recognition	Donor Level
Thank You Letter from Park Board	\$100 and above
Recognition on a Donor Recognition Wall/Monument for Ten Years	\$500 and above
Recognition on a Park Bench for the Life of the Bench	Current price of bench
Recognition in Park Social Media & on County Website	\$1,000 - \$2,999
Official Press Release	\$2,999 - \$4,999
Recognition On-Site [Park defines specifics]	\$5,000+

Bronze – Silver – Gold (or similar) levels to recognition wall/monument?

How do we set a value for in-kind services?

V. Off-Site Donor Recognition:

Most donor recognition will occur through letters of appreciation, press releases, and other items that commemorate a donation. The following forms of Goodhue County recognition may be initiated at the discretion of the Public Works Director subject to the wishes of the donor and in accordance with the donor levels established in Article IV. Any type of off-site recognition not listed in this Plan must be agreed upon prior to utilizing by the signatories of this Plan in writing.

A. Letters of Acknowledgement and Thank You Letters

The **Park Board** must acknowledge donations in writing through a letter of acknowledgement and/or thank you letter. The Park Board's acknowledgement shall identify the type of donation, the donor, date of acceptance, reiterate any restrictions of the donation, the dollar amount (or description for in-kind gifts), and thank the donor. This letter will be provided as soon as possible but no later than ~~2 weeks~~ **3 months** after the date the donation is received. In addition, the Park will work with its philanthropic partners to determine when the Park Board will also provide a thank you letter to a donor who has provided a donation to a park partner that will ultimately benefit the Park.

Should this letter come from the Public Works Director so it can be issued faster?

B. Park Websites and Social Media

The Park may include a page on its website to function as a virtual donor recognition board that acknowledges contributions and can tell donor stories about why they made a gift to the Park. The Park may post stories and other information on its website to celebrate and stimulate Park philanthropy. Park staff may generate and post social media content to recognize the contributions of donors as appropriate and tell a donor's story, with their concurrence, to inspire others. Social media and Park web authors will consult with their Communications Department and obtain the concurrence of Park leadership and donors as appropriate.

C. Publicity

Press releases to media - including newspapers, magazines, web, radio, television, articles in Park and County newsletters, and articles in the donor's media (e.g. corporate employee newsletter, magazine, annual report) - are a few of the ways that the Park and the donor may publicly recognize donors/sponsors/cause marketing efforts that benefit the Park.

D. Donor Appreciation Mementos

A photograph, book, park lapel pin, coin, or other park/project-related memento may be presented as an expression of appreciation and recognition for a donation. Items should be purchased by a philanthropic partner, as appropriated funds should not be used. These kinds of items can be sent to the donor or presented during a simple ceremony, media event, or other activity. (This could be a sticker, etc. purchased by a friends group that may exist some day)

VI. On-Site Donor Recognition

In some cases, a gift may warrant on-site (in-park) recognition. The goal of on-site recognition is to tie the local accomplishment to the gift and to inspire others to support the Park. On-site recognition will not be distracting to Park visitors, detract from the visitor experience, nor imply commercial endorsement by Goodhue County. Where on-site recognition is determined appropriate, the following examples of in-park donor recognition may be authorized at the discretion of the Park Board subject to the approval of the donor and in accordance with the donor levels established in Article IV. Other forms of on-site recognition not described in this Plan must be agreed upon by the signatories of this Plan in writing and must comply with Article III. Duration of donor recognition will be determined by the Park Board if not specified in

Article IV.

[IMPORTANT NOTE: Superintendents can and should consider costs for maintenance, lifecycle of the recognition, potential for vandalism, and preservation of a historic or cultural viewshed prior to including any of the options below in the parks donor recognition plan.]

A. Events

Media events, press announcements, photo opportunities, ribbon cuttings, or other recognition events, and other activities or forums in which donors are acknowledged or involved (e.g., annual meeting/convention of nonprofit organizations) may be used to provide high-profile donor recognition.

Special events at the Park must comply with the Stanton Township Zoning Ordinance and Goodhue County Byllesby Park Rules Ordinance 80-1, and will fall into three categories:

(1) Events wholly or partially sponsored by Goodhue County.

Goodhue County may recognize donors and sponsors as long as corporate names are not used in a way that would imply or suggest Goodhue County or Park endorsement of a product, service, or company, or be construed as commercial solicitation or advertising. Goodhue County may however recognize business sponsors by limited display of logos and name script on temporary event facilities, signs, banners, and literature at such special events. Any lettering or design identifying the sponsor shall be no larger than one-third the size of the lettering or design identifying the special event. Events will not be "named" for sponsoring business entities or individuals, as in "XYZ Corporation Heritage Festival." Event sponsors may not distribute product samples or give-aways that are intended to promote their product or product lines. Goodhue will not permit the appearance of advertising and marketing slogans and taglines. The purpose of recognition is simply to acknowledge the sponsor.

(2) Authorized Philanthropic Partner Events.

An authorized philanthropic partner, with a Byllesby Park Event Permit to hold an event in a park, may recognize donors and event sponsors at the event. The forms of recognition should:

- Be described in the partner's approved annual work and donor recognition plans; and
- Follow the standards for recognition for sponsored events outlined above.

(3) Non-Goodhue County events allowed under a Byllesby Park Event Permit.

Temporary displays directly associated with an event may show sponsors' names, logos, or name scripts. The size, scale, scope, and location of corporate or organization logos and name script should not dominate the event facilities or area.

These displays are restricted to the times and locations outlined in the permit.

Distribution of coupons or vouchers for special offers or samples to park visitors is not permitted at non-Goodhue County events.

B. Donor Appreciation Activities

Donors who give [Donor Level established in Article IV] may be recognized through a special tour of the partnership projects or programs that were enabled through their donation. These tours may not disrupt Park operations or the visitor experience in any way. These may be conducted by Park staff, volunteers, subject matter experts, or partners as deemed appropriate by the Public Works Director.

C. Interpretive and Educational Programs

When interpretive, educational, or other Park programs or products were accomplished through philanthropy, the program leader or product may highlight how this philanthropic support played a role and recognize primary donors to the project or program.

D. Park Social Media

Posts may be written in the Park social media accounts in order to highlight the contributions and recognize our donors and partners. Donor recognition in this format may include name scripts and logos where appropriate.

E. Exhibits

Traditional Park exhibits may include donor recognition. The donor name may be represented in the standard text and font used for that level of text within the exhibit - typically a similar size as a caption or photo credit. If the exhibit is intended to be a temporary installation (generally less than one year or the duration of the construction phase of a more permanent exhibit), the credit line within the exhibit or wayside may include the donor's logo or name script.

F. Donor Plaques/Plates

Donor recognition plaques at a significant project site, such as an exhibit inside a visitor center, major overlook, or primary outdoor exhibit area, will be placed in discreet ways so as to not interfere with the visitor experience. A classic bronze plaque or similar plaque/plate may be placed low along an overlook wall or similar site. These will be concentrated in the following areas – [Insert high-traffic areas of the Park here] – and not dispersed throughout the Park. These plaques may include content such as the project title, date, major donors to the project, and park partner name. Corporate logo or name scripts may not be included.

G. Donor Walls/Boards

A donor wall or monument may be located within Byllesby Park where generous donors to the Park are publicly recognized in a systematic and ongoing manner. This will serve as both a tangible and visible record of philanthropic support for the Park and an expression of appreciation for such support that will likely motivate others to give. This wall/monument may include: the donor name, the year, and when appropriate, the type of donation. Corporate name scripts, logos, or other marketing tools will not be used. Anonymity will be respected, and only those donors wishing to be recognized will be acknowledged. Donor Recognition Walls/Monuments will be unobtrusive and designed to blend in with the setting and Byllesby Park's decor. It will remain in place for a term of forty (40) years, after which the County Engineer will conduct a review to determine whether it remains appropriate to leave in place. The Donor Recognition Wall/Board will be designated to thank all donors above a threshold of [Donation Band Established in Article III] in cash or equivalent value for a [insert Superintendent approved time frame] year period following the donation. Goodhue County Byllesby Park holds the responsibility for maintenance of this Donor Recognition Wall/Monument.

H. Fixtures and Furnishings

Donor recognition may include a time-limited display of recognition via a plaque attached to Park benches. It is important to be able to ensure these forms of recognition are appropriate, sustainable, cost effective, and do not detract from the integrity of the Park resource or visitor experience. This form of recognition will be available at specific locations as deemed appropriate by the Park Board and pre-approved on a designated

Bench Donation Map. Bench donor recognition will originally be available on a first-come, first-served basis. Per written agreement with the donor, the plaque will remain in place for the lifespan of the bench or up to **ten years**, as determined by Goodhue County.

The Public Works Director's approval must be received before ordering and installation of the memorial may proceed. The County shall be responsible for installation of the item and maintenance for the life of the bench, or up to **ten years**. Once installed, the bench becomes the property of Goodhue County.

The County does not guarantee permanency of the bench. If a bench must be removed or relocated, Goodhue County staff will attempt to notify the donor at the address shown on the completed Bench Donation Form. The County takes no responsibility to replace stolen, vandalized, or deteriorated benches/bench donor recognition plaques, or benches/bench donor recognition plaques damaged or destroyed by natural causes. The donor will reimburse Goodhue County for damage expenses within 30 days of repair and invoicing, or the donor recognition plaque will be removed.

At the end of the life-cycle term, the donor may choose to extend the life-cycle term by paying the current value of a new donation. The County reserves the right to seek a new donor for the bench at the end of the established life-cycle should the original donor choose not to renew the donation or if the County has not been able to contact the original donor.

I. Temporary Items and Signage

Temporary donor recognition may be allowed on Goodhue County printed materials and other items that are not intended to stay in the Park (e.g., brochures, newsletters, posters, table cards, cards, banners, and certain temporary signage). Byllesby Park temporary signage could include temporary construction signs placed on the fence at a construction site in the Park, temporary or portable exhibits, and temporary project displays. Donor name script or logo of partners, corporate partners, and lead donors may be included as part of temporary donor recognition provided it is embedded in a short, unobtrusive donor credit line at the end of the material or in an appropriate location on the signage. It

is important to avoid any appearance or public perception of commercialization or product endorsement that would impair the park visitor experience.

VII. Prohibitions

A. Impact on Natural and Cultural Landscapes or Historic Fabric

On-site recognition will not intrude on the character of the Park by detracting from its natural and cultural landscapes. ~~Donor recognition must not be affixed to the interior or exterior historic fabric of structures or museum collections for any period of time.~~

B. Naming of Resources

The naming of natural, cultural, or recreational resources will not be used to recognize donations. **Conflicts with Nielsen's naming?**

C. Permanent Naming of NPS Facilities

The Park is prohibited from permanently recognizing or identifying donors or Park partners for monetary contributions or other donations on any Park facility or asset. ~~The temporary naming of rooms and interior spaces in NPS facilities might be permitted by the Director to recognize donations for the renovation of that facility or construction of a new facility.~~ Acknowledgement of donations on other types of assets such as benches is limited to the means outlined in previous sections of this Plan.

D. Special Considerations

Donors will not receive special treatment or consideration under any law, regulation, or policy. This includes preferential treatment on any applications for Byllesby Park Event Permits, and the prohibitions and limitations on in-Park advertising including distribution of product samples. This does not preclude donors and partners from working together on events, programs and special use permits related to programs and projects identified in their **Partnership Agreement and Annual Work Plan.**

E. Endorsement

~~Federal~~ County employees are prohibited **by law** from using or permitting the use of their position, title, or authority to endorse any service, product, or enterprise. Therefore, donor recognition cannot state or imply ~~Department of the Interior, NPS,~~ Park or government employee endorsement of any business, brand, product, or service. Also, ~~NPS~~ County employees may not appear in any corporate advertising. These prohibitions do not prevent the Park from acknowledging the assistance provided by a donor and how that

assistance has benefited the Park. Park staff may be photographed in uniform accepting a donation. Any distribution of those photos in print or electronic media should be reviewed by NPS the **Public Works Director (per the agreement with the donor/partner)** in order to ensure that the intention is not marketing or endorsement but rather to announce the acceptance of the donation.

F. Use of the Goodhue County Logo, Goodhue County Seal, or Images of County Staff in Uniform by the Donor

The use of the County Logo and County Seal is regulated by Goodhue County policy. Park staff and philanthropic partners should consult with the key official identified in their **Partnership Agreement** to determine if use of the logo, seal, or image of County staff in uniform is appropriate. A County staff member may be photographed in uniform accepting the donation and this photograph could be used to announce the donation or thank the donor; however, this image could not be linked to a statement of endorsement or used in connection with any marketing or advertising.

G. Recognition for Corporate Partnerships

The Park will follow the requirements pertaining to acceptance and recognition of corporate donations. Corporate donors may receive recognition on the same basis as other donors, if the recognition does not suggest official endorsement or could be perceived by the public as in-Park advertisement. Additionally, the use of name scripts or logos for corporations or organizations are prohibited except as part of a credit line (and only as part of a credit line) on printed materials, temporary signage, other temporary items, and limited forms of digital media.

VIII. Signatures:

Goodhue County Public Works Director

Date

Goodhue County Administrator

Date

Goodhue County Board of Commissioners Chairperson

Date

[Parks and programs may also add a signature line for the concurrence of the President/Executive Director of their main philanthropic partner(s). This may be beneficial if this Plan is developed collaboratively with that partner(s).]