

MEETING MINUTES
PUBLIC SERVICES COUNCIL COMMITTEE
Monday, May 22nd, 2023
City of West Des Moines Council Chambers

In Attendance:

Council Member – Matthew McKinney	City Engineer – Brian Hemesath
Council Member – Kevin Trevillyan	Public Services Director – Bret Hodne
City Manager – Tom Hadden	Public Services Superintendent – Gary Rank
Assistant City Attorney – Greta Truman	Principal Engineer – Jason Schlickbernd
Diversity Equity & Inclusion Director – Audrey Kennis	Principal Engineer – Ben McAlister
Engineering Tech – Josh Reynolds	Engineering Tech – Joe Moose

Guests in Attendance:

See Attached

Meeting was called to order at 11:33 AM by City Engineer, Brian Hemesath.

1. Honorary Street Naming Application – Long Family (AK)

Issue Summary:

Recently the City Council approved the Honorary Roadway Naming Policy. This policy provides the opportunity to honor current or formers residents that have accomplished or provided something of significance to the City. Any individual may submit an Honorary Roadway Name Application. The application to honor the John E. Long, Jr. and Barbara Long family was submitted to the Public Services Department, requesting Maple Street, from 1st Street to 14th Street to be honorarily named. The honorary roadway signs will generally be placed mid-block along Maple Street between 1st Street and 2nd Street, mid-block between 13th Street and 14th Street, and a mid-section site at an appropriate location to be determined by Traffic Safety staff, to be viewable from both directions of traffic.

City Manager Tom Hadden read an email from the Mayor of West Des Moines, Russ Trimble which explained that the City has received two applications, one honoring the Long family and one honoring the Swander family. Neither application met the requirements of the policy so amendments were made to the Honorary Roadway Naming Policy. He continued stating that the Long application was for Maple Street from 1st Street to 14th Street and the Swander application was for 1st Street to 8th Street. Mayor Trimble stated he spoke with Rochelle Long and explained that neither application abided by the Honorary Roadway Naming Policy and stated that clarifying amendments would be made. Mayor Trimble asked Diversity Equity and Inclusion Director Audrey Kennis to shepherd this application through the process. The Swander application was withdrawn from the Council agenda, at the applicants request, several months ago. Mayor Trimble told Debbie Swander that he would have no problem putting it back on the agenda at the same time that the Long's application was on the agenda for Council to consider both applications at the same time. Since the requests overlap on the same road if Council agrees to one of the applications the application that does not get approved will have to amend their request. Mayor Tremble would like to get both parties together prior to this item going to Council to see if a compromise or agreement could be reached. The

Long family have been trying to get this stretch of road named for their family for over 10 years. There are several roads in Valley Junction, and Mayor Trimble would like to see an agreement reached that would honor both families. He also said the City has these two applications and will not be taking any others. The Council will make decisions on these applications and once they are determined the policy will be taken back to the subcommittee.

Director of Diversity Equity and Inclusion Audrey Kennis provided a summary of the Long family's application for honorary street naming. Barbara and John Long engaged in civic and philanthropic work with an extraordinary dedication to the residents of Valley Junction. Director Kennis heard from community members including representatives of Historic Valley Junction who expressed interest in seeing this honorary roadway naming occur. Mr. & Mrs. Long pulled the community together and pushed for a better quality of life for all of the residents of Valley Junction as well as the City overall. Director Kennis stated that an honorary road naming is not just a procedural process but a tremendous opportunity for the City to reflect our shared histories more accurately.

Director Kennis shared that she also has a background in planning and following the American Planning Association (APA) as part of the planning process is critical to follow the APA tenants, one being that cities accurately reflect their community. The streets of West Des Moines are a conscious reflection of the City and now is the time to recognize the contributions of local leaders who have historically been excluded from the story of West Des Moines. She continued that the built environment should reflect the civic and cultural identity of our community and currently our City does not equally nor equitably reflect the shared experiences. The honorary street naming is a chance to tell a complete story by uplifting ordinary folks who positively impacted our community. Such a demonstration would speak to the impact the Long's have had on our community.

Director Kennis recommended that this be looked at as an opportunity to demonstrate the progress we have made as a City and expressed her support for the Long Family honorary street naming on Maple Street from 1st Street to 14th Street. The Longs were caretakers of the entire Valley Junction community and limiting their request from 8th Street to 14th Street would be quasi-separatist. Knowing the historical implications of redlining and segregation it may unintentionally mirror that practice.

Council Member Kevin Trevillyan discussed the email from Mayor Trimble and disagreed with the decision to not take any more applications. He mentioned the Raaz family, specifically Herman and Anna Raaz who started the Valley Junction Savings Bank know known as West Bank. He stated that the Raaz family owned a lot of land along Maple Street to Holiday Park and felt they should be included in the history of Valley Junction.

Council Member Trevillyan also requested a copy of the applications submitted by the Long Family.

Director Kennis provided both Council Members with an electronic version of the application.

Council Member Matthew McKinney confirmed that the Long's application had been reviewed by Staff and met all of the requirements listed in the recently adopted policy. Council Member McKinney also asked what Staff's recommendation is regarding the application. Director Kennis responded she recommended moving the Long's application forward.

Debbie Westphal Swander, of 145 5th Street discussed the collaborative efforts and support for the Long family in the interest of historic Valley Junction. She expressed her support of Vicki Long Hill and family

and the history of the contributions that the Long family have made to the Valley Junction area. She also expressed her support of the contributions made by the Hispanic community in Valley Junction. Ms. Westphal Swander emphasized the importance of learning, understanding, and embracing the history of Valley Junction.

Ms. Westphal Swander stated she did not request to have an honorary street named for her family, it was the idea of Nate Hahn who did the work of collecting signatures and submitting the application.

Ms. Westphal Swander discussed a City Council meeting where the Honorary Street Naming Policy was discussed and her decision to withdraw the application from being discussed at that meeting. She felt there was a lack of understanding about their application and did not want it discussed if it was going to be controversial. She explained that in requesting the removal of the application from the Council agenda they did not want to withdraw the application from consideration.

Ms. Westphal Swander mentioned the Raaz family and their contribution to a housing project in Valley Junction. She stated that she didn't think one should be chosen over the other.

Ms. Westphal Swander discussed her mother being awarded the Business of the Year by the Iowa Main Street Board and was given a star by the City of West Des Moines. Her mother was also labeled the unofficial matriarch of Valley Junction. Ms. Westphal stated she hoped to move forward with the process in a positive collaborative way.

Meredith Wells of 138th 5th Street stated she was previously President of Historic Valley Junction Board of Directors. In the fall of 2021 Vicki Long Hill and Cleo Underwood presented their plan and application process for honoring her parents with an honorary street naming to the executive committee.

Ms. Wells commented that being awarded outside of the community such as the Presidential Award from President Obama and the YWCA Women of the Year Award are great but there is no greater honor than having your own community support and honor you. She expressed the positive impact naming Maple Street after the Long family would have as well as bring the community together. She explained the foundations mission, which is to share and preserve Valley Junction history, support the businesses of Valley Junction, and also connect with the community.

Ms. Wells commended the outstanding efforts of the Long family to connect the community, not out of self-interest, but out of selfless acts of community services and altruism that continues throughout the Long family generations. She continued stating that the work that the family has done and continues to do is inspiring and felt this would continue to inspire future generations to also get involved in civic duty and community pride.

Nick Waage of 136 3rd St worked with John Long for many years. He commented that John was not a visionary who looked city wide instead his focus was from 8th Street to 16th Street and the Holiday Park area. He mentioned City committees for sanitary sewer and/or storm sewer that John participated in and expressed that the committees didn't focus on what happened all around the City. Mr. Waage stated that 8th Street to 16th Street would be a better option.

Mr. Waage expressed his displeasure with the policy because it would set precedence for anyone to get a street named after them for things such as keeping a nice yard. He felt honorary street naming should be reserved for veterans or individuals who made large donations to the City. He also included long term

outstanding city employees and referenced the two streets in West Des Moines named after City officials, George Mills Parkway and E.P. True Parkway.

Dr. Vicki Long-Hill of 136 10th St explained why the honorary street naming for Barbara and John Long was important and the need to honor those who have contributed significantly in the neighborhood. She provided details on the history of John and Barbara Long. Their family settled in Valley Junction in the early 1900's with her father John Long spending at least 75 years residing in Valley Junction. Their mother Barbara Long's family lived across the railroad tracks and that side of the family history goes back over 100 years. The community activism started with the parents of John and Barbara Long due to the living conditions across the railroad tracks being swamp like, and their fight for a better quality of life for themselves as well as the other Hispanic and African American families who lived there.

The family was eventually able to relocate to the 100 block in Valley Junction by design and not by choice due to redlining, which kept African American and Hispanic families restricted to the 100 block. Dr. Long-Hill referenced others who contributed to history fighting for a specific subject or project before moving on where Barbara and John Long fought for the City of West Des Moines.

Some of the projects the Long family worked on and/or encouraged were bringing back the Valley Junction area after the flood of 1993, they were advocates for Legion Park located at 4th and Vine and ensuring that the playground and wading pool were restored. The Long's worked diligently for affordable housing in the area, the houses located north of Maple Street were part of the efforts led by John and Barbara Long and many other properties on 8th, 10th, and 11th Streets.

She mentioned that Valley Junction was seen as a blighted area and had been so for many years before the Long's became champions in that area fighting for a better quality of life for all residents of Valley Junction. Dr. Long-Hill discussed what she felt was one of their greatest accomplishments, which was meeting with City officials to collaborate. The City of West Des Moines has books on the history of West Des Moines as does the West Des Moines Historical Society, missing from those books are the contributions and impact from African American's who are a part of that history as well. She felt their contributions should not be overlooked, African Americans came in with the railroad and helped build the railroad making them a part of the efforts to build Valley Junction.

She continued discussing the history of Barbara and John Long. They attended every City Council meeting for over 35 years to learn and took that information back to the Valley Junction community. Their dedication paid off when affordable housing began, sidewalks were installed, and currently work is being done to pave alleys in Valley Junction.

To honorarily name the street after the Long family recognizes the contributions that were made and educates people on this history which has not been shared.

Dr. Long-Hill stated they brought the honorary street naming to City Council in 2010 and were denied. Barbara Long passed in 2021 and the family decided to submit another application along with a petition with the required signatures. In January 2022 Dr. Long-Hill worked with City leaders to come up with and develop a policy. The Long family as well as neighbors worked on that policy and the Long's submitted another application. Dr. Long-Hill clarified their purpose for applying for the honorary street naming is not to compete with other families but to honor the contributions of Barbara and John Long and stated this is an opportunity for the City to recognize some of the past histories and not put-up boundaries.

Victoria Velock of 301 37th St opened Wicker and the Works in Valley Junction in 1978, she stated she has been in the Valley Junction area for about 50 years. Ms. Velock expressed that she was familiar with some of the names mentioned during the meeting such as the Swander and Raaz families but had never heard anything about John and Barbara Long. She felt there are enough blocks to where everyone could have a part of a block so that everyone who wants to be a part of it is allowed to do so.

City Engineer Brian Hemesath added that the purpose of the Honorary Street Naming Policy is to recognize the large contributions that have been made, over many lifetimes in the case of the Long family. The intention being to lift up those individuals names that were important to the community for so long and educate others on those contributions so everyone can share in the celebration.

Ms. Swander proposed a suggestion to collectively work together in applauding these key pioneers to promote the history and thought the original West Bank building where Cinco de Mayo is held would be a space where information on the different contributions can be displayed and shared with the public.

Director Kennis added that would be a phenomenal idea to collectively recognize the history of Valley Junction noting that we can proceed with both. The honorary street naming for the Long family doesn't mean we can't recognize other histories. Ms. Kennis provided information on the environment the Long family and many others who lived in Valley Junction experienced. Which included overt racism and racial terror. She mentioned that some individuals may not know all of the histories of Valley Junction because these stories were not promoted or highlighted. She continued that these families did not have access to capital limiting the opportunities to create the businesses that they wanted. This is an opportunity where we can collectively come together and say we are writing a new chapter to honor the individuals that not only lived in Valley Junction but persisted in the midst of racial tyranny that was their reality.

Director Kennis reiterated that Barbara and Johnnie Long were residents who were pushing for a greater Valley Junction they showed up week in and week out to Council meetings and took that information back to the community. The Long's established the Valley Junction Residential Association which was open to all Valley Junction resident's it was not just for people of color.

Ms. Kennis explained that it does not have to be an either or because there are several blocks in Valley Junction. She pointed out that the family began this process in 2010 and has come to the City multiple times yet there continues to be a push and pull. The City has created a policy yet it still seems there is a lot of resistance. Ms. Kennis added that based on the written records of the Long's contributions they made a tremendous impact and saw this as an opportunity for the City to recognize and rewrite our story collectively. The honorary street naming will not change where anyone lives nor will it change anyone's street address.

Director Kennis also clarified that the Honorary Street Naming Policy is for those who have made a tremendous impact to the community and not just what is self-serving.

Rachelle Long of 106 11th St Founder and Executive Director of the Taste of the Junction, which is a nonprofit created to celebrate the people, the culture, and cuisines of Valley Junction. Ms. Long created the non-profit in 2013 to extend her parents legacy. An important part of the Taste of the Junction is the sharing of stories that are not in print, the stories that people don't know or haven't heard before within the 125-year history of West Des Moines.

Ms. Long mentioned the diverse population that exists within Valley Junction which includes African Americans, Hispanics, Serbians, Italians, and other Europeans, that called Valley Junction home, from 1st Street to 14th Street and Railroad to Vine St. Displays utilized at the Taste of the Junction are inclusive double-sided panels provided through grant money from the West Des Moines Community Foundation, that represent the diversity of the neighborhood. Ms. Long explained her family put forth the application seeking equity, acknowledgement of the contributions and also to educate and make aware those people who live in this City and don't know the history. It is more than businesses that are needed to make up a community, Ms. Long stated. She continued that you need the people to walk into those businesses for them to be profitable and successful.

The current generations of members of the Long family continue Barbara and John's legacy in many different ways, but they all selflessly give to the community and not just to West Des Moines they intentionally are inclusive and don't enter spaces wearing an African American only banner they believe in doing the work based on what will be for the good of all people. Ms. Long added that the City has over 49 square miles and was welcoming of others who would want to have a street named after their family members and encouraged them to do so.

In the 125 year history of West Des Moines before the Long's presented their application to City Council no one else ever had requested an honorary street naming, there are no structures within West Des Moines that are named for a person of color. Ms. Long stated it would be a great honor and huge opportunity to acknowledge the diversity that has always existed in Valley Junction and the City of West Des Moines overall.

Ms. Long mentioned the recent DEI efforts of the City and saw this as an opportunity for the City to show that not only do they talk DEI but they are starting to do more visible things to honor the different diverse backgrounds that make up the City.

Ms. Long expressed that she didn't think the policy should be based on owning land or military experience and stated it is time to start celebrating the people and all of the different cultures within the City. To encourage individuals from diverse populations to come to West Des Moines we want them to feel welcome and they need to see some resemblance of diversity.

Dr. Vicki Long-Hill mentioned the award bestowed upon Barbara Long, by President Obama for leadership and the State of Iowa selecting and naming John and Barbara Long as Juneteenth King and Queen of the State of Iowa from Valley Junction and felt the City needs to honor them the same way.

Bo James Grimes, IA mentioned an important part of the Taste of the Junction which is called Junction Speaks. At the Junction Speaks is where all of the diverse stories and voices of the community are displayed.

Council Member Kevin Trevillyan stated he would have to abstain due to a conflict of interest.

Direction: Council Member McKinney was in favor of moving forward with the Honorary Street Naming application for the Long family. Council Member Trevillyan abstained.

2. Weekend Work Requests

Contractors are requesting permission from the PSCC to work weekends on the following project:

- 2022 Channel Repair Program

- Site 5&6 north of EP True Parkway between 60th & 68th Street
- Site 7 near Dakota Drive & Prairie View Drive

Direction: The committee approved the above weekend work from 8am – 5pm on Saturdays and Sundays.

3. **Review of Items for Council Meeting (June 5, 2023)**

ENGINEERING COUNCIL AGENDA ITEMS:

CONSENT AGENDA

Resolution – Ordering Construction *Eng Est: \$1,664,332.35*

- **Digital Enterprise Private Streets Conduit Deployment Phase 2**
(0510-015-2023) Civil Design Advantage 670.000.000.5250.490 *General Obligation Bonds*

Resolution – Accepting Work *\$418,158.21*

- **Blue Creek Stormwater Detention Facilities, Utility Relocations**
(0510-048-2019) OnTrack Construction, LLC 660.000.000.5250.490 *Stormwater Revenue*

Resolution – Approving Professional Services Agreement *\$100,000.00*

- **Development of a Full-Build Traffic Model for the West Des Moines Planning Area**
(0210-017-2023) HDR Engineering, Inc. 100.250.298.5250.460 *General Funds*

Motion – Approving Professional Services Agreement Amendment No 1 *\$71,640.00*

- **SE Fire Training Facility**
(0510-026-2021) Farnsworth Group 500.000.000.5250.495 *Tax Increment Financing (TIF) revenue collected from within the Microsoft Alluvion Urban Renewal Area TIF*

Motion – Approving CO#1 *\$213,401.15*

- **2023 HMA Resurfacing Program**
(0510-003-2023) Des Moines Asphalt & Paving 500.000.000.5250.490 *General Obligation Bonds and Road Use Tax*

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Public Hearing Regarding the Final Design, Site Selection and Consideration of Acquiring Agricultural Property

- **Grand Avenue Reconstruction, West of I-35 to South 60th Street**
(0510-035-2022)

PUBLIC SERVICES COUNCIL AGENDA ITEMS:

CONSENT AGENDA

Resolution – Approving Honorary Roadway Naming

PARKS & RECREATION COUNCIL AGENDA ITEMS:

CONSENT AGENDA

Approval of Professional Services Agreement

- **Pearson Park Pedestrian Bridges Replacement**

HR Green

4. **Staff Updates:**

None.

5. **Other Matters:**

None.

The meeting adjourned at 1:02 pm. The next Public Services Council Committee meeting is scheduled for June 12, 2023.

A recording was made. Respectfully submitted by Juanita Greer, Administrative Secretary.

All visitors to the Public Services Council Committee meetings are asked to sign in.

Thank you!

**PUBLIC SERVICES COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETING
GUEST ATTENDANCE**

Date: May 22, 2023

Printed Name & Organization	Address / E-mail	Day time phone #	Topic
Valerie James Hip Hope Inc Long Family	Ju phopeunc@gmail.com ValerieJame4040@gmail	515-778-2008	Honary Street Names
Kay Schiller momere	138 6th St. kay@momere.com	615-330-2439	"
Meredith Wells MOMere	138 5th St. meredith@momere.com	515-330-2439	"
Gregory Long Long Family	NA	515-287-2803	Honary Street Names
Bo James long Family	bojamesc20@gmail.com		Honorary Street naming
Debbie Westphal Swander John Swander	debbie@valleyfranchiseproperties.com	515-277-7873	Honorary Street Name Process
Victoria Veilock	victoria.veilock@gmail.com	515-988 4955	Honorary Street Names

Name

Rachelle Long

Natascha Thygesen

Deborah Danner

Susan Watts

Sharon Long

NICK WILKE

Shirley Kaurer

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107-11th St

Topic

Henry Street

Henry Street

Henry Street

Henry St.

Theresa Bales

LONG

Shirley Kaurer