



## **Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs Department Memorials for Public Places and Parks Policy**

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### Introduction

Periodically, requests to place physical objects to honor an individual, organization, or event in City of Gainesville (COG) public places or parks are received from individuals, groups, or organizations. These memorials may take the form of monuments, plaques, or structures that display inscriptions. When properly designed, planned, and displayed, these items may provide the general public with interpretative information or enhanced recreational opportunities. While these items may enrich an experience for users, open space within the urban context is a precious commodity. The City of Gainesville considers the open spaces in its public places and parks as complete, offering an unrestricted setting to encounter a wide range of experiences. It is the goal of COG Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs Department (PRCAD) to preserve the open, tranquil quality of Gainesville's public places and parks. Therefore, the objective of this policy is to ensure that the limited open space available is used for improvements that support the mission of PRCAD.

This policy covers all memorials being placed in public places and parks owned by the City of Gainesville. All such memorials not in place prior to the adoption of this policy must conform to this policy. This policy supersedes any previous policy, guidelines, or approval process with regard to the installation of memorials in the City of Gainesville public places or parks. Existing memorials shall not be precedent for future approvals. This policy does not supersede the Art in Public Places policy (COG Code of Ordinances Chapter 5.5) or the Nature Centers Commission Sign policy.

This policy aims to (1) respect the intended purposes of the City's public places and parks, (2) protect and enhance the environmental, aesthetic, recreational, and cultural values of the City's public places and parks, and (3) support ongoing community, cultural, and social engagement with the City's public places and parks through the installation of appropriate memorials.

## Definitions

1. A “public place”, for the purpose of this policy, is a recreational or cultural affairs facility that is open for use by the citizens of the City of Gainesville. A public place also includes all parks intended for active or other recreation as defined in the City of Gainesville Code of Ordinances Sec. 18-18a and 18-18c.
2. A “park”, for the purpose of this policy, is a public place intended for passive recreation and/or conservation, and includes all nature parks and conservation areas as defined in the City of Gainesville Code of Ordinances Sec. 18-18b.
3. A “memorial” is any monument, plaque, structure, activity, sponsorship, object, or the enhancement or modification of an existing object, public place, park, or landscape. It is designed and established specifically in memory of an individual, association, organization, anniversary, or event. Memorials, for the purpose of this policy, may include, but are not limited to, benches, water fountains, landscape designs, playgrounds, gardens, picnic tables, unique pathways, or some other basic accessory, amenity, or furnishing.
4. A “monument” is a structure which has either been explicitly created to commemorate a person or important event or which has become important to a social group as a part of it’s remembrance of past events. It is often designed to convey historical or political information and is typically a building or structure of some kind.
5. A “plaque” is a flat tablet of metal, stone, or other appropriate material which includes text and/or images commemorating a person or event and providing historical information relevant to its location. Such a tablet will be affixed to an object, building, or pavement.

## Guidelines

### **General for all Memorial Types**

1. No new memorial will be considered which commemorates a person, event or occasion already memorialized in Gainesville unless there are exceptional circumstances. Replacement of an existing memorial within it’s same footprint will be considered.
2. Any wording on memorials must be approved by the Public Recreation and Park Board (for active parks) or by the Nature Centers Commission (for passive parks). However, **final approval is at the sole discretion of the PRCAD**. Text should be brief, in English, and should avoid the use of jargon, acronyms, or slang.
3. Requestors should consider the primary uses of public places and parks in their request for a location or suitable site. Requested location(s) will be reviewed to balance the enhancement benefits and the open space quality to protect the greater good.

4. PRCAD may develop priority lists of appropriate or desired types of memorials for particular public places or parks based on recreational needs, aesthetics, or other considerations. Memorial types identified on any such lists shall be considered prior to considering other memorial types at such locations. Some restrictions may apply.
5. Maintenance is a primary consideration. Adequate provisions shall be made by the requestor for continued future maintenance. All objects shall be made from durable material that will stand up over time.
6. Memorials erected in a public place or park become the property of the City of Gainesville and are subject to the laws, policies, and procedures that govern said property.
7. Unless otherwise agreed, requestors shall pay a fee, as determined by PRCAD, for memorials. A maintenance endowment sufficient to ensure adequate care may be required for memorials that exceed typical park amenity maintenance care.
8. Proposals can be submitted by an individual, group, community-based initiative, or organization.
9. Proposals should consider the values of the community and the visitor experience to the site.
10. Proposals can not be submitted until **one (1) year** after an event has taken place or the death of an individual.
11. Proposals will be reviewed by the Public Recreation and Park Board or the Nature Centers Commission according to the approval criteria and process outlined below.
12. PRCAD may limit or place a moratorium on future installations at particular public places or parks, or areas within those, due to aesthetics, safety, maintenance, environmental, or other considerations.

### **Specific to Monuments**

1. Proposals must come from a community-based initiative or organization. Proposals may not be submitted by a single individual, or by immediate relatives of a person being memorialized.
2. Subjects for monuments will be limited to the following:
  - a. An individual, organization, or association that has contributed significantly to the cultural, political, social, or natural aspects of Gainesville's history.
  - b. An individual, organization, or association strongly linked to the City of Gainesville and its history.
  - c. A significant anniversary of an event unique to Gainesville's history and development.
  - d. Historical or other information relevant to the site/location.
3. Proposals should represent the values of the community and be of continuing relevance to future generations.

4. Proposals should be in a form that has a broad community interest and moves the viewer to a special experience without compromising the goals and objectives of the PRCAD.
5. Proposals can not be submitted until **two (2) years** after an event has taken place or **five (5) years** after the death of an individual.
6. PRCAD may limit or place a moratorium on future installations at particular public places or parks, or areas within those, due to aesthetics, safety, maintenance, environmental, or other considerations.
7. Unless otherwise agreed, requestors shall pay all costs for design, manufacturing, and installation of monuments and shall provide the City a maintenance endowment sufficient to ensure adequate care for a minimum of **ten (10) years**.
8. The City may consider contributing funds to a community request only when it is for a broad community purpose that marks an event that has broadly affected the community and/or City.

### Location

A proposal must demonstrate why a public place or park is required and must not compromise the aesthetic integrity of the public place or park and not interfere or disturb the underlying landscape character or intended recreational uses of the proposed setting. A proposal must be consistent with any approved management plan for the site, with any existing grant or other agreements, and with the City's Comprehensive Plan. The City of Gainesville permits memorials to be located in appropriate places. Those associated with individuals or groups based in or linked to an institution are best located at a site connected to that institution (i.e. universities, churches, hospitals, City Hall, etc.). Those associated with commemorating deceased individuals are encouraged to be located in an existing cemetery so as to prevent the City's public places and parks from duplicating the commemorative function of cemeteries.

### Tree Plaques and Tags

On occasion, the City is asked to dedicate trees in someone's memory. Unfortunately, there is not enough open space available to have a tree planted or dedicated to every person that makes such a request. As an alternative to planting a tree, there are two options where someone can request a tree plaque or tree tag be placed at an existing tree. The first option is a program run through the Alachua County Historic Trust – Matheson Museum whereby tree plaques are placed at existing trees within the Matheson's property. The second option is a tree tag program run through the City of Gainesville Arborist whereby tree tags are placed at existing trees within the City limits. Both options are briefly described below.

The Alachua County Historic Trust – Matheson Museum (The Matheson) provides a program where a tree can be dedicated with a brass commemorative

plaque. The 5-inch by 7-inch brass plaque is mounted on a chert rock base with a brick facing and permanently placed next to the dedicated tree within The Matheson's property. The brass plaque will include the scientific and common name of the tree, the name of the dedicated person, and the date of dedication. The cost of The Matheson's plaques are approximately \$500. More information about this program is available from Dr. Mark Barrow at (352) 378-2280.

If a requestor does not wish to obtain a tree plaque through The Matheson's program, the PRCAD provides a no-cost alternative in the form of an aluminum tree tag. These tree tags allow a requestor to move through his/her grieving process while also allowing the integrity and quality of public open spaces and places to remain intact. A requestor should follow the following process to dedicate an existing tree with a tree tag to an ideal or virtue that evokes the memory of the deceased.

The PRCAD Arborist will print limited information on an aluminum tag that can be affixed to a side branch of a young tree that already exists within the City of Gainesville. The labels have limited spatial capacity and all lettering is in CAPS. In order to obtain one of these tags:

1. The requestor should visit the public place or park where they would like to have a tree dedicated.
2. The requestor then selects a tree with a trunk size smaller than four inches in diameter and that is growing well.
3. The requestor takes three (3) pictures of the tree (close up of the leaves, a full-length photo of the tree, and the tree in the landscape relative to an identifying feature in the public place or park).
4. The requestor emails or brings the pictures and the request form (see Appendix A) to the City's Arborist.
5. PRCAD staff will identify the species from the photos and advise how the tag should read for the common and scientific names.
6. Once the tag has been completed it will be mailed to the requestor with instructions on how to affix it to the tree without causing present or future damage.

The tags will be five lines. The first line is 20 letters long and will designate the scientific name of the tree. The second line is 16 letters long and will designate the common name of the tree. The third line is 16 letters long and will designate the origination date of the tag. The fourth line is 16 letters long and will be designated by the requestor on his/her request form. The fifth line is 20 letters long and will be designated by the requestor on his/her request form. All tags will remain in place for **one (1) year** from the printed origination date upon which time they will be removed from the tree by City staff if not previously removed by the requestor.

## Approval Criteria

The different types of memorials vary greatly in their impact; however, they will all be judged for appropriateness according to the aforementioned guidelines as well as the following criteria. These criteria are intended to serve as guidelines for the Public Recreation and Park Board and the Nature Centers Commission. Approving or denying any proposal is **wholly** within the discretion of the City of Gainesville Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs Department and no individual or organization has any right to make any improvement or place any items or objects in public places or parks regardless of whether they think their proposal meets the following approval criteria.

The requestors' written proposal should address the following key issues, which will be considered during review:

1. Significance: Does the proposed memorial have timeless qualities, make a statement of significance to future generations, represent a person or event deemed significant to the City of Gainesville's history, and is it consistent with the mission of the COG Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs Department?
2. Location: Does the proposed memorial offer enhancement without diminishing the facilities aesthetics, environment, or existing or planned use? Is there geographical justification for putting the proposed memorial in the proposed public place or park rather than another location? Are there any other alternative locations?
3. Aesthetic Quality: Is the quality, scale, and character of the proposed memorial at a level commensurate with the proposed setting?
4. Reduce/Reuse/Recycle: Does the proposed memorial reuse, rehabilitate, or restore an existing feature?
5. Relationship to Vision: Are the values of the proposed memorial compatible with the City's vision and the location's management plan?
6. Representation: Is the subject of the memorial already well represented in other locations of the City?
7. Community Process: Has the requestor involved and consulted with the surrounding community?
8. Technical Feasibility: Can the memorial be installed and maintained for at least ten (10) years as proposed?
9. Technical Specifications: If proposing a monument, the requestor must provide detailed construction/fabrication drawings with a site plan, elevation, and section view of the memorial which describes:
  - a. Adjacent site conditions
  - b. Dimensions
  - c. Materials
  - d. Colors
  - e. Power, plumbing, or other utility requirements
  - f. Construction and installation methods
  - g. Obstacles to construction

If some other memorial is proposed, the requestor must provide a detailed description of the type of memorial, site conditions for installation, and installation methods. The requestor will then coordinate with PRCAD staff to finalize the technical specifications.

10. Budget: What are the estimated project costs? Are they accurate and realistic? Are maintenance funds guaranteed? What are the sources of funding?
11. Durability and Life Span: Are the materials suitable for the location? How long is the material expected to last in the public place or park?
12. Vandalism and Safety: Does the memorial meet all existing codes? Does the work represent a potential safety hazard or nuisance? Will the memorial have a graffiti-resistant coating? What type of cleaning/maintenance is required?
13. Timeline: The requestor must provide a detailed timeline for design, construction, and installation phases of the memorial. If the proposed project is not completed within the timeline originally established, or if significant changes to the proposed project occur, the proposal will be reviewed again.

Additional requirements include:

1. If a professional is to be hired by the requestor to design, construct, and/or install the memorial, appropriate PRCAD staff must be involved in approving each phase of the project.
2. The requestor is responsible for complying with all federal, state, and local laws, which might include competitive bidding and state prevailing wage laws.
3. The requestor will be required to bear the cost of all necessary permits, approvals, project management, design, construction, installation, and maintenance of the memorial, if it is not on a PRCAD priority list. Any and all budgetary details and responsibilities will be spelled out in a contractual agreement between the City of Gainesville and the requestor.
4. If any contractor needs to be hired by the requestor during the construction and installation of the memorial, the contractor shall provide the City with proof of general liability insurance and workers compensation insurance.

## Approval Process

The aims of this process are to 1) provide timely opportunities for public scrutiny and comment and 2) ensure all relevant City of Gainesville departments and other key stakeholders are consulted. Written proposals will be submitted by the requestor to:

For Public Places, Active Parks, Recreational Facilities, or Cultural Affairs Facilities:

Public Recreation and Park Board  
c/o Margie Roland  
Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs Department  
City of Gainesville  
P.O. Box 490, Mail Station 30  
Gainesville, FL 32609

For Passive Parks:

Nature Centers Commission  
c/o Lisa Julseth  
Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs Department  
City of Gainesville  
P.O. Box 490, Mail Station 27  
Gainesville, FL 32609

The following steps will be followed for approving or rejecting a proposed memorial:

1. Initial Feasibility Consultation: A requestor desiring to place a memorial will submit a letter to the appropriate reviewing entity that outlines in sufficient detail the main purpose and concept of their proposal. City staff will schedule a feasibility consultation with the requestor to discuss the details of the proposal and the requirements as outlined in this policy.
2. Written Proposal: Once the initial feasibility consultation is complete, the requestor will submit a written proposal as per this policy's guidelines and approval criteria to the reviewing entity.
3. Proposal Review: The reviewing entity will meet at its regularly scheduled meeting to review any proposals. After the review, proposals will also be submitted to other appropriate/affected City Departments or Divisions for an additional review period of thirty (30) days.
4. Approval, Modification, or Disapproval: Upon completion of the review, the reviewing entity will recommend accepting, rejecting, or modifying the proposal to the City Commission at its regular monthly meeting. If the reviewing entity recommends rejection of the proposal, unless the City Commission requests a review of the proposal, the recommendation is final. If modification is recommended by the reviewing entity, the requestor will meet with the reviewers to discuss necessary modifications until approval is recommended. If approval is recommended by the reviewing entity, the requestor will present the proposal to the City Commission at their regular monthly meeting to hear any City staff or public concerns or comments.
5. Upon final approval by the City Commission, the reviewing entity will notify the requestor and the requestor will enter into a contractual agreement with the City of Gainesville prior to commencement of the construction and installation of the memorial.



## Deaccession Process

It may be necessary, from time to time, to deaccession a memorial. Memorials will be reviewed on a regular basis and deaccessioned if necessary.

Deaccessioning is a procedure for the withdrawal from public exhibition for an indefinite duration through storage or loan, or on a permanent basis through several methods of disposition available. Since memorials are obtained through a thorough review process, deaccessioning will be considered only after **ten (10) years** have elapsed from the date of installation, unless there is an urgent need to re-evaluate. Deaccessioning will be cautiously applied only after a careful and impartial evaluation of the memorial and its relevance to the community. **Thirty (30) days** notification will be given to the original requestor if he/she can be found.

Deaccessioning may be considered for one or more of the following reasons:

1. The condition or security of the memorial cannot be reasonably guaranteed in its present location.
2. The memorial has been damaged and repair is impractical or unfeasible, or the cost of repair or renovation is excessive in relation to the original cost of the work.
3. The memorial endangers public safety.
4. Significant changes in the use, character or actual design of the site require a reevaluation of the relationship of the memorial to the site.
5. The memorial requires excessive maintenance or has faults of design or workmanship.

Deaccessioning a memorial will be subject to the following procedure:

1. The aforementioned reviewing entities will prepare a report which indicates:
  - a. An analysis of the reasons for deaccessioning.
  - b. Options for storage or disposition of the memorial.
  - c. The appraised value of the memorial, if obtainable.
2. A recommendation for action will be brought to the City Commission.

**Appendix A**  
**Commemorative Tree Tag Request Form**

## Commemorative Tree Tag Request Form

Date of request: \_\_\_\_\_

Requestor Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Tree Location (park name or street location): \_\_\_\_\_

Line 4 (16 characters): \_\_\_\_\_

Line 5 (20 characters): \_\_\_\_\_

Attach/enclose the following pictures of the tree with this form:

1. Close-up picture of the trees leaves.
2. Full-length photo of the tree.
3. Landscape photo of the tree and surrounding background that will assist with location identification.

Requestor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

### **CITY STAFF USE ONLY**

Tag Origination Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Tree Species: \_\_\_\_\_

Line 1 (20 characters): \_\_\_\_\_

Line 2 (16 characters): \_\_\_\_\_

Line 3 (16 characters): \_\_\_\_\_

Line 4 (see above)

Line 5 (see above)

City Arborist Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail or bring this form and requested photos to:

Meg Niederhofer

City Arborist

P.O. Box 490, Mail Station 27

Gainesville, FL 32602