

Park and Recreation Board

3/12/2020

City of Gainesville, Fl.

Re: Oakhill Park

Dear Friends,

In 1955 the Kiwanis club of Gainesville constructed the building at what is now called Oakhill Park. The former name was Kiwanis park but recently changed. We understand that the name changed to avoid confusion that 911 or other emergency personnel may have if someone has an emergency at “ Kiwanis Park”.

The Kiwanis club of Gainesville believes that it deserves some visible public recognition for its efforts and generosity showed to the city of Gainesville. The building construction was completed by the Kiwanis club of Gainesville and dedicated in September 1955. Prominent Kiwanis civic leaders involved in the building of the Girl Scout hut are still recognized to this day: E.D. Manning, John R. Kelly, Shellie McKinney, Walter E. Murphree, Curtis A. Powers, Spurgeon Cherry, S.T. Dell, just to name a few. A proclamation dated January 23, 1956 by Clark S. Butler, Mayor-Commissioner, states,\_\_\_\_” in the event the Gainesville Girl Scout Council should discontinue the use of such scout building erected by the Kiwanis club of Gainesville, the Kiwanis Club of Gainesville shall have the right and privilege of designating some other organization to exclusively use the same, provided such organization is acceptable and meets with approval of the city of Gainesville”. We interpret that to mean that the name of Kiwanis, and specifically the Kiwanis club of Gainesville, has a continuing right to have such building bear its name.

In January of 1989 construction began on an addition to the Westside of the building. The Scouts had outgrown the facility and additional space was much needed. Completion took place at the end of that year. Time and treasurer of the Kiwanis membership maintained the building and surrounding grounds until the Girl Scouts vacated the building.

Since the building originally was to be used by Girl Scouts and was for many years, the club is happy to learn that the city will ensure that children’s groups and activities will be the primary focus for future use. This falls completely within the Kiwanis motto, “Serving the children of the World”.

With this in mind, the Kiwanis club of Gainesville proposes the name of the building be changes/ added and that a sign be erected naming the building” Kiwanis Community Center at Oak Hill Park”. We believe that the sign should state that the club built the facility in 1955 and gave it to the city for use by the children and others of the community.

We understand that the proposal will be vetted by staff and then brought before the board for consideration. If the board passes the proposal it will then go before the City commission for

consideration. Please keep us notified of the progress within the process and if additional information is needed.

Sincerely,

John T. Woeste

President, Kiwanis club of Gainesville.

Approved by the Board of Directors, Kiwanis club of Gainesville, March 9, 2020

CC; 1) Billy Marcantel

2) Rod Hemphill, Club Secretary

3) Geo Emmanuel

4) Tom Weller

5) Frank Graddy