

**TOWN OF BELMONT
SELECT BOARD
NAMING POLICY-TOWN ASSETS**

Adopted: November 5, 2018

Amended: July 7, 2025

INTRODUCTION

The Select Board shall be responsible for the naming of Town of Belmont assets under its possession, custody, and control. For this purpose, such assets shall mean buildings, parks, squares, parcels of land, or portions of any of the foregoing owned by the Town and not subject to the authority of another board or commission, such as the School Committee or Library Board of Trustees.

It is the goal of the Board to reserve naming or renaming of public assets for circumstances that will best serve the interests of the Town and to ensure a worthy and enduring legacy for the Town's public assets. It is the policy of the Board that naming or renaming of public assets shall be done sparingly and only for good cause. The Board intends to be cautious in its implementation of this Policy in order to avoid over-naming or inappropriately naming public assets.

PURPOSE

The naming of public assets is a matter of significant public interest that deserves careful consideration. The Board, therefore, has adopted this Policy to establish a systematic, consistent, and transparent approach for naming the Town's public assets. This Policy shall not apply to the naming or renaming of ways in the Town, which is subject to procedures set forth in the Massachusetts General Laws.

GUIDELINES

In considering the naming of any public asset, the Board may consider the following guidelines:

1. A primary purpose in naming Town assets is building Town identity and unity. The Town's name represents all Belmont residents; hence, preference shall be given to naming Town assets after the Town of Belmont itself.
2. Property may be named after an individual when the individual has a historical association with the property, the area in which it is located or the Town as a whole, or where the individual played a highly notable role in the Town, including distinguished service in military, law enforcement, or public office. Consideration may also be given to a Belmont resident's significant regional, national, or international impact or contributions. Quality of contribution in these areas may be considered along with length of service. However, there should be no expectation or entitlement that service in any particular position or for any particular length of time will result in naming of a public asset for said individual.

3. No individual shall have more than one Town asset named after them.
4. A unanimous vote of the Select Board is strongly preferred before naming a public asset after an individual or organization other than the Town of Belmont.
5. Property may be named after an individual or organization that has made significant financial and civic contributions to the Town, or that has made a direct financial grant to the Town for purposes of developing or building a particular property, subject to all other legal requirements applicable thereto.
6. Names shall be chosen in a manner that avoids duplication, confusing similarity, or inappropriateness.
7. In the event of an individual's passing, a year must pass before consideration of naming a public asset after said individual.
8. No asset shall be named for any currently serving Town or School employee or public official.
9. Inclusion of some names necessarily means the exclusion of others. The Select Board shall consider the Town's evolving history, population, and values in making naming decisions and retains absolute discretion to make all naming decisions.
10. No asset shall be named (or renamed) without first holding a duly posted public hearing. The Select Board may not vote on any naming application at the conclusion of said hearing. Rather, the Select Board will vote at a subsequent regular Select Board meeting so the public has an opportunity to provide additional written comment following the public hearing.
11. A Select Board decision not to name an asset shall not require a public hearing. The Select Board may, in its sole discretion, decline to act on any application submitted in accordance with the Application Process outlined below. The Select Board may, in its sole discretion, also decline to act following a public hearing regarding the naming of a public asset. Because any naming action is in the Board's sole discretion, there shall be no timeframe in which the Board must act on a naming application subsequent to a public hearing.
12. There shall be a presumption, but not a requirement, of a twenty-year term on any naming decision. At the end of the term, the asset name will revert to the Town, unless the Select Board votes to:
 - a. renew the current name for another time interval; or
 - b. rename the asset in accordance with the Application Process outlined below;

13. If an asset is named due to a major donation, bequest, or sponsorship, the above-presumed term limit shall not apply, and the length of naming rights shall be determined by the donor agreement that accompanies said donation, bequest, or sponsorship.
14. Due to the presumption of a time limit on names, any name including identifying elements other than “Belmont” or the “Town of Belmont” and the purpose of the asset shall not be incorporated into permanent elements of future buildings but shall be marked by a plaque, monument, free-standing sign, or other marker. Assets named pursuant to a donor agreement shall be identified in accordance with that agreement, which may include permanent building elements.
15. The function, design and placement of all naming plaques, memorials, signs, or markers must be approved by the Select Board, and the costs associated with the production thereof shall be the responsibility of the application sponsor. The Select Board reserves the right to relocate any such plaque, memorial, sign, or marker as necessary for the Town’s overall operation and maintenance. The Town does not assume responsibility for the replacement of damaged or missing plaques, memorials, signs, or markers, nor does the Town agree to maintain said plaques, memorials, signs, or markers in perpetuity.
16. If an asset covered by this Policy was named in a manner inconsistent with the current Policy, the Select Board may revisit the name and bring it into compliance with the Policy. In such cases, a public hearing will be held before the current name may be changed. If there was no presumed term for the current name, or the term has not yet expired, a hearing will be held even in cases where the asset name may revert to the Town.
17. At the Board’s sole discretion, honorary names may be extended to reflect donation, bequest, or sponsorship alongside the honorary name.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Any Town board, committee, commission, or resident may submit a written application that a Town asset be named after an individual or organization.

1. The application shall be submitted to the Town Administrator's Office.
2. Applications should provide thorough due diligence both for and against the proposed name, covering all considerations laid out in this policy. Applications should include documentation to support the rationale and should reflect a broad level of community support. The Board may consider support from residents or organizations outside of Belmont as informative, but such support shall receive significantly less weight than support received from current Belmont residents.
3. Applications pertaining to the facilities under the care, control, and custody of any town board, committee or commission shall be referred to that board, committee, or commission.
4. The submission of an application shall not automatically trigger a Select Board hearing. As noted above, the Select Board may decline, in its sole discretion, to act on any such application.
5. Applications must be sponsored by a current resident of Belmont and, if possible, include support from any boards or committees that have any connection to the asset that is proposed to be named. The Select Board will not consider any naming application that originates outside of Belmont.

CRITERIA

In deciding the appropriateness of any naming or renaming proposal, the Board shall consider the following:

1. The significant value of the public asset;
2. The public interest to be served;
3. Any historic events, people, or places associated with the public asset;
4. Any outstanding individual associated with the public asset;
5. Any major gift associated with the public asset;
6. Whether the naming proposal is for a time certain;
7. Whether a naming agreement or other documentation is appropriate or necessary; and
8. Whether adopting the proposed name will preclude the Town from taking advantage of future sponsorship or donor opportunities that will support the Town's operating or capital budgets.

In addition, in deciding the appropriateness of any naming or renaming proposal, the Board shall consider:

1. Any existing agreement or documentation regarding the current name;
2. The appropriateness of a new name, taking into consideration historical significance of the public asset or its current name; and
3. Any costs associated with the renaming that are to be borne by the Town.

4. Any other assets named, or currently being considered for naming, by the Board;
5. Whether conditions or limitations should be placed on the maintenance or use of the public asset as a result of the naming or renaming;
6. Compliance with state laws, town bylaws, regulations, or policies; and
7. Whether the naming should be restricted in duration.

If the actions of an individual or organization associated with a named public asset become, in the Board's sole opinion, detrimental to the Town's reputation, the Board may review and consider renaming the public asset after the Town in accordance with the principles, rules, and process outlined above.

This Policy is meant to serve as a guide to those persons seeking to name or rename a public asset. Nothing herein shall be construed to limit the Board's authority to exercise its discretion based on relevant facts and circumstances. The Town considers the names of public assets a form of government speech of the Town itself. As such, there shall be no entitlement of any kind to dictate which names the Select Board may choose at any time, or its decision to decline to use a certain name, or to change the name of a public asset.

This Policy may be amended or rescinded by the Board by majority vote.