

CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

ORDINANCE NO. 2026-10

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA AMENDING TITLE 14 "STREETS, SIDEWALKS, AND PUBLIC PLACES" OF THE SITKA GENERAL CODE BY ADDING CHAPTER 14.35 "NAMING OF PUBLIC PLACES"

1. CLASSIFICATION. This ordinance is of a permanent nature and is intended to become a part of the Sitka General Code.

2. SEVERABILITY. If any provision of this ordinance or any application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of this ordinance and application to any person or circumstance shall not be affected.

3. PURPOSE. The purpose of this ordinance is to establish uniform procedures and standards for the naming of any building, facility, municipal or park lands, owned or under the control of the municipality, including interior and component spaces integral to the whole, and excluding the Sitka School District buildings and facilities.

4. ENACTMENT. NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ENACTED by the Assembly of the City and Borough of Sitka that the Sitka General Code Title 14, entitled "Streets, Sidewalks and Public Places", be amended by adding Chapter 14.35 , entitled "Naming of Public Places", to read as follows (deleted language stricken, new language underlined):

Title 14
GENERAL PROVISIONS

Chapters:

14.35 Naming of Public Places

Chapter 14.35
NAMING OF PUBLIC PLACES

Sections:

- 14.35.010 Purpose.
14.35.020 Definitions.
14.35.030 Naming Generally
14.35.040 Naming Procedures
14.35.050 Naming Criteria
14.35.060 Honorary Naming
14.35.070 Naming as a condition of Donation

14.35.010 Purpose.

The municipality hereby establishes a policy and set of procedures to govern the naming of a public place, honorary naming of public places, and naming as a condition of a donation to the Municipality.

A uniform naming policy sets standards for public place names that can ensure that such names have local and historical significance, contribute to a sense of community and continuity, recognize prominent individuals, and support community values.

14.35.020 Definitions.

“Department head” includes the head of any city department, or their designee.

“Donation” is defined as any monetary or nonmonetary gift, devise, or bequest to the city and borough of Sitka governed by SGC Chapter 1.36 “ACCEPTANCE OF DONATIONS TO THE CITY”. Governmental grants are not considered donations.

“Public Place” means any building, facility, municipal or park lands, owned by or under the control of the municipality including interior and component spaces integral to the whole, and excluding Sitka School District buildings and facilities.

“Municipal Administrator” means the municipal administrator of the City and Borough of Sitka, or their designee.

“Honorary naming” includes memorials named for deceased persons or past events, as well as tributes to living persons.

14.35.030 Naming generally

When considering the naming or renaming of municipal buildings, other fixed facilities, and public places, the preferred practice shall be to give public property historical, cultural or geographical significance considering location, function, prior indigenous name, and natural features. The existing name of any public place, including a traditional Tlingit or other Alaska Native name, is presumed to be the best name of that public place. Continuity of name and common usage are presumed to increase sense of neighborhood.

This chapter does not apply to the naming of streets or roads, except for application of criteria for honorary renaming in section 14.35.060 which shall be applied by the City Department naming the street or road.

14.35.040 Naming procedures

A. Public naming panel

The procedures for naming or renaming a public place may be initiated either administratively by the Municipal Administrator or via Assembly action, identifying the proposed public place to be renamed and making a referral to a public naming panel to be commenced by the relevant Department Head or City Commission, The four-member panel shall be composed as follows:

1. The Municipal Administrator, or relevant Department Head acting as their designee, shall appoint two members for the panel.
2. The Assembly, or relevant Commission acting as its designee, shall appoint two members for the panel.
3. An informational memorandum shall be submitted to the Municipal Administrator identifying the four members of the panel and confirming their assent to participate.
4. Municipal staff support to the panel shall be identified in the memorandum or resolution.

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5. The panel shall review proposed names and public places, hold public hearings, and identify additional potential names or public places as appropriate to the request. Hearings shall be set at least one month after initial public announcement of the naming process to ensure appropriate opportunity for public input.
6. The panel shall review all requests for compliance with policy and honorary naming criteria under this chapter.

B. Approval of public name

Upon agreement of at least three of the four panel members, a letter advising the Municipal Administrator and the Assembly shall be dispatched on behalf of the panel. The letter shall include reference to each criteria identified in section 14.35.050 and how the panel considered those factors in its recommendation. The panel's letter shall be attached to a proposed resolution for consideration by the Assembly. If at least three of the four panel members are unable to agree, a divided recommendation of the panel may be submitted to the Assembly, with an explanatory letter and a proposed resolution in support of each proposal.

14.35.050 Naming criteria.

Naming of a Public Place will:

1. Demonstrate that the policy objectives under 14.35.010 have been considered and will specify findings for an exception;
2. Consider the historical and cultural significance of the proposed name;
3. For a proposed renaming, consider the location's history with respect to the current name;
4. Not change the name of a place bearing a historic Sitka family name;
5. Not change the name of any site that is a distinguished landmark on any State or national Register of Historic places, unless support of the State or Federal government is first obtained;
6. Not rename a public place within 20 years of the current name's approval;
7. For public places administered by the Parks and Recreation Division, the naming panel may consider:
 - a. Names of persons who, through exemplary and substantial effort, have made a significant contribution to the community or the parks and recreation division or who have made a substantial donation to acquisition or development of the property consistent with the Honorary Naming criteria in section 14.35.060;
 - b. Organizations that have made a substantial donation to the acquisition or development of the property;
 - c. The indigenous name for the location or its features, from the Tlingit or other Native language, and its cultural significance; and

156 d. Incorporating the geographic, natural or geological feature as part of the name
157 to assist the public in recognizing the location.

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159 **14.35.060 Honorary naming**

160 When considering naming a public place for a specific individual as either a memorial to a
161 deceased person or a tribute to a living person, the following additional criteria shall be
162 considered:

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- 164 1. The historical significance of the individual and their duration of residence in the
165 municipality, or personal connection with the municipality if a nonresident;
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 - 167 2. Identify the individual's connection to the municipality if considering an outstanding
168 local, state, national or international civic leader;
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 - 170 3. Limit honorary naming to a one-time present use of an individual's name; and
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 - 172 4. Naming a public building, facility, or park for a living person is not favored.
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174 **14.35.070 Naming as a condition of donation**

175 This chapter shall not apply to the naming or renaming of facilities that were donated to the
176 municipality contingent upon assignment of a specific name or to any facility constructed or
177 purchased from money or property donated to the municipality for the specific purpose of
178 securing a name for the facility. In such cases, the Honorary Naming Criteria shall be
179 considered as one of the elements in determining whether the City should accept the dedicated
180 donation under SGC Chapter 1.36 "ACCEPTANCE OF DONATIONS TO THE CITY".

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184 **5. EFFECTIVE DATE.** This ordinance shall become effective the day after the date of its
185 passage.

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187 **PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED** by the Assembly of the City and Borough of
188 Sitka, Alaska, this 12th day of May, 2026.

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Steven Eisenbeisz, Mayor

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194 ATTEST:

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197 Sara Peterson, MMC
198 Municipal Clerk

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200 1st reading: 4/28/26
201 2nd and final reading: 5/12/26

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203 Sponsor: Administrator

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