SUBJECT: CONSIDER INSTALLATION OF PLAQUE IN HONOR OF MARGARET J. SLATTERY WITHIN THE HERITAGE COMMUNITY CENTER

SOURCE: Department of Parks and Leisure Services

COMMENT: A member of the City Council has requested approval for placement of a plaque within the Heritage Community Center to honor Margaret J. Slattery. Suggestions have been provided for placing the plaque temporarily within the library room in the new facility. The duration of such a temporary placement is not defined.

The membership of Porterville Celebrates Reading has previously corresponded to the City requesting the naming of the new Heritage Center library room as the Margaret J. Slattery Library. The request was referred to both the Parks & Leisure Services Commission and the Library Board of Directors. Both the Commission and the Board felt that the naming of the library room would not be in keeping with their understanding of the City Council’s intent in naming the Heritage Community Center. The inclusive recognition of many significant individuals with plaques along a ‘Wall of Fame’ is understood to be the expectation of the City Council.

The Library Board of Directors is supportive of Margaret J. Slattery being recognized for her significant community contributions, not the least of which was her involvement as a member of the Library Board. The Board indicated that they are supportive of the Council direction to include many on the ‘Wall of Fame’ versus singling out an individual, or a handful, in the naming of a building, or individual rooms within the facility.

The City Council has adopted a Facility Naming Policy which includes provisions for considering the naming of rooms or places for individuals if sponsorship of the plaque is available. Staff has not yet developed criteria for the “Wall of Fame” or a standard plaque design for the Heritage Center. Staff anticipates completing these tasks over the next several months.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff supports the recommendations of the Parks & Leisure Services Commission and the Library Board of Directors to offer the opportunity for Margaret J. Slattery to be recognized equally with others on a “Wall of Fame”, but not to name the new library room in her honor.

ATTACHMENTS: Facility Naming Policy
Letters regarding Margaret J. Slattery Library naming
CITY OF PORTERVILLE
POLICY FOR NAMING OR DEDICATION OF CITY FACILITIES

ADOPTED: FEBRUARY 17, 2004

Naming City buildings, parks and facilities serves a public interest by recognizing important landmarks, locations, or persons. The development of policies and procedures to guide the naming and dedication of City facilities is intended to enable the process to be applied in a fair, objective and consistent manner.

In order to facilitate the manner in which public facilities may be named, the following guidelines are hereby adopted:

1) Naming of City-owned Parks and Facilities

- Names must be pleasant sounding, tasteful and grammatically correct.

- City buildings, parks and facilities will be named in a manner that will provide an easy and recognizable reference. Such names should generally reflect the facility’s landmarks and geographical location (such as a major street, location, or neighborhood) and/or function.

- In certain circumstances, where names reflecting the geographical location are unworkable, names may reflect topography, notable flora, prominent tree(s), cultural characteristics, a natural or environmental feature, city identification, historical precedent or enhancement of civic values and heritage.

- Under extraordinary circumstances, consideration may be given to naming facilities after significant individuals or organizations that made prominent contributions to the City’s community. This is to promote civic pride as well as to honor or recognize individuals. Consideration may be given to criteria that said individual or organization must meet in order to be considered.

- Consideration may be given to naming the facility after an individual when the land or facility, or the necessary funding, have been donated by the individual, particularly if such naming is set forth as a condition of the donation. In general, 100% of the land, facility, or necessary funding would be expected for favorable consideration to the naming of the facility after an individual.
POLICY FOR NAMING OR DEDICATION OF CITY FACILITIES
ADOPTED: FEBRUARY 17, 2004

- Names shall not be considered for those individuals when they have been previously named, or overly recognized. If naming after a deceased individual, a waiting period of at least ten years after the death is required.

- The Parks and Leisure Services Commission will oversee this process. The Commission will solicit ideas and suggestions from the community, and accept nominations at least 180 days prior to opening of a new facility. The Parks and Leisure Services Commission will hold at least one public hearing. Nominations should be submitted in writing on an approved form with a statement of justification and/or background information. Any letters of support may also be included. Recommendations may also come from other City boards and commissions. All qualified recommendations will be given the same consideration without regard to the nomination source.

- The Parks and Leisure Services Commission will make recommendations to the City Council. All names are to be approved by the City Council. The City Council shall establish the name after receiving recommendations provided by the Parks and Leisure Services Commission.

- The City Council also reserves the right to rename or remove a name from a City building and facility.

2) Dedication of Buildings and Facilities

- City buildings and facilities including places within City-owned land or facilities, such as a room within a building, can be dedicated in memory of an individual or group, who has contributed to the facility or community. A donation or in-kind contribution may be accepted by the Council and recognized by a plaque affixed to the appropriate city building.

- The Parks and Leisure Services Commission will oversee this process in the same manner as the “Naming” process.

- Any individual, family, group sponsoring dedication or memorial must provide sufficient funds to purchase, install, and maintain the plaque.

- The City will make reasonable efforts to preserve plaques but if necessary due to constructions or repairs, the plaque may be relocated. The City Council also reserves the right to remove the plaque.
To the City of Porterville  
c/o Jim Perrine  

32625 Avenue 176  
Springville, CA 93265  
January 18, 2005  

On behalf of the Porterville Celebrates Reading Committee, I am asking for the new library at the Heritage Center to be named "The Margaret J. Slattery Library" in memory of Margaret Slattery.

We feel that Margaret has left our community a heritage of valuing, enjoying and pursuing literacy. Margaret began teaching reading, writing and listening to first grade children at John J. Doyle Elementary School. She later continued as a first grade teacher at Westfield Elementary School.

But Margaret did not limit her teaching to children. She joined the Tulare County Reading Council and eventually became president. Through this organization, and with her encouragement to many Porterville teachers to also join, she helped others examine and improve their methods in teaching literacy skills to their students.

Then Margaret became active in Read for Life. She encouraged hospitals and pediatricians to include books and storytime in the list of items babies need to grow into healthy adults. She was responsible for the distributions of thousands of free books to parents to read to their children.

As a member of Porterville Rotary, Margaret arranged for many Rotarians to be Guest Readers in classrooms throughout our community. It was fun for the children to have someone new read their favorite books to them. It also showed the children other people know how important reading is and it showed the Rotarians what our classrooms are really like.

Margaret left the classroom and became a Reading Consultant with the Burton and Porterville School Districts. She was able to help many more teachers at all grade levels improve their teaching skills. She was responsible for introducing The Literacy Connection to the classrooms in our community which is a program that enables teachers to discover specifically where each child needs help in learning to read.

Margaret was also on the Porterville City Library Board. It was during her tenure that the Heritage Center was proposed. She visited other communities which had facilities that were joint ventures of school districts and the cities. She researched problems that could arise from such partnerships.

In 1999 under the auspices of Porterville Rotary, Margaret gathered a committee together in her home and organized the first Porterville Celebrates Reading. This year we will be holding our fifth Porterville Celebrates Reading. Each year over 2,000 children and their families go to the Porterville Fairgrounds to take part in literacy activities and earn a free book and a free lunch. We find the children now look forward to this event each year. Margaret died in June 2004 but the committee continues the work for her and for the children.

For all that Margaret Slattery did to help the children in our community to become literate adults, and to enjoy reading and writing, we feel that naming the library in her honor is very appropriate. The Porterville Celebrates Reading Committee would be happy to help with the dedication, to help set up the library and to donate books in Margaret's honor. Please contact me if you need any more information. We will be waiting for your reply.

Sincerely,
Darren Byars
539-2317
wdbyars@ocsnet.net