

# **TOWN OF WESTFORD**

## **MONUMENTS AND MEMORIALS ON TOWN PROPERTY POLICY**

### **I. Introduction**

The Town of Westford may install or permit permanent monuments on town property to provide commemoration of persons or events of note and for purposes of public art and beautification. The Town may accept donated monuments, or donations towards the cost of such monuments, the approval and installation of which are at the sole discretion, of the Select Board of the Town of Westford.

Many monuments, memorials, fountains, benches, trees and statues have been added to parks and other town-owned properties over the years.

Because of the expanding nature of this collection of monuments, and the limited amount of town property available it is important that the town work carefully with potential donors and for its own uses to find suitable locations and to develop administrative policies regarding new monuments in town parks and on other town-owned properties.

### **II. Policy**

The purpose of this section is to establish criteria and guidelines for the consideration and installation of monuments on town-owned property determined by the town to be appropriate as a site for monuments. In doing so, the Town recognizes the following considerations:

- A. Monuments can convey a powerful connection between Westford and its history, and in some instances its future.
- B. It is important that the placement of monuments be limited to circumstances of high community-wide importance, both to maintain the significance of such monuments and to minimize conflicts with the active and variable uses of public spaces.

This policy applies to requests to donate monuments or funds to the Town of Westford for monuments or memorials to be placed on town property. Any person or organization may submit a request to place a monument or memorial on town-owned property where such use is not restricted and where the placement of such a monument or memorial will not interfere with the general intended use of the property. Such a request is made by application to be filed with the Monuments and Memorials Committee which will review the application.

Any proposed monument or memorial should be intended to recognize and memorialize a person, not living at the time of the application, or an event or place that is significant to Westford. As an exception to this policy, a monument may be erected at a recreational facility recognizing a living individual who has made a significant contribution of time, effort, or funding in support of the sport or the facility.

In considering applications, monuments of local historic relevance, whether to Westford or the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, will receive preference. The ability to fund the monument to include maintenance of the same will also be a significant consideration.

Monuments and memorials subject to this policy are expected to be permanent, but under town control, with ownership to be conveyed to it. The Town of Westford may, at any time and at its sole discretion, move, remove, modify, sell, or dispose of any monument or memorial provided that remaining funds deposited with the Town for the maintenance and preservation of removed, sold or disposed monuments are returned to the applicant or responsible party.

Following receipt of an application and supporting materials all proposed donations will be evaluated on a number of factors including, the appropriateness of the donated item to the proposed site; the compatibility of the monument to the landscaping and other uses in its immediate area, as well as its impact on the entire area within which it is located and the uses of the same in particular whether its proposed location will restrict or inhibit other uses in the area; its aesthetic merit; and any appropriate safety and maintenance issues.

When proposing a monument, an applicant should submit preliminary plans that provide enough detail for evaluation including evidence of funding or plans to obtain funding.

### III. Guidelines:

It will be the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the following guidelines are met in connection with the application:

#### A. Site specifics:

Monuments must demonstrate compatibility with the site. Monuments to be placed on town property should relate to the site in which they are to be placed using complimentary designs and compatible finishes and materials whenever possible and appropriate. An applicant must state the relevance of a monument to the specific site where the monument is to be placed.

#### B. Community value:

A proposed monument is expected to be of historic or cultural significance to Westford or the surrounding area. In this it is expected to recognize an individual or event that has made a significant contribution or impact to Westford or the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, or is uniquely significant to the location where the monument is to be placed.

#### C. Impact:

In recognition that there is value in keeping town-owned property open for general use, monuments that interfere with or prohibit existing functions on such property may be disapproved.

#### D. Aesthetics:

Since proposed monuments are expected to be permanent, aesthetic merit will be a significant determinant in the acceptance of the same.

Proposed monuments must show a high level of quality and be designed to fit into the environment where located. Works of inferior workmanship or which clash with the location will not be approved.

#### E. Maintenance:

The Town has the responsibility of preserving and maintaining town property. It cannot accept monuments which present an unreasonable maintenance burden. New monuments should not

be accepted unless the donor or sponsor can provide a means of perpetual care. Certain donated items such as benches may require no additional maintenance or limited maintenance and may be excepted from the maintenance requirement. Where applicable, perpetual care may be demonstrated by a maintenance endowment from which sufficient interest is derived to generate funds to contract for annual routine maintenance; or the donor may enter into a long-term legal contract with the town stipulating that the donor is responsible for the routine care and repair of the monument.

F. Safety:

Monuments should be safe to passersby, curious spectators (especially children), and the environment. Sharp projecting elements, loose parts and other public hazards will result in disapproval.

IV. Application

Interested donors should provide the Memorials and Monuments Committee with a letter of intent, and a completed Town of Westford Information Form providing preliminary designs with appropriate detail for evaluation purposes including the anticipated size, scope, and materials. The letter of intent and Information Form for a proposed monument should clearly identify the relevancy of the monument to any proposed site.

After such review, the Committee will, if necessary, work with the sponsor(s) to refine or otherwise amend submissions for the proposed monument. While donor groups are welcome to raise funds and fabricate artwork prior to approval, no guarantees can be made regarding placement of monuments on town property until all necessary approvals have been secured. Upon the recommendation of the Westford Monuments and Memorials Committee the proposed monument project will be presented for consideration and action to the Select Board.

The final approval of the Select Board of the Town of Westford is required before any monument may be placed on town property.

V. Definitions:

A. Town Property: All town-owned property irrespective of care and custody responsibilities including Schools and Library.

B. Monuments and Memorials: All plaques, statues, posts, benches, plantings and any other artifacts commemorating or memorializing an event or person.

Approved by the Select Board on 8/23/2022