

Staff Report

Report To: Community Services Committee
Report From: Pamela Coulter, Director of Community Services
Meeting Date: December 17, 2025
Report Code: CS-25-124
Subject: Request for Commemorative Tree – Julie McArthur Regional Recreation Centre

Recommendations:

THAT in consideration of Staff Report CS-25-124 respecting Request for a Commemorative Tree - Julie McArthur Regional Recreation Centre, the Community Services Committee recommends that City Council approve:

1. The planting of a suitable shade tree outside of the City's Commemorative Forest Program generally in the location as outlined in the report; and
2. The cost of the tree and plaque being covered by the requester.

Highlights:

- The City has received a request by the former Better Pool Committee (Al Nightingale) to plant a commemorative tree in memory of John Douglas Seaman.
- The Family Y has confirmed its support of the request.
- A location along the pedestrian walkway between 10th Street East and the building is proposed.
- The cost of the tree and plaque will be covered by the requester.

Strategic Plan Alignment:

[Strategic Plan](#) Priority: Collaborative City.

This project is a partnership with community members supported by the Family Y. The City has a joint operating agreement with the Family Y for this facility.

Climate and Environmental Implications:

This supports the objectives of the City's Corporate Climate Change Adaptation Plan by strengthening the natural infrastructure, including the urban forest.

The proposal would make a small-scale positive impact on the urban canopy in a high-use civic area.

Previous Report/Authority:

[CS-24-047](#) Commemorative Tree – Julie McArthur Regional Recreation Centre for Sharif Rahman

Background:

The City has received a request from Al Nightingale on behalf of the Better Pool Committee to have a commemorative tree planted at the Julie McArthur Regional Recreation Centre in memory of John Douglas Seaman.

Attachment 1 includes a letter from Al Nightengale which notes:

He was a founding member of the Better Pool Committee, working tirelessly at Bingo and other events to bring a better pool to the community. With Doug's leadership, The Better Pool committee was able to make a significant contribution to the Julie McArthur Recreation Center to build an eight lane 25-meter pool.

Today the pools are used by young and old. This is a legacy facility that both the City of Owen Sound and Y.M.C.A should be proud of.

Analysis:

Mr. Seaman made longstanding contributions to the Owen Sound community, including leadership with the Better Pool Committee that supported delivery of the eight-lane, 25-metre pool at the JMRRC—a facility now widely used by residents of all ages. The memorial request describes his volunteerism and service to multiple community organizations.

Site and Location

The approved JMRRC landscape plan identifies areas suitable for additional trees. Based on the request and a meeting on site with former members of the better pool committee, a location on the south side of the building, east of the walkway is proposed (see attachment 2). This is a location of prominence on the south frontage along the pedestrian walkway from 10th Street East to the main doors. Final siting will consider utilities, sightlines, winter operations, and accessibility clearances.

Species

An oak tree is proposed as it is hardy, drought-tolerant, and appropriate for this location. A larger caliper tree is requested and will be paid for by the group making the request.

Plaque

A plaque would be mounted to a stone with a small concrete base and installed adjacent to the tree. The City would not be responsible for the cost or manufacturing of the plaque or its long-term maintenance. Wording will be coordinated by the requester and approved by the City and the family of Mr. Seaman.

Financial Implications:

Tree purchase cost is approximately \$300 and will be paid for by the requester.

Parks staff labour will be required for bed preparation and planting.

Plaque cost is expected in the range of \$300–\$500. The requester will cover the cost of the plaque.

Communication Strategy:

The requester will coordinate a public commemoration at the time of planting with family, members of the former Better Pool Committee, and Council.

The tree will be added to the City's commemorative forest GIS layer and be on the City website.

Consultation:

The Requester (Al Nightingale) and other members of the former Better Pool Committee. The Requester had confirmed support from Mr. Seaman's family. There is also attached a letter of support from the Family Y (Attachment 3).

Attachments:

1. Letter of request from Al Nightingale
2. Approximate Proposed Location of Tree
3. Letter of Support from Family Y

Recommended by:

Pamela Coulter, Director of Community Services

Submission approved by:

Tim Simmonds, City Manager

For more information on this report, please contact Pamela Coulter, Director of Community Services at pcoulter@owensound.ca or 519-376-4440 x 1252.