

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: FEBRUARY 22, 2007  
TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL  
FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER  
SUBJECT: REPORT OF THE NAMING COMMITTEE

**ISSUE:** Report of the City Naming Committee

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council:

- (1) receive the report from the Naming Committee;
- (2) set for public hearing and consideration on Tuesday, February 27 the proposal to name the new soccer field behind George Washington Middle School in honor of the Swanson family; and
- (3) postpone action on the request by the Ballyshaners to name Waterfront Park in honor of Colonel John Firzgerald until after the Waterfront Plan has been completed.

**DISCUSSION:** The City Naming Committee, which includes Councilman Lovain, Councilwoman Pepper (Chair) and City Manager Jim Hartmann, met on January 29, 2007, to discuss requests to name the new City soccer field behind George Washington Middle School in honor of the Swanson family and to name Waterfront Park in honor of the late Colonel John Fitzgerald.

On December 7, 2006, Dana Lawhorne, Kerry Donley, and Frank Shafroth wrote to City Council and requested that the Naming Committee be asked to consider naming the new City soccer field behind GW Middle School Swanson Field to recognize the contributions that the Swanson family has made to the Alexandria soccer program (Attachment 1).

Sandy Swanson, a T.C. Williams High School graduate served the Alexandria Soccer Association for more than a decade and has had over 30 years of involvement in Alexandria soccer activities. He was a leader in developing the Alexandria Soccer Association partnership with the City. Mr. Swanson was also involved in helping to diversify soccer participation. His wife Mimi Swanson has been as assistant coach and TC soccer fundraiser.

Tragically, Kelly Swanson died last June. She and her twin sister were very involved in soccer and also worked with children with disabilities. Attachment 1 provides additional details about the contributions of the Swanson family to Alexandria soccer.

The Naming Committee reviewed this request and determined that it is worthy of consideration by City Council. The Committee recommends that Council hold a public hearing on the request and make a determination on the naming of the field in honor of the Swanson family.

On November 28 , 2006, City Council received a letter from Ballyshaners Chairman Pat Troy, President Michael Tiddy, and Secretary J.J.Kelly requesting that the City Council name Waterfront Park in honor of Colonel John Fitzgerald (Attachment 2). The Naming Committee considered this request at its January 29 meeting.

According to the request Colonel Fitzgerald came to Alexandria in 1769 and purchased land on the south side of the 200 block of King Street in 1788. He later established a wharf at King and Water (Lee) Streets, where he constructed three warehouses. He was a colonel in the Virginia militia, an aide-de-camp to General George Washington and mayor of the City.

The Naming Committee discussed this request. They determined that since the development of the Waterfront Plan was about to get underway, it might be best to wait until the plan was completed. At that time there might be other opportunities to honor Colonel Fitzgerald.

The Naming Committee recommends that Council defer this request until the Waterfront Plan is complete.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment 1. December 7, 2006 Letter from Dana Lawhorne, Kerry Donley and Frank Shafroth

Attachment 2. November 28, 2006, Letter from Pat Troy, Michael Tiddy and J.J. Kelly

**STAFF:**

Michele Evans, Deputy City Manager

Kirk Kincannon, Director, Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities

To: The Honorable Members of Council  
City Manager

Attachment 1

12/28/06

December 7, 2006

The Honorable Bill Euille  
Members of the Alexandria City Council  
City Hall  
301 King Street  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Dear Mr. Mayor and Councilmembers:

We are writing to formally request that the City convene its nominating committee to act favorably in naming the new soccer field behind George Washington Middle School *Swanson Field* in recognition of the enduring contributions this unique Alexandria family has made through soccer to our community. The broad public recognition and affection for this family and its commitment to our community was clearly evidenced at the dedication of the new Therapeutic Recreation room last month. We believe they have been instrumental over the last 20 years in making soccer in our city the most inclusive activity outside of our public school system, so we ask you to take this formal action to honor the Swanson spirit, so that a little bit of its Irish magic can be a part of us and Alexandria forever. We would request that you act quickly, as we would like to officially name the field this spring before the commencement of TC William's and ASA's Spring seasons.

There is no family that has done as much for the soccer community as the Swansons. Dad Swanson, Sandy, a T.C. graduate, devoted more than a decade of service to the Alexandria Soccer Association, where he became an essential architect in creating a new partnership with the City, from everything to working with the Council to enact ordinances to fence and protect existing fields, to setting in play a series of new fields—like Brenman Park, and vastly improved maintenance of existing fields. He oversaw the largest expansion, with the greatest diversity ever achieved, through an extraordinary outreach effort, clinics, and significant increases in the scholarship program. His wife, Mimi, has been an assistant coach, a T.C. soccer fundraiser, and a mother to a half team who have all not only played in ASA and varsity soccer at T.C., but made their own ongoing contributions to expanding opportunities in our city.

Kelley Swanson embodied the unique values this family has brought and continues to give to our community. A graduate of T.C. a year ago last June with her twin sister, she was the epitome of the very best of what our city is about—a commitment to help be a bridge to bring people together irrespective of ability or disability, race or income, age, or skill. Like A.E. Houseman's poem "To An Athlete Dying Young," Kelley has left an indelible mark on Alexandria—and, knowing Kelley, a challenge to all of us to enrich and further the dreams she sought. Or, as Kelley also wrote: "my ultimate rush for soccer is not restricted to my own games. Others may have severe disabilities. I intend to give my best to all of them, because I have learned that young people, given the chance, deserve to experience the adrenaline rush."

Between us, we have played, coached, refed, or been spectators at soccer events at fields at George Washington for over 30 years, and the fields have never had a name. Today, thanks to families like the Swansons, some 2000 kids of every age and with the greatest diversity of any non-school activity in the city play this global game. They come from every Alexandria neighborhood, from every school, from every physical ability and disability, and from various countries to play together. They are young enough to find delight in looking for four leaf clovers during the game and old enough to demonstrate extraordinary skills. None of that would have been possible without the leadership of Mimi, Sandy, and their kids—they have created a legacy,

and endowed the rest of us—and our city—with the opportunity to be stewards of their gifts, commitments, and contributions for the years ahead. We ask for your support and would be pleased to meet with you or respond to any questions you might have.

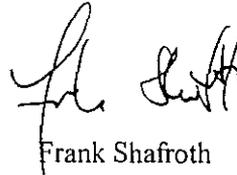
Sincerely,



Dana Lawhorne



Kerry Ddnley



Frank Shafroth

Cc: The Honorable Del Pepper  
The Honorable Tim Lovain  
Mr. Jim Hartmann



# the Ballyshaners, Inc.

P.O. Box 21595  
Alexandria, Virginia 22320-2595



*attachment 2*

November 28, 2006

The Honorable William D. Euille  
Mayor, City of Alexandria  
301 King Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Mayor Euille,

The Ballyshaners, Inc., a non-profit organization, has for over 25 years been actively involved in co-sponsoring, along with the City of Alexandria, the annual St. Patrick's Day Parade, and the Irish Festival. Our mission and purpose has been, and continues to be, the promotion of our Irish culture and history here in the City of Alexandria.

For the past several years we have been actively trying to get formal recognition of one of the famous early leaders of this great city, Colonel John Fitzgerald. Mr. Fitzgerald moved to Alexandria in 1769 and purchased the south side of the 200 block of King Street in 1788. The town council granted him the sunken ground to the east of this lot. Mr. Fitzgerald banked out 400 feet from the shoreline at King and Water (Lee) Streets, creating "Fitzgerald's Wharf." On the wharf, he constructed three brick warehouses.

As you may also know, John Fitzgerald served as colonel of the Virginia militia and an aide-de-camp to General George Washington. He also served as Mayor of the City of Alexandria and collector of the port.

Due to his many contributions to the City and the Commonwealth of Virginia, we believe the City should formally recognize Colonel Fitzgerald by naming Waterfront Park in his honor. We, therefore, ask that the City Council hold a public hearing so that additional facts and circumstances regarding Colonel Fitzgerald's contributions to Alexandria can be presented and a vote on this matter can be held.

Sincerely,

Pat Troy  
Chairman  
The Ballyshaners

Michael Tiddy  
President  
The Ballyshaners

J. J. Kelly  
Secretary  
The Ballyshaners

CF:  
Vice Mayor  
City Council Members  
City Manager

