



Village of Sparta Donation Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines, standards, and procedures for the installation and care of donated improvements, either as a result of a cash or physical property donation. These donations may include, but are not limited to, park benches, bicycle racks, picnic tables, public art, monuments, drinking fountains, and flags. This policy does not apply to buildings or land. The Village of Sparta (hereinafter the "Village") desires to encourage donations while at the same time manage aesthetic impacts and mitigate on-going maintenance cost.

Guidelines established by this policy will apply to all donations made after the effective date of this policy. Donations made prior to the adoption of this policy shall be subject to applicable sections of this policy. This policy is also designed to provide guidelines for individuals or groups should they desire to decorate, landscape, or adorn a donation, such as a tree, bench, or picnic table on Village owned property.

Standards established by this policy will apply to purchased equipment, installation techniques, donation acknowledgements, decoration, and long term care of all donations made after the adoption of this policy.

Guidelines for Existing Donations

Definition of an Existing Donation

For the purpose of this policy, existing donations are those donations installed prior to the adoption of this policy.

Appearance and Aesthetics

Decoration, ornamentation, and adornment of donated elements can interfere with routine maintenance and the appearance of the donated item if not cared for on a regular basis and installed properly. Nothing shall be hung or tied to trees. Because landscaping installed in and around picnic tables and benches can be trampled, landscaping shall not be done around site furniture.

Materials

If landscaping around trees is desired, donors are encouraged to utilize natural materials in the construction of a six (6') foot border around the tree i.e. (one row of rocks no larger than eight inches in diameter). Prior approval of the landscaped area must be obtained from the Department of Public Works.

Maintenance

Maintenance of the landscaping is the responsibility of the Village unless a previous arrangement is in place. All landscaped sites will be maintained weed and debris free. All dead flowers and shrubs will be removed and disposed of by the Village.

Longevity

Without exception, the Village reserves the right to restore, relocate, remove, or relinquish gifts that are no longer suited for their original purpose. Donations do not confer special privilege or rights; they are graciously and unconditionally accepted without obligation.

Standards for New Donations**Definitions of New Donations**

New donations are those made after the adoption of this policy.

Appearance and Aesthetics

The Village and the community have an interest in ensuring the best appearance and aesthetic quality of their public facilities. Donated elements and/or their associated acknowledgments should reflect the character of the park or facility. All elements will be installed in such a manner that will not substantially change the character of a facility or its intended use.

Maintenance

Donated elements and/or their associated acknowledgement become Village property. Accordingly, the Village has the duty to maintain the donation only for the expected life cycle of the donation. If current contact information is on file, the donor will be informed and given the opportunity to take further action at the expiration of the original life cycle. Acceptance of donations confers no obligation on the Village, and the decision to restore, relocate, or remove donations at any time will be at the sole discretion of the Village.

Repair

The community has an interest in ensuring that all elements remain in good repair. In addition, the public has an interest in ensuring that the short and long-term repair costs are reasonable. Repair parts and materials must be readily available. Donated elements must be of high quality to ensure a long life, be resistant to the elements, wear and tear, and to acts of vandalism.

Cost

The Village has an interest in ensuring that the donor covers the full-cost for the purchase, installation, and maintenance during the expected life cycle of donated park elements. A separate fee schedule is maintained in which the Village will detail costs for donations, installation, and maintenance. The Village also has an interest in ensuring that on-going maintenance costs do not negatively impact the resources available for maintenance of other Village facilities. Consequently the Village will assess, at the time of purchase, a charge sufficient to cover anticipated on-going maintenance of donated elements during their expected life expectancy.

Procedure for Making a Donation

The Village Council will approve or deny all donation requests. The Department of Public Works will manage all donations located on Village property.

Application

Potential donors or a donor's representative will complete an application form (attached). Applications are available on line or in person at Village Hall. Completed applications will be made to the Village Manager for review and processing. Once the Village Manager confirms the application is complete it will be reviewed by the Village Manager and the Department of Public Works before being reviewed by Village Council for final review.

Prior to preparing an application, the donor may contact the Village Manager or Department of Public Works to discuss a proposed donation. An informal meeting may assist the potential donor in determining if a gift will meet the criteria contained in this policy.

Criteria for Acceptance

Plan

To accept donation of an element for a specific facility, a plan may exist showing the available locations for donated elements. If no plan exists then the Village may accept the donation under certain conditions. Under this circumstance the donation must 1) meet a true need of the facility, 2) not interfere with the intended current or future use of the facility and 3) not require the relocation of other equipment or infrastructure to accommodate the donation. Some facilities may be fully developed and the opportunity for donations would not be available.

Donation Acknowledgements/Memorial Plaques

Donation acknowledgments and memorial plaques will be purchased through the Village. Donation acknowledgments/memorial plaques will be approved by the Director of Public Works, the Village Manager, and/or Village Council and manufactured by a Village approved vendor to ensure highest quality, life, and durability. These types will be in character with the intent of this section and acknowledgments shall be tasteful and subtle.

Benches, bicycle racks, picnic tables and drinking fountains

Benches, bicycle racks, picnic tables, drinking fountains, and playground components may be sited in locations approved by the Department of Public Works in accordance with an available site plan. Items donated must be of a product approved by the Department of Public Works, and these items become Village property at time of purchase. Donated items will match the style and type of other similar items in the area.

Trees

Landscaping and plant selection for facilities is vital for the Village of Sparta. Accordingly, the size and species of tree or trees donated shall be limited to those determined by the Village. The donor is responsible for watering the tree following planting until growth has been established. The Village is not responsible for watering any donated trees.

Monuments

Upright monuments or monuments resembling those typically found in cemeteries must be approved by the Village Council prior to their installation in any Village facility or on any Village property.

Flags

The American Flag and the State of Michigan Flag may be sited in locations approved by the Department of Public Works in accordance with an available site plan. Flags deteriorate quickly when exposed to the elements and the size of a flag is determined by the type, size, and configuration of the pole on which it is to be mounted.

Consequently, donated flags must be of a size and quality suitable for the site and the environment in which it is to be located. Flags may be subject to replacement, paid for by the donor at the time when Village staff determines replacement is needed.

Interpretive signs

Interpretive signs may be installed at sites that are appropriate for describing the history, geology, environment, and flora and fauna of a particular area. Interpretive signs shall be of a size that is in keeping with the character of the site. Interpretive signs shall be of a design that meets requirements for access to the disabled. Interpretive signs shall be designed in such a manner that is consistent with other interpretive signs on the site. Interpretive signs shall be constructed of materials that are of high quality, vandal resistant, and able to withstand harsh environmental conditions.

Other donations

This policy is not inclusive and there may be types of donations that do not fit neatly into any category presented herein. The Village may accept those donations subject to a review by the Village Council.

Buildings, structures and public art

Donated buildings, structures (including playgrounds), and public art are subject to full review and approval of Village Council and are not considered as part of this policy.

Conditions

Installation

Installation of donated elements, including the donor acknowledgement/memorial plaques, will be completed by a licensed contractor or Village staff. The installation will be scheduled at a time and date as determined by the Department of Public Works so as not to unnecessarily interfere with routine maintenance activities.

Removal and/or Relocation

This section applies to both existing and new donations. The Village reserves the right to remove and/or relocate donated elements and their associated donation acknowledgments/memorial plaques. The Village will make reasonable efforts to determine the origin of the donation and will attempt to contact donors prior to restoring, removing or relocated donated elements.

Maintenance and Repair

The long term care and maintenance of donated elements is important to both the donor and the Village.

End of Life Cycle

At the end of the life-cycle term, the donor may choose to extend the life-cycle term by paying for the current value of a new donation and its associated maintenance cost. The Village reserves the right to seek a new donor for the donation at the end of the established life cycle should the original donor choose not to renew the donation, or if the Village has not been able to contact the original donor.

It is in the Village's interest to exclude certain donations from this policy. Donations with short life spans are to be replaced and paid for by the donor at the time when the Department of Public Works determines replacement is needed. This policy shall not apply to land or building donations.

Policy Adopted by Village Council via Resolution #18-02 on February 12, 2018.