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Stretch of Waterfront Drive to be renamed Israel Asper Way

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Council believes it is appropriate to name the street after Izzy Asper.

A civic committee has opted to ignore a new policy on street renaming to support a bid to rename the road that the new Museum for Human Rights is located on after the late Izzy Asper.

The downtown development committee supported an application from the museum to rename the stretch of Waterfront Drive between William Stephenson Way and Forks Market Road to Israel Asper Way.

It was Asper who envisioned the museum and who secured federal government support to make it a federal institution.

However, the renaming goes against a 2011 bylaw that states street name changes would be restricted to honorary designations, to avoid confusion for emergency services and for existing property owners on the affected roadway.

Recently, the city approved designating a portion of York Avenue that will intersect with the new Israel Asper Way to Honorary Mahatma Gandhi Way but the street will still be legally known as York.

But city administration defended this proposal, stating in a report the renaming is appropriate and the impacts will be minimal.

There are only two properties on that stretch of Waterfront Drive, the museum and a parcel of land owned by the city.

The report states that this will be third name for that stretch of roadway: Before it was Waterfront Drive, the roadway was known as Pioneer Boulevard.

The proposal now moves to city council, which must approve the bylaw making the change official.

Councillors Jenny Gerbasl and Jeff Browaty enthusiastically supported the name change at the committee meeting this morning, saying it was appropriate to name the street after the man who created the idea for the museum.

"The city has a new policy to shy away from street renaming but this one is very important and very appropriate," Browaty (North Kildonan) said.

Gerbasl (Fort Rouge-East Fort Garry) said she supports the honorary street renaming policy but said this exception makes "perfect sense."

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