



Town of Newcastle Dedications and Recognitions Policy

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear, fair, and consistent process for dedicating public spaces, facilities, features, or installing plaques and other forms of recognition on Town-owned property. This policy ensures that recognitions reflect the values of the Town of Newcastle, are appropriate for public spaces, and are approved through an open and transparent process.

Authority: Final authority for all dedications, namings, and installations of plaques or other permanent recognitions on Town property rests with the Newcastle Select Board. No dedication or plaque may be installed without formal Select Board approval.

Scope:

This policy applies to:

- Town-owned buildings, parks, roads, sidewalks, trails, cemeteries, and other public spaces
- Permanent or semi-permanent plaques, markers, signs, or inscriptions
- Dedications recognizing individuals, families, organizations, events, or historical significance

This policy does not apply to:

- Temporary signage for events
- Approved art installations
- Required regulatory or informational signage

Guiding Principles: Dedications and recognitions shall:

- Serve a clear public purpose
- Be consistent with the Town's mission, values, and community character
- Avoid commercial advertising or promotion
- Be respectful, inclusive, and non-discriminatory
- Not obligate the Town to future financial or maintenance burdens beyond what is explicitly approved

Eligibility Criteria: A dedication or recognition may be considered when one or more of the following criteria are met:

Individuals

- Demonstrated long-term and exceptional service to the Town of Newcastle
- Significant historical contribution to the community
- Recognition is typically considered posthumously, except in extraordinary circumstances

Organizations or Groups

- Demonstrated substantial benefit to the Town or its residents over an extended period

Events or Historical Significance

- Events of enduring importance to the Town's history or identity

Dedications shall not be made solely in recognition of political office, financial contribution alone, or for purposes that could reasonably be perceived as partisan or promotional.

Vetted Options: To promote consistency, manage long-term maintenance, and ensure compatibility with public spaces, the Town of Newcastle may limit dedications and recognitions to the following vetted options, unless the Select Board expressly approves an alternative.

These options are intended to balance meaningful recognition with durability, cost control, and visual coherence.

1. Plaque Mounted on Natural Stone: A modest plaque mounted on a natural stone (approximately ten-pin bowling ball sized to small boulder scale) placed at an approved location.
 - Appropriate for parks, trails, and landscaped public areas
 - Stone and plaque materials must be durable and weather-resistant
 - Placement subject to site suitability and safety review
2. Memorial or Recognition Bench: A standard bench approximately four (4) feet in length with an affixed plaque.
 - Bench style must conform to Town-approved models or design standards
 - Typically located in parks, trails, or scenic public areas
 - Bench placement subject to accessibility and maintenance considerations
3. Engraved Brick or Paver: An engraved brick or paver installed as part of a designated walkway, patio, or hardscape area.
 - Limited to areas specifically approved by the Town for such installations
 - Individual bricks or pavers do not confer exclusive rights to surrounding space
 - Wording and layout subject to uniform formatting standards
4. Living Dedication with Plaque: A living feature (such as a tree or shrub) accompanied by a small ground-level or nearby plaque.
 - Species selection must be approved by the Town or its designee
 - Applicant may be required to fund replacement if the living feature fails within a defined establishment period
 - The Town does not guarantee perpetual survival of living dedications

General Conditions for Vetted Options

- All text, materials, and placement are subject to final Town approval
- The Town may establish standard sizes, fonts, materials, and wording limits
- The Select Board may cap the number of dedications in any given location
- Approval of a vetted option does not guarantee approval of a specific site

Non-Standard Requests

Requests that fall outside these vetted options may be considered on a case-by-case basis but may require additional review, conditions, or denial based on maintenance, cost, equity, or public interest considerations and would be subject to a Town Meeting vote..

Application Process:

1. **Submission** - Requests for a dedication or plaque must be submitted in writing to the Town Manager or Town Office. Applications shall include:
 - Name and contact information of the applicant
 - Description of the proposed dedication or recognition
 - Justification addressing eligibility criteria
 - Proposed location
 - Proposed plaque text, size, materials, and design
 - Funding source for fabrication, installation, and ongoing maintenance
2. **Staff Review** - Town staff may review the application for completeness, feasibility, site suitability, and consistency with Town policies.
3. **Select Board Review** - Completed applications shall be placed on a Select Board agenda for discussion and action. The Select Board may approve, deny, or request modifications.

Public Input: At the discretion of the Select Board, public comment may be solicited prior to approval, particularly for proposals involving prominent public spaces, naming of facilities, or matters of significant public interest.

Design and Installation Standards:

- Plaques shall be modest in size and design and compatible with their surroundings
- Materials shall be durable and appropriate for outdoor installation
- Wording shall be factual, concise, and non-political
- Final design and placement are subject to Town approval

Installation shall be coordinated through the Town and may be performed by Town staff or an approved contractor.

Costs and Maintenance: Unless otherwise approved by the Select Board, all costs associated with design, fabrication, installation, and maintenance shall be borne by the applicant or donor. The Town does not guarantee perpetual maintenance; plaques may be repaired, relocated, or removed as needed for safety, construction, or operational reasons

Ownership and Removal: All plaques and markers installed on Town property become the property of the Town of Newcastle. The Town reserves the right to:

- Remove or relocate plaques due to damage, safety concerns, or changes in site use
- Remove plaques if information becomes inaccurate or inconsistent with community standards

Reasonable efforts will be made to notify the original applicant or next of kin when practicable.

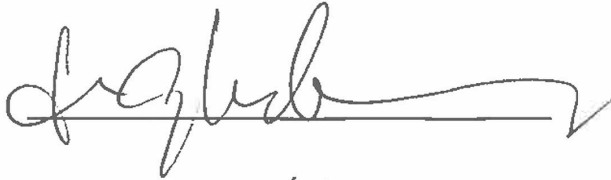
Recordkeeping: The Town shall maintain a record of all approved dedications and recognitions, including location, text, and approval date.

Appeals: Decisions of the Select Board are final. Requests for reconsideration may be submitted in writing if new information is provided.

Enactment: This policy will be implemented upon a majority vote of the Select Board. Any future change or amendment to the policy will also require a majority vote by the Select Board.

Date of Adoption: 01-27-2026

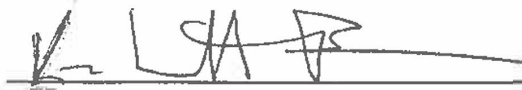
Tor Glendinning
Chair

Handwritten signature of Tor Glendinning in black ink, written over a horizontal line.

Thomas Kostenbader
Vice Chair

Handwritten signature of Thomas Kostenbader in black ink, written over a horizontal line.

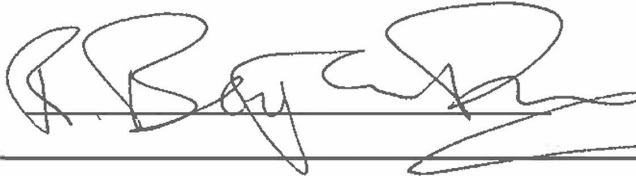
Karen Paz

Handwritten signature of Karen Paz in black ink, written over a horizontal line.

Rufus Percy

Handwritten signature of Rufus Percy in black ink, written over a horizontal line.

R. Benjamin Frey

Handwritten signature of R. Benjamin Frey in black ink, written over a horizontal line.

Legislative History
01-27-2026 Adoption