

Report of the Historic Preservation Section and Advisory Recommendation of the Jacksonville Historic Preservation Commission

TO: Council Secretary, Jacksonville City Council

FROM: Arimus Wells, City Planner Supervisor – Planning and Development

RE: **Proposed Renaming of Losco Regional Park – Ordinance No. 2025-16**

DATE: February 26, 2025

On January 14, 2025, Ordinance 2025-16 was introduced to propose renaming “Losco Regional Park” as “Richard H. ‘Dick’ Kravitz Regional Park.” Consistent with Chapter 122.105 of the Jacksonville Ordinance Code the naming and renaming of public buildings, public facilities and public parks, requires a Report from the Historic Preservation Section and an advisory recommendation on the renaming proposal from the Jacksonville Historic Preservation Commission. The Report is required to address the following criteria:

1. The origin of the existing public building, public facility, or public park name, if applicable;
2. Any historical significance of the existing public building, public facility or public park;
3. Whether there are any historical structures or landmarks on the subject property
4. Whether the existing building name, name of public facility, or public park name is part of a common theme of names throughout the community where such building, park or facility is located;
5. The age of the public building, public facility or public park name
6. Whether there are other public buildings, public facilities, or public parks with the same or similar name; and
7. Whether the person (or persons) to whom the public building, public facility or public park is proposed to be named or renamed has contributed to the development of, or is a reminder of the history and/or culture of the City, State, or Nation.

Location: 10931 Hood Road South, RE# 155612-0500

Reason for Change: At the request of City Council to honor the legacy of Richard H. “Dick” Kravitz and his dedication to the City of Jacksonville and Mandarin community by renaming Losco Regional Park as the “Richard H. ‘Dick’ Kravitz Regional Park.”

Criteria:

1. The origin of the existing public building, public facility, or public park name, if applicable:

Losco Regional Park is located adjacent to Julington Creek in the Mandarin section of southeast Jacksonville. A leading producer of oranges in North America for most of the 1800s, the community acquired its name from the locally cultivated Mandarin orange. After the Buckman Bridge opened in 1970, development in Mandarin greatly accelerated. The booming population eventually needed additional recreational facilities. As such, the City purchased the park site in 1998 and sought considerable input from the area's residents. This would lead to the future development of a nature center and various trails.

The existing park's name is also associated with Italian immigrant Francis "Frank" Losco, who started a wine-operation in the Mandarin area in the 1880s'. The Losco family had a seven-acre scuppernong grape vineyard and produced up to 40 barrels of wine per year.

2. Any historical significance of the existing public building, public facility or public park:

The 210-acre park property was acquired by the City in January of 1998 with four adjacent parcels. Therefore, it is the opinion of the Planning and Development Department that the public park (Losco Regional Park) does not have any historical significance.

3. Whether there are any historical structures or landmarks on the subject property:

No historical structures or landmarks are located on the subject property.

4. Whether the existing building name, name of public facility, or public park name is part of a common theme of names throughout the community where such building, park or facility is located:

With the exception of Losco Road to the south, the existing name of the park is not part of a common theme of names throughout the community where such building, park or facility is located.

5. The age of the public building, public facility or public park name:

The existing public park name, Losco Regional Park, occurred in 2003 via Resolution 2003-1000, with the City acquiring the park in 1998. Prior to its renaming, the park was briefly named Losco Road Regional Park (Resolution 2003-817) and originally named Southeast Regional Park North.

6. Whether there are other public buildings, public facilities, or public parks with the same or similar name:

There are no other public buildings, public facilities, or public parks with the same or similar name.

7. Whether the person (or persons) to whom the public building, public facility or public park is proposed to be named or renamed has contributed to the development of, or is a reminder of the history and/or culture of the City, State, or Nation:

Born and raised in Philadelphia, Richard H. “Dick” Kravitz, earned his bachelor’s degree in education from Temple University and his master’s degree in sports administration from Ohio University. After moving to Jacksonville in 1963 and working for various sports organizations, Mr. Kravitz’s career in public service began in 1979 when he was appointed to the Jacksonville Sports and Entertainment Commission by Mayor Jake Godbold. In 1987, Mr. Kravitz was elected to the Jacksonville City Council, where he served three successful terms.

As a council member, Mr. Kravitz would contribute to the development of several park improvements in the Mandarin community—including the acquisition of new parks and new recreational amenities at existing parks.

PDD Recommendation:

It is the opinion of the Planning and Development Department (PDD) that the proposed renaming of Losco Regional Park as the “Richard H. ‘Dick’ Kravitz Regional Park” will be named after a person that has made significant contributions to the development of the city as outlined in Ordinance 2025-16.

JHPC Advisory Recommendation:

Based on the best evidence available, the Jacksonville Historic Preservation Commission (JHPC) recommended approval the proposed renaming of Losco Regional Park as the “Richard H. ‘Dick’ Kravitz Regional Park”.

The Commissioners also had a discussion about wanting the park to incorporate some type of dedication to the Losco family—potentially through a plaque, marker, or monument.



Aerial view of park



Entrance to the park