



<b>FROM</b>	NAME & TITLE	CHRIS RYER, DIRECTOR 	CITY of BALTIMORE  <b>MEMO</b>	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING 8 <sup>TH</sup> FLOOR, 417 EAST FAYETTE STREET		
	SUBJECT	City Council Bill #21-0008 / City Property – Naming the playground in Northwest Park, located at 2027 West Rogers Avenue, to be the Rikki Spector Playground		

**TO**

The Honorable President and  
Members of the City Council  
City Hall, Room 400  
100 North Holliday Street

DATE: February 5, 2021

At its regular meeting of February 4, 2021, the Planning Commission considered City Council Bill #21-0008, for the purpose of naming the playground in Northwest Park, located at 2027 West Rogers Avenue and approximately 100 feet from the street, to be the Rikki Spector Playground.

In its consideration of this Bill, the Planning Commission reviewed the attached staff report, which recommended amendment and approval of City Council Bill #21-0008, and adopted the following resolution; eight members being present (eight in favor):

RESOLVED, That the Planning Commission concurs with the recommendation of its departmental staff, and recommends that City Council Bill #21-0008 be amended passed by the City Council, with the following amendments:

- That the address of the park is corrected to 2021 West Rogers Avenue; and
- That the name is corrected to the Rochelle “Rikki” Spector playground.

If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Eric Tiso, Division Chief, Land Use and Urban Design Division at 410-396-8358.

CR/ewt

attachment

- cc: Ms. Natasha Mehu, Mayor’s Office  
 Ms. Nina Themelis, Mayor’s Office  
 The Honorable Eric Costello, Council Rep. to Planning Commission  
 The Honorable Isaac "Yitzy" Schleifer, 5<sup>th</sup> District  
 Mr. Matthew Stegman, City Council President’s Office  
 Ms. Nikki Thompson, City Council President’s Office  
 Mr. Colin Tarbert, BDC  
 Ms. Kathleen Byrne, BMZA  
 Mr. Geoffrey Veale, Zoning Administration  
 Ms. Stephanie Murdock, DHCD  
 Ms. Elena DiPietro, Law Dept.  
 Mr. Francis Burnszynski, PABC  
 Mr. Liam Davis, DOT  
 Ms. Natawna Austin, Council Services  
 Mr. Dominic McAlily, Council Services



Brandon M. Scott  
Mayor

## PLANNING COMMISSION

Sean D. Davis, Chairman

### STAFF REPORT



Chris Ryer  
Director

February 4, 2021

**REQUEST:** City Council Bill #21-0008/ City Property - Naming the Playground in Northwest Park, Located at 2027 West Rogers Avenue, to be the Rikki Spector Playground:

For the purpose of naming the playground in Northwest Park, located at 2027 West Rogers Avenue and approximately 100 feet from the street, to be the Rikki Spector Playground.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Amend to correct Councilwoman's name and the address of the Park and approve.

**STAFF:** Laurie Feinberg

**INTRODUCED BY:** Councilmembers Schleifer and Middleton

**OWNER:** State of Maryland / Mayor and City Council of Baltimore

#### **SITE/GENERAL AREA**

Site Conditions: The playground is part of the larger, 45-acre, Northwest Park located at 2021 West Rogers Avenue. The Park property is owned by the State of Maryland with a 99 year lease to the City.

General Area: The park is located in the Mount Washington Community and it includes a major section of the Jones Falls hiking and hiking trail.

#### **HISTORY**

There are no previous legislative or Planning Commission actions regarding this site.

#### **ANALYSIS**

The playground is a new 3,000 sqft playground, completed in May of 2016. It includes two play structures and swings atop rubber safety surfacing. A shade sail, benches, and accessible walkway were also integral to the project. It is located toward the street side of the 45 acres park and is along the newly completed Jones Falls Trail.

It was designed and constructed under the direction of Recreation and Parks and funded with \$258,000 in Pimlico Local Impact Aid.

Councilwoman Rochelle "Rikki" Spector was first appointed to the Baltimore City Council in June of 1977 to fill the term of her husband, who vacated the seat after accepting a judicial appointment. Two years later, Rikki earned the confidence of her constituents and was elected to the seat in her own right. She was subsequently re-elected to represent her Northwest Baltimore

district a record-setting nine more times. Her nearly forty years in office earned Rikki the distinction of being the longest locally elected official in the State of Maryland, as well as the title of “Dean of the Baltimore City Council.”

During her four decades in office, Rikki was an ally, friend, and counselor of every Mayor from William Donald Schaefer to Stephanie Rawlings-Blake. Her time in office focused on several areas: always being accessible to her constituents and responsive to their issues; standing strongly with the city’s small business community in order to create jobs and economic opportunity; and advocating for local government by protecting against unfunded state and federal mandates.

Rikki served for many years as Baltimore’s representative to the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo). In this capacity, she defended the city’s autonomy and fought against fiscal burdens created by costs shifted down from the state and federal government. She was such a staple within the local government community that she earned another moniker as the “Grande Dame of MACo.” In 2016, MACo honored her with a lifetime achievement award at their winter conference.

In addition, Councilwoman Spector served as the City Council representative to the Planning Commission from 1997 to February 2010 and again from January 2012 to her retirement in 2016.

In December 2016, Rikki decided to retire from the City Council. In retirement she continues to assist her former constituents when she can, counseling elected officials, speaking to groups, and pursuing her latest passion of reforming the juvenile justice system. She is an active Board member of UEmpower of Maryland, a non-profit dedicated to helping the youth of southwest Baltimore with job and life skills focusing of food related industries.

Councilwoman Spector worked hard to get the playground at Northwest Park completed so it is very appropriate to honor her with the naming.

**Amendment:** Councilwoman Spector was known to colleagues and friends as Rikki but her given name is Rochelle. In her official capacity, she used Rochelle “Rikki” Spector. The bill should be amended to reflect her name properly. In addition, the bill has the incorrect address for the park, it should be 2021 West Rogers Avenue not 2027.

Notification: The Mount Washington Community Association and numerous individuals involved in the playground.



**Chris Ryer**  
**Director**