



City of Bristol

NEWS RELEASE

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BRISTOL AND BURLINGTON TO PETITION FEDERAL GOVERNMENT FOR NAME CHANGE

(BRISTOL, CT)--The Burlington Board of Selectmen and Bristol City Council announced on Wednesday that each body unanimously endorsed an effort to rename "Negro Hill Brook" to "Pigeon Hill Brook."

The effort to rename the brook originated when the two municipalities began cooperating with the Environmental Learning Center of Connecticut to secure an open space grant from the State with the goal of acquiring land off of Shrub Road to expand the nature preserve.

The brook, which originates near Gilbert Lane in Burlington and flows Southeast into Bristol, was originally named "Negro Hill" decades ago. The stream flows through Seymour Park and passes Pigeon Hill until it runs into the Copper Mine Brook. Pigeon Hill is part of the 70-acre Barnes Nature Center, and was once a major habitat for thousands of passenger pigeons. To the Mayor and First Selectman, renaming the stream "Pigeon Hill Brook" seemed like an obvious choice.

"We believe Pigeon Hill Brook would be a better name. Pigeon Hill Brook would be complimentary to the adjacent Pigeon Hill. As the stream connects CT DEEP's Sessions Woods Wildlife Management Area, The Barnes Nature Center, Seymour Park, and Water Department Watershed, the name of Pigeon Hill Brook ties all these places to Pigeon Hill," said Mayor Ellen Zoppo-Sassu.

"Around the same time we were having this discussion about Open Space, I was approached by a resident who had seen the referenced name and was concerned," said First Selectman Shafer. "We started the process to chart a name change in conjunction with Bristol because the town of Burlington is an inclusive place that welcomes all people and we want that reflected."

Renaming a body of water requires approval from the United States Board on Geographic Names, an office under the US Department of the Interior. The Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments (NVCOG) recently wrote a letter to this board encouraging them to approve the name change. "The NVCOG commends this action of eliminating an insensitive name and replacing it with one that better reflects the scenic and historic nature of the brook's geographic setting," said Rick Dunne, executive director of NVCOG. "I strongly encourage the U.S. Board on Geographic Names to approve the City of Bristol and Town of Burlington's request to rename Negro Hill Brook to Pigeon Hill Brook."

As of today, the Board of Geographic Names had not approved the request, yet both municipalities strongly suspect the name will be approved. "The fact that our City Council and the Burlington Board of Selectmen both unanimously approved the name change speaks volumes to the merits of the proposal," said Mayor Zoppo-Sassu.

First Selectman Shafer agreed, noting that "when neighboring towns work across lines to create solid policies or create changes, it adds strength to the request."

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