



# City of Grand Island

Tuesday, November 12, 2019

Council Session

## Item G-27

**#2019-346 -Approving Request to Place Historical Marker in  
Ryder Park to Commemorate the 1980 Tornados**

Staff Contact: Todd McCoy, Parks & Recreation Director

# Council Agenda Memo

**From:** Todd McCoy, Parks and Recreation Director

**Meeting:** November 12, 2019

**Subject:** Consider Request to Place Historical Marker to Commemorate the 1980 Tornadoes

**Presenter(s):** Todd McCoy, Parks and Recreation Director

## Background

Seven tornadoes struck Grand Island and surrounding areas on the night of June 3, 1980. They were part of a supercell thunderstorm complex that produced eighteen tornadoes from Nebraska to West Virginia. The storm killed five people and injured about 200. It destroyed hundreds of homes and many businesses. Total damage was estimated at over \$200 million. The disaster inspired a book and a made-for-television movie entitled 'Night of the Twisters', as well as tornado and engineering research. The debris from the devastation was collected at Ryder Park and nicknamed Tornado Hill.

## Discussion

Stephanie Crosby with Livingston-Sondermann Funeral Home and Cremation Services has requested permission to have a historical marker placed near Tornado Hill in Ryder Park to commemorate the Grand Island June 3, 1980 tornadoes. Stephanie has received approval from History Nebraska for the marker and will raise \$6,000 for the purchase.

Below is an example of the proposed marker and text.



### ***Tornado Hill***

*Seven tornadoes struck Grand Island and surrounding areas on the night of June 3, 1980. They were part of a supercell thunderstorm complex that produced eighteen tornadoes from Nebraska to West Virginia. The complex approached Grand Island from the north during the early evening. It moved slowly south-southeast through the city at around eight miles per hour. All seven tornadoes struck within a three-hour period. One reached F4 intensity,*

*leaving a six-mile path of destruction more than a half-mile wide. Two others tornadoes were rated F3.*

*The storm killed five people and injured about 200. It destroyed hundreds of homes and many businesses. Total damage was estimated at over \$200 million. The event was also unusual for producing three tornadoes that rotated clockwise. This is rare in the northern hemisphere, where over 99 percent of tornadoes rotate counter-clockwise. The disaster inspired a book and a made-for-television movie entitled 'Night of the Twisters', as well as tornado and engineering research. The debris from the devastation was collected here, creating a park for the people of Grand Island.*

### **Alternatives**

It appears that the Council has the following alternatives concerning the issue at hand. The Council may:

1. Move to approve
2. Refer the issue to a Committee
3. Postpone the issue to future date
4. Take no action on the issue

### **Recommendation**

City Administration recommends that the City Council approve the request to have a historical marker placed near Tornado Hill in Ryder Park to commemorate the Grand Island June 3, 1980 tornados.

### **Sample Motion**

Move to approve the request to place a historical marker in Ryder Park to commemorate the Grand Island June 3, 1980 tornados.

## **Tornado Hill**

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**Livingston-Sondermann Funeral  
Home and Cremation Services**

**Nebraska State Historical Society, 2019**

**(176 words)**

# Marker Installation Instructions

## Single-Post Marker

1. Dig a hole 36" deep with a post-hole digger.
2. Plumb post in the hole.
3. Fill hole with dirt (can use concrete if sandy soil) to within 6" of top.
4. Fill top of hole with concrete (secrete works fine). You might cut the bottom out of a 5 gallon plastic bucket to use as a form. Slip the bucket down over the post so it is resting on the ground at the top of the hole. When you fill the top of the hole with concrete, bring the concrete up about 4 – 6" above the ground. When hardened, cut the plastic form away and you have a nice curb around the post which will deter mowers and trimmers from tearing the post.
5. Set marker on post and secure with the six (6) allen head setscrews provided with the marker.

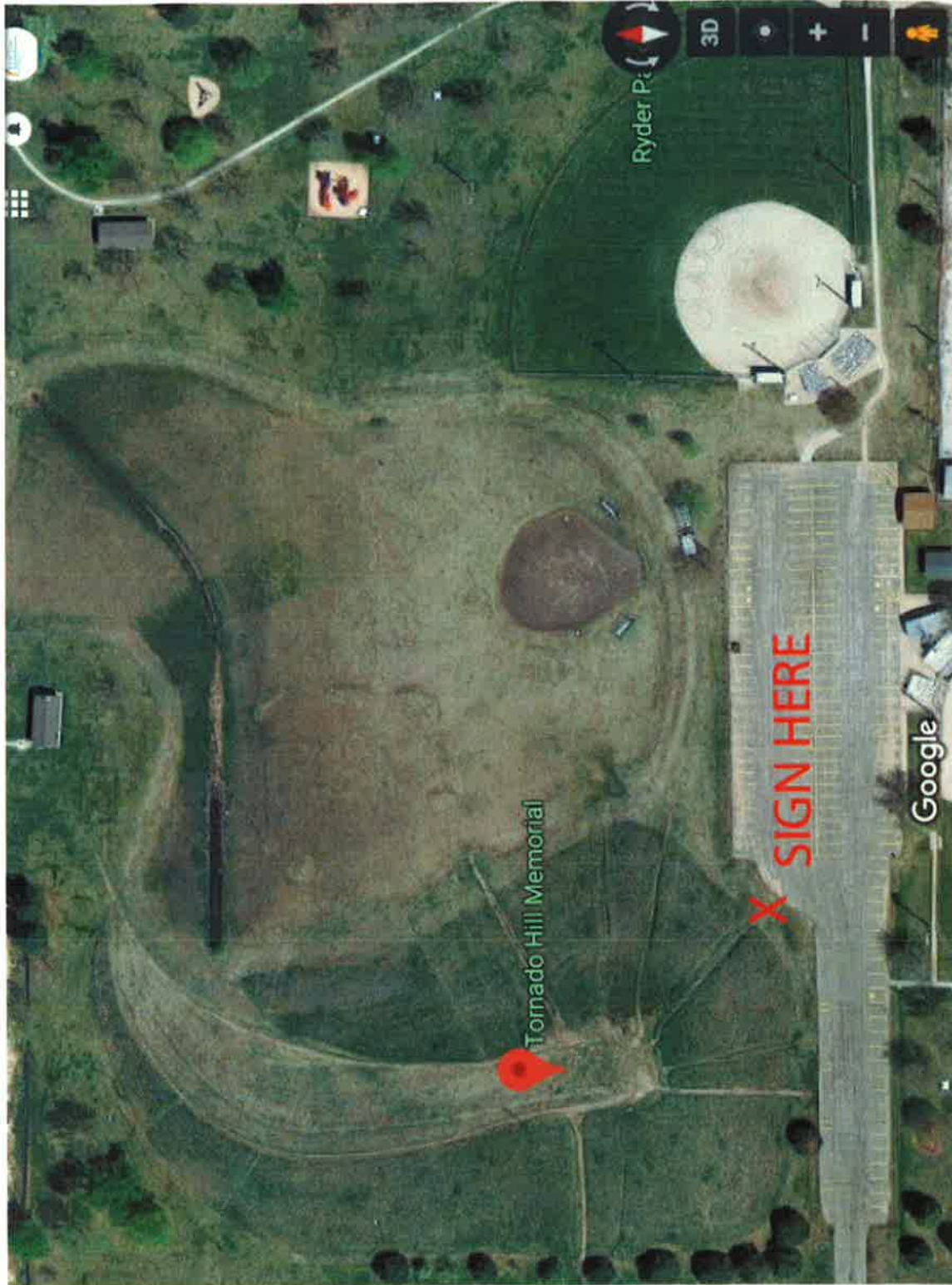
## Two-Post Marker

Each historical marker contains 4 pins (2 on each side of the marker) that are sized and spaced to fit in matching holes in each of the two posts. Nothing else holds the marker in place.

The posts are designed for approximately 36" insertion in the ground. The posts can be set in soil or concrete, but concrete is preferred as it makes the marker more stable. There is no need to pour a slab of concrete, just place some concrete in each hole. If there is ever a need to remove the marker the pins can be cut and replacement pins mounted on brackets can be provided when the marker is reinstalled.

The first step is the installation of one post. Dig a hole approximately 10" – 12" in diameter and 36" deep. Set the first post in the hole making sure the holes in the post are on the marker side of the post. Plumb and brace the post then fill the hole with concrete. The concrete should be permitted to set before proceeding.

Dig a second hole approximately 64" from the first one. Place the second post in the hole and let it lean away from the first post. Place the marker between the posts and insert the pins into the holes in the first post. While holding the marker in place, straighten the second post and insert the pins of the marker into the holes in the second post. Fill the hole with concrete. Again the post and marker will have to be braced until the concrete sets.



Lat Long (40.918407, -98.373216)  
GPS Coordinates 40° 55' 6.2652" N 98° 22' 23.5776" W

RESOLUTION 2019-346

WHEREAS, on June 3, 1980 seven (7) tornados struck the City of Grand Island;  
and

WHEREAS, Stephanie Crosby with Livingston-Sondermann Funeral Home and Cremation Services has requested permission to have a historical marker placed near Tornado Hill in Ryder Park to commemorate the Grand Island June 3, 1980 tornados and offered to raise \$6,000 of funding to purchase the marker.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GRAND ISLAND, NEBRASKA, that the Mayor be, and hereby is, authorized and directed to approve the request to have a historical marker placed near Tornado Hill in Ryder Park to commemorate the Grand Island June 3, 1980 tornados.

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Adopted by the City Council of the City of Grand Island, Nebraska, November 12, 2019.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Roger G. Steele, Mayor

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
RaNae Edwards, City Clerk

Approved as to Form	▣ _____
November 8, 2019	▣ City Attorney