

**City Council – Action Request Form**

**Date:** June 15, 2021

**To:** Mayor, Mayor Pro Tempore, and Members of the City Council

**From:** Damon Dequenne, Assistant City Manager  
William L. Royston Recreation Director

**Council Action Requested:**

Resolution Approving Naming of the Footbridge Across Salem Creek at the end of Liberia Street in Honor of Wade Bitting (East Ward)

**Strategic Focus Area:** Livable Neighborhoods

**Strategic Objective:** No

**Strategic Plan Action Item:** No

**Key Work Item:** No



**Summary of Information:**

The Recreation and Parks Commission, at its June 1, 2021 meeting, received a request from Council Member Annette Scippio, East Ward, to name the footbridge across Salem Creek at the end of Liberia Street in honor of Mr. Wade Bitting.

In the 1930’s, Mr. Bitting approached Salem Ward Alderman J. Wilbur Crews about the need for a footbridge after a woman fell and broke her leg trying to get across the creek from the Happy Hill neighborhood to Salem and downtown.

Mr. Bitting was an advocate for his community. Langdon E. Opperman wrote in her report, *Winston-Salem’s African-American Neighborhoods: 1870-1950*, “The creek and all the low area was excessively overgrown, and the neighborhood was frequently flooded. Residents had no screens in windows and so slept under the constant attack of mosquitoes and rats from the creek. Wade Bitting organized the men of his church and drew up a petition to have the undergrowth cleared and a playground made for children, which they presented to the Mayor, R.J. Reynolds, Jr.”

**Committee Action:**

|                  |                      |                |                 |
|------------------|----------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| <b>Committee</b> | <u>CDHGG 6/15/21</u> | <b>Action</b>  | <u>Approval</u> |
| <b>For</b>       | <u>Unanimous</u>     | <b>Against</b> | <u></u>         |

**Remarks:**

Additionally, Mr. Bitting was instrumental in having street names put up and numbers on the houses which lead to mail being delivered to the houses instead of residents having to walk to the Salem post office for their mail.

This tribute is a lasting testament to one man's efforts to improve the condition of his neighborhood. Although it's been more than seventy years, Mr. Bitting's community engagement and social action is a shining example for others to follow.

As required by the City Council adopted policy on naming of City-owned buildings and facilities, the advisory body overseeing the facility, in this case the Recreation and Parks Commission supports a resolution recommending the naming of the Footbridge across Salem Creek at the end of Liberia Street be named in honor of Mr. Wade Bitting.