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2017 RES-151
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROCESS TO INFORM APPROACH
TO HONOR PRESIDENT OBAMA

Communities across the country have taken varied approaches to honor President Barack Obama, the nation's first African-American president. The President championed education, criminal justice and immigration reform, and – of course – access to health care, among other issues. There are 14 public schools across the country named for President Obama, in addition to a number of scholarship funds. There are streets bearing his name in cities in California, Florida, Illinois, Indiana and Missouri. Additionally, Barack Obama has been commemorated in the scientific names of at least 11 species, the most of any president.

Dane County is interested in recognizing the historic event of Barack Obama's presidency. President Obama visited Dane County several times and his priorities and values align closely with those of the residents of the county.

A resolution currently being considered by the Dane County Board suggests naming the City County Building for Obama. The Madison Common Council is considering the same topic. Dane County residents rightly take pride in President Obama's accomplishments and they deserve the opportunity to weigh in on the best way to honor him locally.

In order to gauge public sentiment, an online survey, hosted by POLCO, is now available asking residents whether they favor naming the City County Building for President Obama. The survey further allows residents to indicate whether any of the following should be named for President Obama: 1) a government building, 2) a public park, 3) a public school, 4) a public street or highway, 5) a topographical feature (such as a lake), or 6) other.

County meetings are open to the public and testimony on items on the agenda is encouraged. The City County Liaison Committee and the Public Works and Transportation Committee will be considering whether to name the City County Building for President Obama, and public input is welcome.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Dane County Board of Supervisors will gather public input on how best to honor President Barack Obama.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Dane County Board of Supervisors encourages coordination among local governments as they seek appropriate approaches to commemorate the nation's first African-American president.