



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 38309, **Version:** 1

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### **Fiscal Note**

No appropriation required.

### **Title**

Celebrating Nakoma on its centennial and saluting all who created, nurtured and maintained it through these past hundred years and beyond.

### **Body**

WHEREAS, Native Americans had long enjoyed the western banks of Lake Wingra for a summer encampment; and,

WHEREAS, European settlement after 1836 developed the rolling landscape into private farmlands in the new Town of Madison; and,

WHEREAS, the University Land Co. opened its Gorham Heights plat on farmland overlooking the historic Spring Tavern in 1911, with little success; and,

WHEREAS, the Madison Realty Co. bought the failed plat and several adjoining farms and in July 1915 offered the first 290 lots for sale in its new 89-acre development; and,

WHEREAS, the MRC called the plat "Nakoma," a Chippewa word said to mean, "I do as I promise;" and,

WHEREAS, the MRC honored the land's legacy by naming the Nakoma's streets after Native American tribes and nations; and,

WHEREAS, the heart of the Nakoma neighborhood is the Nakoma Historic District, entered in the National register of Historic Places in February, 1998 in recognition of its architectural integrity and social significance; and,

WHEREAS, the Nakoma Historic District contains the finest collection of Period Revival residential architecture found in Madison, including Colonial, Dutch Colonial, Tudor, French Provincial and Norman Revival, along with a sampling of Prairie, Bungalow and Craftsman style residences; and,

WHEREAS, the board of the Madison Realty Co. embodied the classic Madison business combination of public service, university, law and finance by including such leaders as Circuit Court Judge and future Supreme Court Justice E. Ray Stevens, Savings Loan and Trust Co. secretary Edward F. Riley, UW Dean of Agriculture Henry L. Russell, Bank of Wisconsin president Joseph M. Boyd, and Alfred E. Rogers, law partner of Sen. Robert M. Follette, and others; and,

WHEREAS, Nakoma's general concept plan was designed by acclaimed Chicago landscape architect Ossian C. Simonds, who earlier designed the Henry Vilas Park and Zoo, Tenney Park, the Yahara River Parkway, and Brittingham Park, for the Madison Park and Pleasure Drive Association, and also the Highlands and College Park (Shorewood Hills) developments; and,

WHEREAS, Prof. Leonard S. Smith, also an MRC director, surveyed and platted Nakoma based on

Simmonds's design, which Rogers said was to "leave the land as nature made it, unmarred by the cutting through of streets, so common in the conventional city plat;" and,

WHEREAS, the original plat and several additions and replats created between 1918 and 1947 respect the natural topography through a graceful pattern of curvilinear streets; and,

WHEREAS, because the Town of Madison did not levy taxes sufficient to pay for the new development's infrastructure, the MRC itself provided streets, water, gas, electricity, sidewalks, shade trees and transportation via a dedicate jitney bus to and from downtown; and,

WHEREAS, in 1917 the MRC built a \$15,000 grade school in the Prairie School style on the site of a one-room frame schoolhouse from 1856, which served the area until the Madison Metropolitan School District built the Henry David Thoreau School in 1971 on the same location, giving Nakoma Madison's only parcel used continuously for public education; and,

WHEREAS, In 1920, MRC sales manager Paul E. Stark incorporated the Nakoma Homes Company, which sought to ensure a permanent, high-quality residential community through restrictive covenants regulating building style, setbacks and standards; and,

WHEREAS, in addition to providing police and fire protection, street lights and maintenance, the NHC developed a duck pond in the waters across from the Spring Tavern, featuring a stone wall attributed to Frank Lloyd Wright; and,

WHEREAS, in May, 1920, residents formed the Nakoma District Welfare League, the purpose of which was "the uplifting of humanity, the relieving of distress, the lending of a helping hand to those in need, be they rich or poor, the giving of ourselves to do for others; and,

WHEREAS, the Nakoma League continues an ambitious program of charitable and social activities; and,

WHEREAS, the full Nakoma plat was annexed to the City of Madison in July, 1931,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of Madison celebrates Nakoma on its centennial and salutes all who created, nurtured and maintained it through these past hundred years and beyond.