

Regarding the proposal to name 809 N. Broadway for Greg Zyszkiewicz

Greg Zyszkiewicz was by all accounts a dedicated, skilled, and much-loved city employee. The quality of his service is beyond question. The question that must be asked, however, is whether we'd be hearing this request if Mr. Zyszkiewicz had served until retirement age and died of natural causes.

The answer is very clearly "No." Without in the least minimizing his service, the effect of this renaming would be to memorialize a victim of random violence.

In my opinion, that's not sound public policy, and it's not consistent with the ordinance under which we operate. That ordinance specifically prohibits renaming streets for victims of crime, and there's no logical reason the same restriction wouldn't apply to public buildings.

The police and fire departments, despite their many losses, don't remember their fallen heroes by naming buildings after them, and I believe the same policy should apply across city government. What would we do if, God forbid, senseless violence took another city employee as deserving as Mr. Zyszkiewicz? Our public facilities could in time become a memorial park.

In August a garden in Mr. Zyszkiewicz's honor was dedicated on the grounds of the Lake Tower, and I'm sure other appropriate remembrances will follow.

I do not believe renaming 809 Broadway should be one of them. With gratitude for his service and sympathy for his family, I will reluctantly vote "No" on this proposal.

John Gurda
Sept. 12, 2017