

Minutes – Lee Highway Alliance (LHA) Working Group on Renaming Lee Highway (Second Meeting October 21, 2020 (virtual meeting via Zoom)

Draft Minutes prepared by Paul Holland (LHA CAC, Steering Committee, and Working Group Member)

Working Group Members Present (24) (alphabetical order/*also Steering Comm.)

1. Grace Abi-Najm Shea, Co-owner, Lebanese Taverna
2. Bill Braswell, LHA CAC & Tara Leeway Heights CA
3. Ginger Brown, LHA Co-founder & Executive Director*
4. Mike Cantwell, LHA CAC, President, Yorktown CA, Civic Federation Board
5. Sandi Chesrown, LHA Co-founder & VP, Vice Chair Plan Lee Highway, VP, Waverly Hills CA*
6. Lynn Coates, Arlington Artists Alliance, Arlington Commission for the Arts
7. Elaine Furlow, LHA Board & Chair, LHA Communications Committee*
8. Saundra Green, LHA CAC & Calloway Church
9. Lauren Harris, Owner, Little Ambassadors Day Care
10. Michael Hogan, LHA CAC, Old Dominion CA
11. Paul Holland, LHA CAC, Chair Plan Lee Highway, VP Waverly Hills CA*
12. Wilma Jones, LHA CAC, President, John M. Langston CA
13. Jeff Joseph, Board Member, R.E.A.D., President of SHA
14. Minneh Kane, Member, Arlington Engagement Brigade and Woodmont Civic Association
15. Diane Kelly, LHA CAC & President, Waycroft Woodlawn CA
16. Ben Keeney, LHA CAC & North Highlands CA
17. Anika Kwinana, Chair, Arl. Co. Commission for the Arts, Founder/Steering Committee, Arlington for Justice, Black Lives Matter
18. Annie Moyer, Co-owner, Sun Moon Yoga Studio, Cherrydale
19. Maia Potok-Holmes, LHA Communications Manager*
20. Richard Price, LHA CAC Woodmont CA, LHA Board, Arl Co. Transportation Commission
21. Andrew Rude, LHA CAC & Lyon Village CA
22. Julius Spain, President & Regional VP, Arlington Branch NAACP
23. Jim Todd, LHA CAC & President, Cherrydale CA
24. Matt Weinstein, LHA Board, Chair of Working Group

Working Group Members Absent (1)

1. Tom Wolfe, LHA CAC, Leeway Overlee CA, LHA Board

Advisory Group Members Present (2)

1. Maura Seikaly, Institutional Advisory Group
2. Desiree Davis Stolar, Branding Advisory Group

Welcome & Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Matt Weinstein, Chair, at 6:32 pm. After welcoming the participants, Matt briefly reviewed the meeting agenda.

The meeting minutes from September 30 were adopted by the Working Group.

Matt Weinstein reminded the members of the Working Group of the continued efforts at transparency for the renaming process.

Facts and Hopes

Sandi Chesrown provided brief remarks as a Hope and a Fact. First, the hope: we are looking at a once in a lifetime opportunity to rename and rebrand Lee Highway. It is imperative that we remember there are 14 well established communities along the corridor. The new name should reflect their needs and link them together as our Main Street - placemaking with a shared identity.

Second, the fact: our process is in collaboration with the County. To make the County Board's approach to the Commonwealth Transportation Board easier, they have requested that our name could be used by multiple jurisdictions. The reality is that Falls Church City and Fairfax City have already chosen their names, so the only remaining jurisdiction is Fairfax County. Fairfax City's new name for Lee Highway - Fairfax Boulevard - will work well for Fairfax County, but it will not work well for Arlington. Falls Church City's name -Washington Street - does not work either as we already have Washington Boulevard. We need to encourage the County Board to keep local placemaking in mind with a new name that best fits Arlington and the Lee Highway corridor.

Advisory Groups Update – Branding and Institutional

Desiree Davis Stolar provided an overview of the work of the Branding Advisory Group. The group focused on finding a name that highlights or better informs local history, place, or flora/fauna. Wanted a name that was approachable and inclusive. Something that is easier and accessible to both long-term Arlingtonians and new arrivals. There are people and names that lend themselves to telling a good story and a good way to brand the corridor. Finally, the Branding Advisory Group encouraged the Working Group to not shy away from names that only locals would know/understand. Many of the names that were selected by the Branding Advisory Group help achieve these goals.

Maura Seikaly provided an overview of the Institutional Advisory Group. The Group included a variety of members from schools, churches, and civil groups near the Lee Highway corridor. Members of the working group will engage with their communities, including faith communities, Black Parents of Arlington, and Swanson and Hamm Middle Schools, to increase participation in the final 20-name survey. This will expand opportunities to provide feedback.

Question and Answer

Jim Todd expressed a couple of concerns about two names: heritage and progress. Jim said Heritage is too tied to the lost cause of the Confederacy. Progress is too tied to the Southern boosterism of the 1950s. Jim recommended that we drop those names. Otherwise, they are very good names and congratulations on the work of the naming subcommittee. The Chair said that we will have an opportunity to discuss further after the questions section.

Subcommittee Meeting

Twelve working group members participated in the subcommittee meeting on Saturday, September 17. 39 names were approved to remain on the list, five names must be discussed further, and 142 names were removed from the list.

The subcommittee interpreted “Racial Equity” criteria to mean “does the name further increase awareness.”

Matt Weinstein reviewed two criteria in question: should we use a name similar to an existing street? Should we use the name of a person who has not been dead for five year?

Discussion

Jim Todd suggested that we do include Joan Mulholland, even though she is still living. He pushed back against the notion that someone needs to be deceased or long deceased.

Mike Cantwell thanked the subcommittee for their time and effort. Mike encouraged the Working Group not to recommend naming the road for a person and provided a number of examples. We “don’t know what we don’t know” about these as individuals. Mike cited Discovery Elementary School as a good outcome of a naming process.

Lynn Coates stated that we should remove the names that are similar to existing names. Such names could make the process harder.

Annie Moyer agreed with Lauren Coates about removing the names that are existing streets.

Bill Braswell expressed a desire to include names of people who have been deceased less than five years.

Minneh Kane agreed with Lynn Coates and her comments on removing the existing names of Arlington streets from consideration.

Sandra Green asked about the list of six names that would be affected by this action and confirmed that only Joan Mulholland would remain on the list.

Jeff Joseph asked about the Plan Lee Highway process and opportunities for honoring people with other public facilities. Sandra Chesrown provided a brief update and potential opportunities for honoring folks through the plan.

Matt Weinstein moved and was seconded by Richard Price the motion to not use names that are close to existing names for Arlington streets. The motion passed.

Minneh Kane asked if we include living or recently deceased individuals. Matt W responded that the subcommittee discussed this during their meeting on Saturday, October 17. Lauren Harris concurred with the comments from Matt W.

Mike Hogan asked about the deceased five-year rule.

Matt Weinstein moved, and Sandi Chesrown seconded, not using names of individuals who are recently deceased or still living. This was supported by the working group.

Review of Proposed Names

Edward Morton: Wilma Jones provided a summary of the background of Edward Morton's significant contributions to Arlington and Lee Highway.

Gwendolyn Greene: Ginger Brown informed the working group that Ms. Greene was a Maryland State Senator and Howard University Student. She participated in the Lee Highway lunch counter sit-ins.

James Browne: Wilma Jones provided background on Reverend James Brown and his participation in the lunch counter protests and the NAACP during the late 1950s.

John Reed: limited discussion on this name.

John M. Langston: Sandra Green provided a summary of John M. Langston's significant contributions to Arlington and Virginia. Maura Seikaly provided a summary of the Institutional Advisory Group's position that Mr. Langston already has a facility named for him. Grace Shea agreed.

Leonard "Doc" Muse: Sandra Green provided background on Doc Muse and his work in Green Valley. There was a question of whether there was a park that will be named for Doc Muse. Mike Hogan asked about the Branding Criteria. Desiree responded that "Muse" offered the friendliness of the name "Doc" and his impactful access to white and Black Arlingtonians. Lauren Coates stated the subcommittee felt the name "Doc Muse" did not brand the corridor because there wasn't a direct connection to the corridor. Minneh Kane highlighted the Main Street connection and local opportunities for learning about the community. Grace Shea stated that "Branding" should be considered.

Necostin: Ginger Brown provided a summary of the Necostin tribe's local impact. Maia added the acknowledgement of who was here before us.

John Glenn: Paul Holland provided a summary of John Glenn's life in Arlington. Mike Hogan provided additional details on his life and impact in Arlington and beyond.

Arcova: This was supported because it was a unique name. Members of the working group were concerned that it was too close to the existing Alcova name.

Cardinal: This name supports the environmental goals of Lee Highway.

Dogwood: Jim Todd said this is a native tree and is also close to extinct. He felt the name wasn't very original.

Halls Hill: Lauren Coates had a question for Sandra Green and Wilma Jones about this name. The subcommittee was conflicted about whether this was a name we want to move forward. Looking for guidance. Sandra Green stated that none of the other neighborhoods were suggested; if Halls Hill is on the list, why is this represented when others were not. Might cause other communities to question why their neighborhood names weren't included. Wilma felt that the Halls Hill name brings some unique perspectives. Grace Shea supported this. JD Spain expressed concerns about a negative connotation with a plantation owner. Diane Kelly shared that there were other names of communities that were considered. It was decided that all the names would remain on the list for the survey.

Jeff Joseph asked for a process clarification. Tonight, we will vote for the top 10 names. This will allow the Working Group to identify the top 20 names.

The working group voted to remove the names "Halls Hill" from the survey.

Equity: first name reviewed under the "Broader Ideals" category. Ginger Brown said it is something to which we aspire. JD Spain agreed with that.

Greenway: Sandi Chesrown said that Greenway is based on LHA guiding principles of conservation. Original name was "Green" "Way."

Innovation: Ginger Brown said this was a name that speaks for itself. Connections to technology and jobs. Jim said that Innovation was co-opted. Mike Hogan supported and pushed back against the idea of coopting the name.

Loving: Desiree Stolar provided the perspective of the Branding Advisory Group and their support of the name. Ginger Brown added the connection to the state slogan: Virginia is for Lovers. Minneh Kane recommended that the name should include the full names: Mildred and Richard Loving.

Progress: Elaine provided background on this name and its support from the LHA Guiding Principles document and the possible support from the Commonwealth Transportation Board. Both a recognition of limited past success and future opportunities for continued progress.

Abolitionist: Maia provided background on the support for the name. Minneh Kane said it is much more powerful to give the street the name of an abolitionist than to name the street "Abolitionist."

Inclusionary: Jim Todd suggested that we adjust the name to **Inclusive**. This name change was approved by the Working Group.

Main Street: Mike Cantwell spoke in support of this name. Diane Kelly said the name "Main Street" could be claimed by a number of other streets in the County. Looking for a branding linchpin.

Ella Baker: Diane said that there was limited discussion. Jim supported the idea of having a street named after a woman. There was a question about Ella Baker's connection to North Arlington or Virginia.

Monocans and Patowmans: These tribes have a larger Virginia footprint.

Maggie Walker: Desiree highlighted the larger Virginia connection. There is a need

Question and Answer:

Question about William Lee: we did consider Lee names, but the Working Group decided that we would not continue with the name Lee. It was adopted as part of our charge.

Question about Freedom: the word has been hijacked. Seen as too political. Freedom caucus is a connotation.

Question from Jeff Joseph about memorializing the work and research of the Working Group. There are opportunities including the relocation of the Arlington Black History Museum to the Lee Hwy Corridor. Perhaps also including the minutes and work of the Working Group at the Virginia History Room at Arlington Public Library.

Voting:

Ten-minute break to vote and tabulate the results. The working group reviewed the names that were identified as the top 20 names. The names include:

- Loving
- John M. Langston
- Leonard "Doc" Muse
- Necostin
- Edward T. Morton
- Unity
- Inclusive
- Maggie Walker
- Arcova
- Justice
- Community
- James E. Browne
- John Glenn
- Innovation
- Dogwood
- Equity
- Green Way
- Main Street
- Harmony
- Ella Baker

Way Ahead

Ginger Brown described the postcard that will be part of the community engagement. This includes civic associations, LHA, schools, Shop Local event, and other groups.

There will be a new LHA website that includes information on the names and will provide additional context. Want people in the community to learn about the names and also be informed when they vote.

Top 20 names will be circulated at the end of the meeting.

Homework is to encourage the community to complete the public poll and provide productive feedback before December 2.

Meeting Adjourned – 8:46 pm