

HISTORIC
HUNTLEY



Telephone (703) 971-6262
Fax (703) 971-3032
E-mail: leedist@fairfaxcounty.gov
Web site: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/lee

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
COUNTY OF FAIRFAX



6121 Franconia Road
Alexandria, VA 22310

Rodney L. Lusk
LEE DISTRICT SUPERVISOR

Board Matter

June 28, 2022

Mr. Chairman – You more than any one of us sitting here at this dais understand what the name “Lee District,” means to the residents who call it home.

For many it evokes visions of the old gravel pits, or the sound of footsteps on the boardwalk through Huntley Meadows, or pride in the history of the Laurel Grove School, or so many of the other things that makes our community what it is.

However, for many, the name Lee District evokes another set of imagery. Whether by design or by accident—and we may never

know by which—the name stands as a lasting monument to the most recognizable Confederate figure in history.

Mr. Chairman, no member of this Board, and I believe no member of this community, celebrates the name “Lee District” for that connotation. However, simply not celebrating the connection does not erase the echoes of slavery, racism, segregation, and discrimination that it invokes in many of our neighbors.

I know and understand that firsthand—through the hours of time I have spent in dialogue with our community—what the name means to them. In a series of three town hall meetings attended by hundreds of residents we discussed the history of our district, the etymology of the current name, what it represented to them, and what alternatives they would like to see considered.

Each of these townhalls was anchored by a presentation from a historian connected to the Virginia room, who opened our first

meeting with a detailed presentation on the history of Lee District, and its name. Then subsequently, based on feedback from the community, conducted research and made additional presentations on the history of the names Franconia, Douge, Huntley and Laurel Grove.

Through those discussions there were three consistent themes:

First, the civility of the conversation. This is not an easy topic to breach, and I was heartened by the respect with which members of our community expressed their views and heard the ideas of others.

Second, the overwhelming sentiment of those who chose to be part of this dialogue, supported changing the name of the district.

And finally, and equally as overwhelmingly, community members supported the name “Franconia” as the most suitable alternative.

The name Franconia is synonymous with our community. From the main thoroughfare of Franconia Road, to the Franconia-Springfield Metro, to the Franconia Governmental Center and the Franconia Museum—the name Franconia has always been central to our identity.

It's a name that makes sense, it's a name that our community has embraced, and it's a name that memorializes a place, not a person.

I recognize that this is a decision that everyone may not fully agree with, or be excited about. Those that disagree have had a seat at the table as we've discussed the possibility of this change over the last year and a half. After hearing every viewpoint, after considering every side, and after long contemplation, I have come to the personal conclusion that the name of the Lee District should be changed to the Franconia District—and I'm asking for my colleagues' concurrence today in making that change.

Towards that purpose Mr. Chairman, I'll make the following motions:

I move that the County Executive initiate the process of formally changing the name of the Lee District to the Franconia District, and report back to the Board on both any administrative changes necessary to facilitate that change, as well as a timeline for its adoption.

I also move that the County Executive assign the appropriate staff to undertake outreach to businesses, non-profits, community organizations and any other entity that may be impacted by the change, and recommend possible strategies for supporting them in that transition.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.