

Report of the 2022 Redistricting Advisory Committee

to the

Board of Supervisors of Fairfax County, Virginia



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Committee Membership & Workgroups

Paul Berry, Chairman (At-Large)
 Lisa Sales, At-Large
 Bill Bouie, At-Large
 Prashanth Rajan, Braddock District
 Jimmy Bierman, Dranesville District
 Richard Chew, Hunter Mill District
 Bryon Garner, Lee District
 Alis Wang, Mason District
 Hon. Gerry Hyland, Mount Vernon District
 Denver Supinger, Providence District
 Jenee Lindner, Springfield District
 Sam Walker, Sully District
 Tim Thompson, Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations
 Candace Butler, League of Women Voters
 Coretta Perkins, African American Community
 Rafael Marin, Hispanic Community
 Silvia Patton, Asian/Pacific Islander Community
 Saif Rahman, Arab-American Community
 Scott Price, Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce
 George Becerra, Northern Virginia Labor Federation

Workgroups

Districts & Precincts	RAC members assigned
Mt. Vernon & Mason (Gunston)	Gerry Hyland, Alis Wang, George Becerra, Jimmy Bierman, Lisa Sales, Saif Rahman, Paul Berry
Lee & Sully (Mosby, Hollin Hall, Ravensworth, Stuart, Van Dorn, Graham-Greenway, Oak Marr, Penderbrook, Lees Corner)	Bryon Garner, Sam Walker, Bill Bouie, Candace Butler, Richard Chew, Coretta Perkins
Springfield	Jenee Lindner, George Becerra, Scott Price, Denver Supinger, Prashanth Rajan, Tim Thompson

Chairman's Letter

Topics to discuss

- Committee formation/redesignation
 - One Fairfax
 - Outreach activities and public input
 - Evaluation Criteria
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- the RAC can only recommend to the Board of Supervisors that it rename a District or Precinct. *Very limited mandate.*
 - Given the limited mandate, the RAC started *with as broad a list of potential criteria* as possible—"consideration" does not mean that the RAC "will" recommend a name change.

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Evaluation Criteria & Candidates

The following criteria were assembled by the members of the Redistricting Advisory Committee (RAC) to use when selecting magisterial district and precinct names to consider for the renaming process. The steps in which a name would be considered for discussion proceeded as follows:

- A committee member would make a motion to the full RAC to include a district or precinct name based on one or more of the criteria below
- If the motion was seconded, a discussion would follow and the motioning committee member would justify, if asked, how their candidate for renaming met the criteria
- When discussion was closed, the Chair called for a vote. If the motion passed, the candidate was added to the list of names to be evaluated.

Candidate selection criteria

1. Does the name violate the spirit or explicit meaning of the One Fairfax policy?
2. Is the name offensive to the community?
3. Is the name related to the Confederate past?
4. Is the name associated with segregation, Jim Crow, racism, discrimination, or slave ownership?
5. Is the name confusing to residents or is it geographically representative of the district?
6. Is the name of historical significance or is the name no longer reflective of life in that part of the county?
7. Does it help residents aspire to the best possible quality of life in the future?

Recommendations

Lee & Sully

Recommendation

Discussion centered on conceptual distinction between commemoration of Confederate names and associated properties and historical landmarks. Sub-committee members agree that the intent of the process conducted by the Redistricting Advisory Committee is not to erase history but to align the values of the community with the One Fairfax policy on accountability and racial and social equity.

After discussion with the public:

Sub-committee agrees that *commemoration*, which means a celebration in which a person or event is remembered, of Confederate names and associated properties does not reflect the values of our community today. Confederate commemorations began in the late 19th century and early 20th century as part of the rise of the “Lost Cause of the Confederacy.” Lost Cause proponents sought to alter narratives about the Civil War by denying the centrality of slavery. Moreover, Lost Cause proponents were part of efforts to counter the fight for civil rights and to enforce laws and practices that supported white supremacy. Commemorations occurred what is known as the Jim Crow era. The intent of the commemoration of names and properties associated with the Confederacy is to carry forward a dark part of our community’s history by mythologizing the historical narrative. For this reason, these commemorations – Confederate names attached to streets, highways, properties, precincts, and districts – cannot be recommended to continue within Fairfax County.

Sub-committee agrees the candidate names associated with a Confederate past and/or segregation, Jim Crow, racism, discrimination should be recommended to be changed by the Board of Supervisors. These names include Lee District, Sully District, Mosby Precinct, Ravensworth, Stuart, Van Dorn, Graham-Greenway, Oak Marr, Penderbrook, and Lee’s Corner.

Sub-committee acknowledges that historical data is inconclusive whether Lee District is named for Robert E. Lee or a family member. However, consideration should be given to a name change given the context of all the Confederate names that are in use within Fairfax County. To change some name but not all would be inconsistent.

Hollin Hall is not associated with the Confederacy. It was owned by George Mason and subsequently his son, Thomas Mason. The name is, in fact, associated with slave ownership, given the historical significance of Hollin Hall and given that it is not part of the Lost Cause commemoration of the Confederacy, this name should not be changed or removed.

Mount Vernon & Mason

Recommendation: The Mason and Mount Vernon Subcommittee of the RAC recommends that the full committee neither recommend renaming Mason nor Mount Vernon.

- Mason and Mount Vernon were both part of the initial list of consideration. Consideration was due to the association of both names with the institution of slavery.
- Mount Vernon was the home of our first President, George Washington.
- Mount Vernon was a working plantation. At the time of George Washington's death, 317 people were enslaved at Mount Vernon. In his will, George Washington decreed that the 123 slaves that he owned at Mount Vernon would be freed upon the death of his wife, Martha Washington.
- Mount Vernon, named after the house, is one of the original six townships of Fairfax County when the General Assembly divides the County in 1870. In 1874, Mount Vernon was converted into one of Six Districts in the County.
- Mount Vernon's proximity to Washington, DC, and association with George Washington played a role in deciding to place the Country's capital city where the District of Columbia now sits.
- Commander of the Continental Army, led Patriot forces to victory in the Revolutionary War.
- Early critic of the Articles of Confederation who pushed for a central government better designed to stand the test of time.
- Unanimously elected by his peers to preside as president over the Constitutional Convention of 1787, which resulted in the drafting of the United States Constitution.
- America's first president, elected in 1789.
- Perhaps most importantly, declined to run for president after serving two terms, believing that democracy required that the Country move on.

The "Father of the Nation."

Mason:

- In 1953, the Court-appointed redistricting committee of Fairfax County chooses to create a seventh district, the Mason District, named after George Mason, the author of the Bill of Rights.
- George Mason, another founding father, wrote the Virginia Declaration of rights in 1776, a precursor to the Bill of Rights.
- George Mason was one of three delegates to the 1787 Constitutional Convention who did not sign the Constitution.
- In his *Objections to this Constitution of Government*, Mason wrote: "There is no declaration of rights, and the laws of the general government being paramount, the declarations in the separate states are no security ... The president has no constitutional council. From this defect spring the improper powers of the Senate and the unnecessary office of the vice-president, who as president of the Senate dangerously blends executive and legislative powers ... There is no section preserving liberty of the press or trial by jury in civil cases, nor is there one concerning the danger of standing armies in time of peace."
- Eventually fellow Virginian James Madison would introduce the Bill of Rights along the lines of Mason's sentiments.
- Records suggest that Mason owned 90 slaves at his plantation estate, Gunston Hall.

Workgroup findings:

- On January 25, 2022, a subcommittee of the RAC considered the renaming of Mount Vernon and Mason with input from the public.

- There was *no appetite whatsoever* to rename the districts from either RAC members or members of the public.
- Public comments emphasized:
 - The importance of George Washington to the development of the nation.
 - The importance of Mount Vernon as a major attraction and key landmark in the Mount Vernon community.
 - The work that the operators of Mount Vernon, now a World Heritage Site, have done to contextualize Mount Vernon, the good and the bad.
 - The distinction between Founding Fathers and Confederate leaders.
- Within minutes of the start of the Subcommittee meeting, the RAC Subcommittee decided that there was simply no reason at this time to rename Mount Vernon or Mason.
- RAC Subcommittee members drew a clear distinction between those who had help found our nation and those who tore it apart.
- RAC Subcommittee members did not ignore the flaws of our Founding Fathers, but pointed out that the Constitution and the Bill of Rights have, in the end, been central to the progress of the Nation.
- RAC Subcommittee members also pointed out a distinction between honoring Confederate leaders, a deliberate and concerted attempt to whitewash the causes of the Civil War, and honoring Founding Fathers like Washington and Mason, which occurs *in spite of* rather than *because of* their association with the evils of the institution of slavery.

Springfield

Recommendation:

The Fairfax County Redistricting Advisory Committee (RAC) met two weeks ago to decide which district names should possibly be changed in line with the One Fairfax Policy that has been enacted by the Board of Supervisors. One of those names under discussion was changing the name of Springfield District to better reflect that area now that the voter redistricting was complete. Much of West Springfield was removed. The question was posed by the Chair, “Is the name Springfield no longer relevant?”

In our list of questions to ask about each county district/ precinct on whether to stay the same name or be changed, our fifth question of seven was asked, “Is it confusing to residents or not geographically representative of the District?” This threshold gave way to further research and discussion. It was added to our list.

At our next meeting, on January 25, 2022, the Honorable Fairfax County Springfield Supervisor Pat Herryty came to speak before the RAC during the public comments section. He was informed about this new development. He chose to come in person (zoom) to speak on this topic. He said:

1. No one has registered a complaint from the public in his district for a name change.
2. The Government Center, Police, Fire and Rescue, Post Office, and West Springfield High School are still in Springfield District.

3. If you are going to change the name for these reasons, then you need to consider Providence and Braddock Districts, for example, since the same criteria would apply.
4. Providence is named after the old city name of Fairfax. Fairfax City is not even in their district limits.
5. Braddock District is named for the road that goes through it. Braddock Road goes through other districts, too. As a matter of fact, Springfield District has Braddock Park and other Braddock named entities.
6. If you change one for those reasons, you need to change them all.

Conclusion: There were a few comments of clarification except appreciation from former Mount Vernon District Supervisor Hyland who is on the RAC committee. The exchange about hosting a town hall meeting was accepted.

On February 1, 2020, the Springfield RAC members met. I was selected as chair because of my living there and appointment by Supervisor Pat Herrity. I repeated all Mr. Herrity talking points. There were no dissenting comments. We will vote after the Springfield Town Hall meeting.

There is scheduled a virtual Springfield District Town meeting on this topic on Feb. 9, 2022, at 7:00 pm led by Mr. Herrity. You may find the log in information on his Facebook page or Twitter account.

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Bibliography

Lee & Sully Workgroup

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