

Fairfax County Confederate Names Task Force

Meeting Minutes for

December 13, 2021, at 7:00 pm

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Spain at approximately 7:00. A quorum was verified.

Attendance:

- Myers, Robins, Ginwright, Glakas, Leckert, Crowell, Lindner, Thompson, Repetti, Wenzel, Woods, Kovach Shuman, Champness, Sheppard, Henderson, and Wilkerson.
- Six people participated remotely: (Walton, Bryant, Onks, Floyd, Ginwright, and Marino).

Remote Meeting Participation Vote: Approved

2). Adoption of November 30, 2021, Minutes: The meeting minutes were approved.

- Ms. Lindner abstained.

3). Review of List of Suggested Alternative Names for Lee Highway and Lee-Jackson Memorial Highway, and Discussion on Preferences/Priorities. The facilitators guided the Taskforce members through a process of narrowing down and selecting two to five alternate names for Lee Highway and Lee-Jackson Memorial Highway.

- A Taskforce member asked County staff if there were any criteria that had to be met, such as the number of spaces on the street signs, etc. Response: If the name is the same length as the current sign, the sign would easily be replaced. If the name is longer than the current sign, County staff may have to do an analysis to make sure that the mast arm and the equipment holding the sign would hold a heavier sign. This doesn't preclude the Taskforce from choosing a name that's longer than the current name.
- Follow-up: Loudoun voted to rename Route 50 to Little River Turnpike. Would VDOT allow two different routes numbers to have the same name? Response: County staff does not have any technical limitations on any of the names being proposed for the Taskforce's consideration.

The facilitators provided the group with the list of top alternate names selected by the Taskforce in priority order for Lee Highway.

1. Route 29
2. Fairfax Boulevard/Highway
3. Cardinal Highway
4. Langston
5. Billie Lee Highway
6. Centerville Pike
7. Lincoln-Douglass

Discussion:

- A Taskforce member requested that the Taskforce add Abraham Lincoln-Frederick Douglass Highway (Lincoln-Douglass) to the list. This name is appropriate to the time. Lincoln and Douglass mutually respected one another. After President Lincoln gave his second inaugural address, he sought out Frederick Douglass' opinion at the White House reception that followed. A street that matches the former President and the leading abolitionist of that time would send a message to the community and anyone watching about the partnership we are trying to

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establish across racial boundaries. Response: The name did not make it through the narrowing down process, but it will be added to the list of names for the Taskforce's consideration.

- The second ranked name, Fairfax Boulevard/Highway, would be more appropriate on Route 50 because of the continuation with Fairfax Boulevard.
- If Route 29 is selected, we would be passing up an opportunity to select a name that honors Fairfax County or some other underrepresented people.
- We should stay away from Lee names. Billie Lee was Washington's enslaved man servant.
- Some members hesitate to use proper names, but other words can be used to represent areas or tribes without having to use proper names.
- Langston was an honorable man, the first African American to serve in the US Congress. Also, Arlington renamed Route 29 Langston Boulevard.
- There is concern about erasing history. If we pull up someone's history that's already been erased and bring it to the fore, that would be a proud thing to do.
- Any credible biography of George Washington will reference Billie Lee. He was an incredible figure in Washington's life. He was enslaved, Washington's servant. Washington eventually freed him. Billie Lee was a resident of Fairfax County and was very influential in Washington's life. He was a great American and most people don't know who he is.
- The selection of Route 29 is simple and it's there. It might not change anything, but that might be a good thing.
- Regarding Fairfax Boulevard/Highway, boulevards are typically within a town or city. Highways are outside of those boundaries. Renaming Route 29 to Fairfax Boulevard would not be appropriate.
- The Taskforce should exercise caution of naming highways after any person for all the reasons previously discussed. We have not done any research on any of the names put forth thus far. We should name it after something that means something to the locality.
- Mr. Langston was an Arlington man. That's why Arlington County renamed the road after him. He had nothing to do with Fairfax County.
- The names we select should be welcoming and it should have continuity. Cardinal Way would be a welcoming name. Having a state bird would go a long way in doing that.

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Taskforce members used dots to select the following preferred list of names for Lee Highway.

Street Name	Votes
Cardinal Highway	13
Route 29	9
Lincoln-Douglass Highway	6
Langston Blvd/Highway	6
Fairfax Blvd/Highway	5
Billie Lee Highway	2
Centerville Pike	2

The facilitators provided the group with the list of top alternate names selected by the Taskforce in priority order for Lee-Jackson Memorial Highway.

1. Little River Turnpike
2. Route 50
3. Fairfax Boulevard
4. Cardinal Highway
5. Blue and Gray Highway
6. Unity Highway

Discussion:

- Taskforce member discussed an article received by County staff about Frederick Forrest Foote. Mr. Foote was a former slave who joined the US Colored Troops after the Emancipation Proclamation, worked on the railroad, and subsequently purchased the land that belonged to his former enslaver. After he died, during the development of Fairfax County, the development of Route 50 cut through his land so that people would have a way to get to Washington DC. Taskforce member advocated for that segment of Route 50, east of Fairfax City, be renamed after Fred Foote. Response: That segment of roadway is not within the purview of the Taskforce. The Taskforce will only consider the segment of Route 50 west of the City of Fairfax that has the name Lee-Jackson Memorial Highway.
- With Little River Turnpike there is continuity throughout the County, with a break at the City of Fairfax.
- There is merit to not having the same name on highways all the way across the County. Breaking up the names would provide people a greater sense of location within the County.
- If renaming the road to Little River Turnpike is confusing, the Taskforce should lean towards a less confusing name.

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- Lee Highway goes through multiple jurisdictions. This should not be a problem.
- When a road name changes from one jurisdiction to another, it provides a signal that you left one jurisdiction and entering another.
- Blue Gray Highway acknowledges the history of Fairfax County without glorifying any one person. Further, it would be a small concession/compromise to people who don't want the names changed.
- If the selection is Fairfax Boulevard or Little River Turnpike, the Board will have to figure that out.
- The Blue Gray Highway recaps war and divisions, and the history of when US citizens was fighting each other.
- Unity is uplifting and brings everyone together.

Taskforce members used dots to select the following preferred list of names for Lee-Jackson Memorial Highway.

Street Name	Votes
Little River Turnpike	16
Unity Highway	12
Route 50	6
Fairfax Blvd/Highway	4
Blue Gray Highway	3
Cardinal Highway	2

4. Final Vote on List of Recommended Names for Lee Highway

Taskforce member made a motion to adopt the slate of alternate names to go to the Board of Supervisors for Lee Highway: The motion was seconded.

- Cardinal Highway
- Fairfax Boulevard/Highway
- Langston Boulevard
- Lincoln-Douglass
- Route 29

Discussion:

- Taskforce member recommended that the name for Fairfax should not go forward as a boulevard. It doesn't fit the definition of a boulevard.

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Chair Spain conducted a roll call vote to submit the following list of alternate names for Lee Highway to the Board of Supervisors for their consideration. The motion passed with 19 YES, 1 NO, and 2 Abstained.

5. Final Vote on List of Recommended Names for Lee-Jackson Memorial Highway

Taskforce member made a motion to adopt the slate of alternate names to go to the Board of Supervisors for Lee-Jackson Memorial Highway: The motion was seconded.

- Blue Gray Highway
- Fairfax Boulevard/Highway
- Little River Turnpike
- Route 50
- Unity Highway

Discussion:

Taskforce members discussed the Blue Gray Highway and a amendment was proposed for removing the name from the slate. Chair Spain called for a vote on the amendment to remove Blue Gray Highway. After discussion, the amendment was withdrawn.

Subsequently, a motion was made to vote for the slate of alternate names for Lee-Jackson Memorial Highway, Route 50. The motion passed with 19 YES and 3 Abstentions.

6. Discussion on Draft Outline of Task Force Report

CNTF members made the following recommendations/comments on the draft outline and the final report.

- If the Board decides to change the names, consider selling old signs to offset the cost.
- Recommend that there are no more top-down changing of road names.
- Use words/text from the appointment letters sent to Task Force members by the Board.
- Delete reference of the History Commission report.
- Convey the basis of the recommendations made by the Task Force
- Add footnotes and hyperlinks to the document to assist with references and detailed information not documented in the report.
- The section on impact is not within the purview of the Task Force.
- The section on the impact is appropriate and should be noted in the report to take into consideration people with modest means who may be impacted if the Board decided to change the name.
- Equity considerations should be included near the beginning of the report.
- The History Commission report was influential.
- Add more information about the Community Outreach process.
- Make sure there's a direct reference to One Fairfax.

The meeting ended at 8:55.