

MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Commemoration Commission

Re: Recommendations on Takoma Park streets
named after Civil War era generals.

Date: March 14, 2018

This memorandum outlines the background, findings and recommendations from the Takoma Park Commemoration Commission regarding Takoma Park streets named after Civil War era generals.

Background

In September 2017 the Mayor and Council requested that the Commemoration Commission submit recommendations on a process to consider changes or modifications to Takoma Park streets named after Civil War era generals. On October 9, 2017, the Commission forwarded recommendations on a process to consider street name changes. (Attachment 1). The Commission held a public hearing on January 29, 2018 to solicit comments on three options outlined by the Commission. The options presented for comment, but not limited to, included : A) Rename a street through a formal process, B) Continue to use the current street name for the purpose of maintaining current postal addresses, but add a commemorative name and/or signage to provide historical context on each street, C) No name change- leave the current street names.

The public hearing was advertised in the Takoma Newsletter and an individual notice of the hearing was mailed to each owner of properties on the five affected streets. As part of this review, Commission members conducted research into the historical record for naming the five streets in 1893 and produced a report which was distributed at the public hearing.

The commission received 53 public comments for the record (consisting of testimony at the public hearing and written comments. The record was held open until February 2). A tally of public comments shows: Sixty-six percent (66%) of the public comments favored the no name change option; Eighteen percent (18%) of the respondents favored changing one or more of the street names option (over half of the respondents who favored the no name change option recommended placement of a historical interpretive marker) and three individuals recommended adding commemorative names to each street.

Commission Findings and Recommendations

The Commission finds that the five streets in Takoma Park , Grant Avenue, Lee Avenue Hancock Avenue, Sherman Avenue and Sheridan Avenue were named in honor of the Union and Confederate General bearing their respective names in 1893. We find that, based on the historical record, these names were chosen as part of a reconciliation effort in 1893 in the City of Takoma Park, to honor both Union and Confederate veterans of the Civil War.

The Commission recommends, based on the comments received from the public, historical research by Commission members, and a discussion of the issues by the Commission, that:

1) The City Council make no changes to the five street names, Grant Avenue, Lee Avenue, Hancock Avenue, Sherman Avenue and Sheridan Avenue,

2) The City Council does not add additional place names to the five streets,

3) The City Council approve the placement of one historical interpretive marker at the intersection of Lee Avenue and Hancock Avenue. The marker would outline the historical context of the naming of these five streets, as well as the historical role of each general, as part of the review process conducted by the Commemoration Commission in considering changing these street names. The Commemoration Commission will submit a proposal to the Council within three months on type, size and proposed text for a historical interpretive marker after consultations with neighbors, city staff and other City commissions.

Two additional recommendations are made based on information obtained by the Commission during our deliberations on street name changes. These include:

1) The City Council authorize the placement of one historical interpretive marker near or at Heffner Park which outlines the process and naming of Heffner Park. The Commemoration Commission will submit a proposal to the Council within three months on type, size and proposed text for a historical interpretive marker at Heffner Park after consultations with neighbors, city staff and other City commissions,

2) The City Council authorize the Commemoration Commission to begin a renaming process for Jackson/Boyd Park. The Commission finds that the Park was named after the intersection of two street names and a new name for the park is needed. The Commission proposes to seek solicitations of a new name based on the Commemorative Program (City-wide nomination process), which was adopted by the Commemoration Commission.

Finally, the Commission recommends that the City Council, in consultation with City

staff, allocate City funds for the operation of the Commemoration Commission and installation of historical interpretive markers over the next two years.

While the Commission believes that our recommendations reflect the desires of the public, the Commission recognizes that 1) residents of the City could decide independently to request that their street name be changed through the existing County process, or 2) residents of the City could request to add a commemorative name to a street through the process established by the Commemoration Commission for City-Wide Commemoration Programs.

MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Commemoration Commission

Re: Recommendation on Process to Consider Changes to Takoma Park Street Names

Date: October 9, 2017

The Mayor and Council have requested that the Commemoration Commission submit recommendations on a process to consider changes or modifications to Takoma Park streets' named after Civil War era generals and other Civil War era individuals.

Recommendation

The Commemoration Commission proposes to hold one or more public meeting(s) in January, 2018 to discuss the issue of street name changes. The meeting(s) would:

- 1) Focus on the five streets that we know for certain were named after Civil War generals (Lee, Sheridan, Grant, Hancock & Sherman). We would leave aside, for now, those streets, such as Davis, which we believe were named for local families.
- 2) Discuss the formal process for an official name change and solicit public comment on this process
- 3) Discuss options available for street name changes including, but not limited to:
 - A) Rename a street through a formal process.
 - B) Continue to use the current street name for the purpose of maintaining current postal addresses, but rename the street for the purpose of making a social statement by adding a commemorative name and sign age to provide historical context on each street.
 - C) Leave the current street names.
- 4) Solicit names of noteworthy individuals or organizations that deserve citywide recognition.

After the public hearing(s), the Commemorative Commission would forward a series of

recommendations to the Mayor and Council by April 10, 2018.