

ADVISORY STREET RE-NAMING COMMITTEE

Robert E Smith

Samuel Brown

Charlotte Pfeifer

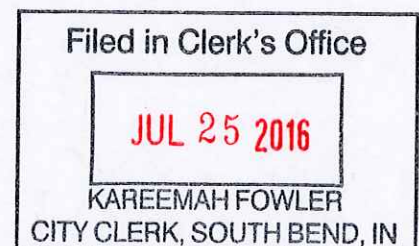
Cheri Richmond

Debra Walker

John Charles Bryant

Sidney Blanchet

The report and recommendation is enclosed. You may contact Robert E Smith, 574-855-0609 regarding any concerns.



05:20 PM

Street Renaming Advisory Committee

Report

The Street Renaming Committee was initiated by Council Resolution 4443-15. Committee assignments were made by the Council and the Mayor. Members met and got acquainted in November and December 2015. During that meeting the expectations of Council Resolution 4443-15 and the November 12, 2015 letter from the Mayor were reviewed. The expectations from the review are:

- Review the impact on residents and businesses on any proposed route
- Identify Streets that are potentials to be renamed for Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
- Solicit Public Input through several public meetings

The committee was briefed on how the current Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Dr. came about.

The briefing was provided by Debra Walker, who was an active committee participant from the previous Street Renaming Committee. The following is a summary of her verbal report:

Several streets were recommended, a public meeting was held on each street that was recommended, the process was later changed to include a canvas of the street that was recommended. In addition, the rules also changed during the process from a majority of people in favor of a change to the street name would be changed to where if one person objected no change would take place. The process took a few months to complete and due to personal verbal attacks/threats on the committee and the former mayor. The current street was identified and the name of Dr. King was placed on a street that was 3 blocks in length with no one living on the street.

Having been appraised of the past history, it was decided to identify a street to present at the public meetings. Each committee member voted on their street of choice. The criteria used in selecting a street was one of substantial length, one that would be maintained during the February 2016 meeting. and one that had the potential of future development. A survey sheet (see attached) was developed to capture and document the responses of people at the public meetings. The purpose of the survey was to identify if participants were in favor of a street named in honor of Dr. King, if the recommended street was acceptable or identify a street of their own selection. This method would eliminate the issue of continuous public meetings with changing requirements for each street that was identified. This process was used during the time of the first committee that was established to rename a street for Dr. King. The result was to delay or avoid making a

decision that resulted in naming the current street, that the majority of residents are not happy with and thus we are repeating the process again.

We need to celebrate our evolving history, since Chapin settled South Bend, Slavery has been abolished, women have gained the right to vote, Studebaker produced automobiles and we have had the civil rights movement.

Public Meetings

Five widely attended public meetings were held at the following locations:

March 1, 2016 from 5:30 – 6:30pm Charles Martin Center

March 3, 2016 from 5:30 – 6:30pm Rum Village Nature Center

March 15, 2016 from 5:30 – 6:30pm Charles Black Center

March 24, 2016 from 5:30 – 6:30pm Martin Luther King Center

March 29, 2016 from 6:00 – 7:00pm Robinson Community Learning Center

Council members Tim Scott and Regina-Williams Preston attend one meeting each.

People expressed their opinions and completed the survey form. People used the public meetings to discuss issues with city government, budget and past street naming activities. This was expected and several times at each meeting people were reminded of the subject such that we could stay on track.

Survey Results

Survey results are contained in the Survey Results attachment. There are a few points that need explanations.

1. An electronic survey form was used by some. The electronic form was developed and managed by the City Clerks Office using the Survey Monkey software application. The electronic survey form indicates that 282 people responded to the survey.
2. The survey results of both the electronic form and the paper form indicate that Western Avenue is the street that people want to be named for Dr. King.
3. On both forms the selection of other does not match the actual number of other streets name.
4. Unknown to the committee an unaffiliated petition was turned in to the City Clerk Office after the closing date of public meetings and comments.

5. The electronic survey form indicated 107 people in favor of naming a street in honor of Dr. King and 175 against having a street named for Dr. King. Of the 175 against, 94 people identified other means of honoring Dr. King and 61 identified a street to be named in honor of Dr. King.

The two streets receiving the most votes to be named in honor of Dr. King are:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----------|
| • Western Avenue | 47 Votes |
| • Expand The Existing Dr. King Dr. | 43 Votes |

Concerns Raised at The Public Meeting

The concerns raised at the public meetings are identified below

- Expense of Completing Address Change forms for the Post Office
- Cost of Stationary/Business Cards
- Web Page (change postal address)
- Business Customer notification
- Change of address on business vehicles
- Changes to internal business documents
- Changes to Mortgage Documents
- Changes to medical documents
- Historical Concerns
- The name of the street is too long

Responses to Concerns

The responses to the concerns raised at the public meetings are as follows:

- The expense of making an address change was answered by the committee. After continued concern over this issue, Chris Cortier from the South Bend Postal Service attended the meeting at the MLK Recreation Center and informed the public that the Post Office has an existing process in place to address street name changes. The process involves an electronic data base application that matches the old street

name with the new street name. This process results in mail being routed to the new street name with the resident or business owner requesting a change of address at the post office. The Post Office does not have a time limit on the process but they hope that within 18 months a change of address form would be completed. This information from the Post Office Employee was not warmly received.

- In response to mortgage documents having to be changed, Ann Mannix stated that mortgage documents do not have to be changed if the street name changes. Ann is familiar with mortgages, address changes and etc. The information was not warmly received.
- In response to changes of address to Medical documents, the resident notifies the medical provider of the address change. Changes are made by the medical provider.
- The historical concern identified by the Historical Commission has no bearing on the street name. Naming of streets is outside the Commission responsibility. H. Chapin never lived on Chapin street. His house and a park named for him are located blocks away. There is historical significance to Afro-Americans and Chapin Street that is documented in the book Better Homes of South Bend authored by Gabrielle Robinson.
- In response to the expense of changing stationary by a businesses or individual, changes to a web page for business address and signage on vehicles is a concern. The concern expressed at the public meetings was based on urgency and cost. The concern over urgency can be reduced by providing plenty of notice for the change.
- In response to the name of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr street name being too long, the street name could be abbreviated as Dr. MLK Drive

Analysis of Survey and Public Meetings

An analysis of the survey(s) and the public meetings is necessary. Two factors dominated the public meetings and the survey forms (1) not in my back yard and (2) race.

The consensus sentiment expressed at the public meetings were in favor of a street named to honor Dr. King by a vote of 41 to 11 but put it someplace else. There were at total of 46 votes for other streets to be named in honor of Dr. King. The 46 votes for other streets were more than the 41 in favor of a street named for Dr. King. By this comparison it can be concluded that people want a street named in honor of Dr. King but not the recommended street.

The electronic survey forms documented the majority were not in favor of a street to honor Dr. King 175 against and 107 for a street. Within that same majority who were not in favor of a street to honor Dr. King, 94 indicated another street of the 94 only 61 identified another street. This shows that 33 people indicated another means of honoring King, however most did not

identify any specifics. This comparison also indicates a street is acceptable but not in my backyard. There was the appearance of voter tampering, many of the electronic voting surveys had the same responses.

The two survey results do show conflict however the electronic survey results high lite a term called "not in my back yard". During the 1960's the term "not in my back yard" was coined to identify government and community projects that people were in favor of but they did not want them in their area or on their street. This sentiment is quite normal but it can be taken to the extreme where a community may lose out on an opportunity.

The elephant in the room was race. This was exhibited by the following comments;

- Where are the white people?
- Put the street in a black only neighborhood
- The street name will attract black people and crime
- During two meetings we had to pause the meeting to let the participant know that the comments made to each other were racial
- During the wrap up meeting the three business owners acknowledged that race was involved in some concerns

The attitude of "not in my backyard" and having race enter the discussion of naming a street are facts of life. During the 1960's government leaders discovered that when thy make a decision, the attitude of "not in my back yard" dissipates over time.

The concern for racial justice and social injustice can only be addressed by strong leadership. However, these two should not guide decision making. A leader has to step forward and make the right decision.

Recommendation

During the public meeting a consensus could not be reached on a particular street. The Street Renaming Committee recommends the following streets. Item one is the initial recommendation by the committee. The Western Avenue was identified during the public meetings and on the survey forms.

1. Extending the existing Dr. Martin Luther King Dr. north on Marion to Michigan Street, and extending it south to Wester and south on Prairie Street to the city limits.
2. Western Avenue was the street identified in both surveys.

Due to the appearance of voter tampering another online survey could be done which would require the voter to enter their name on the survey. This would help to ensure the one vote per person rule.

It is strongly recommended that no more committees be established to rename a street for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Feedback received from many individuals for and against the recommended street are looking for a decision. The lack of a decision is similar to an infection that is untreated and it festers. It's time for a decision.

Advisory Street Re-Naming Committee

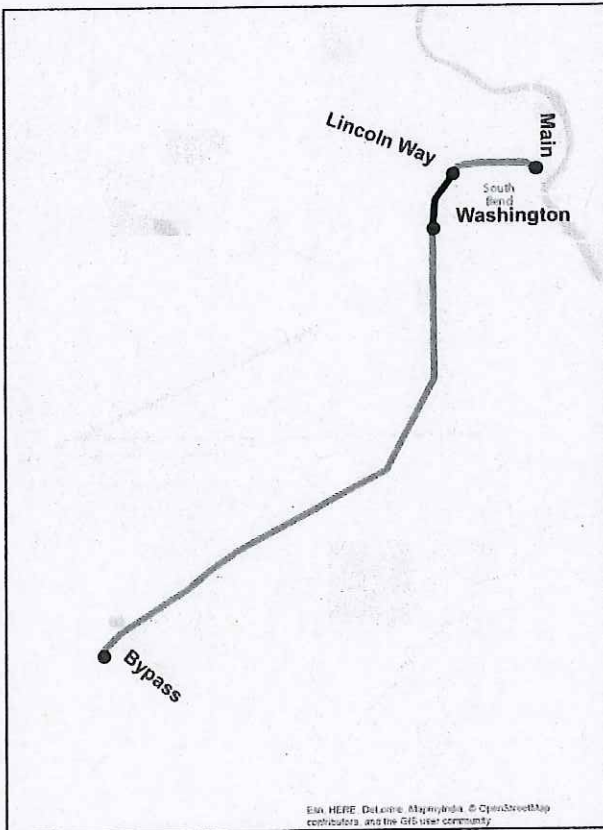
On May 14, 2015, Mayor Pete Buttigieg signed Common Council Resolution 4443-15 to create a 7-member Advisory Street Re-Naming Committee composed of four Common Council appointees and three Mayoral appointees. The committee's charge is to oversee a public process to consider renaming a street to honor the late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Please answer the questions below.

Question 1: Are you in favor of renaming a street in South Bend after Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.? Please check your choice below.

Yes

No, because _____



Question 2: If yes for Question 1, please pick from the following:

Expand the current Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive to Michigan Street (i.e. the current Marion Street) in the North and to the Bypass (i.e. the current Chapin Street and Prairie Avenue) in the South as illustrated on the left.

Other _____

Advisory Street Re-Naming Committee

SURVEY RESULTS

Electronic Survey Survey Forms
(Survey Monkey)

Are you in favor of renaming a street in
South Bend for Rev. Dr. Martin Luther
King Jr?

Yes	107	41
No	175	11

If yes to question 1, Do you favor expand
the current Dr. Martin Luther King Jr Drive

Expand	37	6
Other	94	

Other streets identified (SEE NOTE 1)

Western	23	24
Laporte	20	6
Lombardy	5	1
Sample	4	
Lincoln Way West	4	10
Williams	2	
South Bend Ave	1	
Main Street	1	
Michigan Street	1	
Ignition Park		1
Bendix		1
Round-A-Bout		1
By-Pass		2
Total Other	61	46

NOTE 1

The reponses to OTHER was not always
a street name.