

On March 20, 2020, City Manager Gregory Rose declared a State of Emergency for the City of University City due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Due to the ongoing efforts to limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus, the April 26, 2021 meeting will be conducted via videoconference.

**JOINT STUDY SESSION WITH THE
RENAMING STREETS AND PARKS TASK FORCE AND
PROPOSED RPA 2 STEERING COMMITTEE
VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE
April 26, 2021 5:30 p.m.**

AGENDA

1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

At the Study Session of the City Council of University City held via videoconference, on Monday, April 26, 2021, Mayor Terry Crow called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.

In addition to the Mayor, the following members of Council were present:

Councilmember Stacy Clay
Councilmember Aleta Klein
Councilmember Steven McMahan
Councilmember Jeffrey Hales
Councilmember Tim Cusick
Councilmember Bwayne Smotherson

Also in attendance were City Manager, Gregory Rose; City Attorney, John F. Mulligan, Jr.; Director of Public Works, Sinan Alpaslan; Susan Armstrong, Holly Ingraham, Esley Hamilton, Don Fitz, Mimi Taylor-Hendrix, and Alice Boon of the Renaming Streets and Parks Task Force.

Mr. Rose requested that Item 4 on this Agenda; Proposed Establishment of RPA 2 Steering Committee, be removed.

2. CHANGES TO REGULAR AGENDA

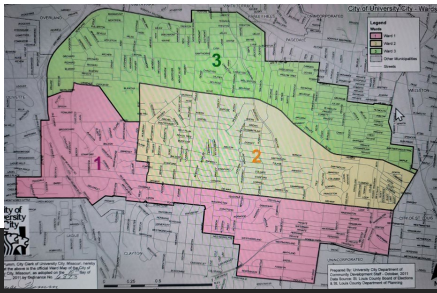
No changes requested.

3. JOINT DISCUSSION - RENAMING STREETS AND PARKS TASK FORCE REPORT

Mr. Rose stated in September 2020 Council established the Renaming Streets and Parks Task Force who are here tonight to present their findings and recommendations.

Chairman Armstrong thanked Council for the opportunity to study the streets and the 120 days provided to accomplish this task.

Ms. Armstrong asked that everyone take a moment of reverence for the unarmed Americans killed by the police.



University City, Missouri

History

Mr. Hamilton stated U City was founded in 1906 by its first Mayor, Edward Gardner Lewis after he purchased 85 acres in 1902. He envisioned it as "*City Beautiful*," intending to build a "*high-class residential district*" on the contours of the landscape. The City's name reflected its proximity to Washington University, and after its incorporation, all subdivision plats had to be approved before any lots could be sold. Most of the City's street names came from those plats which had been named after Ivy League Universities, English-sounding names, and some that were simply made up.

The eastern portions of Wards 1 and 2 became the first segments of U City. Some of the neighborhoods north of Olive were originally started as unincorporated communities before being incorporated into the City.

Members

1. Alice Boon, 3rd Ward
2. Mimi Taylor-Hendrix, 3rd Ward
3. Don Fitz, 2nd Ward
4. Esley Hamilton, 2nd Ward, Historian
5. Holly Ingraham, 1st Ward
6. Andrew Wool, 1st Ward
7. Susan Armstrong, 1st Ward, Chair

University City Resolution 2020-12

Ms. Ingraham stated the Task Force decided to focus on the words highlighted in this Resolution to guide them in accomplishing their task.

- **Inclusion and equity** are essential components of democracy and are ultimately beneficial to all encourage better community interaction, **cooperation, tolerance, and understanding**...and reaffirmed its support for diversity and affirmative action programs (2009-22)
- **Rich tradition of diversity, acceptance, and tolerance** and "welcomes all regardless of race, religion, creed, culture, ancestry, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, political affiliation, marital status, familial status, income or education level (2016-26)
- Declared loyalty to being a welcoming city **and find ways to institutionalize welcoming efforts**...that promote inclusion (2017-5)
- **Condemned the message of white nationalism**, while encouraging ongoing **respectful and honest conversations** among the people of U City on issues that divide our community .. (2017-16)

Ms. Ingraham stated the Task Force reviewed over 200 street names and completed its work on February 1, 2021.

Executive Summary

- Researched street & park names using local experts, residents, books, and online resources
- Criteria: Did the person whom the street was named after

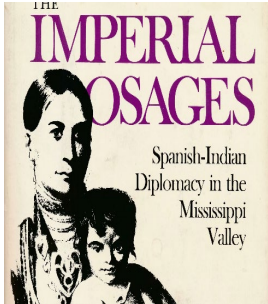
- Practice inclusion and equity??
 - Welcome all??
 - Condemn white supremacy??
- If the person did not meet U City criteria, the street name was considered **offensive**
 - Three tiers for offensive names:
 - Tier 1: Offensive by Task Force Resolution
 - Tier 2: Names of Slave Owners
 - Tier 3: Possibly Offensive – Further Research Needed
- ❖ *Street names listed under these categories can be found on page 5 of the Task Force Report.*
- New names for consideration & Implementation
 - “Detailed explanation” & “Establish criteria”
 - Replacement names consistent with foundation Resolutions
 - Collected from Citizens
 - New Name Criteria
 - Names of University City Residents
 - Universities or Colleges
 - HBCU
 - Establish Equity by using names of slave revolt leaders
 - Establish Equity by using names of Police victims and Black civilians killed by police
 - Persons dead for 50 years
 - Cities or States
 - Reference our existence on Native American land, Osage
 - Rededicating street or adding secondary sign to current street sign
- ❖ *Citizens' comments can be found on page 15 of the Task Force Report.*
- ❖ *A chart of new names can be found on the last page of the Task Force Report.*
- **Future Actions Recommended**
 1. Hold well-publicized Zoom webinars for all U City residents
 2. Reconvene Task Force to continue research
 3. Establish educational programs explaining the history of U City racism in the context of national/global racism
 4. Make this report available to U City School District to increase awareness of the destructive effects of racism
 5. Press Release
 6. Copy of Report to libraries and municipalities to assist in similar actions
 7. Encourage artistic/cultural groups to organize festivals for reenactments of slave revolts/stampedes
 8. Renaming ceremonies & celebrations inclusive of the diverse U City residents & students

Ms. Taylor-Hendrix stated because of what they learned from their research the Task Force began each meeting by reading this acknowledgment.

Indigenous Land Acknowledgment

“As we gather today, we acknowledge that this land is the traditional territory of the Osage Nation, and the Illinois Confederacy, which includes the Cahokia, Peoria, and Illini peoples. We, therefore, pay our respect to elders both past and present, and may we nurture our relationship with our native neighbors and the shared responsibilities to their homelands where we all reside today. Specifically, we commit to learning more about the people, history, and contemporary concerns of these indigenous communities.”

What They Learned



- Osage Native Americans occupied these lands
 - Mound builders; Cahokia and South City
 - Villages of 2-3,000
 - North & south banks of the Missouri River
 - 1100 AD greater populations than London
- Smallpox epidemic decimated the population in 1805
- In 1808, 52 million acres of Missouri Territory was purchased from the Osage for \$5,000 or **0.005 cents per acre**
- Later Missouri legislation made it illegal for an Osage Native to live in Missouri
- ❖ *Osage means children of the Middle waters*
- ❖ *Author Walter Johnson, argues that the genocide of Native Americans in the Mississippi Valley paved the way for the expansion of plantation slavery and its development into a fully capitalist economy—with global ambitions (Walter Johnson, May 2020 Harvard Magazine)*

(Video presentation of Activist Dread Scott emphasizing the importance of street names)

Offensive Names

Lord Jeffrey Amherst

Mr. Fitz stated many Amherst students have come to see Lord Jeffrey as a symbol of White oppression for advocating that Native Americans be given smallpox-infected blankets to slaughter them. The military commander who led British victories in the French and Indian War and for whom this town and others in the northeast were named, wrote in a postscript to a letter in 1763; *"You will do well to try to inoculate the Indians by means of blankets, as well as try every other method that can serve to Extirpate this execrable Race"*. Lord Jeffrey was severely criticized by military subordinates on both sides of the Atlantic; nevertheless, he was promoted to Lieutenant General in March 1765.

In 2008 John Joe Sark *called the name of Fort Amherst Park* of Prince Edward Island a *"terrible blotch on Canada"*, and said: *"To have a place named after General Amherst would be like having a City in Jerusalem named after Adolf Hitler"*.

Mr. Fitz stated after learning this information he reached two conclusions; (1) Amherst cannot be forgiven for the racism of the society in which he lived because he violated the standards of his day, and (2), Amherst Street in U City must not be ignored even though it was named after a college because that name traces back to Lord Jeffrey Amherst, the grandfather of biological warfare.

- British officer in Northeast America
 - 1717-1797
- "Grandfather of Biological Warfare"
- Advocated smallpox laced blankets for Native Americans
- Amherst Street in U City named for Amherst College
 - Named for Amherst, MA.
 - Named for Lord Jeffrey Amherst

- All struggling with legacy

General Stonewall Jackson

Mr. Hamilton stated Jackson was Robert E. Lee's close associate. Their association with U City is tied to the Hanley family who subdivided part of their property as an addition to the City of Clayton and named two of the streets Lee and Jackson.

Lee is less than a block long but Jackson was laid out on a property line between two major land grants and was ultimately extended to the north.

- Jackson Street named for Stonewall Jackson
- Confederate General from 1861-1863
- Symbol for the ideals of the Confederacy
- Jackson Park Mooney Park
- Jackson Park School

President Woodrow Wilson

Mr. Fitz stated President Wilson was a racist by the standards of his time and he would be a racist by today's standards. In 1881 he defended the South's suppression of Black voters, stating they were being denied to vote because their minds were dark; they were ignorant, and they were the inferior race.

As President of Princeton University Wilson refused to admit any Black students and erased earlier admissions of Black students from the University's history.

During his Presidency Wilson crippled the upward mobility of African Americans who held federal jobs; writing, *"There are no government positions for Negroes because the Negroes place is in the cornfield"*. Racism was a core part of Wilson's identity. He saw slavery as relatively benign, the Klan as harmless, and reconstruction as a disaster.

Mr. Fitz stated Wilson was so destructive in his race actions that it would be negligent to simply rededicate this street to another person named Wilson and it should be totally removed so that no one ever associates it with this President.

- President 1913-1921
 - 1856 birth -1924 death
- Considered Racist
 - Rolled back hard-fought gains of African Americans
 - Racial segregation
 - White supremacy
 - Authorized Jim Crow
- Oversaw segregation of multiple federal agencies

General John Pershing

Chairman Armstrong stated when she read about General Pershing's support of Black Troops as separate but equal, it reminded her of a story she had been told about her grandfather, who also fought in WWI.

Pershing put the White troops in command with American supplies. However, the Black troops were sent to France, not as a fighting unit but to replace the French soldiers as they fell. Pershing's policies had an incredible impact on the economic gap. And this policy; separate but equal, helped her to understand why her grandfather, a celebrated WWI Veteran died in despair. Though he served his country, he was never allowed to buy a home for his family, and he died in a boarded-up rental property in the poorest part of town.

Pershing Elementary School and Pershing Avenue were both named after a man whose life summarizes him to be a White Nationalist.

- Born in Laclede, Missouri 1860 -1948
 - Nicknamed "Black Jack"
 - Taught Black schoolchildren in 1878
 - Commanded Black Buffalo Soldiers in Indian Campaigns
 - Apache Wars (1849-1886)
 - Sioux Wars (1854-1890)

- Attended cornerstone ceremony for Pershing School, 1919
- Served in Western Front in WWI (1917-1918)
- Supported Black troops as “separate but equal”

Tier 2 - Slaveholders

Ms. Taylor-Hendrix stated the Task Force developed tiers to categorize certain street names. Tier 2 represents streets that were named after people primarily because the road ran through their property. This is a list of some of those individuals who were also recorded in the 1850 or 1860 Census of Slaveholders.

- 650 Slave Inhabitants (records) in “Central Township”
- Streets named for Slaveholders
 - Robert **Forsyth** – 9 slaves
 - John H. **Gay** – 8 slaves
 - Martin **Hanley** – 4 slaves
 - Peter **Lindell**
 - John **McKnight** – 6 slaves
 - William **Price** – 2 slaves
 - Virginia **Cabanne** – 3 slaves
 - James **Clemens** – 3 slaves
 - George **Kingsland** – 12 slaves
 - William **Woodson** – 10 slaves

St. Louis Area Owners of African-Americans

Chairperson Armstrong stated the 1850 and 1860 Census of Slaveholders also revealed the following information:

- 8,000+ Slave Inhabitants (records) 1860 Census
- St. Louis County Towns named for Slaveholders
 - Ralph **Clayton**
 - **Page**(dale)
 - **Jennings**
 - **O’Fallon**
 - **Ferguson**
 - **Sappington**

Tier 3

Ms. Boon stated Tier 3 represents streets that could possibly be offensive. More research is needed to reach a definitive conclusion.

- Princeton; (Recent admission of racist practices)
- Yale; (University founded by a slave owner)
- Chamberlain
- Camden
- Washington; (Citizen’s Comment)

Councilmember Cusick asked if anyone was aware of the rationale behind the Hanley families' decision to name Jackson and Lee after confederate generals? Mr. Hamilton stated Martin Hanley was a strong confederate sympathizer, as were most of the slave owners within the County. In the center of that stage was an area called “*Little Dixie*,” largely a rural area where Claiborne Jackson also resided. Its residents not only supported the confederacy but anticipated that the State of Missouri would join their coalition.

Chairman Armstrong encouraged members to elaborate on the slave revolts that occurred in Missouri, where families attempted to flee to the Free States.

Mr. Fitz stated that the Canton, Missouri Stampede occurred in 1849. However, he does not believe there is any evidence that Canton Street was named after this event.

Councilmember Clay thanked the Task Force for the significant amount of work put into this task, which is evident by their report. He then asked the Task Force if they would expound upon their recommendation to conduct a webinar that involved residents living on some of the impacted streets? Ms. Ingraham stated what the Task Force feels is most important about this work is the process by which the community goes through to recognize and honor the past in a way that sets the tone for a future that embraces the values of U City. Therefore, it is important to include residents who live on streets where renaming is being considered not only to allow them to express their concerns but to educate them about their origin; much of which she was surprised to learn about. She stated one person she spoke to mentioned growing up in U City and learning as a child that the street she lived on was named after a slaveholder. And because she was never provided any context or explanation, she carried the weight of trying to figure out exactly what that meant throughout her life.

So even if these streets are not renamed, Ms. Ingraham stated she thinks it is important to provide this education to residents because this should be about having conversations about this community, its values, and why they have those values.

Mr. Fitz stated the Task Force included several high school students in their work, and when having these discussions it will be important to keep in mind that an emphasis should be placed on their involvement as well because they are the ones who will have to live with these decisions. In the Dread Scott video, Council heard how so many students have been affected by the designation of these names that originated from slaveholders. Even to the point where some believed there was something wrong with African-Americans who tolerated these actions.

Chairman Armstrong stated the Task Force received a comment from a high school student that said, *"Surely, within the tight-knit communities of U City no form of ignorance like racist street names should be tolerated"*. So students are counting on us to do the right thing.

Councilmember Klein thanked the Task Force for bringing this conversation to Council today because it is a really important topic with a lot of facets to be considered. She stated one thing that came to mind is making sure that the people who might be affected receive clear information in advance about what the steps in this process will entail so that it can be a part of their decision-making process. Councilmember Klein stated it will also be important to give special consideration to elderly or disabled residents to ensure they have an opportunity to participate.

Councilmember Smotherson thanked the Task Force for all of the information presented, which he found to be very enlightening. He then posed the following questions to the Task Force:

Q. Can the link you provided for the Dread Scott video be used to access this presentation?

A. Yes.

Q. Was Amherst University actually named after Lord Jeffrey Amherst?

A. *Amherst was originally founded in Williamstown, Massachusetts, where it was called Williams College. But it was so far west that nobody wanted to go there, so it was moved to the town of Amherst. So while the name of the college had nothing to do with Lord Amherst, the name of the town did.*

Q. Was U City's street named after the college?

A. Yes.

Q. Has the Task Force discussed how to address the fact that Pershing and Jackson are linked to other municipalities?

A. *I have talked to the City of Clayton and while their committee is primarily concerned with documenting the positive aspects of their history, they have committed to following whatever decision U City makes regarding Jackson Street. No discussions have been conducted with Pagedale.*

Chairman Armstrong stated U City, which was founded in 1906, is not named after a slaveholder, and that provides a lot of leveraged freedom and opportunity.

Mr. Fitz stated he does not think it is correct to say there is no direct correlation between Amherst Street and Lord Amherst since the college was named after the town and the town was named after Lord Amherst.

He stated he would like to acknowledge his wife for her support. She was responsible for finding the connection to Dread Scott, whose video is available for use on YouTube. Mr. Fitz stated he also has his direct contact information if anyone is interested.

Ms. Ingraham stated Amherst College considered Lord Jeffrey Amherst to be their mascot and had a statue erected in his honor. Today, they have banished that tradition and removed his statue. But this whole concept was so blatant that all of the intersecting streets along Midland are named after colleges; none of which include any HBCU's. So the Task Force thought this seemed like a great opportunity to include them.

Chairman Armstrong stated there is one, Morehouse Lane, which was a specific designation made by City Council.

Councilmember Klein stated while she understands Mr. Fitz's caution about rededicating streets to another person with the same last name, she can think of one instance where that might not be a bad idea. Mary Jackson was the first female African-American engineer at NASA, so Mary Jackson Elementary might be something people would be receptive to.

Mayor Crow stated there are a lot of details that will have to be worked out prior to moving forward but one of the wisest things to do is look for best practices. So there will be a need to rely on the City Manager and his staff to contact other cities who have already gone down this path to discover some of the lessons they've learned, and establish the next steps forward in this process.

He stated as Holly mentioned this needs to be a broad conversation that sets the tone for a future that embraces the values of our City. And there also needs to be a parallel effort to establish how this process should be implemented that includes making sure we get this information out to everyone

Councilmember McMahon stated this is a really good group of individuals who have demonstrated some keen insights on this issue. He stated while he certainly has no idea what kind of opposition Council might face, the discussion points exhibited here today provide valid explanations for why this is important and offers a solid defense to the pragmatic, practical, and inconvenience reactions that are bound to pop up once this topic is brought to the public's attention. So, a big thanks to all of you for such an educational and useful presentation.

Chairman Armstrong stated one very brave citizen said, "Even if the name of your street changes, Amazon will still be able to find you".

Councilmember Hales stated he is in complete agreement with Steve's comments, and would also like to thank this Task Force for a very enlightening presentation. He stated the reality is that we all share a history that we may not be completely proud of. But this Zoom meeting is a testament that as time moves on changes in our country, and our communities are essential to our ability to continue making progress in the future.

Mr. Fitz stated he wanted to apologize for neglecting to include the driving force behind the existence of the Task Force on the front page of their report, which is the murder of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter movement. He stated this was an unfortunate oversight because no matter the outcome, ten or fifteen years from now anyone reading the report should be aware of the impetus behind its creation and its correlation to a specific time in our history.

Mr. Fitz stated while he values truth over politeness, anyone who has frequently attended Council meetings knows that everyone does not possess those same values. So he is in total agreement with Council's assessment that tempers will likely flair up when this topic is discussed;

especially from residents who see this as a trivial issue, and those who have dedicated their lives to ensuring justice and equality.

Mayor Crow stated the Task Force has asked that we express their appreciation to Errol Tate and LaRette Reese for their support in this effort. And on behalf of all of his colleagues, he would like to thank the members of this Task Force for their dedication to make U City a better place by righting some of the wrongs by addressing this rather vague and controversial topic.

Mr. Rose stated the next steps will involve identifying the procedures that need to be followed in order to change the names of streets and working with the Mayor and Council to determine what their priorities are. He stated this is a complicated process, so everyone must keep in mind that the goal is to do things right; which oftentimes does not produce instant results.

4. **PROPOSED ESTABLISHMENT OF RPA 2 STEERING COMMITTEE**; *(Removed)*
REQUESTED BY COUNCILMEMBERS SMOTHERSON AND CLAY

5. **ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Crow assured the Task Force that Council would do its best to move this project forward in a thoughtful and appropriate manner. He thanked everyone for their attendance and adjourned the Study Session at 6:30 p.m.

LaRette Reese
City Clerk

