

October 15, 2017

Edward H. Sebesta

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Mayor Mike Rawlings
City of Dallas
Mayor and City Council City of Dallas
1500 Marilla St.
Dallas, TX 75201

Dear Hon. Rawlings:

There has been put forth arguments not to change all the streets named after Confederates with one rationalization or another.

I would like to address four of these rationalizations and discuss the implications would be for the values of the City of Dallas. These rationalizations are:

1. The cost of the name change is too much and it is too much bother.
2. The Confederate individual for whom the street was named after wasn't an officer or major figure in the Confederacy so it isn't necessary to change the name.
3. It is generally not known that the street is named after a Confederate so it can be allowed.
4. The individual for whom the street was named did some meritorious activity after the Civil War.

IN REGARDS TO THE ARGUMENT #1 ABOVE RELATING TO COST.

I would like to raise the question if there was somehow a Himmler highway in Dallas and we discovered it would we allow it to continue? I think we would change the name regardless of the cost, regardless of the length. A street, avenue, boulevard, highway or road or any path or trail or way named after a Nazi, however obscure, would be intolerable.

Yet in discussing eliminating Confederate street names, names which fundamentally denigrate the value of African American life, there is the discussion of cost and bother. Confederate street names for some appear to have a threshold of cost and bother in which beyond that threshold they argue to retain Confederate names. This allows a calculation to see what value some people put on Black lives, how much Black lives matter in terms of dollars and cents to them.

In "APPENDIX A" you will see a calculation based on the costs for the name changes supplied by Dallas city staff and my cross-check of the calculations based on those figures.

These are the original figures given to change the names of Lee Parkway, Lemmon Avenue, Gaston Avenue, and Beauregard Drive.

I put in the figures supplied by city staff and calculated what the cost was and then compared the cost given by the Excel sheet to the totals given by Dallas city staff. There are discrepancies for each city. However, I am going to go with the Dallas city staff figures.

The total costs for all four streets is \$416,660.07 and in the 2010 U.S. Census figures there was reported that there were 298,993 African Americans living in the city of Dallas, Texas. Dividing the total cost by the population of African Americans living in the city of Dallas in 2010 you get \$1.39 per African American resident of Dallas.

Also, these street names send a toxic message to Dallas residents in general that being violently active for white supremacy is not really that terrible such that the name needs to be changed.

These aren't all the costs with a street name change, there are business cards to be changed and probably some other paper work and just taking a guestimate of \$1,000,000 for these other costs you have a cost of \$9.48 per African American resident of Dallas.

I don't think that is a lot. The fact that some people think this is a lot gives us an idea how much Black lives matter to them and why there are jurors who are unwilling to convict police officers when they wrongfully cause the death or injury of an African American.

The final recommendation of the Task Force, dated 9/29/2017 recommends that the street names Stonewall Street, Beauregard Avenue, Lee Parkway, Gano Street, and Cabell Drive be changed. Gano Street and Cabell Drive are much shorter than either Gaston Avenue or Lemmon Avenue. It seems that \$1.39 per African American resident of Dallas is too much for the Task Force and many Dallas residents.

IN REGARDS TO THE ARGUMENT #2 ABOVE RELATING THE CONFEDERATE BEING SIGNIFICANT

The rational for Lee Parkway, Gano Street and Cabell is to quote the report, "... streets named after a Confederate leader and/or general, who made a significant contribution to the Confederacy, specifically Gano, Lee and Cabell, be changed."

I would like to suggest that if someone enlisted in the Confederate army and shoot at American troops their contribution to the Confederacy was significant.

As you probably already know W.L. Cabell being a war criminal. I enclose the documentation.

This raises historical questions about street names. There were massacres of African American troops during the Civil War by Confederate troops. Was there any review of these Confederate soldiers possible involvement in massacres? Doesn't appear to me that there was.

The other question is the involvement of ex-Confederates in the overthrow of Reconstruction and the establishment of white supremacist states in so-called "Redemption." It was commonly understood in the early 20th century by neo-Confederates that ex-Confederate soldiers made up the Ku Klux Klan.

S.E.F. Rose in her book "The Ku Klux Klan or Invisible Empire," rhapsodizes about the Ku Klux Klan being the heroic effort of the ex-Confederate soldier and her book is endorsed by the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) and the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV). On the strength of her pro-Klan writing she was elected Historian General of the UDC. She died before the end of her term of office and was succeeded by Grace Meredith Newbill who also praised the Klan and in Pulaski, Tennessee led an effort there to name streets, Ku-Klux Place, Ku-Klux Avenue, and "Cyclops Hill." I enclose some parts of Rose's book.

UDC praise was so strong for the Ku Klux Klan that when the North Carolina Division of the UDC donated a KKK flag to the Museum of the Confederacy they had a post card of the flag printed. I enclose a page with both sides of the postcard. Visually it tells what Confederate "heritage" is really all about. Incidentally, the building on the stamp is Lee's plantation, the building at Oak Lawn Park is a one-third replica of this building.

Even before Rose and Newbill's efforts it was generally understood that the ex-Confederates were the Ku Klux Klan. In this page 7, June 8, 1908 *Dallas Morning News* article, "R.E. Lee Camp Meeting: Two Veterans Enliven Occasion with Their Ku Klux Experiences." The article reports:

"Two statements by aged Confederate soldiers, that they were members of the famous Ku-Klux Klan of reconstruction days, praise for this band of 'home-protectors' was the principle feature of the regular meeting ..."

I enclose a copy of the article.

It should not be surprising that the early 20th century Klan launched its Texas organizing at a Texas Division United Confederate Veteran reunion in Houston, Texas in 1920. [Page 1-2, "Crusade for Conformity: The Ku Klux Klan in Texas, 1920-1930," by Charles C. Alexander, Texas Gulf Coast Historical Association, Publication Series, Vol. 6 No. 1, August 1962.] The modern KKK would be the re-launch of an ex-Confederate organization and the continuation of really is the true Confederate "heritage."

Being that the Ku Klux Klan was a secret violent terrorist society we might not be able to specifically name a particular ex-Confederate soldier as being a member of the Ku Klux Klan, but it can be assumed that it was very likely that an ex-Confederate who was able to participate in the Ku Klux Klan was a member of the Ku Klux Klan. Then again, it will be interesting to see what comes up with an intensive research of Gaston, Lemmon and the others. For example, in

checking the Texas State Historical Association online handbook we see that Junius Peak was a member of the Ku Klux Klan. (<https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fpe03>). The report (Street Naming and Change Process, Sept. 15, 2017, by Neva Dean, Sustainable Development and Construction Assistant Director.) by city staff lists only that he was a real estate developer, deputy sheriff, Captain in Texas Rangers, and Superintendent of White Rock Lack. Did the city staff not know of the Texas State Historical Association handbook or did they just didn't list the Ku Klux Klan membership?

Regardless whether it can be found that these individuals were members of the Klan or involved with war time atrocities, we can be assured that they mentioned their Confederate service was mentioned with pride after the fall of Reconstruction and if they had political careers their Confederate service was referenced. Further their careers were in a white supremacist state where they were privileged, in a multiracial democracy would they have had these careers?

IN REGARDS TO THE ARGUMENT #3 ABOVE THAT THE STREET IS NOT GENERALLY KNOWN TO BE CONFEDERATE

Is ignorance of local history really going to be an argument to retain a name? However, I would say that many now know that these streets are named after Confederates and some rationalization was adopted to keep them.

Streets are named after individuals so that they are remembered and the fact that some street name has failed to do that, doesn't make it more acceptable.

I think that we would rename a street named after a Nazi even if was only discovered in the reading of a footnote in an obscure journal buried in some archive.

IN REGARDS TO THE ARGUMENT #4 ABOVE THAT THE STREET WAS NAMED AFTER AN INDIVIDUAL WHO AFTER THE CIVIL WAR DID SOME MERITORIOUS ACTIVITY.

W.L. Cabell was elected mayor of Dallas because the multi-racial democracy of Reconstruction was overthrown. Otherwise a war criminal wouldn't be elected mayor of Dallas.

These ex-Confederates were often elected because they were ex-Confederates. Had Reconstruction not been overthrown by violence and terror these ex-Confederates would have spent their days after the Civil War apologizing for their actions and not celebrating them.

How many of their accomplishments might have been done by African Americans excluded from participating in civil life?

None of these individuals regretted their fighting for the Confederacy and that is how they should be judge.

I ask that all the streets named after Confederate soldiers be renamed. It might have to be spread out over time, but it needs to be done, and excuses to retain these names needs to be rejected.

To retain the names means the city of Dallas really isn't really all that concerned that they fought for white supremacy and slavery and the city of Dallas isn't really that concerned about the suffering of the slaves.

Sincerely Yours,

Edward H. Sebesta

CC:

Office	Name	Address	Address
Mayor Pro Tem	Dwaine Caraway	Mayor and City Council	Dallas City Hall
Deputy Mayor Pro Tem	Adam Medrano	Mayor and City Council	Dallas City Hall
District 1 Council Member	Scott Griggs	Mayor and City Council	Dallas City Hall
District 3 Council Member	Casey Thomas II	Mayor and City Council	Dallas City Hall
District 5 Council Member	Rickey D. Callahan	Mayor and City Council	Dallas City Hall
District 6 Council Member	Omar Narvaez	Mayor and City Council	Dallas City Hall
District 7 Council Member	Kevin Felder	Mayor and City Council	Dallas City Hall
District 8 Council Member	Tennell Atkins	Mayor and City Council	Dallas City Hall
District 9 Council Member	Mark Clayton	Mayor and City Council	Dallas City Hall
District 10 Council Member	B. Adam McGough	Mayor and City Council	Dallas City Hall
District 11 Council Member	Lee Kleinman	Mayor and City Council	Dallas City Hall
District 12 Council Member	Sandy Greyson	Mayor and City Council	Dallas City Hall
District 13 Council Member	Jennifer Staubach Gates	Mayor and City Council	Dallas City Hall
District 14 Council Member	Philip T. Kingston	Mayor and City Council	Dallas City Hall

APPENDIX A:

Calculations for name changes for first proposed set of street name changes with figures supplied by the Dallas city staff.

No.	Street	Total Cost	Notes
1	Lemmon Avenue	\$364,256.35	
2	Gaston Avenue	\$49,919.36	
3	Lee Parkway	\$1,430.94	
4	Beauregard Drive	\$1,053.42	
	Total	\$416,660.07	

Total	City of Dallas 2010 Census African American population	Cost per African American
\$416,660.07	298,993	\$1.39

I put the actual figures for the item, # of items, cost per item and calculated the totals. I summed the totals and then compared them with what the Dallas city staff gave for totals of the Total column. The small side table is to get the total # of items for the notices and was put into the “# of items” column for notices. In the city staff calculations $3 \times 212 = \$638$, which is an error of \$2, so I am at a loss where the discrepancy in the city staff calculation of the total comes from.

Street	Item	# of items	Cost per item	Total
Lemmon	Street Name Signs	384	\$100.00	\$38,400.00
	Signal-mounted signs	54	\$500.00	\$27,000.00
	Overhead Guide Signs	11	\$25,000.00	\$275,000.00
	Ornamental Bridge Identifier	2	\$10,000.00	\$20,000.00
	Service Road Entry Signs	2	\$1,000.00	\$2,000.00
	Notices (Three notices needed)	1905	\$1.07	\$2,038.35
	Newspaper Advertisement	3	\$212.00	\$636.00
	Pending Street name Signs	40	\$180.00	\$7,200.00
	Total			\$372,274.35
	City Staff Total			364,256.35
	Delta			\$8,018.00

Notice	No. of times	Total
635	3	1905

Street	Item	# of items	Cost per item	Total
Gaston	Street Name Signs	204	\$100.00	\$20,400.00
	Signal-mounted signs	42	\$500.00	\$21,000.00
	Notices (Three notices needed)	1548	\$1.07	\$1,656.36
	Newspaper Advertisement	3	\$212.00	\$636.00
	Pending Street name Signs	50	\$180.00	\$9,000.00
	Total			\$52,692.36
	City Staff Total			43,919.36
	Delta			\$8,773.00

Notice	No. of times	Total
516	3	1548

Street	Item	# of items	Cost per item	Total
Lee Parkway	Street Name Signs	4	\$100.00	\$400.00
	Notices (Three notices needed)	342	\$1.07	\$365.94
	Newspaper Advertisement	3	\$212.00	\$636.00
	Pending Street name Signs	6	\$27.00	\$162.00
	Total			\$1,563.94
	City Staff Total			1,430.94
	Delta			\$133.00

Notice	No. of times	Total
114	3	342

Street	Item	# of items	Cost per item	Total
Beauregard Dr.	Street Name Signs	4	\$100.00	\$400.00
	Notices (Three notices needed)	6	\$1.07	\$6.42
	Newspaper Advertisement	3	\$212.00	\$636.00
	Pending Street name Signs	2	\$9.00	\$18.00
	Total			\$1,060.42
	City Staff Total			1,053.42
	Delta			\$7.00

Notice	No. of times	Total
2	3	6