

1. Public Feedback for Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names

1. Please provide your feedback:

Membership on this Advisory Group is disappointing. No representation from groups like United Daughters of the Confederacy, Daughters of the American Revolution, or Sons of Confederate Veterans. Does the City even want to hear from all sides in this discussion? It appears not. Looks like the Yankees have taken control of the city yet again, as they did during the "War between the States".

Though I've lived here nearly 40 yrs, I'm not a native. Grew up in Yankee territory: Pennsylvania, but I believe we should recognize and memorialize our heritage. Leave well enough alone. Especially love the Appomattax Statue on Washington/Prince and point it out to all who come to visit Alexandria. Leave the street names alone as well.

Greg Crider

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Jan 03, 2016 13:49:41 Success: Email Sent to: craig.fifer@alexandriava.gov

1. Public Feedback for Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names

1. Please provide your feedback:

The statue on Washington Street must stay. He stands there solemn and humble and sad. He reminds us how terrible war is and that too many lives are lost. The Rebel Army was made up of poor men - men who didn't own slaves, who didn't own land, who had no opinion. They were called to serve as young men and women are today. Their service should be respected and their sacrifice honored.

My father served in Korea and came back to a hero's welcome. He served in Vietnam and came back to spits and bottles thrown at him. He was called to serve and did his duty, he didn't change - society did. Do not bend to society's fickleness.

Please don't remove this statue - I pass it daily and it reminds me to look for the solution and not strife.

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1. Public Feedback for Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names

1. Please provide your feedback:

Don't make any changes.

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1. Public Feedback for Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names

1. Please provide your feedback:

The Appomattox statue should remain untouched and no changes should be made to highway or street names. The Council should be asked to reverse its policy regarding the flying of the Confederate flag on City property on Lee's birthday and Confederate Memorial Day. I am offering this opinion as a resident of Northern Virginia (since 1951) and a descendant on both sides of my family of Confederate veterans.

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1. Public Feedback for Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names

1. Please provide your feedback:

I was born and raised in Alexandria. I attended the mostly black stonewall Jackson school in the 1970's. No one was bothered in the slightest that the school was named after a confederate general. Nor did it prevent the school from observing black history month. I was one of the few white students.

Confederate history is American history . It is part and parcel of the history of Alexandria. It sons left Alexandria to fight and die in the war. In 1957 congress recognized these men and others as U.S. Veterans.

America does have a race problem but it was not invented in the south nor by the confederacy. Our problems will not be solved by tearing down monuments or renaming streets . All this accomplishes is erasing history.

I am disturbed by the fact that there are no confederate heritage groups that have been invited to be a part of this commission. It sounds like the council has already made up its mind and is going through the motions of a hearing.

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1. Public Feedback for Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names

1. Please provide your feedback:

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a descendant of both Union and Confederate soldiers.

As much as I wish to do so, due to a medical condition I am unable to attend your public meetings.

While I fully and resolutely acknowledge the injustices inflicted on African-Americans over hundreds of years, I am even more resolute that we do NOT sweep aside the remembrance of the valiant soldiers, on both sides, who fought for their individual states to create the overall combined history of our country.

It will be even a stronger acknowledgment of those intertwined threads of history to keep them unchanged.

Thank you.

Lauris Eek III

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1. Public Feedback for Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names

1. Please provide your feedback:

Dear Members of the Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names,

I pray that you do not take your responsibilities lightly. Censure, erasure and the burying of history will not benefit anyone. I hope this is not a predetermined outcome and stalling tactic to remove the rich history of our fine city. There are those of us who will be watching and participating in the process of this attempted cultural marxism. I'm not sure if the attempts to divide us is done out of ignorance or with willful glee to eradicate all signs, symbols and memories of self-government and resistance to tyranny.

I find it disheartening that no representation was specifically made for members of heritage organizations such as members of the Sons of Confederate Veterans or the United Daughters of the Confederacy. I also hope the committee will take the time to fully understand and dig deep into the history and causes of the war and the purposes for the many memorials around our fair city.

I am quite ashamed of the actions taken so far by the city council. Pending the outcome of the recommendations and actions of this advisory group will dictate whether I will continue to be a taxpayer and resident of the city of Alexandria.

For mainstream America, the Civil War is a morality play in which Yankees righteously liberate the grateful oppressed. That story has tremendous emotional commitment but it is not true. There are so many facets to the struggle that if this is the official narrative accepted by this advisory group, you all have done a terrible disservice to the taxpayers, residents and your neighbors in Alexandria.

I look forward to the upcoming meetings and I pray y'all search for truth and do not make any decision or recommendations that deprive our community of its rich history, traditions and charm.

Sincerely,

Andrew Walmsley

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1. Public Feedback for Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names

1. Please provide your feedback:

Craig, as you will recall I was one of the applicants that was not selected to serve on this committee. However, my years of experience with this project certainly would have been helpful to those who were not involved - as I was. I have attached some information that I hope you will pass along to members of the committee since no one from the west end of the City - the most affected area - was selected.

I was the assistant director at Fort Ward when this renaming was in full swing. The Director, Joseph B Mitchell was tasked by the City Manager to provide names to the Planning Department as they requested. Also, as you know, the base of the Appomattox Statue has been damaged by vehicles. The last time this occurred, The City Manager directed that I arrange for and supervise the repairs. The insurance company would not pay for replacement of the base which cost would be in excess of \$500,000. The repairs to the base were then made by a conservator from the Smithsonian and I would not expect that it would survive a move. To replace this base today would probably be in excess of one million dollars.

TO: CRAIG FIFER, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

FROM: WANDA S. DOWELL, RESIDENT, WEST END

SUBJECT: RENAMING STREETS IN ALEXANDRIA

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

In the 1950s the City Civil War Centennial Committee was tasked with a way the City could "commemorate" the approaching event. While many states celebrated the Centennial, Virginia would only commemorate the event because most of the major Civil War Battles had been fought on Virginia soil.

The Committee proposed the restoration of Fort Ward –one of the Union forts that had surrounded the occupied City from 1861-1865. And, to pay homage to both sides, The Committee proposed that in the area west of Quaker Lane (which had just been annexed from Fairfax County), the north-south streets be named for Confederate Generals. City Council accepted this proposal with certain conditions. It directed that the officers be Virginians and that only the last name be used with no military rank attached. Only where the last name did not match the City street alphabet grid required by the Planning Department, were non-Virginia names used. Therefore, with these exceptions and some later added streets, every north-south street south of Seminary Road from Quaker Lane to the City's western border was named for a Confederate general from Virginia. This practice was in effect until the late 1970s, and involved an estimated 25-30 streets in this area alone.

IMPACT:

This is not a simple change street sign issue. The population of Alexandria is now stated as 150,000. If only one-half of these residents (75,000) live west of Quaker Lane, and if only one-half of those 75,000 live on these north-south streets, minimally some 37,000 residents will be affected. They will have to change their address on driver's permits, vehicle registrations, bank accounts and possibly other legal documents. And, consider the impact changing street names would have on the delivery of mail, 911 emergency/police responses, DMV, GPS, existing maps, and the City tax office to change the addresses of all of these affected residents. This does not even address the impact it would have on hundreds of businesses on South Pickett, Van Dorn, Walker, Beauregard streets, and Wheeler Avenue.

This only addresses the west end of the City. There are other such named streets scattered throughout Alexandria, such as Mosby, Morgan and Herbert Streets, et.al. Arthur Herbert was one of the founders of Burke & Herbert Bank – he was also a Confederate officer. Then, there is Maury Lane and Maury School, named for Matthew Fontaine Maury, who was an officer in the Confederate Navy. Maury, from Fredericksburg, was a world-renowned oceanographer who was the first to chart the Gulf Stream and other ocean currents, modernizing navigation of the oceans. He was considered so important that the Czar of Russia offered him sanctuary until the war was over. AND, if we are sanitizing everything, we have not even addressed Taney Avenue, where thousands more residents reside.

History always has its good, bad and ugly sides; this can be found in any conflict. Today we thank veterans for their service, no matter if we agree or not with the war in which they served. Primarily, the men for whom these streets were named were veterans who served Virginia. They just happened to be on the side that lost a war fought 150 years ago.

I have always been proud of Alexandria for preserving, interpreting and acknowledging all facets of its history – both the pleasant and unpleasant. Examples are: 1) the restoration/interpretation of Fort Ward, one of the forts that surrounded the longest Union occupied City of Alexandria. Commander James Harmon Ward was a Union Naval Officer, 2) the Appomattox Statue, erected in memory of the 100 men from Alexandria who died in the Civil War, and 3) the restoration of Freedman's Cemetery, where sadly not only civilians, but African-American soldiers (U.S.C.T.) who fought for the Union, were interred until Congress finally changed the law allowing these men to be re-interred in the Alexandria National Cemetery in 1864. This is all part of our City's history. We can't change the facts by trying to move a statue or renaming streets - using the tax money of affected residents and businesses to pay for it. The costs could be astronomical.

I find it sad indeed that we can find nothing more important, after the passing of 150 years, on which to focus our time and financial resources than things connected to a tragic war fought in the 19th century – before anyone living today was even born. We certainly have enough issues on which to focus in the 21st century. Repaving our streets would be a good beginning.

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1. Public Feedback for Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names

1. Please provide your feedback:

As a native and long time resident of Alexandria, and as a historian of the American Civil War, I am deeply troubled with any attempt to remove, relocate or rename any historical statues or road names. The Appomattox statue at Washington and Prince Street is a piece of history. Alexandria has deep ties to the Confederacy. It was Robert E. Lee's hometown, the white male population voted for secession in 1861, it was the site of the first bloodshed in the war, and the 17th Virginia formed up and joined the Confederate Army from Alexandria. Alexandria also has even deeper ties to slavery. The city was practically built on the backs of slaves and the city's most prominent figure, George Washington, owned hundreds of slaves. Reactionary attempts to cover up or delete this history will only continue to make it difficult to have open dialogue and understanding of the complex and often tragic history of the city. Altering the cultural landscape of the city to fit an idealized view of the past is not only misguided, it is dangerous. To avoid the sins of our past is to believe our history is a perfect one. We must embrace the complexities and challenges in our rich history. A simple viewing of the new show *Mercy Street* on PBS (which is set in Civil War Alexandria), will showcase how complex and difficult the Civil War was in Alexandria. Removing statues and renaming streets tells our children that the world is black and white.

I often look at the Appomattox Statue. His head is bowed in defeat, he has no weapon. Scrawled across the base are the names of Alexandria citizens who perished in the war. There is no prophecy of a Confederate resurgence, no anger to the North, no attempt to justify the cause of the South. A simple soldiers' monument that expresses the grief of a nation that had lost over 750,000 husbands, brothers, sons and fathers.

I would urge this committee to look towards doing more to build Alexandria's history, not to remove it. I believe this committee's efforts would be better placed at increasing public knowledge and awareness of the Civil War in Alexandria. Perhaps the city could increase heritage tourism by promoting more Civil War walking tours of the city, increase advertising to the Freedom House Museum or Freedman's Cemetery. Citizens and visitors alike want to discuss the history of the Confederacy and war (as recent events have shown) and the city of Alexandria should capitalize on that, not retreat from it.

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Jan 22, 2016 09:20:53 Success: Email Sent to: craig.fifer@alexandriava.gov

1. Public Feedback for Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names

1. Please provide your feedback:

Please do not turn a blind eye to history and our proud heritage. Trying to change history is an exercise of ignorance. Anyone would admit that slavery was an issue of the Civil War but it was not the cause and not the driving issue between the north and south. Moving a statue or changing street names will not change anything except to appease an upsurge of political correctness. Please stop this madness and be reasonable.

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1. Public Feedback for Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names

1. Please provide your feedback:

You will never erase history. This is something that cannot be done no matter how many of you self appointed Politically Correct Obama Gestapo Agents think it can be done. History books have been written by Clinton revisionists to distort, hide, change, modify and delete important facts about American History. For example, there are those who teach that ALL plantation and farm owners IN THE SOUTH held slaves. Only 3% did. And there were slave holders in the "Northern" States as well. But dissenters seem to have been successful in burying that information as well. Lincoln's emancipation declaration freed only those held in the "Rebellious States." The war was fought over economics, agriculture and recognition of the participating states. Not slavery exclusively.

I believe that the Civil War should never have been the stain in our once great Union! It's a reality that looks you in the face every day. Many volumes of books have been written on the subject from facts, regardless of one's loyalties.

I had two ancestors who served in the Confederate Service. I'm very proud of their service (as I am very proud of relatives - alive and deceased) who served in the military of the United States. In fact, we have come across information that we are descendant from a Federal General as well. Another fact that I'm interested in researching. A fourth great grandfather, his brother and a nephew were either injured or killed during the Revolutionary War.

Have you been threatened, in one way or another, by fringe groups? Those who believe they can eradicate man's inhumanity to man simply by changing street, building, subdivision and place names.

Adolph Hitler attempted to do so, based on irrational beliefs about certain ethnic and religious groups. Are you all trying to create a "master political race?" Sure sounds like it to me.

I greatly appreciate the accomplishments of all our citizens! Especially the continuing struggle for equality. Dr. King comes to mind. Remember what he said in his great speech about ALL CHILDREN living as one? It is probable that it can and will succeed despite the 'best' efforts of Government, Ad Hoc committees, racial, political, religious and fringe groups.

What are you doing? Dividing the country! Divide and Concur is the touchstone for this generation. It will lead to destruction. Do you realistically feel safe living in your sheltered, gated communities?

Frank Zappa composed a song entitled, "It Can't Happen Here" which addresses the fear Americans have of despotic, tyrannical leaders or "political parties." Can it happen here? Yes it can! It is happening in our midst, right now! But citizens of the U.S. continue to support the lies, and misinformation spread by our media because no one seems to have the willingness to counter these distortions.

In short, STOP IT!!!! Place statues of Federal Officers from the Civil War, all those who have made scientific, life improving, technological advances, and sport figures with the Confederate Officers in Alexandria! That would show equality, tolerance and love for all! Include the many important Alexandrians as well!

Alexandria is, indeed, a great, historical and gorgeous City. I love strolling and shopping in Old Town. Let Jefferson Davis Highway remain Jefferson Davis Highway! George Washington owned slaves! Why don't you attempt to erase that from the history books?

One more thing before I go, GOD BLESS AMERICA! IN GOD WE TRUST! AMEN!

Thank You,
Jim Buscher

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Jan 22, 2016 19:54:34 Success: Email Sent to: craig.fifer@alexandriava.gov

1. Public Feedback for Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names

1. Please provide your feedback:

It is inappropriate to judge our ancestors' actions and heroes, using the morality of the present. In terms of the Confederacy, these ancestors fought bravely for freedom from the centralizing authority of the federal government, and they fought bravely for what they defined as being their homelands. Cultural cleansing, for the sake of revisionist aims, is wrong. Don't be a party to it.

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1. Public Feedback for Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names

1. Please provide your feedback:

I hope that the Mayor will furnish to you a copy of the letter that I sent on this subject.

I want to remind you at Confederate military veterans are by law [38 USC §1501(3) et seq], and by custom, United States military veterans and entitled to the stature, respect and honors which accompany that status. As a citizen of the United States and a citizen of Virginia you are honor-bound to take no action to dishonor them that you would not likewise take against every other U.S. military veteran.

Nevertheless, your committee has been assembled because of the unanimous decision of the city council to spit upon the grave of every soldier who fought for the survival of Virginia and of the C.S.A. That council, through its action, reminds me of the hate-filled people who used to spit on American soldiers and veterans as they returned from the Vietnam battlefield; because they did not agree with the war. And now, they want you to make common cause with them. It is easy to attack dead heroes, they can't vote.

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1. Public Feedback for Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names

1. Please provide your feedback:

Dear Committee -

I had planned on attending tonight's meeting, but I am now unavailable due to child care issues. I wanted to share my feelings on this important topic.

I was born and raised in Leesburg, Virginia and have family that once called Alexandria home. I have worked for the City in the past and I have a strong attachment to its history. I currently work as a museum professional in Prince William County and have published several Civil War books. Working for a local government in the history field has given me a lot of insight into matters such as these. I also serve on the Board of the Virginia Association of Museums, so I know a lot about these issues across the state that you will discuss tonight. And I have friends and colleagues on both sides of this issue. People are passionate and that can be good and bad.

I also have led many tours for groups to Alexandria and have a few scheduled this year. These groups come for many reasons, but mostly the City's charm and its rich history...ALL of its history. I think the City and the residents should be proud of that history.

When it comes to dealing with Confederate symbols on government property, I am in agreement with the City's recent decision to take down the flags. Government property is for everyone and flying a flag that may seem racist and demeaning to a large segment of the population is unacceptable. As for the Appomattox Statue, I believe it should remain in place. This statue, unlike no other, represents peace and the post war reflection of the veterans. Like it or not, native Alexandrians fought for the Confederacy (and yes, for the Union too). We can not forget that, and possibly we should interpret that...not just remove it. The statue is well liked by many and most tourists I have brought to the area have said positive comments about it. As for the street names, I believe changing some is probably in the best interest. Certain Confederate figures such as R E Lee, have close ties to the City and should be left alone. Again, these men were once looked up too and I think it is unwise to just disregard their memory.

Finally, I would like to comment on the make up of the committee. I believe you are missing two very important groups. One, the United Daughters of the Confederacy - decisions by the City on this issue will impact them directly. The flying of the flags and matters of the statue, they are the main stakeholder. Secondly the Office of Historic Alexandria, you have on your staff a very credible and reputable staff that deals with the City's history and heritage every day. They should be included in this as well as they have insight of history and public perception. They work with the public every day (tourists and school children and city residents). I would implore you to include these two groups. As it stands now, the make up of the committee gives the impression of bias. And no matter what recommendations this committee makes to the City Council, it can not be perceived as biased.

Thank you for your time and thank you for taking these issues head on. They are passionate issues and ones that can impact the City's impression to the outside world. I ask for you to remember, that no historical figure is perfect and we should not judge the past by our modern views. As Mark Twain said of history "The very ink with which all history is written is merely fluid prejudice". -Rob Orrison

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1. Public Feedback for Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names

1. Please provide your feedback:

To the Advisory Group:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the change of street names, monuments, and flags in the City of Alexandria.

I hope the Advisory Group will NOT recommend the change of any items associated with the history of the Confederacy. The path down choosing what is right to celebrate and what is not is a slippery slope - especially in a diverse society like ours. I personally do not understand Cinco de Mayo and it's connection with our country, but I am willing to tolerate/learn why some people do celebrate it. Why don't we celebrate all people's heritage? Whatever happened to tolerance in this country? Are we going to change the African American symbols decades down the road because the demographics have been altered again?

I've always enjoyed visiting Alexandria. I like to bring history tour groups there for the wide variety of history. I like for people to see the French and Indian War sites, the Revolutionary sites, where Lee and Washington worshipped, where Confederate soldiers marched off to war and Union soldiers built fortifications.

Please do not rob me of this opportunity to share Alexandria with America.

Tolerance please!
Thank you for your time,
Matt Atkinson

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1. Public Feedback for Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names

1. Please provide your feedback:

Dear Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names,

My name is Ashley Whitehead Luskey and I am an historian of the Civil War era and the American South, as well as a practicing public historian. I hold a Ph.D. in History, as well as an M.A. in History, concentration in Public History, and write to you with more than 15 years of in-the-field experience as a public historian, including most recently, 9 years as an historian and front-line interpreter with the National Park Service.

In the wake of the horrific shootings in Charleston, SC, last July by self-proclaimed white supremacist Dylann Roof, we have seen significant backlash against multiple forms of Confederate iconography currently dotting the American landscape. While I am personally in support of the removal of Confederate flags from government and public property, as a devoted historian and public historian of the Civil War and historical memory, I am deeply concerned about the continued calls for removal of Confederate monuments and other historic iconography, such as the monuments located in Alexandria, from our public, civic spaces.

I am especially troubled by the lack of a public presence from both historians of the long Civil War era, as well as from public historians who specialize in issues of historical memory, shared authority, and civic engagement, on either the commissions (such as Alexandria's) appointed to review said monuments and iconography, or in the on-the-ground community discussions about the fate of such iconography. While the decisions about what to do with these controversial pieces of material culture and historical memory ultimately will rest in the hands of community members themselves, it strikes me that historians and public historians have valuable contributions to add to these discussions, as well as professional, educational, and civic responsibilities to make their voices more audible in these conversations. The inclusion of Civil War historians and public historians on these commissions and in these community discussions is essential for providing accurate historical context and a valuable, educational foundation against which community members might make their final decisions.

I am attaching the link to a recent article that I published not only about why I strongly believe these monuments and other Confederate iconography should remain (with proper contextualization) in situ, but also about the public historian's valuable role in these highly charged debates. In this article, I have outlined the case for the inclusion of historians in these formal discussions, as well as for the sharing of authority between historians and local communities in deciding how to move forward on these matters. I have also offered herein some insights as to the next possible steps that historians and communities might take together to help produce an outcome that is informed, educational in nature, and cathartic for all parties involved.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration of these ideas.

Sincerely,

Ashley Whitehead Luskey, Ph.D.

<http://www.civildiscourse-historyblog.com/blog/2016/1/25/confederate-iconography-the-next-steps-on-shared-authority-historical-stewardship-and-the-role-of-the-public-historian>

2. Please provide any contact information you would like the Advisory Group to receive. All fields are optional.

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