

New Middle School Naming Committee Meeting
October 23, 2018

The New Middle School Naming Committee meeting convened on Tuesday, October 23, 2018, at 6:30 p.m. at H-B Woodlawn.

Committee Members Present:

1. Ellen Smith, New Middle School Principal
2. David Pearson, Williamsburg Middle School Parent
3. Susan Cunningham, Arlington Historical Commemoration Committee
4. Toni Wexler, Arlington Science Focus Elementary School Parent
5. Eraina Reed, Key Elementary School Parent/PTA Member
6. Madelon Brennan, Taylor Elementary School Parent
7. Jane Scruggs, Williamsburg Middle School Staff Member/Arlington Resident
8. Joseph Caldwell, Williamsburg Middle School Staff Member
9. Johanna Boyers, Williamsburg Middle School Staff Member/Alternate
10. Tommy Antonipillai, Future New Middle School Student
11. Alex Frymoyer, Future New Middle School Student
12. Caroline Holt, Swanson Middle School Parent
13. Tara Antonipillai, Swanson PTA President/Parent
14. Saundra Green, Historic Commemoration Committee Member/Stratford Alum
15. Liz Lord, Donaldson Run Civic Association
16. Jen Thompson, Glebe Elementary School Parent
17. Dave Barish, Waverly Hills Civic Association
18. Beth Sanderson, Swanson Middle School Staff Member
19. Kris Humprey, Arlington Science Focus Elementary School Parent
20. Julie Hutsell, Swanson Middle School Staff Member

Also Present:

1. Daryl Johnson, School & Community Relations Staff Liaison (Non-Voting)

Agenda

1. Introductions/Greeting Circle

- a. Introductions – the committee gathered in a greeting circle to introduce each other again since the last committee meeting to increase team bonding.

2. Goals for Group

- a. Goal for the naming process – make a recommendation to the School Board for a school name (and one alternate) for the New Middle School.
 - i. Will the Stratford program keep its name? Discussions have been underway about the Stratford Program and it is prepared to change its name if the New Middle School is named Stratford Middle School.
 - ii. What was the original name of the Stratford program? It was the Jackson Program until it moved to the Stratford building.
- b. Goal for committee meeting – narrow down the list of name possibilities suggested by the committee to just a few to share with the community for feedback.

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3. **Criteria Review** - the committee reviewed the naming criteria to ensure the names suggested during the meeting are eligible based on the criteria outlined in [School Board Policy F-6.1 Naming of Facilities](#).
4. **Brain Dump** - The committee broke into six groups to list all the names they have in mind for the New Middle School.
5. **Gallery Walk** - The six groups posted the sheets listing all the names they would like to be considered. Each committee member was given 6 stickers to place a sticker next to the names they liked the most.
6. **Narrow #1** – The following were the top names the committee selected:
 - a. The name should include Stratford in some way.
 - b. Dorothy Hamm Middle School
 - c. Cherrydale Middle School
 - d. James Armistead Lafayette Middle School
 - e. Perseverance Middle School
 - f. Courage Middle School
 - g. Legacy Middle School
7. **Clarification/Advocacy**
 - a. Stratford should be included in the name of the New Middle School somehow.
 - i. If Robert E. Lee’s name is being removed from Washington-Lee, the committee should consider not having Stratford in the name at all since it is the birthplace of Robert E. Lee.
 - ii. Stratford honors the significance of the events that happened at the school and the event overshadows the relation that Stratford has to Robert E. Lee.
 - iii. If the committee puts Stratford in the name, it is an educational opportunity about Civil Rights history.
 - iv. There is a movement to move away from names associated with certain people from history, so a name that includes “at the Historic Stratford Site” is a compromise to honor the school’s history.
8. **Narrow #2** – two stickers were given to all committee members to select from the following:
 - a. Perseverance Middle School – 2 votes
 - b. Courage Middle School – 4 votes
 - c. Cherrydale Middle School at the Historic Stratford Building - 3
 - d. Legacy Middle School at the Historic Stratford Building – 10 votes
 - e. Stratford Middle School – 13 votes
 - f. Dorothy Hamm at the Historic Stratford Building – 10 votes
9. **Committee Feedback**
 - a. If the name is not Stratford, but “at the Historic Stratford Site,” people will not acknowledge Stratford’s history because it will be dropped from the name.
 - b. Acknowledging Dorothy Hamm means not acknowledging all the other Civil Rights Activists here in Arlington.
 - c. The school is technically in Cherrydale, but corners four other civic associations, but Cherrydale is the oldest of the civic associations, so that is why it is being considered as a school name.

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10. Next Steps - The top three names will be shared with the community to get feedback on the primary and alternate names that will be presented to the School Board.

- a. **Stratford Middle School** - In 1959, Stratford Junior High School became the first public school in the Commonwealth of Virginia to desegregate with the admission of four African American students -- Ronald Deskins, Michael Jones, Lance Newman, and Gloria Thompson. The event signified the end of massive resistance in the Commonwealth of Virginia and dealt a powerful blow to the opponents of racial equality nationwide. The original building was named after the Lee family plantation, Stratford Hall, the birthplace of Robert E. Lee.
- b. **Legacy Middle School at the Historic Stratford Building** - The name Legacy Middle School clearly recognizes the unique Civil Rights history of the Stratford Building and values the contributions of those students and families who worked together to fight for ensuring equal educational opportunities were available for all Arlington residents. As well, the name Legacy Middle School is aspirational in nature - it asks students to consider how they will leave their mark on our world; how they will make the world a better place.
- c. **Dorothy Hamm Middle School at the Historic Stratford Building** - Dorothy Hamm was a community activist during the Civil Rights era who lived in Hall's Hill, Arlington that fought to integrate Arlington Public Schools. Hamm joined a civil action case in 1956 that sought to end segregation in Arlington schools. In 1958, a U.S. District Court judge ordered that four African American children be admitted to the all-white Stratford Junior High School the following year, making it the first white public school in Virginia to admit African American students. In the intervening years, Hamm participated in a successful challenge to the Pupil Placement Act, which was designed to delay school integration while giving the appearance of compliance. While Hamm was the community activist at the forefront of the campaign to integrate Arlington Public Schools, she was not the only community activist that was determined to integrate Arlington schools so that all students would have the opportunity to receive an equal education. Additional information on Dorothy Hamm: <https://bit.ly/2PmTiWB>

11. Adjournment - The meeting ended at 8:30 p.m.