

Washington-Lee Renaming Committee
November 29, 2018 – Syphax Education Center – 7-9 p.m.
Meeting Minutes

Committee Attendees:

STUDENTS: Regina Santos- Caballero, John Holt, Chloe Slater, Thornton Thomas

PARENTS: Allison Chen

W-L STAFF: Hiromi Isobe, Jackie Stallworth, Dave Peters, Gregg Robertson

ALUMNI: Bill Moser, Julia Crull, Peter Strack, Dana Raphael

COMMUNITY: James Rosen, Allan Gajadhar, Nikki Roy, George Keating

HISTORICAL SOCIETY: George Axiotis

Unable to Attend:

PARENT: Duane Butcher

COMMUNITY: Melissa Perry

Resigned from Committee:

PARENT: Patrice Kelly

Group Facilitator: Sian Madden

APS Staff Liaison: Linda Erdos

Opening:

Sian led the members in another “lightening round” at the start of the meeting to allow time for each committee member to share where they were now on reflection of the conversations from the committee’s first four meetings.

Bill Moser indicated to Sian and Linda that he planned to tape record the meeting conversations which Sian shared with the committee members. Members asked if he could be asked to not tape record the meeting, but Linda explained that because it is a public meeting, it can be tape recorded by a member or observer.

Review/Discussion of WL Naming Finalists:

The committee members spent more than 90 minutes discussing each of the five finalists to articulate their reasons for choosing each naming option as well as any concerns about each name.

- **Washington-Lee**

Changing the recognition from “Robert E.” Lee to “William (aka William/Will or Billy)” Lee, originally George Washington’s huntsman and later his personal assistant who served by Washington’s side throughout the Revolutionary War.

George Keating provided and reviewed his written rationale for selecting “William Lee” which is attached.

- **Washington-Liberty**

An aspirational name that honors the Father of our Country, and the Mother of All People (as represented by the Statue of Liberty, an archetypal symbol of the U.S.).

Peter Strack discussed his rationale for selecting “Liberty” which is attached.

- **Washington-Lincoln**

Honoring George Washington, a founder of our country as both the General of the American Revolutionary War Army and the 1st President of the nation, and Abraham Lincoln, the 16th President of the United States, who worked to preserve the nation. Lincoln led the nation through the Civil War, its bloodiest war and its greatest moral, constitutional, and political crisis. In doing so, he preserved the Union, abolished slavery, strengthened the federal government, and modernized the economy. Washington’s Farewell Address to the nation is considered by many to be one of the most important documents in American history, emphasizing the importance of checks and balances, separation of powers, and achieving change in governance through amendments rather than aggression. Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address lifted the nation during the Civil War and became an iconic and international renowned endorsement of nationalism, republicanism, equal rights, liberty, and democracy.

No committee member wrote a more detailed rationale for “Lincoln,” but the group discussed the reasons (as summarized above) for choosing Lincoln as part of the name.

- **Washington-Loving**

Honoring Richard and Mildred Loving from Virginia who fought and won the civil rights decision in the US Supreme Court - Loving v. Virginia - which struck down all state laws banning interracial marriage.

Chloe Slater and James Rosen presented their reasons for selecting “Loving.” A merged copy of their rationale is attached.

- **Washington-Tubman**

Recognizing a woman, former slave and the many achievements of Harriet Tubman that reflect the mission, vision and core values of APS.

Dana Raphael presented her reasons for advocating for Harriet “Tubman.” A copy of her rationale is attached.

Preparation for Voting:

Members prepared to vote for their first choice and alternate recommendation.

Because the committee completed their work faster than originally expected, two members – Duane Butcher and Melissa Perry – were not able to attend. However, they emailed their rankings Linda Erdos in advance and Linda forwarded their emails to all of the committee members so they knew the rankings that would be used for proxy voting for both members. Their rankings were:

Duane Butcher – In Order of Preference:

#1 Washington-Loving; #2 Washington-Liberty; #3 Washington-Lincoln; #4 Washington-Tubman (No #5)

Melissa Perry – In order of Preference:

#1 Washington-Tubman; #2 Washington-Loving; #3 Washington-Liberty (No #4 or #5)

Voting Process:

Each committee member received one “ballot” to vote for their first choice. A ballot box was at the front of the room where members could place their ballot. Ballots were color coded and marked 1st Ballot, 2nd Ballot and 3rd Ballot for each round of voting so they could not be inadvertently mixed up while tallying the votes. Aside from the “proxy votes” which were shared by email with all members, and submitted on their behalf by Linda Erdos, voting was anonymous. Members could either write their first choice or “abstain.” After each vote, members of the committee were asked to serve as monitors as Linda Erdos tallied each ballot count and to verify correct voting for the member proxies.

First Ballot Results (Red):

William Lee – 2
Liberty – 4
Lincoln – 0
Loving – 7
Tubman – 6
Abstain – 1

Second Ballot Results (Blue):

William Lee – 0
Liberty – 4
Loving – 10
Tubman – 5
Abstain – 1

DECISION: By group assent, “Loving” was approved as the Committee’s First Choice.

Third Ballot Results: To select an alternate recommendation.

Liberty – 12
Tubman – 8
Abstain – 0

DECISION: “Liberty” was approved as the Committee’s Alternate Recommendation.

NOTE: After the voting was concluded, Julia Crull gave a note to Linda Erdos and Sian Madden and asked that it be included in the minutes:

To: Linda Erdos and Sian Madden:

I would like to abstain from voting. I was selected to be on this Re-naming Committee as a WL Alumni representative. My constituents were polled and they overwhelmingly chose (as did other groups) to keep the name of Washington-Lee the same. Since we have been told that this option is not available to us, I am choosing to abstain.

My conscience will not allow me to disservice my constituents by ignoring their requests and participating in the dishonesty of this process. I would like to have the fact that I abstained and the reason be noted in the minutes and in the voting tally.

Thank you.

Julia Crull

Next Steps:

- Thursday – Dec. 20 – Renaming Committee Recommendation Presented
(School Board Meeting Information Item)
- Thursday – Jan. 19, 2019 – Renaming Committee Recommendation Decision
(School Board Meeting Action Item)

Linda Erdos explained the School Board meeting process and approximate timeline for presenting the committee recommendation. Several members offered to assist in developing and making the presentation. Copies of the full presentation will be emailed to all members when it is complete.

The meeting ended at approximately 9:20 p.m.