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March 9, 2020

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Board of Supervisors
3501 Civic Center Drive
San Rafael, CA 94903

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SUBJECT: Public Hearing to Consider Whether to Rename Sir Francis Drake Boulevard

Dear Fellow Board Members:

Katie Rice

2ND DISTRICT

RECOMMENDATION: Hold a Public Hearing to consider whether to rename Sir Francis Drake Boulevard in unincorporated Marin. Provide formal direction to the BOS representatives to the Sir Francis Drake Working Group.

Stephanie Moulton-Peters

3RD DISTRICT

Background

The genesis of the renaming discussion was the nationwide racial justice movement that followed the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and other Black Americans by police officers, concurrent with the glaring socio-economic disparities exposed by the pandemic that continue to exist and persist in this county and country as a result of historic, structural and societal racism.

Matthew H. Hymel

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Integral to this movement were calls for government to examine and right policy and practices that work against inclusion, racial justice and equity, and calls for the removal of public monuments of individuals associated with slavery and oppression. Here in Marin, that call centered around effigies honoring Sir Francis Drake – a statue in Larkspur, a high school in San Anselmo, and a road that runs some 43 miles from interior bay to the coast

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Cross Jurisdictional Working Group

In response, Supervisors Rice and Rodoni (District 2 and District 4 respectively) convened a cross jurisdictional “Working Group” comprised of council representatives from each of the city/towns through which Sir Francis Drake Blvd. runs – Larkspur, Ross, San Anselmo and Fairfax – in addition to unincorporated areas along the SFD Corridor. These individual jurisdictions have road naming authority for their section of SFD Blvd.

The Working Group met several times, researched the regulatory process for road renaming, cost and process for property owners, and other questions

raised by residents and discussed next steps for community outreach and decision making.

The Working Group held a virtual countywide [listening session](#) in June and co-hosted [a learning session](#) in August with the Marin County Free Library. The group also had staff research the financial, legal, logistical impacts and actions for public agencies, residents and businesses related to a road renaming. And Marin County Free Library established a [webpage](#) with resources/articles related to Drake Boulevard History and recordings of public meetings in both English and Spanish.

At its November meeting, the Working Group determined it was time for the discussion to move to the community level, led by the individual jurisdictions, with a tentative deadline for local decision making on whether to proceed with a renaming of the road or not, by March 31, 2021.

Outreach and Engagement for Unincorporated SFD BLVD

In January of 2021, Supervisors Rice and Rodoni hosted a virtual [informational meeting](#) for residents and businesses along the corridor in the unincorporated areas of the Ross Valley and West Marin. During February, each Supervisor hosted virtual community conversations in their respective districts, geared towards soliciting comment and conversation with residents of the unincorporated areas, but open to anyone who wanted to join. The intent of these of these meetings was for the Supervisors to hear from community members, and for community members to hear from each other.

Participation to date

Since June, via working group hosted events in 2020 and Supervisor hosted meetings in 2021, we have received nearly 600 comments on the potential renaming of SFD Blvd. via email. The summer listening session drew over 300 viewers/participants, and the learning session drew about 200. Community conversations held in January and February drew approximately 150 participants.

Common themes/takeaways from public comment

- The name offensive to those who connect Sir Francis Drake to slave trade and colonialism
- Conflicting accounts/perception of Sir Francis Drake's involvement in slave trade and historical context
- Name change symbolic, but meaningful particularly in context of racial justice movement
- Name change reactionary; will not address racism or equity issues
- Name change erases history/cancel culture
- Changing name a poor use of resources, burdensome to SFD residents/businesses
- Any action/change of name should acknowledge/recognize Marin's indigenous people – Coast Miwok

- Renaming should be decided by the voters

SFD Jurisdictions Decisions to Date

- On January 14, the Town of Ross voted not to change the name
- On February 17, the city of Larkspur voted to retain Sir Francis Drake Boulevard as the legal name; adopt as a co-name what the consensus of the other jurisdictions is; in the absence of co-naming explore a historical designation or a ceremonial name.
- On March 4, Fairfax voted to change the name (even if only jurisdiction to do so)
- The town of San Anselmo to vote on the evening of March 9.

Recommended Options for Board Consideration:

Based on all the input we received and from actions taken from other councils, we recommend the board consider the following options:

- 1) Support the legal renaming of SFD Blvd.
- 2) Support the legal co-naming of SFD Blvd.
- 3) Support a historical designation or ceremonial naming of SFD Blvd.
- 4) No name change.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Fiscal impact would depend on the option chosen. Should the County vote to change the name of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard in unincorporated Marin, the impact to the County would be approximately \$50,000.

EQUITY IMPACT:

It's important that County's decision considers the larger equity issues in our County and other equity work being done. Chosen option should lead to additional educational opportunities in unincorporated areas and beyond to address institutional and structural racism in Marin. This should include the acknowledgement of marginalized communities such as the Miwok and other communities of color.

Respectfully submitted,



Supervisor Katie Rice

Supervisor Dennis Rodoni

Attachments:

Staff white paper

[FAQ Link](#)

[MCFL Drake Boulevard History Resources Website Link](#)