



June 17, 2021

Dear Residents,

I am writing to update you on decisions regarding the renaming process for your streets. After our last meeting on February 22nd with the residents and owners of JEB Stuart Court, JEB Stuart Road, and Jubal Early Court, the Planning Department solicited and received feedback on the names that our Department and the community had suggested for renaming. Some of the suggested names were associated with native botanicals (Blue Lilac), others were associated with the history of the C & O Canal (Lock, Key), and others were associated with local African American historical figures (Geneva Mason, Jeremiah Dutch, etc.).

The Planning Director is assigned the duty and the responsibility for street addressing in Montgomery County. I have made the determination to rename the three streets, which are currently named for Confederate officers, after two consequential Montgomery County residents – Georgia Mason and William Dove – so as to honor their legacies going forward. There is detailed information about the names selected in the paragraphs below. In addition, in an effort to keep some consistency within the existing streets, Geneva Mason’s name will replace both instances of the name ‘JEB Stuart’. **JEB Stuart Road and JEB Stuart Court will be renamed Geneva Mason Road and Geneva Mason Court, respectively. Jubal Early Court will be renamed William Dove Court.**

We put much effort and care into this entire renaming process and sincerely appreciate your input. After the Planning Department received your feedback in February, we worked closely with Emergency Services and Fire Department staff from Montgomery County and the City of Rockville to make sure that the new names are not duplicative or could easily be confused with an existing street name. We have also ensured that the new names will meet the standards of our existing *Addressing and Street Naming Manual* and the Planning Department’s *Street Renaming Policy*.¹

Out of all the individual names proposed for the new street names, Geneva Mason’s name received overwhelming support. Geneva Mason (1899-1980) was a prominent community leader in the Scotland community in Montgomery County; she was instrumental in the rebuilding of the Scotland community and its fight against urban renewal efforts in the 1960s. One resident wrote to us with the following comments, that we found very persuasive:

1



Using Confederate Generals' names for streets in my neighborhood was an injustice that did harm to people in the community. Choosing an innocuous name such as Blue Lilac would be an insult to the people who were harmed by the choice of Confederate names, and is merely trying to pretend like the injustice never happened. The only way to take a step to right the injustice and attempt to repair the damage done would be to honor a local African American historical figure.

When we saw the support for Ms. Mason and for recognizing local African American historical figures, we explored other individuals from the Scotland community who might be also honored. In addition to Ms. Mason, the Scotland community suggested renaming a street in honor of one of their elders: William Dove. Dove, an African American man born in slavery, was one of the founding members of the Scotland community. He purchased some of the first parcels in Scotland and is an ancestor of many Dove and related family members who live in Scotland today.

We have received a great deal of feedback regarding whether financial compensation for these name changes would be available. After thoroughly researching this issue, we determined it is not possible for the Planning Department to issue individual checks to each owner or resident. Our procurement rules simply do not allow it. We also reached out to the County Executive's office to explore that possibility of rebates on county property tax bills; however, we were told that this would not be possible. Exploring these options is one of the reasons that we have been so delayed in getting back to you all with final decisions – please know that we tried hard to find a solution, but were unsuccessful.

Within 30 days, you will receive a separate letter from the Planning Department to formally initiate the renaming process. The Planning Department will be responsible for initiating the process with the applicable county agencies. Additionally, we have attached a list for your convenience that notes which agencies you as the resident and/or property owner will need to contact regarding this change, and which ones the Planning Department will contact.

We thank you for your patience and your willingness to work with us during this process.

Sincerely,



Gwen L.M. Wright

Director

Montgomery County Planning Department