

TO: Jonesboro City Council
FROM: Councilman Charles Coleman, Chair, Unity Coalition Advisory Committee
RE: Committee Recommendations
DATE: September 17, 2019

On June 18, 2019, the Jonesboro City Council voted on to postpone temporarily RES-19:072 until the September 17, 2019 council meeting with the following instructions:

1. That the Mayor with all do due haste appoint a committee to bring back a recommendation on or before September 17, 2019 on a solution to the situation of Jonesboro not having a street named after Martin Luther King, Jr.; and,
2. That the committee studies all possibilities of the designation of a Memorial Highway or a suitable and acceptable alternative naming opportunity.

On July 10, Mayor Perrin nominated eleven residents to serve on the "Unity Coalition Advisory Committee", and these names were confirmed by the City Council at its meeting of July 16. The members are Emma Agnew, John A. Beineke, Judy Casteel, Charles Coleman, Sandra Combs, Jeffrey Gibson, Jeff Mead, Lisa Melton, Chris Moss, Adrian Rodgers and Garry Tate.

Since then, the Committee has met four times. Among their considerations were the review and discussion of several related issues, including these proposed and approved resolutions:

- RES-05:402, 10/4/05, Guidelines for Naming Public Parks, Streets, and Facilities.
- RES-08:220, 12/2/08, Establishing and Appointing Members to an Ad Hoc Committee Regarding the Renaming of a City Street in Honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
- RES-09:056, 6/16/09, Renaming of the Stadium Blvd. Overpass crossing Highway 63 in Honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; and naming priority shall be considered to any new street within the city limits or any future bypass created around Jonesboro.
- RES-13:112, 11/19/13, Renamed Stadium Boulevard north of I-555 to Red Wolf Blvd.
- RES-13:206 (Denied by Public Works Committee 1/7/14), Renaming of State Highway 141 running north to the city limits as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.
- RES-19:072 (Postponed 6/18/19): Renaming of Highway 91/49 (Johnson Avenue) in Honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

At the committee's last meeting on August 22, the majority of the committee voted to make these recommendations to the City Council:

- Naming of the bike/pedestrian trails from Allen Park to Marion Berry Boulevard, and the proposed trail from Downtown to Arkansas State University as the "Dr. Martin Luther King Freedom Trail". Along the Downtown/A-State trail would be the placement of educational signage with quotes of Dr. King that correspond with those at the Dr. King Memorial in Washington, DC. Payment for the signage would be from contributions to a newly created city restricted fund for this purpose, and the maintenance thereof. The contributors may, if desired, designate a memorial name at the bottom portion of the signage. It is suggested that Mayor appoint a special committee, confirmed by the City Council, to raise funds for the signage, determine their location, and approve the wording of the memorial designation on the signage.

- Re-name Commerce Drive and the extension north of the planned Eastern Arterial as “Dr. Martin Luther King Drive”.
- Re-name Aggie Road as “Dr. Martin Luther King Boulevard”.