

Copy for the Record
June 14, 2004-Town Council Meeting

My name is Melissa Johnson Lankford and I appreciate the opportunity to speak this evening.

I was mildly encouraged by Mayor Foy's memo that is being introduced this evening. It validates the primary concern of those opposed to the re-naming of Airport Road---the simple fact that no individual or business directly effected by this change has been consulted regarding impact to them and the feelings of history and pride citizens and others have in Airport Road. I am hopeful that the memo will be approved. And that a proper review and compromise will be reached by a cross-section of those affected and those desiring the renaming. Airport Road will ensue.

First to recap: there have been 879 signers to the petition in opposition of renaming Airport Road for anyone or anything, there are now 157 additional signatures added to the 722. 744 have CH addresses, 63-Carrboro, 22-Hillsborough, 15-Durham, 10-Pittsboro and 25-Other; 144 signers had Airport Road addresses. Please bear in mind that of the 135 non-CH addresses the majority own property on Airport Road or as I, have a vested interest there through family or business. Are you aware this proposal has brought more comment to Town Hall than any other proposal since curbside garbage collection? Unnamed sources in Town Hall report more than the majority of phone calls have been against this proposal with hundred of calls received as well as the vast majority of letters to the Council, Mayor and Town Hall. The numbers just don't add up.

To date we have received rough cost analyses from 16 businesses that calculate the cost of this proposed change to Airport Rd totaling in excess of \$151,402 for the impact to business. This does not include the cost to residences or the larger businesses that must have all changes take place through a corporate office. Additionally there will be a very large cost to the Town of CH not just for new street signage but for the recommendation seeking to change the address of the Town Hall---this will be passed on to all taxpayers in CH, a double-whammy for those on Airport Road---clearly a demonstration of the Naming Committee's disregard for citizen input and pocketbooks. By reviewing these numbers, packets, and other documentation you have received; I hope you will see the REAL impact of this proposed change.

Second, I am still confused as to why those who are opposed to this renaming be required to offer up evidence that this is not a well thought out idea. As of yet, there have been no tangible reasons given for renaming Airport Road. It is preposterous to me and at least 879 others, that we who have had no voice continue to be required to justify keeping Airport Road as Airport Road. Some on the council have stated this is just like moving, but you are certainly wrong---we did not choose to make a move---we have been evicted---from Airport Road and this process!

Third, I was dismayed by the remarks of Cam Hill in yesterday's CH Newspaper—he stated that much opposition to changing the name of Airport Road is veiled racism—Mr. Hill this borders on slandering those who have exercised their right to participate in this so called process. Those of us in opposition to this proposed name change have solidly evidenced our position through comments, signed petitions, letters, emails, phone calls, attending meetings, and more—and we have been clear throughout, it is not Dr King we are opposed to, our opposition is to any name change at all.

In closing, I encourage you to receive and review the petition put forth by Charles Carver this evening.

Signed,

 6/14/04

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