

Chapel Hill Town Council
Chapel Hill NC 27514

Hand Delivered 6-14-04
June 14, 2004
Joan Clark's Office
Agenda # 2.1

To the Mayor and All Council Members::

I urge you to make no decision this evening renaming Airport Road to Martin Luther King Road (Drive, Boulevard). Or any time soon.

The proposal has created much contention lately. Community consensus is needed for a dramatic move or change of this sort, and that could take a convenient long time. To everyone's benefit.

I do not live on Airport Road.

I honor the person and memory of Martin Luther King. I met him. We shook hands. Ellen and I attended a speech/rally/sermon in Williamsburg in 1963 in a black church, where we and several others stood in the back the whole exciting time. Felt we had no business sitting in a pew that local black Americans might have come in late to sit in.

Perhaps we can think outside the box. Beyond the original proposal (but not at all negating the intent). Raleigh Road? It's long, important, visible. South Road? Pretty dull name.

Or some major *new road* to be created or extended down the line. This will surely happen in due time in our town. Hard to imagine anyone's objecting to that or being inconvenienced or concerned about retaining local history.

Aside, it just occurred that we have no Washington Street. Or Lincoln. Eisenhower. Or if we do, they are small, short, out of the way. Roosevelt Drive is there, but minor.

Please, let us not get carried away in haste. I doubt seriously that the local NAACP expected or certainly intended the current brouhaha.

Sincerely,



Roderick A. Ironside

349 Wesley Drive
Chapel Hill 27516
929-3694

PS: When we have a streetname honoring King, I suggest that we dispense with the "Dr." and the "Jr."
Everyone knows that famous name, Martin Luther King. It speaks to us. It stands by itself.