



TOWN OF FAIRFAX

STAFF REPORT

April 7, 2021

TO: Mayor and Town Council

FROM: Garrett Toy, Town Manager

SUBJECT: Receive report from the Council representatives to the Marin County Sir Francis Drake Ad-Hoc Working Group regarding the concept of renaming Sir Francis Drake Blvd. and provide direction as appropriate

RECOMMENDATION

Receive report from the Council representatives to the Sir Francis Drake Ad-Hoc Working Group and provide direction to the Council representatives and/or staff as appropriate.

BACKGROUND

The Town of Fairfax is one of five jurisdictions participating in a discussion about the use of Sir Francis Drake's (SFD) name on the boulevard that traverses east-west across the central part of Marin County. The other jurisdictions through which the road passes are the County of Marin, City of Larkspur, and the Towns of Ross and San Anselmo. Each of the jurisdictions appointed two Councilmembers to the SFD Ad-Hoc Working Group. The Town's Council representatives are Mayor Ackerman and Councilmember Goddard. Collectively, the ten elected officials have been participating in a series of public forums (i.e., community listening and learning sessions) and three Working Group meetings.

At the Council's December 16, 2020 meeting, Councilmember Goddard and Mayor Ackerman reported that the Working Group agreed that members should return to their respective jurisdictions to take up the issue of whether to move forward at the local level with renaming of Sir Francis Drake Blvd. Each jurisdiction should complete its community process and make a final decision no later than March 31. The Members will report back at the Working Group's early April meeting.

They also reiterated that the request is focused on the concept of changing the name and not selecting a name. The selection of a name would be a separate multi-jurisdictional process that would occur after decisions are made regarding the renaming of SFD. Staff also stated at the Council meeting that each entity has jurisdiction over its portion of SFD and the possibility exists that portions of SFD may have different names and/or co-names.

The Council assigned Councilmembers Goddard and Cutrano to lead the local effort on the renaming process including the scheduling of a community listening session. The Council held the listening session on Saturday, February 6th from 10:00am to 12:00 noon. Councilmembers Goddard and Cutrano also worked with staff to create a Town webpage for local resources including a link to the Marin County Free Library's resource and learning page focused on Marin County and the Sir Francis Drake roadway. While the information on the Town webpage and the associated links is not intended to be comprehensive, we do anticipate the resources accessible through this page will grow over time. The Town webpage also has information regarding the name change process and potential costs.

DISCUSSION

At its March 3rd meeting, after a lengthy discussion, the Council provided direction to its two Council representatives to inform the Ad-Hoc Working Group that the Fairfax Town Council supported the renaming of Sir Francis Drake Blvd. The Council requested Mayor Ackerman and Councilmember Goddard to report back to the Council after the Working Group met to discuss the matter.

The other four jurisdictions have discussed/considered the matter. Specifically, the Town of Ross voted not to change the name of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard. The City of Larkspur voted to not change the name but would consider a co-name or a historical designation or a ceremonial name for SFD. The Town of San Anselmo could not agree on a course of action and, as a result, no action was taken with regard to the name change. The County of Marin voted to not change the name but would consider co-name or a historical/ceremonial/honorary name or designation for the SFD corridor. The County has since indicated that a legal co-naming of a street may be problematic from a logistical and public safety perspective. It also appears that most communities pursue historical/ceremonial/honorary names for streets instead of co-naming.

The Ad-Hoc Working Group met on March 31st. Mayor Ackerman and Councilmember Goddard will provide an oral report of the next step recommended by the Ad-Hoc Working Group.

FISCAL IMPACT

n/a