

CITY OF MELBOURNE, FLORIDA
MINUTES – SPECIAL MEETING BEFORE CITY COUNCIL
APRIL 17, 2006



A special meeting of the City Council was held in the City Council Chamber, 900 East Strawbridge Avenue, and was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Mayor Harry Goode.

1. Pledge of Allegiance.
2. Roll Call.

Present:	Harry C. Goode, Jr.	Mayor
	Loretta Isenberg-Hand	Vice Mayor, District 6
	Richard Contreras	Council Member, District 1
	Mark LaRusso	Council Member, District 2
	Kathy Meehan	Council Member, District 3
	Grace Walker	Council Member, District 4
	Cheryl Palmer	Council Member, District 5
	Jack M. Schluckebier, Ph.D.	City Manager
	Paul R. Gougelman, III	City Attorney
	Cathy L. Baker	Assistant City Clerk
	Amy W. Elliott	Deputy City Manager
	Howard Ralls	Deputy City Manager

3. ORDINANCE NO. 2006-33: (Public Hearing/First Reading) An ordinance amending Chapter 28, "Streets, Sidewalks and Other Public Places," by changing the name of Airport Boulevard to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard; providing that the name change applies to the length of Airport Boulevard from New Haven Avenue to Apollo Boulevard.

Attorney Gougelman read Ordinance No. 2006-33 and Ordinance No. 2006-34 by title.

Mayor Goode opened the public hearing for both ordinances, noting that all speakers are limited to three minutes, Melbourne residents will speak first and then non-residents.

Reverend Carol Glanton, 906 E. Covina Way, President, South Brevard Ministerial Alliance, said in 1987, after Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday was declared a legal holiday and following Melbourne's first MLK Peace March (5,000 participants), she stood here and asked Council to consider renaming University Boulevard to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard. After almost 20 years, she said she stands here and asks - how long. Reverend Glanton said she was born and raised in Melbourne and still lives in the house she grew up in overlooking a park named in her honor. She has earned the right to stand here and ask the City to honor the request of the Martin Luther King Coalition to rename Airport Boulevard. She added that Airport Boulevard was originally named Magnolia Street when Melbourne and Eau Gallie merged.

Enoch Mobley, 1802 Airport Boulevard, said he has owned property on Airport Boulevard for 25+ years. There have been several changes on and along the road in that time that he has mostly supported. He whole-heartedly supports and approves the renaming of Airport

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Boulevard to honor Dr. Martin Luther King. Any time there is talk of change there will be opposition from those affected. Changing business stationery and cards is a small price that all of us can pay. Most of those on Airport Boulevard burdened by the change of address will find a way to recoup the business expense during the tax-reporting period. He also noted that informational signs can lead people to the Airport. Mr. Mobley asked fellow Airport Boulevard property owners to join him in supporting the renaming.

David Graham, 1205 Heather Glen Circle, stated that in 2000 he asked Council to show some backbone, step up and name a major Melbourne thoroughfare to honor Dr. Martin Luther King. He is asking this Council to do the same thing. Elected officials are expected to do things from time to time that are controversial and universally unpopular. Council is acting in the general good of the community. Mr. Graham said there are no major cities, which Melbourne is becoming, that do not have a major thoroughfare named for Dr. King.

Patricia Wells, 1705 Airport Boulevard, said she was raised, and is raising her family, in this house on Airport Boulevard. This is her family's roots and she does not want the name changed. She finds it rather bothersome that no one asked the property owners' opinion.

Anne O'Berry, 1893 Players Circle, N., said that Martin Luther King was a great man who did a lot for the people of this Country; however, there have been enough namings and renamings. He has been honored in many ways - a holiday, naming honors, etc. If someone wants to honor Dr. King, they should do so through their actions and behavior.

Earl Harper, 1142 Eddie Allen Road, commented that he has a problem with the name change and problem with people who call Mrs. Poole a racist.

Mayor Goode asked Mr. Harper to remain on the subject.

Continuing, Mr. Harper said the street needs to remain the same. People who live on the street were not approached. The Committee brought it to Council and it was voted down. Then the Committee met again and brought it back to Council. He said he is not sure that was legal.

Mayor Goode stated it was legal. Council directed the Committee to review the issue. The Committee returned its original recommendation to Council.

Frank Louisell, 612 Palmetto Avenue, said that Martin Luther King was a great civil rights leader, as was Bobby Kennedy. Both stood for equality and civil rights and paid with their lives for what they believed in. If we name something for one great leader, it is only fair that we should name something for other great civil rights leaders.

Marie Lopez, representing the Florida Puerto Rican Heritage Chamber of Commerce, asked Council to vote positive to rename Airport Boulevard for Martin Luther King. Council has a responsibility to all citizens. It would make everyone feel welcome. She asked Council to do something for the man that did so much for this Country.

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Spence Guerin, 2112 Helen Street, commented that the State of Florida is second only to South Carolina in active hate groups. The Southern Poverty Law Center tracks hate groups and targets programs to teach tolerance, which is an on-going necessity. He said that naming a street is a tool to teach tolerance and a behavioral reminder symbol. He said some of the inflammatory comments ironically support the need for teaching tolerance and tend to prove that we should name this street for Martin Luther King, Jr. He favors Airport Boulevard over the Melbourne Auditorium because streets have daily exposure. He said to suggest that the memory of Martin Luther King is bad for business is a sad viewpoint. Mr. Guerin said that with a little leadership this could be an opportunity for better business.

Cammie Donaldson, 2112 Helen Street, Space Coast Progressive Alliance, stated that her organization stands united with the many community groups, churches, and individuals in support of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Naming Opportunities Committee recommendation to rename Airport Boulevard. The Committee chose a solution that provides maximum visibility with minimal cost. She submitted a petition of support containing 153 signatures and an electronic petition containing 55 entries. Ms. Donaldson said she is not insensitive to the cost to the businesses; however, the cost can be minimized using a dual name approach for as many as five years. She said if a business doesn't change its stationery in five years – it is not doing business. She provided information regarding Chapel Hill's (NC) process to name a street for Dr. King. The Airport may lose a little identity, however, she suggested the street be identified as Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard, Melbourne's Historic Airport Road. She agreed that the Airport has an identity problem and needs more signage. She suggested directional signs, maybe in the shape of an airplane. Referencing the businesses concerned about losing customers, she said we could make it a positive experience – a chance to show this is a City for economic and social equality and peace. She urged Council to support the renaming.

Rob Selkow, 1711 Hickory Street, discussed the beatings, bombings, blackmail and assassination of Martin Luther King. He said Dr. King demonstrated his faith by turning the other cheek and laying down his life for others. He was not the civil rights movement, the movement is made up of those whose names we will never know, murdered for their support of the civil rights movement. Greater sacrifices were made by many people. Honoring Dr. King honors the movement and the peace among the races today. Mr. Selkow asked Council to take this positive action and end the debate.

Jackie Cartwright, 3099 Longwood Boulevard, stated that renaming roads after historical figures is nothing new and naming roads to honor Dr. King began right after his assassination. There are over 600 roads across the Country named for him. It is shameful that Melbourne has taken two decades on the issue. It is time to move forward. It is not just a symbol to honor Dr. King; it is for all African Americans, particularly those involved in the struggle for civil rights. It honors the American ideals of freedom, equality and social justice. This will send an important message to people of color - it's about respect. It is more than renaming a street, it would instill pride in the citizens that value King's message. She asked Council to put itself on the line for the humanity of the City. She quoted Dr. King, "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

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Dr. Kathy Pierce, 1601 Airport Boulevard, discussed her difficulties in establishing her business on Airport Boulevard and said a name change would only add to her difficulties.

Carl Finerson, American Legion Post 191, Grant Street, said that Council is familiar with Dr. Martin Luther King's accomplishments. It's not a question of whether he is worthy and deserving of this honor. The federal government, the states and the cities that have honored him answered that question. The question is whether Council Members will support a commitment made at the NAACP forum and vote to honor Dr. King. He said all present members have made such a commitment. Mr. Finerson said Council is the problem and Council is the solution.

Mark Holshoe, 356 Patrick Circle, said he was born and raised in Melbourne. Martin Luther King was a great civil rights leader and stood up for Americans, black and white. Today's society dictates the naming of streets as a symbol to Martin Luther King. There has been discussion about Martin Luther King Boulevards in other cities; however, no discussion about crimes committed on these streets. He said that the MLK Boulevard in Volusia County was recently on the evening news because of crack houses and drugs.

Based on audience outbursts, Mayor Goode reminded the audience that this speaker deserves the respect afforded other speakers.

Continuing, Mr. Holshoe said that the renaming of the street might have a negative influence on property values and the City's drug cultural. He is opposed to the renaming.

James Teele, 2442 Empire Avenue, Dr. Martin Luther King Naming Opportunities Committee member, stated he is the person that championed Airport Boulevard. He asked Council to support Ordinance No. 2006-33 and close a long chapter in the City's history.

Elizabeth Nall, 3264 Fairview Drive, said she has been teaching high school reading for 28 years. Each year students know less about Dr. Martin Luther King. He is a hero in this Country that did so much for civil rights and our children don't know about him. They also don't know the word segregation or integration. Mrs. Nall said we should do anything we can to draw attention to this fabulous person. One of the first things a child learns to read is a street sign; the street renaming would provide a wonderful opportunity to teach children about Dr. King.

Samuel Lopez, 2129 Royal Poinciana Boulevard, President, United Third Bridge, stated he supports renaming Airport Boulevard. He discussed some of his personal experiences based on race, and said this City has not changed based on some of the remarks made this evening. Dr. Martin Luther King and others paid with their lives for the civil rights movement. This issue is very important to Melbourne's civil rights organizations. A lot of public officials come to Hispanic events and ask for the Hispanic community's support; he said tonight he is asking Council to do the peoples' business – rename Airport Boulevard for Martin Luther King.

Charles Favors, President, South Brevard NAACP, said he has worked with NAACP

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chapters across the state on streets to honor Martin Luther King. In discussing Melbourne's attempts, he has found that none of these chapters can equal Melbourne's 20-year history. Our leaders need to step up to the plate; it is 2006 and the time is now. He said it doesn't matter how you voted in the past, you have the chance to make it right. Mr. Favors said all people in Melbourne, especially blacks, would appreciate your vote.

Leonard Ross, Dr. Martin Luther King Coalition, said this issue has grown beyond the simple renaming of a street for Dr. King. It has become an issue of whether the voice of a minority can be heard. There is a growing and persistent belief that minority goals and ideals are completely irrelevant to this Council, which is perpetuated by comments of Council Members, both past and present. Mr. Ross said the Airport can be accessed without using Airport Boulevard.

Pat Poole, 805 E. Palmetto Avenue, said she has carried petitions on this issue since 1987. She has researched the issue and walked and talked with people. A minority in this Country does not rule just because they make a loud noise and say they want something. She said we are all Americans, a nation of the people, by the people, for the people - we forget that during controversy. She discussed the proper way to rename a street. She asked Council to represent all of Melbourne residents.

Alberta Clinkscales, 2032 Nottingham Road, said thanks is owed to our elders for believing in the righteousness of commemorating the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. She is a descendant of Africans who came to this Country in the hulls of ships and made slaves. She thought this information would help Council understand her desire to name a street in honor of a civil rights soldier. The renaming would provide a glimmer of social justice; a unifying base for residents interested in living in harmony with each other. She asked Council to make the right and just decision - vote yes on Airport Boulevard.

Elizabeth Newell, 1609 S. Airport Boulevard, said that Airport Boulevard was once Magnolia Avenue, so she has experienced a name change. She does not want any name change. She agrees there should be a street, monument or park named to honor Dr. Martin Luther King; however, not Airport Boulevard. Ms. Newell said this is not about segregation; it's about changing the name of her street that she has lived on since 1963.

Eugene Johnson, 823 Brothers Avenue, said he was born at this address, which was formerly 235 S. Melbourne Avenue, so he is familiar with a street name change. He has a deep desire to have a street named for Dr. Martin Luther King, and Airport Boulevard is that street. He served his Country for 31+ years and returned to Melbourne. It saddens him that the "un-naming" of a street for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. has been allowed to continue for 20 years. Council has the opportunity to close this and go about the business of making Melbourne greater than it already is.

Mike Fischer, 1905 Airport Boulevard, said he is a member of the Melbourne Airport Authority; however, his comments are not reflective of the Airport Authority. He represents a majority of Airport Boulevard property owners (he asked them to stand and be recognized) opposed to the renaming. He submitted a petition of opposition containing 362

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signatures. These are owners, customers and patrons on Airport Boulevard. The issue is not whether to honor Dr. King, the issue is renaming this road. The name doesn't matter, John F. Kennedy, Ronald Reagan, Martin Luther King, it should not be done without the support of a majority of the property owners.

Reverend Hartford Lee, 2450 King Richards Road, said he is here as the chairman of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Naming Opportunities Committee. The Committee, a multi-racial, multi-occupational group, took a long hard look at the opportunities available to honor Dr. King. The Committee listened to the citizens and provided its recommendation to Council in January. The swiftness of Council's denial stunned the Committee. He thanked Council for the opportunity for the people to give their views. Reverend Lee said if not for the civil rights movement, he would not be able to stand here or look certain members of Council in the eye. He said the City of Melbourne could make its Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard better than any other city. Dr. King represented a significant movement in this Country. Today's youth are lacking decent role models and Dr. King's legacy can be used to instill values.

Mark Tietig, 6065 S. Tropical Trail, Merritt Island, noted that he is a civil rights attorney and an area resident for 23 years. We should be used to changing our stationery and business supplies because our area code has changed from 305 to 407 to 321. Mr. Tietig said Martin Luther King symbolizes tolerance and equality. It would be a real benefit for this city to promote tolerance and non-violence that is lacking in this world and seems to only be getting worse.

Eddie Taylor, 1500 Woodlake Drive, President, Lipscomb Street Park Association, said change will come and we won't suffer from it. He asked Council to be visionaries, and added that it takes courage to be a visionary. Mr. Taylor asked the Council to accept the Committee's recommendation and make the change.

Mark Modak, 1262 Thallar Lane, Palm Bay, said he owns a small business at 1601 Airport Boulevard. Dr. King stood for unity – not division or debate. We need to find a win-win situation – something to honor Dr. King that is not at the expense of a few small business owners. Mr. Modak said a Committee member told him that Airport Boulevard was chosen because it was the path of least resistance – affecting fewer business owners. He prefers Melbourne Auditorium with a reflecting pool and a bust, paid for at the expense of all taxpayers.

Rand Carroll, 6830 Sheridan Road, Melbourne Village, said has been a public school teacher for 36 years. He read an excerpt from an April 13, 1998 Time Magazine article about Dr. King and the fact that nearly every major city in the U.S. has a street or school named for him. Mr. Carroll said he supports the Committee's recommendation even though it would not have been his choice. He prefers one of the causeways. He added that now is the time to also honor Coretta Scott King and added it is not inconceivable to name the two causeways for them.

Michael Paccione, 1010 Heath Avenue, NW, Palm Bay, read a prepared statement supporting approval of the renaming. It would be a fitting tribute if every passenger that flies

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to Melbourne sees Dr. Martin Luther King's name.

Recessed: 7:50 p.m.

Reconvened: 7:57 p.m.

Michael Bouvier, 1214 Pinewood Drive, Palm Bay, speaking as a retired emergency communications operator, said that Melbourne already has a King Center. Emergency communications operators should not have to sort out which King Center is in a state of emergency. Mr. Bouvier read from Dr. King's 1963 "I Have a Dream Speech." He supports renaming Airport Boulevard.

Reverend Nathaniel Harris, Macedonia Baptist Church, stated that naming a street for Dr. King sends a powerful message to Melbourne's Afro-American citizens. Council's favorable action would be a blessing and honor for all that revere the legacy of Dr. King. It would show that Melbourne truly values all of its citizens, especially those of African heritage. He added this issue won't go away. Naming a street speaks to the heart of the Afro-American community. He asked Council to show that it has compassion, love, concern and unity for all its citizens.

Rebecca Boettcher, 2855 N A1A, beachside property owner, said she has been a business owner in the community for over 20 years. She is ashamed that Melbourne has dragged its feet for nearly 20 years and not provided this honor to Dr. Martin Luther King. She said she hopes that Council does what is right and submits to the Committee's suggestion. It may be inconvenient for some people – but it is over due and an appropriate place. She said having the name of Dr. King on a street signifies that the City is forward moving.

Desiree Nall, 2364 Port Malabar Boulevard, Brevard NOW (National Organization of Women), said that Dr. Martin Luther King Street should become the official name of Airport Boulevard. She asked Council to honor this great American. A commemorative street naming brings history into our geography. She stated that Brevard NOW urges Council to do the right thing and demands that Council not give into hatred and bigoted propaganda and ideals. She opposes renaming the Melbourne Auditorium after Dr. King based on the gun shows held there.

Council Member Palmer and Mrs. Nall briefly discussed Margaret Sanger, Ms. Sanger's affiliation with NOW, and the suggestion that Ms. Sanger was notoriously a racist.

Mayor Goode closed the public hearing. He said Council listened and honored each speaker as opinions were expressed. He asked that Council be afforded the same courtesy.

Moved by Hand/Meehan for approval of Ordinance No. 2006-33.

Vice Mayor Hand stated that she totally supports the Committee's recommendation to rename Airport Boulevard to Dr. Martin Luther King Boulevard. He was a great leader that deserves this honor that has been a long time coming. She has been on Council for 28

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years and each time she was invited to a candidate's forum in South Melbourne she was asked if she would support a street name for Dr. King in Melbourne. This question was asked of many of the Council members. She discussed the recent history of Council's attempts to name a street to honor Dr. King. Mrs. Hand said she cannot support the Melbourne Auditorium – the building is deteriorating and it is unclear if money is available for repairs. Placement of a bust of Dr. King does not provide the honor he deserves. She expressed concern that Council Members that serve on the Airport Authority may have a conflict.

Council Member Kathy Meehan concurred with Vice Mayor Hand. It has been 19 years – and that is too long. She would be proud of the community for having a street named for Dr. Martin Luther King. She noted that the Airport is not on Airport Boulevard; its address is Air Terminal Parkway. She added that signage would help with locating the Airport. She normally gives Airport directions as U.S. 1 to NASA Boulevard. The City of Melbourne has renamed 200 streets since 1969 with very little press. She referenced the 1980 renaming of Lynching Tree Drive, and noted that 11 residents spoke against the change; however, Council did the right thing and unanimously changed the name to Legendary Lane. She concluded by asking Council members to look in their hearts.

Council Member Mark LaRusso said the Committee selected four options. He continues to support the Melbourne Auditorium. It goes beyond a bust in the lobby; the entire lobby could be dedicated to Dr. King, as well as the park next door. He said that the City's recent survey of residents showed support for renovation of the Melbourne Auditorium. School kids to senior citizens visit the Auditorium annually. Dr. King was about educating the general public. The comments regarding the falling off of young people from various organizations; our youth not understanding the cause taken up in the 1960s; and that some don't even know about Martin Luther King only strengthen his belief in the need for an educational center at the Auditorium. It could house a museum, with pieces brought in from the King Center in Atlanta. This is an opportunity to come together – to educate young people in generations to come. He said he believes in his heart of hearts that this is the proper thing to do – to rename the Auditorium and push this forward.

Council Member Richard Contreras referenced his discussions with Palm Bay Mayor Mazziotti to find a street that could be used to bridge the two cities that centered around Lipscomb Street and then went in multiple directions. The issue was resurrected in 2005 with a proposal to rename Apollo Boulevard that he supported that was ultimately voted down by Council. The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Naming Opportunities Committee was formed, met and provided options. Included in those was the renaming of Airport Boulevard, that Council previously denied 5-2. He said his position on this issue has been to allow Council an opportunity to look at all four of the Committee's options.

Continuing, Mr. Contreras read the definition of racism from the dictionary. He said some Florida Today articles have identified City leaders as racists and he takes exception to that.

Council Member Grace Walker said she understands the desire of some residents to rename this street; but she is concerned for the residents who live there that have

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expressed opposition to the change. They have lived there for many years, paid taxes, and need to be heard also.

Council Member Cheryl Palmer commented that she expressed her opinion at previous meetings.

The question was called. The roll call vote was:

Aye: Meehan and Hand

Nay: Contreras, LaRusso, Walker, Palmer and Goode

Motion failed.

4. ORDINANCE NO. 2006-34: (Public Hearing/First Reading) An ordinance changing the name of the Melbourne Auditorium to the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Auditorium.

Moved by LaRusso/Contreras for approval of Ordinance No. 2006-34. The question was called. The roll call vote was:

Aye: Contreras, LaRusso, Walker and Goode

Nay: Meehan, Palmer and Hand

Motion carried.

(Note: The second reading/public hearing will be scheduled for a special meeting date to be announced.)

5. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Contreras/Meehan to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:24 p.m.

Assistant City Clerk – 4/25/2006

Approved by Council: _____