

CITY OF MELBOURNE, FLORIDA
MINUTES – SPECIAL MEETING BEFORE CITY COUNCIL
MAY 2, 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 (arrived 6:34 p.m.)
	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
	Cathleen A. Wysor	City Clerk
	Amy W. Elliott	Deputy City Manager
	Howard Ralls	Deputy City Manager

3. ORDINANCE NO. 2006-34: (Public Hearing/Second Reading) An ordinance changing the name of the Melbourne Auditorium to the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Auditorium. (First Reading 4/17/2006)

City Attorney Paul Gougelman read Ordinance No. 2006-34 by its title. Mayor Goode opened the public hearing.

Ron DeLoach, 559 Palmetto Drive, Melbourne (Brevard County), stated that he is an event promoter who uses the Melbourne Auditorium. He commented that changing the name of the Melbourne Auditorium can only be viewed as preposterous and absurd. Mr. DeLoach elaborated on the events he has promoted and said that he has invested tens of thousands – if not hundreds of thousands of dollars – to promote live concerts at the Auditorium. Any change in the name of the Auditorium would destroy his business. He asked that Council not change the name of the building and consider his business and the investments he has made over the years.

Nathaniel Harris, Pastor, Macedonia Baptist Church, Lipscomb Street, asked Council to consider renaming Airport Boulevard instead of the Auditorium. He noted that there are many people from all races who believe a major thoroughfare is the way to go. Pastor Harris stated that he does not believe this issue will go away and the community will not give up on getting a major thoroughfare named after Dr. King. He asked Council to be sensitive to the cry of the community.

Pat Poole, 805 East Palmetto Avenue, pointed out that the residents of South Melbourne do

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not want the Auditorium named as a token measure for the defeat of Airport Boulevard. Airport Boulevard was selected by the MLK Committee but was voted down twice by the City Council. The City of Melbourne has been called racist and prejudice, yet no other city in Brevard County has a street named after Dr. King.

Mrs. Poole stated that the Auditorium belongs to all the citizens of Melbourne. She added that this issue is too critical for seven Council Members to decide after 19 years and recommended that a referendum be held so the people can decide what is best. She concluded by saying that of the petitions submitted, twice as many people opposed renaming the Auditorium than opposed renaming Airport Boulevard.

That concluded comments from the public. Mayor Goode closed the public hearing.

Council Member Cheryl Palmer said that the NAACP has approached this Council along with other councils in the County to name a thoroughfare after Martin Luther King, Jr. She stated that this Council has never considered renaming the Auditorium – it came up as an alternate suggestion. She does not believe renaming the Auditorium is wanted or desired; therefore, it is not the right thing to do.

Mrs. Palmer's motion to deny Ordinance No. 2006-34 did not receive a second.

Council Member Loretta Hand said she has supported naming a thoroughfare somewhere in the community in honor of Dr. King for many years.

Mayor Goode asked for a motion before continuing with discussion.

Mrs. Hand repeated that she would like to see a thoroughfare named after Dr. King.

Mayor Goode asked for a motion.

Council Member Kathy Meehan asked Mrs. Palmer to repeat her motion.

Moved by Palmer/Meehan to deny Ordinance No. 2006-34.

Mrs. Meehan said she would like to name a street in honor of Dr. King, not the Auditorium. Mrs. Hand agreed and asked Council to reconsider naming Airport Boulevard.

Mrs. Palmer said she does not believe anyone will be satisfied with renaming the Auditorium because a thoroughfare is what is desired. She pointed out that she has not previously supported nor will she support a renaming. However, she will support naming a new thoroughfare. Mrs. Palmer added that the western beltway is still a future project that is coming. She clarified that during the NAACP political forum, she indicated that she would support naming a roadway, not renaming a roadway. She concluded by saying that she doesn't believe the Auditorium is a good substitute.

Mrs. Hand said she has no problem naming the Auditorium after Dr. King, but her heart is

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on a roadway.

The question was called. The roll call vote was:

Aye: *Meehan, Palmer and Goode

Nay: Contreras, LaRusso, Walker and Hand

*Mrs. Meehan initially voted nay; however, she changed her vote to aye.

Motion failed.

Moved by LaRusso/Contreras for approval of Ordinance No. 2006-34.

Mr. Contreras said it is abundantly clear that the preference is for a roadway; however, it appears that Council has determined that a roadway won't be renamed in the City at this time. The discussion now folds back to either a future roadway or something on the Metropolitan Planning Organization's schedule. Additionally, the question is whether there would be any value to naming the Auditorium as a temporary measure while looking at future roadways. Mr. Contreras stressed that naming a road in honor of Dr. King isn't indigenous to the City of Melbourne.

Council Member Grace Walker said she spoke with several people today who indicated that this is not what they would prefer. She said that the City has previously supported naming the beltway in honor of Dr. King; however, that roadway has not been funded. She agreed that under the circumstances renaming the Auditorium is the best alternative.

Mrs. Meehan said she spoke with Nathaniel Harris, Bennie Hopkins and Leonard Ross who all indicated that the community wants a roadway named. She added that Council needs to respect that and honor Dr. King by naming a road.

Mr. LaRusso pointed out that the Auditorium renaming is one of the MLK Committee's four recommendations. He said he still believes that this would provide an opportunity to educate and close the diversity. He added that he doesn't understand why it must be a roadway. A roadway doesn't achieve or accomplish what the City would like to do in the long term. He noted that if this passes, he will work very hard with the public and private sector to ensure that the Auditorium is successful and would have an educational display that would instill pride in our City.

Mrs. Hand said that she also spoke with Mr. Hopkins today who indicated that since the road is not a possibility, he could support changing the Auditorium. Now she is hearing conflicting comments. With regard to the ordinance that is being considered, Mrs. Hand said that the Auditorium is old and it will take a lot of money for repair. If this ordinance passes, she would like some assurance that any future/new Auditorium would continue to carry Dr. King's name.

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A brief discussion followed regarding the process for naming the western beltway if/when it is funded.

Mrs. Poole returned to the podium and said that Council is not speaking on the subject ordinance. Mayor Goode asked Mrs. Poole to sit down. Mrs. Poole continued talking at the podium. Mayor Goode asked Mrs. Poole to be seated or he would have the officer remove her from the Chamber. Mrs. Poole continued and the police officer was directed by the Mayor to remove Mrs. Poole from the Council Chamber.

The question was called. The roll call vote was:

Aye: Contreras, LaRusso, and Walker

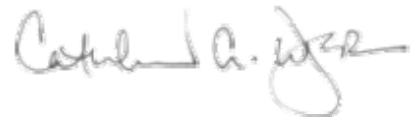
Nay: Meehan, Palmer, Hand and Goode

Motion failed.

4. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by LaRusso/Walker to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:04 p.m.



City Clerk – 5/11/2006

Approved by Council: _____