




MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Diane Wolfe Marlin and City Council Members
FROM: Carol Mitten, City Administrator and Interim Public Works Director 
DATE: July 24, 2020
SUBJECT: An Ordinance Naming a Street, Avenue, Alley, or other Public Place (Changing "Plantation Point" to "River Birch Lane")

Introduction: Some of the residents along Plantation Point in the Stone Creek Subdivision have petitioned the City through the Public Works Department to change the name of their street to River Birch Lane.

Discussion: In my role as Interim Public Works Director, I received a petition from the owners of six of the 13 lots along Plantation Point in Stone Creek dated July 15, 2020 (see attached). They are seeking to change the name of their street because of its "inferences to a Plantation's historical role in slavery in addition to other definitions of the word." Their first choice for an alternative name is River Birch Lane.

The proposed street renaming is not without opposition. I also received a letter, dated July 15, 2020 (see attached), from two Plantation Point residents whose primary concern regarding the street renaming is the burden created for affected property owners to change their address in the many places that one's mailing address appears, including drivers' licenses, social security accounts, health insurance and Medicare-related information, and so on.

Public Works staff have vetted the proposed street name with other City Departments and the City Clerk's office. Public Work staff have also vetted the proposed street name with external Departments and stakeholders, including utility companies, various Champaign County offices, the Urbana Park District, the Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District, METCAD, and the US Post Office. No objections or other concerns have been raised.

Recommendation: I recommend that City Council approve the attached Ordinance, which would change the name of "Plantation Point" to "River Birch Lane".

Attachments:

Letter from Dimit, Culpepper, Hankin, Heckman, Phebus, and Reichard dated July 15, 2020
Letter from two Anonymous Plantation Point Residents dated July 15, 2020
Draft Ordinance

July 15, 2020

Carol Mitten, Interim Director
Urbana Public Works
706 South Glover
Urbana, IL 61802

Dear Interim Director Mitten:

Residents of Plantation Point are writing to request a change to the name of our street, as the word "Plantation" has inferences to a Plantation's historical role in slavery in addition to other definitions of the word.

At the time this process was initiated, The Atkins Group (TAG) asked that we keep within the original theme for street names in the subdivision, which was golf courses. We have worked with Justin Swinford, P. E. in the Urbana Public Works Department throughout this process and have proceeded within the guidelines of the City of Urbana regarding street names.

The residents on Plantation Point have discussed and voted on more than 25 different options for a new street name and the following two options are a result of our voting.

#1 River Birch Lane

- This name was suggested originally because of the number of River Birch Trees we have on our street and throughout the subdivision and golf course.
- Additionally, it complements the Tree City designation of the City of Urbana.
- There is a River Birch golf course in Idaho and one in Mississippi.

#2 Gracehill Lane

This name was suggested originally because the only other street in our section of the subdivision is Castlerock, which is a golf course in Ireland, and Gracehill is also a golf course in Ireland.

We have also communicated with the Division of Intercollegiate Athletics, the new owners of the golf course and surrounding real estate. They expressed their support of a name change and these two options. Additionally, The Atkins Group, current ownership, is supportive of the name change and these two final options. TAG opted not to participate in the voting process.

Thank you for your consideration of our request, we understand that this is rarely done, and we recognize the comprehensive impact of changing a street name especially in regard to safety and services. Should there be any questions or need for additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Angie Dimit at 217-369-7846 or angie.dimit.gpb@gmail.com. While 12 of the 13 lot owners participated in the process, the residents listed below wanted their names included on this request. We look forward to the next steps in this process.

With kind regards,
Angie and John Dimit

Steve, Malaika, and Baraka Culpepper
Ben and Michelle Hankin
Nina Heckman
Carolyn Phebus
Jon and Patti Reichard

July 15, 2020

Carol Mitten, Interim Director
Urbana Public Works
706 South Glover
Urbana, IL 61802

Dear Interim Director Mitten:

We are writing in response and opposition to a recent request to change the name of our street, Plantation Point. A few of our neighbors have penned a letter to you outlining this request. Unfortunately, the letter omitted the fact that of the 13 potential voters only 6 support a change. Enclosed you will find a copy of the voting results. The neighbors who support changing the name of our street have indicated "Plantation" has inferences to a plantation's historical role in slavery in addition to other definitions of the word. Below you will find the definition of *Plantation*, as stated in Merriam-Webster's dictionary:

- 1: a usually large group of plants and especially trees under cultivation
- 2: a settlement in a new country or region
- 3a: a place that is planted or under cultivation
- 3b: an agricultural estate usually worked by resident labor

One could argue that MANY street names have inference to slavery if it is inferences you seek. For example, in the cities of Champaign and Urbana, look no further than the street names that reference presidents/founding fathers who owned slaves: Jefferson, Washington, Grant, Monroe, Jackson, Madison, Harrison, Hancock, Rutledge, Patrick Henry, and Lee. Will you also change these street names?

As elderly residents of Plantation Point, we do not support the change of our street name. While it might sound simple to replace street signs, the change would create a financial burden for the city of Urbana as well as a physical and financial burden for the property owners of Plantation Point. Not only will there be an inconvenience, but we will be required to spend money and an exorbitant amount of time changing bank accounts, driver's licenses, utilities and other bills, voter registrations, legal documents, property tax records, business and personal correspondences, IRS records, Social Security and Medicare information, Alumni records, subscriptions, health insurance, car/home insurance, life insurance, home delivery services, credit cards, professional organizations and clubs, medical records, investment accounts, etc. It will also require hiring a lawyer to redo our will and retitle our Plantation Point property.

Changing a street name has significant financial impact on the City of Urbana and property owners. It will create an unnecessary burden. We respectfully request Urbana Public Works deny the proposal to change our street name.

Thank you,

Anonymous Plantation Point Resident #1
Anonymous Plantation Point Resident #2

From: Mary Angela Dimit <angie.dimit.gpb@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, July 8, 2020 2:42 PM
To: Carolyn Phebus; Dan McKenzie; Tina Jacobs; Hankin, Benjamin L; JBS1296@yahoo.com; Jane Santogrossi; John Santogrossi; John Dimit; Jon Reichard; Patricia REICHARD; Spencer Atkins; Stephanie W Spiros; hankinml@yahoo.com; Aldred Heckman; jbgraves101@gmail.com; malaika.mckeeculpepper@gmail.com; kamckenzie20@gmail.com; Thomas Roth; MICHAEL KRICKL
Subject: Results and Round Two Voting Information

Hello again,

Thank you to everyone for your participation in this process, which enables us to act proactively rather than reactively. This is another long email, offered in 3 sections, sorry.

1. Here are the voting results.

We sent out 13 surveys. Spencer chose to abstain, 11 votes were received by survey or email.

Do you support a name change?	Do we need an in-person meeting?	Do you want your name included on the petition?
6 Yes	0 Yes	4 Yes
4 No	10 No	3 No
1 Abstain	1 Abstain	4 Abstain

Voting Results

A vote of 1=25; 2=24; 3=23; 4=22; 5=21, etc.

Street Name Option	Number of votes	Total vote value
Cypress Pointe*	5	123
River Birch Point/Lane/Drive	5	121
Gracehill	4	91
Silver Rock	2	48
Stone Eagle	2	48
Elder Lane	2	47
Whistling Straits*	2	47
Mike Small Drive/Way/Lane*	2	46
Reserve Place/View/Point	2	46
Trevino Way	2	46
Reserve Run	2	44
Creek Club	2	42
Grand Cypress	2	42
Sandtrap Drive	2	42
Torrey Pines	2	42
Lee Elder Lane	1	25
Powell Drive/Lane	1	24

ORDINANCE NO. 2020-07-040

AN ORDINANCE NAMING A STREET, AVENUE, ALLEY, OR OTHER PUBLIC PLACE

(Changing “Plantation Point” to “River Birch Lane”)

WHEREAS, the City of Urbana (“City”) is a home rule unit of local government pursuant to Article VII, Section 6, of the Illinois Constitution, 1970, and may exercise any power and perform any function pertaining to its government and affairs, and the passage of this Ordinance constitutes an exercise of the City’s home rule powers and functions as granted in the Illinois Constitution, 1970; and

WHEREAS, Section 11-80-19 of the Illinois Municipal Code (65 ILCS 5/11-80-19) provides that the corporate authorities of each municipality may name originally and then change the name of any street, avenue, alley, or other public place; and

WHEREAS, the City heretofore originally named a certain street “Plantation Point,” said street intersecting E. Castlerock Drive within the Stone Creek Subdivision; and

WHEREAS, the developer of Stone Creek, The Atkins Group, used a naming convention for the streets throughout the subdivision whereby the streets were named for golf courses; and

WHEREAS, “Plantation Point” was named for a golf course in Scottsboro, Alabama; and

WHEREAS, the name Plantation Point is a hurtful reminder of this country’s past practices of enslaving human beings; and

WHEREAS, certain residents of Plantation Point have petitioned the City to change the name of their street to “River Birch Lane”; and

WHEREAS, the name River Birch would continue the street naming convention in Stone Creek by using the name of golf courses located in both Idaho and Mississippi; and

WHEREAS, the name River Birch Lane is appropriate because it complements the City’s Tree City designation and because the River Birch tree species is present both along this street and throughout Stone Creek; and

WHEREAS, City staff have reviewed the name for conflicts with both internal and external stakeholders, including the United States Postal Service and METCAD, and have found none; and

WHEREAS, the corporate authorities, after due consideration, find that the best interests of the City are served by changing the name of Plantation Point to River Birch Lane; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with Section 11-80-19, no change in the name of any street, avenue, alley or other public place is effective until 30 days after the corporate authorities give notice of such change to the election authorities having jurisdiction in the area in which the name of the public place is changed and the post office branch serving that area.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the City Council of the City of Urbana, Illinois, as follows:

Section 1.

The street originally named Plantation Point be and is hereby renamed River Birch Lane.

Section 2.

The appropriate records of the City, including all maps that are part of the City's Geographic Information System, shall be adjusted accordingly to reflect the name change.

Section 3.

The proper officers, employees, and agents of the City are hereby authorized, empowered, and directed to do all such acts and things and to execute and deliver all documents and instruments as may be necessary to carry out the intent and accomplish the purposes of this Ordinance in accordance with its terms.

Section 4.

This Ordinance shall not be construed to affect any suit or proceeding pending in any court, or any rights acquired, or a liability incurred, or any cause or causes of action acquired or existing prior to the effective date of this Ordinance; nor shall any right or remedy of any character be lost, impaired, or affected by this Ordinance.

Section 5.

Upon approval of this Ordinance, the City Clerk is directed to send a certified copy of this Ordinance, by registered or certified mail, to the Champaign County Clerk and to the post office branch serving the area in which the name of the public place is changed.

This Ordinance shall be in full force and effect thirty (30) days from and after the City Clerk notifies the appropriate election authorities and post office branch, in accordance with Section 11-80-19 of the Illinois Municipal Code.

This Ordinance is hereby passed by the affirmative vote, the “ayes” and “nays” being called, of a majority of the corporate authorities (5 of 8 votes) of the City of Urbana, Illinois, at a meeting of said corporate authorities.

PASSED BY THE CITY COUNCIL this date day of Month, Year.

AYES:

NAYS:

ABSTENTIONS:

Phyllis D. Clark, City Clerk

APPROVED BY THE MAYOR this date day of Month, Year.

Diane Wolfe Marlin, Mayor