

# **Item # 40**

**Additional Exhibits (4 & 5)**

## **ADDITIONAL MATERIAL**

**Regular Meeting**

**FEBRUARY 11, 2020**

**SUBMITTED AT THE REQUEST OF**

**MAYOR DALE V.C. HOLNESS**

## 'We've Got to Change This': Has Dixie Highway Reached the End of the Road?

In South Florida, leaders are discussing whether to change the name of Dixie Highway, which some say glorifies the nation's racist history.

By Audra D. S. Burch

Jan. 20, 2020

HALLANDALE BEACH, Fla. — Hubert Jackson has lived almost his entire life just four blocks from Dixie Highway. When he was a child, he thought of the highway as simply the place where the doctor's office and the neighborhood grocery store were located.

It wasn't until he was serving in the United States Army in Vietnam that he learned the history from fellow soldiers.

"I was a half a world away before I learned the truth," said Mr. Jackson, 74, who lives and works in the City of Hallandale Beach. "Now, Dixie means anti-black to me. I see the name and I think of slavery and Jim Crow."

Dixie Highway was originally a patchwork of two-lane roads that ran from Michigan to Miami. The idea behind it came from Carl Fisher, an entrepreneur and developer who helped transform Miami Beach into a resort destination. He saw Dixie Highway as a way to bring tourists from the Midwest to sunny Florida in the 1920s.

Today there are multiple stretches that carry the Dixie Highway name in Florida and, as conversations continue to play out about what to do with Confederate monuments, there is a growing interest in changing the name. In Hallandale Beach, where Mr. Jackson lives, a resolution supporting a name change was recently approved, but not without some pushback.

"Dixie Highway was this ambitious project starting in 1915. It was later absorbed into some state and federal systems," said Tammy Ingram, the author of "Dixie Highway: Road Building and the Making of the Modern South, 1900-1930." "The name Cotton Belt Route was considered, too, but Dixie was chosen to promote the South."

Dixie is thought to be a reference to the Mason-Dixon line, although the origins of the term are still debated by historians. The minstrel song of the same name was adopted as a kind of anthem of the Confederacy during the Civil War. "By the time of the Civil War, the term Dixie was racialized, and a romanticized reference to the antebellum South," said Dr. Ingram, an associate professor of history at the College of Charleston.

It was an email from a retired businessman and the words of a Miami-Dade County commissioner that led several leaders in South Florida to consider changing the name in parts of the region.

In July, Modesto Abety-Gutierrez was driving on South Dixie Highway in Miami on the way to drop his 16-year-old granddaughter, Isabella Banos, off at a friend's house. When Isabella noticed the sign, she asked her grandfather why a name that symbolized slavery was still being used. She later suggested Harriet Tubman Highway as an alternative.

Mr. Abety-Gutierrez, the founding president of the Children's Trust in Miami, sent an email to the 13 Miami-Dade commissioners. "We've got to change this," he wrote. "I hope you agree." Four months later, Dennis Moss, a Miami-Dade County commissioner, announced plans to introduce legislation to rename Dixie Highway in the areas where the county has control. Harriet Tubman Highway is one of the new names being considered.

"She is the antithesis of Dixie," Mr. Moss, a longtime commissioner, told The Miami Herald. The word Dixie, he said, "is something that's symbolic of our inhumane institution of slavery."

Barbara Jordan, also a Miami-Dade commissioner, said that it was time to move away from Dixie, but that she knew there might be objections, including from some businesses. Ms. Jordan said she liked the idea of naming the highway for Harriet Tubman because of her role as an abolitionist and in the underground railroad. "I can't think of a better way to honor her," she said.

Inspired by Mr. Moss, the commissioners in Hallandale Beach in neighboring Broward County unanimously approved a resolution in December urging the county, which has jurisdiction over stretches of Dixie Highway, to consider changing the highway's name.

"The name is outdated and upholds the history of the Confederacy," said Sabrina Javellana, the vice mayor of Hallandale Beach. "This is not about erasing history."

But Ms. Javellana, one of the youngest elected officials in South Florida, faced a backlash for introducing the resolution.

"I received hate emails, phone calls and Facebook messages from a few dozen people," she said. "The messages were vile — people telling me to go back where I came from — but this is worth fighting for."

Dale Holness, the mayor of Broward County, said he planned to bring the issue up for public discussion sometime this year. He added that larger conversations around the wealth gap and unemployment were also important, particularly among African-Americans. Mr. Holness said he was open to expanding the name to Harriet Tubman-Dixie Highway, to lessen the impact on businesses along the highway while still acknowledging America's painful racist history.

"The name recalls the lasting effects of slavery and Jim Crow and the harsh realities of those who came before us," Mr. Holness said. In 2015, Riviera Beach changed the name of Old Dixie Highway to President Barack Obama Highway. Two years later, in Hollywood, Fla., the names of three streets named after Confederate generals — Robert E. Lee, John Bell Hood and Nathan Bedford Forrest — were removed. The new names: Liberty, Hope and Freedom.

"This nation is looking more deeply at our history, including the parts that are shameful," said Daniella Levine Cava, a Miami-Dade County commissioner. "Confederate statues have been revisited. Naming roads is another important area for reconsideration."

"Dixie is a reminder of slavery and Jim Crow. Even lynching comes to mind," Ms. Levine Cava said. "Driving every day on a highway that recalls those times isn't aspirational. I think we should create a new narrative."

**Richards, Heidi**

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**From:** Ashton, Annika  
**Sent:** Monday, February 10, 2020 12:45 PM  
**To:** Richards, Heidi  
**Subject:** List of Cities that Dixie Passes through

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Heidi, Hallandale had been accidentally left off the prior list I sent you. Here is the complete list.

County Road Portions

Dania Beach  
Deerfield Beach  
Hollywood  
Hallandale Beach

Remainder

Fort Lauderdale  
Wilton Manors  
Oakland Park  
Pompano Beach

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