

**Open Work Session  
Honorary Street Sign Policy  
June 18, 2019**

Mr. Weston Young, Assistant Director of Administration, and Mr. Dallas Baker, Director of Public Works, came before Council. Mr. Cannon said one concern was the design of the sign, so he put something together as an example, which he then passed out. He said it would not hurt to see if there could be some type of proposal of the styles because that was one of the five issues, he thinks, that was still pending for the County, but they will first go through items one through five.

Mr. Cannon said the first item is that the cost of the sign should be set yearly by the Roads Department. He said he believes when they first discussed this it was stated that the cost was rather insignificant, and it was not really a deal breaker. He then asked how Mr. Young and Mr. Baker recommend they include the cost of the sign if they do that, and whether they would do that with the application fee, to which Mr. Baker responded, the application would say what the limit is of where they want to establish the road. He explained, if somebody said they want to give an honorary name to Jersey Road, that is a pretty long road, so they need to know if they are talking about all of Jersey Road, or certain sections. He said, within those sections, they would quantify how many signs are on that road to come up with an estimate, and then provide that back to whoever requested it. He said one of the factors playing into the significance or non-significance of the cost is whether they need to put in a new pole. Referring to his picture, he said, to establish all the signs shown in the picture, they would need a 9-foot pole, which they do not typically install out there, so they would have to replace the pole. He said that is where about \$70 of the cost comes from, and \$30 for the sign. He said they could go out and identify which places need new poles, and then, of course, they would all need signs as well, and come back with a cost estimate. Mr. Cannon said he thought they were going to create one sign to dedicate that individual, and that one sign would be at some location on that road with high visibility. He clarified, he was not thinking there were going to be eight or nine of these signs along the length of that road. Mr. Baker then asked if Mr. Cannon is thinking of the type of honorary sign on the Bypass that is dedicated to Norm Conway, or in Crisfield where a highway is dedicated to Donny Drewer, to which Mr. Cannon responded, yes. Mr. Baker clarified, that was not his understanding, but, certainly, they can look at revising it. Mr. McCain said he is confused too because he was thinking the same thing as Mr. Cannon. Mr. Davis said Mr. Baker is talking about dedicating a whole street, but most dedications are a section, not the whole road, but just a little section, and maybe they can use a street in the area they want to dedicate instead of doing the whole street. Mr. Cannon said, if somebody wants to dedicate a sign in honor of someone, they need guidelines as to what the County is going to request. He said he cannot remember what the City does, but, of course, the City has smaller streets as well, and do not have the roads that go on for a couple of miles. Mr. Baker said one example would be Eastern Shore Drive, which is Pete Cooper Way. He said there are a lot of cross streets, so Pete Cooper's name is along all of that street. He said one of the challenges with one sign at an entryway is the lack of right of way available. He explained, if they are out in the middle of the County, they probably have right of way on the side of the road, but, if they are talking about Riverside Drive, for example, they own to where the edge of the pavement is, so if they try to find a spot to dedicate a certain corridor of that area to an individual with one large sign, they lack the real estate to put that sign up. He said it would limit where they can place the larger signs, which is not to say it is not an option. He said maybe there is an option of doing one for the larger sign, or, if the person is interested in doing the smaller signs, if that is something the County wants to pursue. He clarified, it does not have to be one or the other, but it could be both, and let the people pick.

Mr. Holloway asked Mr. Baker how many different kinds of road signs they have as far as poles go? He said he knows one is pretty standard, so he was wondering if, instead of having to replace a pole completely, they can make the sign fit on the pole with a different attachment mechanism, to which Mr. Baker responded, he can certainly check to see if they have something that would fit on top of it. Mr. Holloway said he went out and looked at some of them, and with some of the square poles, if they had the sign, all they would need is an extender, and drop it on the top of the sign and it would stay there, to which Mr. Baker responded, he can find out. Mr. Young said that would drop the cost significantly. Mr. Holloway said, if not, maybe they could bolt it to the side underneath. He said, as far as running it down a five-mile road, he thinks that is kind of ridiculous to put it on every road that connects to that. He then asked if that was what Mr. Baker was planning on doing, to which Mr. Baker responded, it was his understanding that was the direction they wanted to go, but he can certainly work up whatever is needed whether they want one large sign, or if they want to place these on every major street, or every major road. Mr. Holloway said, unfortunately, he thinks something so simple is going to end up being more complicated than what they thought when they started this. Mr. McCain said the policy is an honorary street sign policy, so it is normally just a street sign, like they see in the picture Mr. Cannon handed out, and would be the same size of a typical street sign that honors someone, and not something large, but just a street sign. Mr. Holloway said, if the applicant is paying for this and wants to do Naylor Mill Road, for example, which has several intersections, they are not going to want to pay \$1,000 or \$1,200 to put up signs at every intersection, so he thinks the price is going to simplify it a little bit more for them too. Mr. Young said he guesses if they do not do the whole road they could, theoretically, have a section named after somebody. Mr. Cannon said Mr. Holloway made a good point, and, if the people want to go to the extent of paying for six signs and they cover the cost, then the County would put up six signs. He said they could put restrictions, such as three signs only, but, if the individual wants to pay for that number of signs, it does not hurt the County to put them there. He said that was a good point because it is kind of a wash for the County, so the degree of the dedication can be as far as they want to take it. He said, if they want to do 15 signs on a ten-mile road, so be it, and he thinks that would certainly resolve that issue. He then asked, if they only want to pay for one sign, who would decide at what intersection it would go, to which Mr. Davis responded, the person making the request. Mr. Baker agreed. Mr. Holloway said that brings up another issue. He said, if they only want to do one sign on Naylor Mill Road, but someone else wants to do a sign on Naylor Mill Road with a different name, what would they do there, to which Mr. Cannon responded, it would just be one dedication per road. Mr. Baker said it could be one dedication per road per five miles because they have some roads that are fairly long. He said, if they drive up and down Route 13, that road is dedicated to probably about ten different people from Dover down to Temperanceville. He said, even along Route 50, it is dedicated to multiple people depending where they are at, so they could establish a limit on one dedication within five-miles. Mr. Cannon asked Council if that sounds like a solution, to which there was agreement. He said they need to keep in mind that they can always change this.

Mr. Cannon asked if they decided whether the cost of the sign would be taken on by whoever the applicant is, to which Mr. Baker responded, he wrote in that the first three are free. Mr. Cannon said they never discussed that. Mr. Young said they will pay for what they use. Mr. Cannon said he does not think they will establish the cost in the Resolution, and he thinks that is something Roads will have to define later on. He said Council approves some fees with Recreation and Parks, so maybe they will be approving this fee structure, but he does not know. He said they will have to work on that, and he thinks that, whatever Mr. Baker comes up with, Council will probably find to be fair.

Mr. Cannon said the second issue is that the size of the sign should only be that of a normal street sign, and not larger than the street sign. He said he agrees with that because what was brought in at the last

meeting was so huge, to which Mr. Baker responded, that is actually a real sized sign. He said that is the maximum size they go to, and is a four-foot sign. He said, if they want 14 characters on the sign, that is the size it is going to be. He said, when driving by a street sign at a relatively high speed, they look smaller, but signs are typically two and a half to three feet, and some are larger up to four feet. He said they will tailor the size of the sign to meet the characters, but, if they want 14 characters, they are going to get a four-foot long sign. Mr. Cannon suggested they create a maximum so they are all going to be the same size, and they do not have to make all different sizes. Mr. McCain suggested it could say "Not to exceed." Mr. Holloway said that is going to be tough unless their name is short. He then asked if they are going to tell somebody they cannot have a sign because their name is too long, to which Mr. Young responded, they limit license plates in terms of what they can put on there, so he thinks they could say "Not to exceed," and play it by ear, and Mr. Baker can let them know what that limit is.

Mr. Cannon said the third item is how long the sign will be there, to which Mr. Young responded, his only concern is who will keep track of the time period. He said, when Public Works goes to remove the sign after the time period, it could upset that family, so they need to make it clear what the timeframe is. He said they can renew it if they wish to, but there may be a competing name that wants to go up for the next time period. He said his concern with that is who will track it, and then if there may be any political blowback when they go to remove it at that timeframe. Mr. Cannon said Mr. Baker would keep track of that, to which Mr. Baker responded, he can imagine just creating a spreadsheet to know which streets have the honorary signs. Mr. Cannon said he could just track the invoice because, when the payment is made, it would go through Finance, to which Mr. Baker responded, there would also be the Resolution for naming the sign, and that would start the time period. Mr. Cannon then asked Council for suggestions on timeframes, to which Mr. Hastings responded, he suggested 20 at the last meeting because that feels long enough to recognizes someone's legacy or their impact. He said ten years seems kind of short to him, but he does not have any strong feelings. Mr. Baker said, from a technical side, the stickers on the signs are only expected to last about ten years. He said the sign itself will last 20, but they do not have the ability to make that elaborate seal appear as an integral part of the sign. He said it is a separate sticker they apply, and the sticker is probably going to wear out after about ten years, so they will have to go through and slap some more stickers on. Mr. Cannon then asked if Council wants a 20-year timeframe because he thinks ten is too short, to which there was agreement.

Mr. Cannon said the next item is whether or not the individual being recognized is still alive when it is presented, or whether it can only be someone who has passed away. He said he understands why they would say it should only be someone who has passed away, but, then again, he also thinks it is nice to be able to present it while that person is still there. He said he thinks it means a lot, so they should let them appreciate it. Mr. Holloway said, if they do it for people who are still alive, they might run into people wanting to put their own sign up. He said he does not think they should wait until two years after they have passed, but at least until they have passed. He then asked, if they do this at any time for anybody, how are they going to turn somebody down, to which Mr. Hastings responded, he does not think it is going to be a lot of folks. He said usually it is bureaucratic, so a lot of people are not going to know how to do this. He said Mr. Holloway is right that they could definitely get somebody coming out of left field, but, generally, it is going to be someone who has a good momentum behind them, such as a church or civic group, he would imagine. Mr. Cannon said this is something that is going to have to be approved as well, and it is not as if anybody can just send it in and ask to have their sign put up the next day. Mr. Holloway asked what reason they would have to disprove it, to which Mr. Cannon responded, they are going to have to follow the criteria Council has established. Mr. Hastings said he thinks Bob Cook is a really good example, to which Mr. Holloway responded, that is a good example of why to do it, but there are a lot of examples of why not to do it. He clarified, there are a lot more examples of why

not to do it than there are to do it. Mr. Cannon said the criteria is stringent enough where he believes whoever's name might be put forward would be justifiable whether they are still here today, or whether they have passed on. He said he would like to leave it with that option, and, as he said, they can always amend it later, but there are enough good reasons, he thinks, to try to allow it, and hope it does not backfire on them, to which Mr. McCain responded, if it does, they will just have to fix it. Mr. Holloway said he thinks they are going to see a lot of people wanting the name of their family on a road.

Mr. Cannon asked if there are any other questions. Mr. Baker then asked if they established the color, to which Mr. Cannon responded, not yet. He clarified, he is asking if there are any questions overall as far as issues and structure, but, hopefully, they are far enough along there. He said the only other thing they have is the sign, such as the color, and that is going to depend on what Council wants to do. He referred to the picture he passed out, and said he actually saw it on TV in a town in the Carolinas where they just happened to show the streets, and he noticed an honorary sign, so he tried to make something similar to it. Mr. Baker said one thing he will say about the coloring is to just make sure it is not confused with the 911 address sign, which was one of the thought processes behind the gold on black. He said the County's street signs for 911 addresses are black on white, and the City's are white on green, so they want to stay away from those so there is no confusion about what a street is called when people are looking for it. Mr. Cannon said the purpose of the decorative border was to let them know immediately that it was not a normal sign. He said they can reverse the colors in his picture because it is really a simple process. He then asked what Council wants as far as color, to which Mr. Davis responded, they want to stay away from black and white because that will confuse people. Mr. Cannon asked if they should reverse it, to which Mr. Davis responded, not even reverse it, but get away from black and white altogether because they are going to confuse people with the normal sign. He said, as Mr. Baker said, most people look for a white and black sign as being in the County, and green and white for the City, so, if they put it like Mr. Cannon has in his picture, somebody who is from out of town might get confused with what the name of the street is, to which Mr. Young added, even worse, if 911 is called. Mr. Holloway said that is his issue with this whole thing. Mr. Baker said white on blue is what is used for informational signs. He said, when driving down the Bypass, there are signs for food and gas, which are white on blue, and is common for informational signs, so that is a possibility. Mr. Hastings asked if they can do a different typeface. He said he really likes the way Mr. Cannon's picture is, and he does not think people will get confused. Mr. Cannon said he can just bring in multiple variations of colors if Council would like. Mr. Baker said the Wicomico County flag is yellow on blue, so that is a suggestion. Mr. Cannon said he will put together eight or nine different color schemes, to which Mr. McCain suggested three or four. Mr. Davis agreed that three or four would be good.

Mr. Cannon asked Mrs. Hurley how close they are to getting this into some real structured element because he does not think the color necessarily needs to be in the Resolution. He then asked if they have to go through the Public Hearing process, to which Mrs. Hurley responded, it does not require a Public Hearing process, but, if Council wants to have a Public Hearing, they can certainly do that. She said, based on the feedback they received today, they can incorporate those changes into the policy. She said, if Council does not want to have the colors inserted, they can bring it back in final form at the next meeting. Mr. Cannon said he thinks a Public Hearing would be good because, again, the public normally has some really interesting thoughts on what they may have missed completely. He said, not to prolong this, but he thinks that would be important. He then asked if she will get it in written form, to which Mrs. Hurley responded, yes. There was no further discussion.

*Signatures on next page*

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John T. Cannon, President

absent   
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Larry W. Dodd, Vice President, District 3

  
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Ernest F. Davis, District 1

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Josh Hastings, District 4

  
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Joe Holloway, District 5

  
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William R. McCain, At-Large

  
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Laura Hurley, Council Administrator