

DOCKET ITEM #12

Street Name Case #2009-0003

James Bland Private Street Names

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| Project Name: James Bland Private Street Names | Planning Commission Hearing: | November 5, 2009 |
| Proposal: Consideration of a request to approve names for private streets in the James Bland development. | | |
| Applicant: Alexandria Redevelopment and housing Authority (ARHA) and EYA Development, Inc by Joanna Frizzell, McGuire Woods, attorney | | |
| Staff Recommendation: APPROVAL | | |
| Staff Reviewers: Dirk Geratz, AICP dirk.geratz@alexandriava.gov Maya Contreras maya.contreras@alexandriva.gov | | |

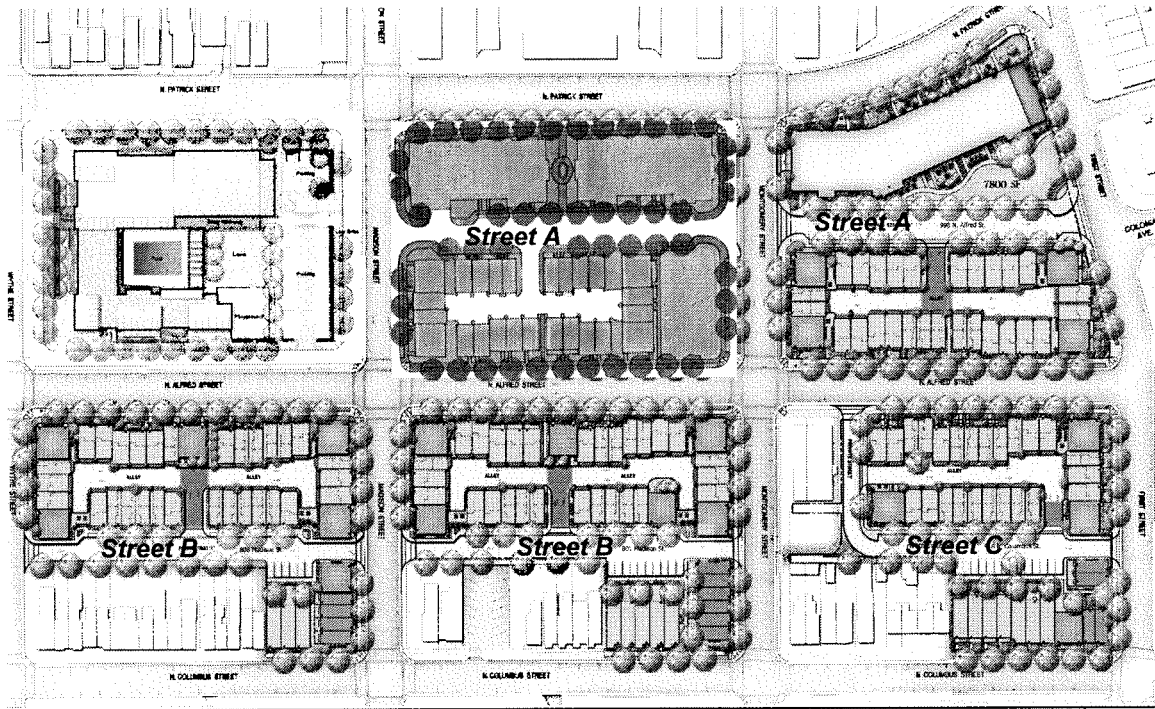


Figure 1. Location of Private Streets within the James Bland blocks

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This application recommends the Planning Commission approve the following names for three private streets that will be created as part of the James Bland redevelopment: Parker-Gray School Way, Pete Jones Way, and Snowden-Hallowell Way. Typically, street names are approved as part of individual development cases. However, the review process for the James Bland development was accelerated to comply with tax credit deadlines and, thus, adequate time for research of historically appropriate street names was not feasible. As a result, the development was conditioned to have the private street names approved by Planning Commission prior to issuance a building permit for the first phase of construction.

Since the approval of the development in October 2008, City Staff has worked with the applicant and Historic Alexandria to develop a list of possible names. The three recommended names were chosen in discussion with EYA and ARHA, and City staff reviewed them to ensure historical accuracy and to avoid duplication within the City.

I. BACKGROUND

The redevelopment of the James Bland property (DSUP2008-0013) was approved in October, 2008. As part of the approval, three new private streets will be created using portions of the current alley system that runs north-south through the middle of each block. These new private streets will be the primary entrance for 49 market-rate “alley townhouses”, 6 ARHA units, and the garage of one of the multi-family buildings, which necessitates the creation of street names for addressing and emergency services.

Street A crosses the two western blocks, between First Street to the north, Madison Street to the south, North Patrick Street to the west, and North Alfred Street to the east. Street B crosses the two southeastern blocks between Montgomery Street to the north, Wythe Street to the south, North Alfred Street to the west, and North Columbus to the east. Street C is part of one block at the northeast corner of the development, and due to a jog in the alley around St James Church, it links First Street at the north to North Alfred Street at the west.

Condition 33 of the development approval states “The private street names shall be approved by Planning Commission prior to issuance a building permit for the first phase of construction. The street names shall be depicted on the final site plan and the applicant shall be responsible for installing all applicable signage”. The applicant has stated that they are ready to submit their first building permit for review. In order to have the permits released upon approval, the street names must be in place.

II. STREET NAMES

City staff worked extensively with EYA and ARHA to find names that had a historical or meaningful connection to the neighborhood. As with the Chatham Square redevelopment, ARHA was instrumental in the selection of names that would reflect and have meaning for the community. The following names were suggested, and have been vetted by GIS and emergency services, consistent with City policy for street naming.

A. Snowden-Hallowell Way

The Snowden School for Boys and the Hallowell School for Girls were the first black public schools in the City of Alexandria. Both were located in what is now considered Parker-Gray.

B. Parker-Gray School Way

In 1920, the Snowden and Hallowell schools were consolidated, and the resulting school was named the Parker-Gray School for John Parker, principal of the Snowden School for Boys, and Sarah Gray, principal of the Hallowell School for Girls. The Parker-Gray School was built on Wythe Street where the existing Charles Houston Recreation Center is currently located, which is adjacent to the James Bland development.

C. Pete Jones Way

Pete Jones, an ARHA resident, was an ardent advocate on behalf of the interests of Alexandria's public housing residents. Mr. Jones was actively involved in the mixed income redevelopment of Samuel Madden Downtown ("The Berg"), which is known today as Chatham Square.

In addition to the three recommended names above, the following names were also considered as possible options. Although these names recognize individuals who have made great contributions to the City, they are not recommended as street names given the similarities to existing street names in the City, which can create addressing and emergency services issues. The potential exists to utilize some of these names in the future as other facilities associated with the James Bland development (for example, the park) are brought on line.

D. Melvin Miller Way

Melvin Miller is an Alexandria attorney and the chair of the Alexandria Housing and Redevelopment Authority (ARHA), where he has served for many years. Mr. Miller's leadership was integral to the City adopting Resolution 830 to ensure that when ARHA-owned properties are redeveloped, every public housing unit will be replaced on a one-to-one basis, assuring the preservation of Alexandria's public housing stock. He is a former chair and member of the School Board and was the director of HUD's Metropolitan Washington Office.

E. Nelson Greene Way

Nelson Greene Senior was the first African American to serve on the ARHA Board and also served on the Alexandria City Council.

F. Eugene Thompson Way

Eugene Thompson was a curator of the Alexandria Black History Resource Center.

III. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends **approval** of the following private street names: Parker-Gray School Way, Pete Jones Way, Snowden-Hallowell Way.

STAFF: Faroll Hamer Director, Planning and Zoning;
Gwen Wright, Chief, Development;
Dirk Geratz, AICP, Principal Planner
Maya Contreras, Urban Planner; and

Docket Item # 12
SNC # 2009-0008



Kendra Jacobs /Alex
11/05/2009 10:07 AM

To
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Subject Fw: Name for the Alley between North Columbus and Alfred,
Wythe and Madison

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ToDirk.Geratz@alexandriava.gov

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SubjectName for the Alley between North Columbus and Alfred, Wythe and
Madison

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Dirk, Gillian Chen suggested I forward the following comments to you .

The 800 block of Wythe Street, and perhaps some other blocks, is/are "Parker/Gray Way" already. The School was in the 900 block of Wythe, so naming something in the 800 block after the school is misleading (see <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/article.asp?article=321214&paper=59&cat=104>). In my opinion, the school is not as important as the names Parker and Gray , two leaders in educating our under-served young people in the early 1900's (see _

<http://oha.alexandriava.gov/bhrc/bh-bonds.html>) and after whom the school was named. The school should be commemorated, but not by naming an alleyway after it, rather by a plaque at the Recreation Center.

Instead, I suggest we pick up on the important history of the names of the two East/West streets. George Wythe was the first law school professor in the U.S., had a particularly close mentoring relationship with Jefferson and Madison, and is a signer of the Declaration of Independence (Jefferson saved the top Virginia signature spot for him). If Jefferson is the father of the Declaration of Independence and Madison the father of the Constitution, then Wythe is the grandfather of both.

So I suggest that we name the alley "America Lane", as it stretches between Wythe and Madison, and is just west of Columbus.

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Gerry Shea
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