

TJS

<b>FROM</b>	NAME & TITLE	THOMAS J. STOSUR, DIRECTOR
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING 417 EAST FAYETTE STREET, 8 <sup>TH</sup> FLOOR
	SUBJECT	CCB #09-0292/ CITY STREETS- RENAMING SOUTH HILTON STREET TO UNSELD'S WAY

CITY of  
BALTIMORE  
**MEMO**



**TO**

DATE: April 20, 2009

The Honorable President and  
Members of the City Council  
City Hall, Room 400  
100 N. Holliday Street

The Department of Planning has received City Council Bill #09-0292 concerning the renaming South Hilton Street to Unsel'd's Way, which is for the purpose of changing the name of South Hilton Street, between West Caton Avenue/Baltimore Street and Frederick Road, to Unsel'd's Way.

In its consideration of this Bill, the Planning Commission reviewed the attached staff report which recommended the following:

- Approval of Ceremonial Naming of a five block portion of South Hilton Street to Unsel'd's Way; and
- Defer consideration of CCB 09-0292 because it is not needed for the Ceremonial Naming of the five block portion of South Hilton Street.

Thus, the Planning Commission recommends deferral of consideration of City Council Bill # 09-0292 and adopted the following resolution, nine members being present and nine in favor.

RESOLVED, That the Planning Commission concurs with the recommendation of its departmental staff, and recommends that consideration of City Council Bill #09-0292 be deferred by the City Council. Additionally, the Commission recommends that the Ceremonial Naming of a portion of South Hilton Street to Unsel'd's Way be pursued.

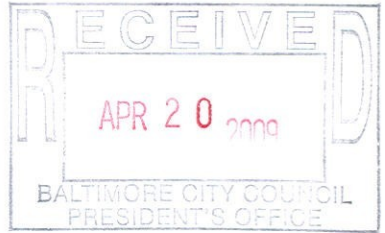
If you have any questions, please contact Wolde Ararsa, Division Chief of Land Use and Urban Design, at (410) 396-4488.

TJS/WA/ttl

Attachment

CC:

- Mr. Andrew Frank, Deputy Mayor
- Mr. Demuane Millard, Chief of Staff
- Ms. Angela Gibson, Mayor's Office
- The Honorable "Rikki" Spector, City Council Rep – Planning Commission



*Comments*

Ms. Nikol Naybors-Jackson, DHCD  
Mr. David Tanner, BMZA  
Mr. Larry Greene, Council Services  
Mr. Geoffrey Veale, Zoning Administration  
Ms. Marcia Collins, DPW

## PLANNING COMMISSION

### STAFF REPORT

April 16, 2009

**REQUEST:** City Council Bill #09-0292 / City Streets - Renaming South Hilton Street to Unsel  
Way

For the purpose of changing the name of South Hilton Street, between West Caton Avenue and Frederick Road, to Unsel's Way.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

- Approval of Ceremonial Naming of a five block portion of South Hilton Street to Unsel Way.
- Defer consideration of CCB 09-0292 because it is not needed for the Ceremonial Naming of the five block portion of South Hilton Street.

**STAFF:** Melvin Hicks

**PETITIONERS:** Baltimore City Council

**OWNER:** Mayor and City Council

#### **SITE/GENERAL AREA**

Site Conditions: The portion of South Hilton Street that is proposed to be renamed is five blocks between Baltimore Street to the north and Frederick Avenue to the south. These are two unit blocks, the 100 blocks, and the 200 blocks of South Hilton Street.

General Area: South Hilton Street is located in Southwest region of the city within the Saint Joseph's neighborhood. The area is bordered by residential homes and light commercial uses to the north.

#### **HISTORY**

There are no previous legislative or Planning Commission actions regarding this site.

#### **CONFORMITY TO PLANS**

This action is consistent with the City of Baltimore's Comprehensive Master Plan, with respect to the enhancement of Baltimore's history and culture.

#### **ANALYSIS**

This bill proposes to rename a five block portion of South Hilton Street (between West Caton Avenue and Frederick Avenue) to Unsel Way. This street naming request is for Mr. Westley Unsel, a former professional basketball player and his family. Wes Unsel spent his entire NBA career with the Baltimore/Capital/Washington Bullets, and was inducted into the Basketball Hall



of Fame in 1988. This portion of South Hilton Street was selected because the Unseld School is located at 250 South Hilton Street.

Westley Sissel "Wes" Unseld was born March 14, 1946 in Louisville, Kentucky. Unseld starred on a Seneca High School team that won two state championships. In 1965, Unseld began playing center for the University of Louisville, where he was a 3-year letter winner. He led the conference in rebounding in 1966, 1967 and 1968, and led Louisville to a 60-22 record with two trips to the NCAA tournament and one trip to the NIT tournament. Unseld is also a member of Alpha Phi Alpha, the first intercollegiate Greek-letter fraternity established for African Americans. The University of Louisville is also where Unseld met his wife, the former Connie Martin, an elementary school teacher

Unseld was drafted by the Kentucky Colonels in the 1968 American Basketball Association draft and was drafted second overall in the first round by the Baltimore Bullets in 1968, and helped lead the Bullets to a 57-25 record and a division title. Unseld averaged 18.2 rebounds per game that year, and became only the second player ever to win both Rookie of the Year and Most Valuable Player in the same season. He was famed for his rebounding, bone-jarring picks and ability to ignite a fast break with his crisp, accurate outlet passes. Unseld made up for his lack of size (6'7") with brute strength and sheer determination. Unseld took the Bullets franchise to four NBA Finals, and won the championship in 1978 over the Seattle Supersonics, in which he was named the Finals MVP. He ended his playing career following the 1980-1981 season, and his #41 jersey was retired by the Bullets shortly thereafter. In 1988, Unseld was enshrined into the Basketball Hall of Fame, and in 1996, he was named as one of the NBA's 50 Greatest Players of all time. After his retirement in 1981 he moved into a front office position with the Bullets where he served as vice president for six years, coached from 1987-1994 and became Washington's General Manager in 1996.

Since his professional basketball career made Baltimore his permanent home, Unseld opened a private school which started in 1979. Wes, Connie, and her parents began searching the west side of Baltimore City for the best location. They finally settled on the quarters of the former nursing school at 250 South Hilton Street, the Tuskegee School of Nursing. Once they had the building, Connie and Wes was confronted with all the building regulations, both city and state, that was required to convert a nursing school into a primary school; but they pushed ahead and got it done.

Now they had a school, Wes gave his wife responsibility of running their school while he provides the funding. Connie had one pupil, her son Wesley, Jr. However by word-of-mouth, the school began to fill up its student body. First there were five, then ten, and soon more and more parents were contacting Unseld's School to learn how they could enroll their children. On Feb. 28, 2004, Unseld's School celebrated its silver anniversary. Unseld's School has developed a great reputation for developing young children into solid academic achievers. Connie Unseld has the climate that she feels is conducive to learning. This is a climate that emphasizes learning critical thinking skills and how to study. The children learn the freedom of discipline and the confidence of a positive self-image. Connie Unseld has brought together a dedicated staff of teachers who have bought into the concept that they are there because they truly want to teach. Kimberly, her daughter and one of her first students, now teaches at the school. Graduates of

Unsel'd's School, upon leaving the eighth grade, go on to such institutions as the School for the Arts, private schools and magnet schools. Some of the best schools in Baltimore come to Unsel'd School to recruit their students.

Staff concurs with the intent of the proposal to rename the five block portion of South Hilton Street to Unsel'd Way. This would be a fitting tribute to the Unsel'ds (Westley, Connie, Kimberly, Westley Jr., and other family members) for their dedication to Baltimore City and excellence in education.

However, the current request does not comply with City Code (Article 26, Section 7-3) regarding the renaming of City streets. For example, the City Code does not permit the renaming of portions of streets; the entire length of the street has to be renamed. Additionally, this is arduous and time consuming process. Staff feels that the intent of the request to rename of a five block portion of South Hilton Street to Unsel'd Way can be best accomplished with the Ceremonial Street Naming process. This is a relatively easy process and involves a nominal fee. The City's Department of Transportation will provide a red and white ceremonial street name sign below the dedicated street sign. Thus, staff supports the street renaming, but recommends that the Ceremonial Street Naming process be pursued.

#### INFORMATION SOURCES

- "Wes Unsel'd." *Wikipedia. The Free Encyclopedia*. 18 Mar 2009. <[http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wes\\_Unsel'd&oldid=278014342](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wes_Unsel'd&oldid=278014342)>.
- "Eye on the Entrepreneur - Silver Anniversary for Unsel'd's School." *The Dailey Record (Baltimore)*. 27 Feb 2004. <[http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_qn4183/is\\_20040227/ai\\_n10059665/pg\\_2/?tag=content;coll1](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qn4183/is_20040227/ai_n10059665/pg_2/?tag=content;coll1)>

Staff notified Carroll Improvement Association, Inc., Irvington Community Association, Saint Joseph Improvement Association, Southwestern District Police-Community Relations Council, Southwest Development Committee, Communities Organized To Improve Life-(COIL), Unsel'd School, and the City Council Representative of this action.



**Thomas J. Stosur,**  
**Director**