



BILL SYNOPSIS

Committee: Economic and Community Development

Bill: 22-0218

City Property - Renaming Robert E. Lee Park to Lake Roland Park

Sponsor: *The Council President*

Introduced: *April 4, 2022*

Purpose:

For the purpose of changing the name of the park known as Robert E. Lee Park, located at 1000 Lakeside Drive, Baltimore, Maryland, 21210, to Lake Roland Park.

Effective: The 30th day after the date it is enacted

Agency Reports

City Solicitor	
Department of Recreation and Parks	Comments
Planning Commission	Favorable
Department of Finance	
Baltimore Development Corporation	
Department of Real Estate	Favorable
Department of Transportation	Favorable
Office of the Comptroller	



Analysis

Current Law

Article 5 – Finance, Property, and Procurement; Section 20-2; Baltimore City Revised Code (Edition 2000).

In general, City property shall be named or renamed by an ordinance of the Mayor and City Council. When a bill is introduced it must be referred to the Planning Commission; the municipal agency that has or will have control over the City property; the Department of Real Estate; and any other agency that may have an interest in naming the City property. (City Code, 1976/83, art. 1, §229(b), (c).) (Ord. 89-268.)

Background

Bill 22-0218 proposes to change the park known as Robert E. Lee Park to Lake Roland Park. The city/county park is located north of the City limits, at 1000 Lakeside Drive in Baltimore County. The park is situated near the intersection of Falls Road and Lake Avenue, adjacent to the Falls Road Light Rail Stop of the Baltimore Light Rail System. The park encompasses 500+ acres of woodland, wetlands, plants and plateaus and surrounds Lake Roland.

Lake Roland Park is owned by the city and has been controlled by the Baltimore City Department of Recreation and Parks since the 1920's. The park was designated as the Robert E. Lee Memorial Park by Ordinance #143 in 1945. In 1992 Lake Roland was declared a national historic district. The park is now leased to neighboring Baltimore County and operated by their parks' agency. After major renovation the park, which was closed since 2009, was reopened to the public in 2011.

Robert E. Lee helped to command the southern Confederate army which fought, during the Civil War, against American government policies and in support of slavery. The South lost the war. Over 600,000 men lost their lives. After the war, remnants of support for Robert E. Lee and Confederate-led initiatives remained throughout America, even until today. More recently, however, national sentiment has rejected the Confederate ideology espoused by Robert E. Lee.

In 2015 Kevin B. Kamenetz, County Executive for Baltimore County indicated a desire to rename the park. Bill 15-0552 was introduced at the request of City Council President Bernard C. "Jack" Young" to rename the park to Lake Roland. The bill died at the end of the legislative term. Bill 22-0218 was introduced to rename the park.

Research reveals that Lake Roland was named after a stream named Roland Run which was named after Roland Thornborough (also known as Roland Thornberry and Rowland Thornberry). During the 1600's he owned an estimated 900 acres of land around the lake property. Baltimore City purchased Lake Roland in order to create and operate their first water reservoir. The man-made reservoir is no longer in operation, but the lake is used for recreational purposes.

The question arises as to whether Roland Thornborough owned slaves. A company that bears his name, The Roland Park Company, which was responsible for one of Baltimore's first suburbs, Roland Park, issued deeds with covenants that restricted certain races and religious groups from owning property in the newly built Roland Park neighborhood and other communities.

Additional Information

Fiscal Note: Not Available

Information Source(s): Reporting Agencies and Bill 22-0218

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