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Kansas City Missouri  
Special Committee for Legal Review  
Sponsor: Councilmember Melissa Robinson  
Melissa.Robinson@kcmo.org  
Legislative Aide: Lisa Ross, (816) 513-6513  
Changing the Name of Troost Avenue to Truth Avenue  
414 E. 12<sup>th</sup> Street  
26<sup>th</sup> Floor, Council Chamber  
Kansas City, Missouri 64106

Dear Councilmember Robinson,

RE: Kansas City's Troost Avenue.

It s 10.7 miles stretches from 4th Street and its southern terminus is Bannister Road. It is named after Kansas City's first resident physician, Benoist Troost.  
Per Wikipedia

Troost is a Historic Avenue known worldwide, much as: Atlanta and it's many, many Peachtrees or Los Angeles and it's Rodeo Drive. NYC's Broadway – do you refer to it as it's now called "Avenue of Americas"? Or do you stubbornly say "Broadway" like that favorite family on the block that you grew up on, and when the family moved out, regardless of the new family(ies) that moved in, it would ALWAYS be known as the first family's name. "So and So's house" – even tho they have not lived there for 10 years....

What's in a name?

The full quote from Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet" is: "What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet." This line is spoken by Juliet in Act II, Scene II, expressing that names do not change the essence of what something is.

The line is used by Juliet as she's standing on her balcony, considering her situation with Romeo and the feud their families have been engaged in for years.

Their names are what is separating them, and, as Juliet proves in the quote, names don't really mean anything. They can change, and the person will still be who they were before. The idea of intermarriage between Romeo and Juliet is incredibly taboo, and Juliet mourns that fact through this logical argument on her balcony.

"Names" do not make something that it is - except in this case - it does. Troost Avenue is steeped in history. A man had a vision to bring new, unheard of, lifesaving medicine from a land far away, to a land that needed saving. Just as in Dr. Benoist's efforts to save people, this historic avenue named in his honor deserves that same saving.

Our cultures are made up with an endless number of cultural artifacts that prime cognitive associations, while human tendencies are constantly being bombarded and therefore maintained and shaped by our environment. IMHO a street name change or shift in conversation or anti-bias teachings – lead us right back into a world of media's negative portrayals. I truly believe that the only way to change these culture cues and sometimes unconscious behaviors is to recognize the struggle, the continued fight, and where we still have room to grow – and what happened to a REAL DISCUSSION, FIRSTLY – but secondly a REAL GIVE AND TAKE DISCUSSION one of how WE could make things better while respecting the people who have given their LIVES (akin to voting), so that we now all have the privilege vote – not a yes or no question on a survey with only one correct response – and then that response being construed as the "is it wrong to...." one's approval of a name change of Troost. - NO! Questions as "is racism wrong?" Absolutely deserve a YES in a yes/no format. However, that "yes" does not mean – bingo – street name change agreed upon! Nor do postcards "sent to some" with a few days notice constitute "advanced and proper notice" of a Legislative Agenda discussion. I know there are procedures for this type of change, and if I did not receive a postcard, others did not receive a postcard. - So does that mean my / our voice(s) do not matter? If they don't matter, that's not going to stop anyone from charging a sales tax or bond whether I or others like it or not. - What is that about? That is NOT due process – but I digress.

Consider the meaning, or lack thereof, of names. What role do names play in everyday life, and what power do they have? For KC and Troost, this one is significant. It is because of the name that is as much KC as jazz. BBQ. Disney. Fountains. Theaters. Timeless architecture. All for a name, in a history of a family that sailed here to save lives. Don't we owe TROOST AND OUR City the same saving?

In our City, those that still managed to pay Personal Property Taxes when an understood "30% shift" may be coming, and in some cases what actually came was a 1,000% shift – somehow they managed to pay these taxes, and remain here on/around Troost – they deserve the courtesy and honor of the name. They DO. NOT. NEED. additional expenses of the cost of changing documents related to a street name

change, another trip to the DMV, to all the places required to make them legal with a new change. They would benefit from street repair and maintenance, and other things that would be far more beneficial. The City and County have many desperate situations in which both time and money would be better spent and more respect given: and I am not talking about making things nice for visitors of large events to come. I speak of those in this historic city, on this historic block and elsewhere that could benefit from - might we say lives being saved, and some of the same respect given that Dr. Troost intended with his medicine. Lives that could be changed by: helping the unhoused. The hungry. The uninsured. The under insured. Those that have purchased their homes and maintained their homes, insured their homes, and through no fault of their own, are now on the verge of losing their homes due to a tax. If we treat our fellow man with all that was fought for those that live and do business on Troost Avenue, while saving its iconic and historical name, then WE will keep the lifesaving vision alive that Dr. Troost intended.

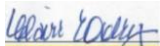
And may I please just add that given the non-notice of this meeting: I live just 3 blocks off of Troost Avenue, and did not receive a postcard of the meeting, I just happened to find out about it - and did not have the opportunity to try to make an appointment at the historic archives to see the materials on the Benoist Family that are "only available in person, under direct request from the archive" may I say that I do not understand nor know where some of the information on this family comes from as I do not see the despicable things that have been said that he / they did. I would think with an internet that "lives forever" and "never forgets" and gleefully loves to tell all the unsavory things about anyone, and everyone - that if something(s) so heinous were done by this family, they would have been told?! And they would not have portraits proudly hanging in the Nelson Museum for example?

Agree or disagree if the facts, the events creating the history of this Avenue are events that. Have. Already. happened. They cannot be changed, but history is subjective, as we know it to be. But what matters now is what can we do TODAY to make Troost and surrounding areas the best it can be now and going forward? That we CAN change by working together! THAT IS THE NARRATIVE AND BEHAVIOR THAT IS ABLE TO BE CHANGED!!!

And it's a resounding YES! - I absolutely wish for all racist, sexist, classist, brutal, oppressive - (the list goes on) - inequity enhancing tendencies, monuments, paintings, writings, etc. to be removed, but that is not possible in today's world. We will never get rid of all of this or if we did, not this way of thinking nor acting and way of life for some. As they see nothing wrong with their thoughts nor actions. - As I said, these events have already happened, and cannot be changed. But what we do have the power to change is to re-shape thinking of things, and to recognize and appreciate those that fought before us and NOT LOSE SIGHT OF THAT, and to continue the NEW SAME OLD CONTINUED FIGHT that is here upon us now, for the fight is FAR FROM OVER! We need to band together, work together and bond more than ever before! Not create a "new" red line of separation.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



Claire Oxley