

Controversial City Street Name Change Proposed

(KAIR)--An online push is launched to change the name of an Atchison Street.

The issue arises from a post made in the Facebook group “Project Atchison Discussion Board.”

Resident Abby Bartlett, in the post made Sunday evening, questions why the city's north side Division Street, long perceived by some residents as a symbol of racial divide, has never been changed.

The post, which cites what Bartlett calls the roads “ugly past,” has sparked discussion, with statements of approval balanced by questions pertaining to such long term affects as postal, and personal identification, changes that would be necessitated by a renaming.

The issue is not new, with the two most recent calls for a name change happening in 1997 and 2008.

City Manager Trey Cocking, in a reply to the post, supplied a portion of a city memo pertaining to the 2008 effort. It cites the '97 effort, when a survey of Division Street residents voiced opposition to the name change, with the most frequent complaint listed in the memo as being the impact the change would have on verification items. Additionally, noted is the impact such a change would mean for local 911 service.

Nonetheless, Cocking says the possibility of changing the name is being reviewed, with an estimate of the related costs being calculated.

He explains that if such a change should be decided, the City Commission would adopt an ordinance to change the name, and then give notice to Atchison County and the Post Office.

Cocking tells MSC News a five-year period would likely be allowed for residents to make changes to their postal address, and related documents.

Going forward, Bartlett told MSC News she would like to see this issue brought to Project Atchison and hopefully be provided guidance with how to make this change happen.