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Group works to rename Belton road after MLK

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By: Rex Castillo



Community leaders in Belton are working to change the name of a city road to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Street, but a new policy is slowing their efforts.

The new city policy requires that all changes to street names have support from 70 percent of the residents along the street—something Belton's African American Churches Union believes to be a serious road block.

"A street would never be renamed in Belton at 70 percent," Reverend William Hill said.

Reverend Hill taught math and special education at Belton's Harris High School, a former school for black students of all ages. Those behind the name change effort have nominated one of the roads outside of the school to become Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Street.

"We have a great heritage here in Belton," Rev. Hill said. "We have a great relationship with the city and we are trying to get this done."

The school has since been repurposed and renamed to Harris Community Center.

Property owners along the proposed route have until Feb. 18 to sign off on the name change.

"It's not a delaying tactic," Council Member Craig Pearson said. "It's a sincere effort on the part of selfless folks and dedicated staff to get the process right, to let **the people's desires be heard.**"

While Reverend Hill and his group are less than optimistic, city leaders have shown a willingness to change the policy.

"It's used by a number of others that have come up with similar ordinances, so we think it's about right," Pearson said. "That doesn't mean that council wouldn't consider changing it."

If the group passes the 70 percent hurdle, Belton City Council will consider the name change in a vote.