

## COMMON COUNCIL REPORT

M&C No.	2023-59
Report Date	March 01, 2023
Meeting Date	March 06, 2023
Service Area	Utilities and Infrastructure Services

Her Worship Mayor Donna Noade Reardon and Members of Common Council

**SUBJECT: Street Naming**

**AUTHORIZATION**

Primary Author	Commissioner/Dept. Head	City Manager
<i>Yves Léger</i>	<i>Ian Fogan/Michael Baker</i>	<i>J. Brent McGovern</i>

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council amend the list of Official Street Names and approve the following changes:

1. Add the name “chemin Campus Ring Road”;
2. Add the name “allée Residence Lane”; and
3. Add the name “voie Abraham B. Walker Way”.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

There are several buildings, located on the UNBSJ campus, without unique civic addresses. In order to be able to assign unique civic addresses to each building, to reduce confusion for emergency service providers, staff has asked UNBSJ representatives to suggest unique street names for the access roads leading to these buildings.

The UNBSJ representatives have proposed “chemin Campus Ring Road”, “allée Residence Lane” and “voie Abraham B. Walker Way” as street names for these access roads. These street names meet NB 9-1-1 guidelines and are therefore acceptable.

**PREVIOUS RESOLUTION**

RESOLVED February 8th, 2021 that staff be directed to engage stakeholders and community groups for the purpose of creating a process and timeline that would bestow recognition of Abraham Beverley Walker’s contribution to the City of Saint John.

## **REPORT**

All buildings on the University of New Brunswick Saint John campus currently have the same civic address of 100 Tucker Park Road. This can cause confusion for emergency service providers when responding to emergency calls. Because of the nature and configuration of the numerous buildings located on the UNBSJ campus, each building should have its own unique civic address. In order to be able to assign unique civic addresses to the buildings, the various access roads first need to have unique street names.

A few years ago, staff had begun discussions with UNBSJ representatives in order to have them suggest unique street names for the access roads leading to the various buildings. However, the process had been put on hold because of several planned reconfigurations to access roads and new buildings that were to be constructed on UNBSJ property, which would then have required street renaming and civic address changes, which could have increased confusion.

With the planned access road reconfigurations complete and buildings constructed, staff restarted the process last year and met with UNBSJ representatives once again to seek unique street names for the access roads to the buildings on campus. The UNBSJ representatives have proposed “chemin Campus Ring Road”, “allée Residence Lane” and “voie Abraham B. Walker Way” as street names for the access roads (see Schedule A: UNBSJ Proposed Street Names). The proposed street names do not currently exist in Saint John, nor in neighbouring communities and therefore meet NB 9-1-1 guidelines for street names.

UNBSJ representatives have provided background information to support the proposed street name dedicated to Abraham Beverley Walker (see Schedule B: Abraham Beverley Walker).

## **STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT**

Ensuring street names meet NB 9-1-1 guidelines aligns directly with Council’s “Move” priority by offering safe, accessible travel options.

## **SERVICE AND FINANCIAL OUTCOMES**

The costs to the City of Saint John, associated with installing new street name signs, are approximately \$1,000.

## **INPUT FROM OTHER SERVICE AREAS AND STAKEHOLDERS**

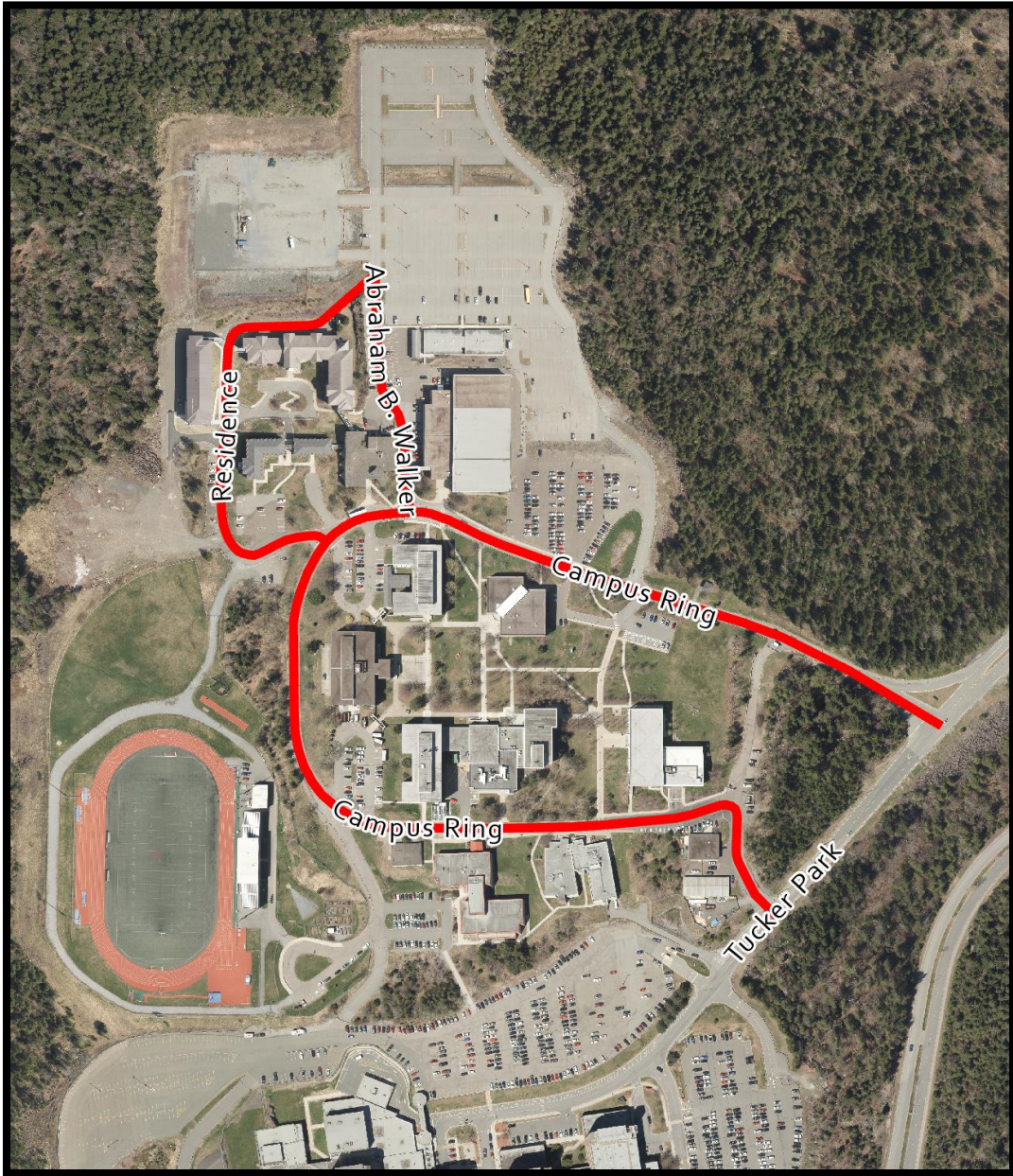
Public Works and Transportation Services were consulted and will cover the costs for street signs from their operating budget.

***ATTACHMENTS***

Schedule A: UNBSJ Proposed Street Names

Schedule B: Abraham Beverley Walker

## Schedule A: UNBSJ Proposed Street Names



## **Schedule B: Abraham Beverley Walker**

“Abraham Beverley Walker was a civil rights pioneer in New Brunswick and North America and deserves recognition for his notable achievements,” says Dr. Paul J. Mazerolle, UNB president and vice-chancellor. “Walker was not only the first Canadian-born Black lawyer but an alumnus of UNB Law as its first Black student.”

Born on Aug. 23, 1851, in Belleisle, New Brunswick, to farmer William Walker and Patience Taylor. Walker’s loyalist ancestor was among the first black people to settle on the Kingston Peninsula, upriver from Saint John, in 1786. He is best known as a lawyer, journalist and activist.

As a teenager, Abraham Walker worked as a stenographer and toured Canada with noted phrenologists Orson Squire Fowler and Samuel Roberts Wells. Walker went on to study at the National University in Washington D.C. before returning to Saint John to study in the legal office of George Godfrey Gilbert. In June 1881, Walker was admitted as an attorney of the Supreme Court of New Brunswick.

In October 1882, Walker was the first Black student to enroll at Saint John Law School – now UNB’s faculty of law.

“We are pleased that such a notable UNB Law alumnus is being recognized on the UNB Saint John campus,” says UNB Law Dean Michael Marin. “In 2021, UNB Law created the Abraham Walker Scholarship for a Black student in the first year of the JD Program. It makes sense that we continue to honour his legacy to New Brunswick and UNB Saint John.”

After being admitted to the bar in 1882, Walker opened his own law office on Princess Street in Saint John, which ultimately failed due, in part, because of racism. Despite being highly educated and influential, Walker faced insurmountable discrimination and systemic racism. For example, he was excluded from local events for solicitors. In 1895, the Afro-Canadian community of Saint John nominated Walker for a Queen’s Counsel appointment, which was ultimately denied. Historical documents indicate that Walker attributed this to racial discrimination. Walker asked Attorney General Andrew McKeown for an appointment for as a provincial King’s Counsel but was also denied.

Walker was a man ahead of the times. He fought for racial equality and is what we would today consider a civil rights activist. He advocated for universal suffrage and spoke against governments for their racism.

Peter Little, author of *Abraham Beverley Walker: Lawyer, Lecturer, Activist*, credits Walker with having said: “A man should not be measured by his race, or his colour, or his creed, but by the size of his soul, his heart, or his mind.”



Walker founded and edited *Neith*, the first African-Canadian literary magazine, which focused on racial issues and gave a forum to Black writers in and out of Atlantic Canada. *Neith*, although lasting only a few issues, once again, due to racism and lack of readership, is credited as a primary source of radical Black politics within Canadian discourse.

He lectured extensively across North America, and, while lecturing in Ontario, Walker became ill with tuberculosis, which ultimately led to his death in 1909.

Until recently, despite being a Saint John local, Walker had become a forgotten part of New Brunswick history. In 2019, the Government of New Brunswick honoured him with an Order of New Brunswick. In 2021, the New Brunswick Black History Society Unveiled a headstone to mark Walker's grave in the Church of England cemetery on Thorne Avenue in Saint John. In 2022, a plaque with Walker's story was installed at the Saint John Law Courts.