The following communication went out via email to our distribution list on January 16, 2021:

**ECCO Board creates new Naming Committee; save the date for a Town Hall Meeting on January 28**

Neighbors continue to discuss our neighborhood name and the Board will provide ways for you to share your thoughts.

In 2019, the neighborhood went through a year-long, thorough process regarding the neighborhood name that included community meetings and several different opportunities to vote. We are grateful for all the thought, volunteer hours, and participation that went into this effort! However, feedback from neighbors has identified flaws in that process and the Board is soliciting community input.

In retrospect, the Board recognizes that it made some crucial mistakes in the 2019 process. One challenge was identifying the neighborhood name. Our organization bylaws reflected “East Calhoun” and reserved “ECCO” for referring to the neighborhood organization. The City’s neighborhood map listed “ECCO”, but their website also referred to the neighborhood as “East Calhoun.” The initial question thus posed to the neighborhood--whether to change or keep the name “East Calhoun Community Organization”--was flawed. It was confusingly noted on the first ballot that “ECCO” would be a name change from “East Calhoun Community Organization”. Neighbors voted 63.7% in favor of changing the name. Although it was later clarified that “ECCO” was not an acronym, many people still associate this name with “East Calhoun Community Organization.”

Since that vote in late 2019, much has happened. The state Supreme Court ruled that the name Bde Maka Ska could indeed replace Lake Calhoun. Many area businesses and organizations have removed Calhoun from their names. Perhaps most importantly, the murder of George Floyd has occasioned a national reckoning over the issue of racial inequality. The ECCO Neighborhood Association Board issued a statement on June 29, 2020 that the organization will “work against racial inequities and make our neighborhood more open and welcoming to all people.” At a racial justice rally on the lake in July 2020, speakers communicated that our name ECCO angered and alienated them by its continuing reference to John C. Calhoun. Many neighbors feel that ECCO still contains an implicit reference to John C. Calhoun, and are aware that this causes pain for indigenous and Black people.

Neighbors continue to discuss the neighborhood name, and a significant number of comments were shared with the ECCO Board leading up to the Board meeting on January 7, 2021. It was clear that neighbors wanted to share their thoughts and participate in a process to give further consideration to our neighborhood name. At the Board meeting, the Board approved the creation of a new Naming Committee and the opportunity for neighbors to share their thoughts via an online comment form and Town Hall meeting.
We want to hear from our neighbors
Recognizing that providing different ways to engage the neighborhood increases participation, we invite neighbors to:

- Attend the virtual Town Hall on Thursday, January 28, at 7 p.m.
- Fill out a form to collect comments from neighbors, which will be made available soon.

Details about the virtual Town Hall and link to register for the event will be provided in another communication, as will a link to the online comment form.

Next steps
The Naming Committee will work closely with the Board. Based on feedback from the online comments and Town Hall, the committee will propose an engagement plan that could include further input from neighbors and a potential voting on the neighborhood name. Once the engagement plan is approved, the committee would work to execute the plan. If you would like to volunteer to serve on this committee, please email ECCO Coordinator Monica Smith at info@ecconeighborhood.org. The initial meeting is planned for the evening of January 21.

Sincerely,
The ECCO Neighborhood Association Board