

1 Introduced by Council Members Peluso, Miller, Arias, Carlucci and  
2 Carrico and Co-Sponsored by Council Member Pittman and amended on the  
3 Floor of Council:  
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6 **RESOLUTION 2026-280-A**

7 A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF  
8 JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA, EXPRESSING THE CITY'S  
9 STRONG SUPPORT FOR THE NOMINATION OF MARIA LA  
10 MOTA AND CHASON SPENCER FOR THE 2026 JAMES BEARD  
11 AWARD FOR BEST CHEF: SOUTH, FURTHER  
12 CONGRATULATING THE FOUNDERS OF CHANCHO KING ON  
13 THEIR SELECTION AS FINALISTS FOR THIS  
14 PRESTIGIOUS NATIONAL HONOR AND RECOGNIZING THEIR  
15 CONTRIBUTIONS TO JACKSONVILLE'S CULINARY  
16 LANDSCAPE; DIRECTING THE CHIEF OF LEGISLATIVE  
17 SERVICES TO TRANSMIT A COPY OF THIS RESOLUTION,  
18 ONCE ADOPTED, TO THE JAMES BEARD FOUNDATION;  
19 REQUESTING ONE CYCLE EMERGENCY PASSAGE;  
20 PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.  
21

22 **WHEREAS**, Maria La Mota and Chason Spencer established Chancho  
23 King in 2018 as a culinary mission to introduce the authentic and  
24 traditional flavors of Maria's native Ecuador to the Jacksonville  
25 community, and the business began its journey through community-  
26 focused pop-up events at the Vagabond Flea, Really Good Beer Stop,  
27 Keg and Coin, and other local establishments where the founders  
28 cultivated a dedicated following for their authentic recipes before  
29 establishing a permanent presence in the community; and

30 **WHEREAS**, the brand expanded in 2021 by becoming a weekly fixture  
31 at the Riverside Arts Market under the Fuller Warren Bridge, and

1 during the COVID-19 pandemic, Chanco King transitioned to a food  
2 truck operation at Aardwolf Brewing Company in San Marco; and

3 **WHEREAS**, in 2022, after a year-long transformation of the space,  
4 they opened their flagship restaurant at 1120 Edgewood Avenue South  
5 in Murray Hill, creating a permanent community hub that integrates  
6 local art and music into a welcoming dining environment, and Maria  
7 La Mota and Chason Spencer have demonstrated exemplary leadership by  
8 prioritizing the mental and physical health of their team through a  
9 measured growth strategy that avoids burnout and focuses on a work  
10 culture of warmth, humor, and health; and

11 **WHEREAS**, Chanco King has received numerous local honors from  
12 Folio Weekly, including titles for Best Fried Chicken, Best Family  
13 Restaurant, Best Gluten Free, Best Raw Food, Best Late Night, and  
14 Best Oysters, and the culinary excellence of the menu is defined by  
15 artisanal dishes such as Pan de Yuca and Llapingacho potato cakes  
16 served with a signature peanut sauce, with their slow-roasted pork  
17 remaining a centerpiece of the menu, appearing in sandwiches and rice  
18 bowls topped with lime-pickled red onions and house-made chicharron;  
19 and

20 **WHEREAS**, every Sunday from 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m., the  
21 restaurant hosts Ceviche Sunday, which earned the title of Best Raw  
22 Food by Folio Weekly and features fresh seafood preparations that  
23 change based on market availability; and

24 **WHEREAS**, on Friday nights, the founders host Chanco After Dark  
25 from 9:00 p.m. until midnight, offering a high-energy atmosphere and  
26 a specialized late-night menu to provide a unique social experience  
27 for the residents of Jacksonville; and

28 **WHEREAS**, the founders established the Royal Exchange as a  
29 passion project involving interstate chef swaps, beginning with a  
30 collaboration in St. Louis and continuing with upcoming residencies  
31 such as Coro in Orlando, establishing the restaurant as a destination

1 for culinary collaboration; and

2       **WHEREAS**, the James Beard Restaurant and Chef Awards, often  
3 referred to as the "Oscars of the food world," recognize excellence  
4 in the culinary arts, food and beverage, and hospitality industries,  
5 and have done so for 40 years; and

6       **WHEREAS**, Maria La Mota and Chason Spencer have been named  
7 finalists for the 2026 James Beard Awards Best Chef in the South, one  
8 of the culinary industry's most prestigious honors; and

9       **WHEREAS**, this nomination represents a pivotal moment for the  
10 Jacksonville culinary and cultural community on the national stage,  
11 and the recognition of Maria La Mota and Chason Spencer as finalists  
12 for Best Chef: South represents the highest culinary honor in the  
13 history of the City; now therefore

14       **BE IT RESOLVED** by the Council of the City of Jacksonville:

15       **Section 1.**       The City Council officially expresses its strong  
16 support for the nomination of Maria La Mota and Chason Spencer for  
17 the 2026 James Beard Award for Best Chef: South. The City Council  
18 further congratulates the founders of Chancho King for their selection  
19 as finalists and recognizes their professional dedication and  
20 cultural impact.

21       **Section 2.       Directive to the Chief of Legislative Services**  
22 **Division.** The City Council hereby directs the Chief of the Legislative  
23 Services Division to forward a copy of this Resolution, once adopted,  
24 to the James Beard Foundation to formally support their candidacy.

25       **Section 3.       Requesting One Cycle Emergency Passage Pursuant**  
26 **to Council Rule 4.901 Emergency.** One cycle emergency passage of this  
27 legislation is requested. The nature of the emergency is the City  
28 Council desires to have this Resolution forwarded to the James Beard  
29 Foundation in advance of its consideration of the nominees for receipt  
30 of the James Beard Award.

31       **Section 4.       Effective Date.** This Resolution shall become

1 effective upon signature by the Mayor or upon becoming effective  
2 without the Mayor's signature.

3

4 Form Approved:

5

6 /s/ Mary E. Staffopoulos

7 Office of General Counsel

8 Legislation Prepared By: Steven Libby, City Council Research

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