

1 Introduced by Council Members Peluso, Miller, Arias, Carlucci and
2 Carrico:

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5 **RESOLUTION 2026-280**

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

19
20 **WHEREAS**, Maria La Mota and Chason Spencer established Chancho
21 King in 2018 as a culinary mission to introduce the authentic and
22 traditional flavors of Maria's native Ecuador to the Jacksonville
23 community, and the business began its journey through community-
24 focused pop-up events at the Vagabond Flea, Really Good Beer Stop,
25 Keg and Coin, and other local establishments where the founders
26 cultivated a dedicated following for their authentic recipes before
27 establishing a permanent presence in the community; and

28 **WHEREAS**, the brand expanded in 2021 by becoming a weekly fixture
29 at the Riverside Arts Market under the Fuller Warren Bridge, and
30 during the COVID-19 pandemic, Chancho King transitioned to a food
31 truck operation at Aardwolf Brewing Company in San Marco; and

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

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

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

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

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

31 **WHEREAS**, the James Beard Restaurant and Chef Awards, often

1 referred to as the "Oscars of the food world," recognize excellence
2 in the culinary arts, food and beverage, and hospitality industries,
3 and have done so for 40 years; and

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

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

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

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

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

23 **Section 3. Effective Date.** This Resolution shall become
24 effective upon signature by the Mayor or upon becoming effective
25 without the Mayor's signature.

1 Form Approved:

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3 /s/ Shannon MacGillis

4 Office of General Counsel

5 Legislation Prepared By: Steven Libby, City Council Research

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