

Introduced by Council Member Peluso and Co-Sponsored by Council Members Carrico and Johnson and amended on the Floor of Council:

ORDINANCE 2025-189-E

AN ORDINANCE RENAMING THE PUBLIC PARK CURRENTLY KNOWN AS "OAKLAND PARK," LOCATED AT 657 EAST UNION STREET, JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32206, IN COUNCIL DISTRICT 7, PURSUANT TO SECTION 122.105 (PUBLIC BUILDINGS, PUBLIC FACILITIES AND PUBLIC PARKS NAMING AND RENAMING PROCEDURES), *ORDINANCE CODE*, TO BE KNOWN AS "EARTHA M. M. WHITE HISTORICAL OAKLAND PARK"; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, since the 1880's the City of Jacksonville has owned the land currently known as "Oakland Park," located at 657 East Union Street, Jacksonville, Florida 32206, in Council District 7; and

WHEREAS, Oakland Park opened on July 4, 1918, through the efforts of noted Jacksonville humanitarian Dr. Eartha Mary Magdalene White, and carries historical significance as the first playground and recreational park established by the City of Jacksonville for African American children; and

WHEREAS, Dr. White dedicated her life to serving others, including as one of the first African American social workers in the United States, a school teacher, the first female African American realtor, a soprano with the nation's first African American opera company, and as the first African American census taker in the state of Florida; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Eartha M. M. White's lifetime is marked by significant efforts and achievements aimed at serving her fellow men

1 and women, including founding Mercy (tuberculosis) Hospital,
2 coordinating statewide orphanage services, establishing employment
3 training programs, initiating the first alcohol recovery program,
4 organizing enlistment services for the military, founding the Clara
5 White Mission (with her adoptive mother, Clara White), establishing
6 the "Old Folks Home" to provide housing and care for elderly African
7 Americans in Jacksonville, and founding Florida's first historical
8 African American museum; and

9 **WHEREAS,** Dr. White was a charter member of several important
10 organizations including the Jacksonville Historical Society, the
11 Community Chest of Jacksonville and Duval County, The Merry Hearts
12 Christmas Drive (later the Dorcus Drake Christmas Drive), the Boy's
13 Improvement Club, the Boy Scout Troop, and the WPA Initiatives, all
14 of which were established for the betterment of the community; and

15 **WHEREAS,** Dr. Eartha M. M. White was long recognized as "The
16 Angel of Mercy," and she received numerous honors for her leadership
17 and service from educational institutions, civic clubs, government
18 agencies, business groups, and fraternal organizations; all in
19 recognition of her contributions to society, both locally and
20 nationally, while also serving as a testament to what one person with
21 vision, commitment, and resourcefulness can achieve; and

22 **WHEREAS,** it is for these reasons the Jacksonville City Council
23 desires to recognize the life and legacy of Dr. Eartha M. M. White
24 by renaming the City-owned and operated Oakland Park, located at 657
25 East Union Street, as "Eartha M. M. White Historical Oakland Park"
26 pursuant to Section 122.105, *Ordinance Code*; now therefore

27 **BE IT ORDAINED** by the Council of the City of Jacksonville:

28 **Section 1. Renaming Oakland Park to "Eartha M. M. White**
29 **Historical Oakland Park."** The City-owned and operated public park
30 currently known as "Oakland Park," located at 657 East Union Street,
31 Jacksonville, Florida 32206, is hereby renamed "Eartha M. M. White

Historical Oakland Park" in accordance with the procedures set forth in Section 122.105, *Ordinance Code*. The City's Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department currently oversees and maintains this park and will continue to be responsible for its maintenance and upkeep.

Section 2. Effective Date. This Ordinance shall become effective upon signature by the Mayor or upon becoming effective without the Mayor's signature.

Form Approved:

/s/Mary E. Staffopoulos

Office of General Counsel

Legislation Prepared By: Mary E. Staffopoulos

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