

1 Introduced by Council Members Salem, Pittman, Newby and Gaffney:
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4 **ORDINANCE 2021-64**

5 AN ORDINANCE NAMING FIELD AT J. P. SMALL
6 MEMORIAL PARK STADIUM LOCATED AT 1701 MYRTLE
7 AVENUE, JACKSONVILLE, FL 32209, IN DISTRICT 8,
8 FOR HENRY L. AARON, TO BE KNOWN AS THE "HENRY
9 L. AARON FIELD AT J. P. SMALL MEMORIAL PARK
10 STADIUM"; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.
11

12 **WHEREAS**, J. P. Small Memorial Stadium in the Durkeeville
13 community of northwest Jacksonville was the first municipal
14 recreation field in the city of Jacksonville; and

15 **WHEREAS**, J. P. Small Memorial Stadium was first created as a
16 recreational field used by local teams, including the Jacksonville
17 Tars and the African-American ball team, the Jacksonville
18 Athletics, a team on which James Weldon Johnson played; and

19 **WHEREAS**, Major League Baseball teams, including the New York
20 Giants and the Brooklyn Dodgers played at the field in the early
21 decades of the twentieth century and Jacksonville's only Negro
22 League team, the Jacksonville Red Caps, made up of employees of the
23 East Coast Railroad, played against Negro League greats, including
24 Satchel Paige; and

25 **WHEREAS**, in 1953 the field became part of history when it
26 became the location of the first games played by the newly
27 integrated Jacksonville Braves (a home team of the Milwaukee
28 Braves), which included three Black players, one of which was Henry
29 L. "Hank" Aaron; and

30 **WHEREAS**, on January 22, 2021, the nation was saddened when
31 Hank Aaron passed away at the age of 86; and

1 **WHEREAS**, a native of Alabama, Henry Louis Aaron, is regarded
2 as one of the greatest baseball players of all time, having a
3 storied career in professional baseball for more than 30 years and
4 after retiring as a player held front office positions within the
5 Atlanta Braves, becoming one of the first minorities in Major
6 League Baseball upper-level management; and

7 **WHEREAS**, Aaron began his Major League Baseball career when he
8 was signed by the Boston Braves in 1952, and in 1953, the Braves
9 (which had then relocated to Milwaukee) promoted him from the Eau
10 Claire Bears (the Braves' Northern League Class-C farm team) to the
11 Jacksonville Braves, their Class-A affiliate in the South Atlantic
12 League; and

13 **WHEREAS**, the Jacksonville Braves won the league championship
14 that same year and Aaron led the league in runs (115), hits (208),
15 doubles (36), RBIs (125), total bases (338) and batting average
16 (.362), and won the league's Most Valuable Player Award; and

17 **WHEREAS**, by 1954, Aaron was moving up within the ranks of the
18 Milwaukee Braves and on April 13, he made his major league debut,
19 and was swiftly nicknamed "Hammerin' Hank" by his teammates; and

20 **WHEREAS**, Aaron went on to play 23 seasons in Major League
21 Baseball, from 1954 through 1976; he spent 21 seasons with the
22 Braves in the National League and two season with the Milwaukee
23 Brewers in the American League; and

24 **WHEREAS**, Aaron had 755 career home runs, breaking the record
25 set by Babe Ruth; Aaron's record stood for 33 years until Barry
26 Bonds broke it in 2006; he still holds many other Major League
27 Baseball batting records to this day and was inducted into the
28 National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1982, his first year of
29 eligibility; and

30 **WHEREAS**, the provisions of Section 122.105, *Ordinance Code*,
31 for renaming as to the renaming of the ball field have been met;

1 the public hearings have been held and the Planning and Development
2 Department has submitted its report to the Council; and

3 **WHEREAS,** in recognition of the contributions of Henry L.
4 Aaron to the game of baseball and to Jacksonville's unique history,
5 it is fitting that the field located at J. P. Small Memorial Park
6 Stadium, where Aaron played as a member of the Jacksonville Braves,
7 be named in honor of Henry L. Aaron; now, therefore

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

9 **Section 1.** The field at J. P. Small Memorial Park
10 Stadium, located at 1701 Myrtle Avenue, Jacksonville, Florida 32209
11 in District 8, is hereby named the "Henry L. Aaron Field at J. P.
12 Small Memorial Park Stadium" in recognition of Hank Aaron's
13 enduring imprint made on the game of baseball and the history of
14 Jacksonville.

15 **Section 2. Effective Date.** This ordinance shall
16 become effective upon signature by the Mayor or upon becoming
17 effective without the Mayor's signature.

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19 Form Approved

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21 /s/ Paige H. Johnston

22 Office of General Counsel

23 Legislation prepared by: Paige H. Johnston

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