

1 Introduced by Council Member Dennis:
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4 **RESOLUTION 2021-97-A**

5 A RESOLUTION ENCOURAGING AND REQUESTING THE
6 DOWNTOWN INVESTMENT AUTHORITY ("DIA") TO
7 EXPLORE THE SALE OR LEASE OF PROPERTY LOCATED
8 AT 816 UNION STREET WEST, WITHIN THE DOWNTOWN
9 CRA BOUNDARY, TO THE JACKSONVILLE BROTHERHOOD
10 OF POLICE OFFICERS; PROVIDING DIA TIME TO
11 REVIEW AND REPORT ITS FINDINGS TO COUNCIL;
12 PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.
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14 **WHEREAS**, when the first six Black police officers were hired
15 in Jacksonville, Florida on July 16, 1950, they were not trained at
16 the same police academy as their white counterparts and they were
17 not allowed to gather at the same precincts as the white officers;
18 they were assigned a separate precinct, known at the time as
19 Precinct #3; and

20 **WHEREAS**, the meeting place for Precinct #3 was originally
21 located downtown at the Wilder Park Civic Club (3rd and Lee Street)
22 but later moved to the Blodgett Homes Housing Project at 1200 North
23 Davis Street (which is about ½ mile from 816 Union Street); and

24 **WHEREAS**, because only the white officers could use patrol
25 cars, the Black officers were assigned to walking beats within the
26 Black community around downtown and LaVilla, called the "Black
27 Beats", and the Black officers often connected with the community
28 by interacting with the black businesses, citizens, children and
29 entertainers on a daily basis in the LaVilla community; and

30 **WHEREAS**, Precinct #3 was moved to 4th and Jefferson Street in
31 1953 (underneath the Jefferson Street community swimming pool) and

1 in 1966 Precinct #3, also known as the Colored Division, was
2 finally closed so that the Jacksonville Police Department could
3 integrate; and

4 **WHEREAS**, the Jacksonville Brotherhood of Police Officers (the
5 "Brotherhood") is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization first
6 established in 1954; and

7 **WHEREAS**, on January 19, 1954 the members of the Negro Police
8 Division of the Jacksonville Police Department, who were prohibited
9 from joining the Fraternal Order of Police due to their race, met
10 and discussed creation of a new organization which would combat
11 juvenile delinquency and address the status of the Negro Officer,
12 the group calling itself the "Negro Police Savings Club"; and

13 **WHEREAS**, while also serving as a social club for Black
14 officers and contributing charitably to the neighborhoods it
15 served, the Brotherhood, as it was renamed in 1979, also tackled
16 issues associated with racism that the Black officers endured like
17 unequal pay and the treatment of the Black officers as police
18 officers; and

19 **WHEREAS**, the Brotherhood continues today as a charitable
20 organization, open to active and retired police officers and
21 corrections officers of any race, providing student scholarships,
22 Thanksgiving meals, Christmas toy drives and classroom and school
23 supplies for area schools; and

24 **WHEREAS**, the LaVilla area has also held historical
25 significance for the Brotherhood as this is the location of the
26 "Black Beats" and the Brotherhood desires to establish a home
27 office in LaVilla where the organization can continue to give back
28 to the community through programming and charitable endeavors
29 focusing on individuals living within the area, the homeless and
30 children and educational programs; and

31 **WHEREAS**, 816 Union Street W. is a City-owned property located

1 in the boundary of the Downtown CRA and is due north of the area
2 identified in the Downtown Jacksonville Community Redevelopment
3 Plan as the LaVilla Catalyst Site, which, according to the Plan, is
4 intended to "reinforce LaVilla's role as an important center of
5 African-American heritage and Downtown's center for cultural and
6 arts facilities"; and

7 **WHEREAS**, the City created the DIA to serve as the "sole
8 development and community redevelopment agency for Downtown," as
9 codified in Chapter 55, *Ordinance Code*, with the duties and
10 obligations to, in part, plan and propose community development,
11 redevelopment and investment projects within Downtown and to
12 approve and execute all contracts and other documents necessary to
13 carry out the DIA purposes; and

14 **WHEREAS**, recognizing the historical significance of former
15 Precinct #3's presence in LaVilla and the role that members of the
16 Brotherhood served on the daily "Black Beats" in LaVilla as an
17 example of the African-American heritage in LaVilla which appears
18 to be consistent with the Downtown Jacksonville Community
19 Redevelopment Plan, the Council desires to encourage the DIA to
20 explore the sale or lease of the property at 816 Union Street W.,
21 or another suitable property in the LaVilla area, to the
22 Brotherhood,; and

23 **WHEREAS**, the Council encourages DIA to further investigate and
24 consider whether the use of the property is best served as a
25 standalone use for the Brotherhood headquarters or better suited in
26 conjunction with the shared use of the building by the Brotherhood
27 as a mixed-use, neighborhood-serving retail to enhance the
28 neighborhood and strengthen the business opportunities within the
29 LaVilla area; now therefore

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

31 **Section 1. Encouraging DIA to Explore Sale or Lease of**

1 **816 Union Street W. to the Brotherhood.** The DIA is requested to
2 explore whether the sale or lease of 816 Union Street W. to the
3 Jacksonville Brotherhood of Police Officers is consistent with the
4 Downtown Jacksonville Community Redevelopment Plan as a site for
5 its headquarters, reinforcing the African-American heritage in
6 LaVilla. The DIA may consider another location in LaVilla for the
7 location of the Brotherhood's offices if a more suitable site
8 exists. The DIA may also consider whether a standalone use for the
9 Brotherhood's headquarters would be most fitting or whether the
10 Brotherhood's proposed use, in conjunction with a mixed-use project
11 or neighborhood-serving use would best enhance the neighborhood and
12 strengthen business opportunities.

13 **Section 2. Timing for Review; Report to Council.** In order
14 for DIA to explore the appropriateness of the Brotherhood proposal
15 and to review all relevant materials, the DIA shall have no less
16 than 45 business days to perform their review. Such time will begin
17 upon DIA receiving a copy of this resolution from the Council
18 Secretary/Legislative Services. After the DIA has reviewed the
19 proposal and completed its review, the DIA shall submit a report
20 with its findings and conclusions to Council within 60 business
21 days.

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

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26 Form Approved:

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28 /s/ Paige H. Johnston

29 Office of General Counsel

30 Legislation Prepared By: Paige H. Johnston

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