

1 Introduced by the Council President at the request of the
2 Jacksonville Transportation Authority and co-sponsored by Council
3 Member Gaffney, Hazouri, Newby, Freeman, Morgan, Priestly Jackson,
4 Diamond, Carlucci, Boylan, Salem and DeFoor:

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7 **ORDINANCE 2019-889-E**

8 AN ORDINANCE REGARDING CHAPTER 745 (ADDRESSING
9 AND STREET NAMING REGULATIONS) *ORDINANCE CODE*;
10 RENAMING "JOHNSON STREET" TO "LAVILLA CENTER
11 DRIVE" IN COUNCIL DISTRICT 7; AN ORDINANCE
12 REGARDING AN HONORARY STREET DESIGNATION AND
13 ASSOCIATED ROADWAY MARKERS; ESTABLISHING AN
14 HONORARY STREET DESIGNATION ON JOHNSON STREET
15 EXTENDING FROM BAY STREET TO ADAMS STREET FOR
16 JAMES WELDON JOHNSON AND JOHN "J." ROSAMOND
17 JOHNSON; PROVIDING FOR THE INSTALLATION OF TWO
18 HONORARY ROADWAY MARKERS TO BE LOCATED IN
19 APPROPRIATE LOCATIONS ON THE DESIGNATED
20 ROADWAY IN COUNCIL DISTRICT 7; HONORING THE
21 LEGACY OF JAMES WELDON JOHNSON AND J. ROSAMOND
22 JOHNSON AND RECOGNIZING THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF
23 JAMES WELDON JOHNSON AND JOHN ROSAMOND
24 JOHNSON; DIRECTING THE LEGISLATIVE SERVICES
25 DIVISION TO FORWARD THIS ORDINANCE TO THE
26 PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT FOR
27 PROCESSING, IMPLEMENTATION, AND COORDINATION
28 WITH 911 EMERGENCY, FIRE AND RESCUE
29 DEPARTMENT, THE POST OFFICE AND OTHER AFFECTED
30 AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS; PROVIDING AN
31 EFFECTIVE DATE.

1
2 **WHEREAS**, the Addressing Section of the Planning and
3 Development Department received a request from the applicant, the
4 Jacksonville Transportation Authority ("JTA"), to re-name "Johnson
5 Street" to "LaVilla Center Drive"; a copy of the application and
6 receipt of payment are attached hereto as **Exhibit 1**; and

7 **WHEREAS**, the JTA is currently constructing a new Jacksonville
8 Regional Transportation Center facility on Johnson Street, and will
9 be located as a part of the re-emerging and re-development of the
10 LaVilla Community; and

11 **WHEREAS**, historically, the LaVilla community existed as an
12 independently incorporated Town of African Americans living beyond
13 the Jacksonville city boundaries after the Civil War re-
14 construction; and

15 **WHEREAS**, in 1887, the LaVilla Town was annexed into the City
16 of Jacksonville; and

17 **WHEREAS**, the JTA requests a street name change to honor the
18 history and culture of LaVilla as well as placement of two historic
19 markers along the street to honor LaVilla's famous residents, James
20 Weldon Johnson and his brother, J. Rosamond Johnson; and

21 **WHEREAS**, it is in the historic home site, located in the Town
22 of LaVilla at the corner of Lee and Houston Streets, where the two
23 brothers collaborated, and wrote and produced the famous anthem,
24 "Lift Every Voice and Sing"; and

25 **WHEREAS**, the street name change from "Johnson Street" to
26 "LaVilla Center Drive" affects the address assignment of one
27 property owner who is also the applicant, the JTA; and

28 **WHEREAS**, on November 20, 2019, the Jacksonville Historic
29 Preservation Commission reviewed the street name request, and
30 recommended to change Johnson Street to LaVilla Center Drive; a
31 copy of the recommendation and the minutes of the Jacksonville

1 Historic Preservation Commission are attached hereto as **Exhibit 2;**
2 and

3 **WHEREAS,** the Addressing Staff invited the property owner to
4 the December 4, 2019, public meeting of the 911 Emergency
5 Addressing Advisory Committee in order to participate in the
6 discussion regarding the LaVilla Center Drive street name change
7 request; and

8 **WHEREAS,** on December 4, 2019, the 911 Emergency Addressing
9 Advisory Committee determined and voted to approve the proposed
10 street name change to LaVilla Center Drive; a copy of the
11 recommendation and an excerpt of the minutes of the December 4,
12 2019, meeting are attached hereto as **Exhibit 3;** and

13 **WHEREAS,** a copy of the map of "Johnson Street" is attached
14 hereto as **Exhibit 4;** and

15 **WHEREAS,** the Council finds it appropriate to change "Johnson
16 Street" to "LaVilla Center Drive"; and

17 **WHEREAS,** the applicant has remitted funds to satisfy the cost
18 for the street name change (See attached **Exhibit 5;** and

19 **WHEREAS,** the JTA also submitted an application for an Honorary
20 Street Name Designation to honor the prominent residents of
21 LaVilla, James Weldon Johnson and his brother, J. Rosamond Johnson
22 (See attached **Exhibit 6;** and

23 **WHEREAS,** James Weldon Johnson was born in Jacksonville on June
24 17, 1872, in historic LaVilla; and

25 **WHEREAS,** James Weldon Johnson graduated from Stanton School in
26 1887, and Atlanta University in 1894, and later, was eventually
27 appointed principal of Stanton School; and

28 **WHEREAS,** during his tenure as principal, Stanton School became
29 the first high school for African Americans in Jacksonville; and

30 **WHEREAS,** in 1895, James Weldon Johnson, owned and operated the
31 The Daily American newspaper; and

1 **WHEREAS**, James Weldon Johnson, a lawyer, was the first African
2 American to pass the Florida Bar examination before a state judge;
3 and

4 **WHEREAS**, James Weldon Johnson is most remembered and lauded
5 for composing "Lift Every Voice and Sing" in 1900 along with his
6 brother, J. Rosamond Johnson, who was the music director for the
7 Florida Baptist Academy; and

8 **WHEREAS**, "Lift Every Voice and Sing" also celebrated as the
9 Black National Anthem has, universally, impacted the world, and was
10 initially composed to celebrate President Abraham Lincoln's
11 February 12th birthday; and

12 **WHEREAS**, reportedly, "Lift Every Voice and Sing" was first
13 performed by a chorus of 500 school children, and it is speculated
14 that this memorable performance by the students occurred at one of
15 the following: Old Stanton High School, Ebenezer United Methodist
16 Church, Bethel Baptist Institutional Church or the Florida Baptist
17 Academy; and

18 **WHEREAS**, "Lift Every Voice and Sing" propelled both brothers
19 to worldwide prominence; and

20 **WHEREAS**, in 1906, President Theodore "Teddy" Roosevelt
21 appointed James Weldon Johnson as the United States Consul to
22 Venezuela, and he later served in a similar position in Nicaragua;
23 and

24 **WHEREAS**, ten years after composing "Lift Every Voice and
25 Sing," James Weldon Johnson married New York native, Grace Nail;
26 and

27 **WHEREAS**, James Weldon Johnson issued and served as the editor
28 of a number of publications and literary works including The
29 Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man in 1912 which was previously
30 printed anonymously then re-printed; God's Trombones in 1927, The
31 Book of Negro Poetry in 1922 and 1931, and in 1933, Johnson penned

1 his autobiography, Along This Way; and

2 **WHEREAS**, James Weldon Johnson received numerous awards,
3 honorary degrees, namely a Master's Degree in 1904 from Atlanta
4 University; a Doctorate in Literature from Talladega College and
5 Howard University; the Springarn Medal, the Harmon Award as well as
6 a Rosenwald Fellowship; and

7 **WHEREAS**, tragically, James Weldon Johnson died on June 26,
8 1938, in an automobile accident near Wiscasset, Maine and is buried
9 in Greenwood Cemetery in Brooklyn, New York; and

10 **WHEREAS**, James Weldon Johnson's brother, J. Rosamond Johnson,
11 was a successful composer and singer, and both brothers traveled
12 together, extensively, to New York to produce several musical
13 pieces with Bob Cole, a notable song writer; and

14 **WHEREAS**, born in 1873, J. Rosamond Johnson, collaborated and
15 produced "Lift Every Voice and Sing" with his brother, James Weldon
16 Johnson; and

17 **WHEREAS**, J. Rosamond Johnson was trained in music by their
18 mother, Louise Johnson; and

19 **WHEREAS**, J. Rosamond Johnson trained, internationally, in
20 London, England, and at the New England Conservatory; and

21 **WHEREAS**, J. Rosamond Johnson began his musical career serving
22 as a teacher at the Florida Baptist Academy, and serving as the
23 Director of Music at Bethel Baptist Institutional Church in
24 Jacksonville; and

25 **WHEREAS**, in the early 1900s, he lived as a New York resident
26 working alongside his brother, James Weldon Johnson and song
27 writer, Bob Cole; and

28 **WHEREAS**, the three men, James Weldon Johnson, J. Rosamond
29 Johnson and Bob Cole, collaborated and produced numerous songs, and
30 Broadway operettas of all black cast members; and

31 **WHEREAS**, during a short residency in London, John Rosamond

1 Johnson toured as a Vaudeville performer; and

2 **WHEREAS**, from 1914-1919, J. Rosamond Johnson was appointed
3 Director of the New York's Music School Settlement for Colored; and

4 **WHEREAS**, J. Rosamond Johnson completed several tours singing
5 and performing in musicals and drama productions; and

6 **WHEREAS**, J. Rosamond Johnson, similar to his brother, edited
7 several spiritual books; and

8 **WHEREAS**, the Council finds that the accomplishments of James
9 Weldon Johnson and John Rosamond Johnson are worthy and deserving
10 of a form of recognition that the City of Jacksonville and James
11 Weldon Johnson's and John Rosamond Johnson's descendants can share
12 and celebrate in, to wit: the creation of an honorary street
13 designation and the installation of two appropriate honorary
14 roadway markers on LaVilla Center Drive extending from Bay Street
15 to Adams Street in Council District 7; now therefore,

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

17 **Section 1. Johnson Street Renamed.** The street name of
18 "Johnson Street" in Council District 7, is hereby renamed "LaVilla
19 Center Drive", by which name such street segment shall be hereafter
20 known and designated. A copy of the map of the renamed "LaVilla
21 Center Drive" is attached hereto as **Exhibit 4**.

22 **Section 2. Waiver of Section 745.105, Ord. Code.** Section
23 745.105, Ord. Code which requires that the Planning and Development
24 Department send written notification of street name changes and
25 honorary markers to property owners who live on the designated
26 street name, is hereby waived due to the fact that the applicant,
27 the JTA, is the sole property owner whose address will be impacted
28 by the proposed street name change.

29 **Section 3. LaVilla Center Drive to receive an honorary**
30 **street designation for James Weldon Johnson and J. Rosamond**
31 **Johnson.** LaVilla Center Drive extending from Bay Street to Adams

1 Street in Council District 7 shall hereby be designated as
2 contemplated by Section 745.105, *Ordinance Code*, for James Weldon
3 Johnson and J. Rosamond Johnson. A map of the road designation is
4 attached hereto as **Exhibit 4**.

5 **Section 4. Honorary Roadside Markers for James Weldon**
6 **Johnson and J. Rosamond Johnson to be installed.** Two honorary
7 roadside markers, as contemplated by Section 745.105, *Ordinance*
8 *Code*, recognizing and honoring James Weldon Johnson and J. Rosamond
9 Johnson shall be placed in appropriate locations on LaVilla Center
10 Drive.

11 **Section 5. Directing Legislative Services to forward a**
12 **copy to the Planning and Development Department.** The Chief of
13 Legislative Services is requested to send a copy of this
14 legislation, once enacted, to the Planning and Development
15 Department, Addressing Unit, for processing, implementation, and
16 coordination with 911 Emergency, Fire and Rescue Department, the
17 Post Office, Public Works Department, Traffic Engineering Division
18 and other affected agencies and organizations.

19 **Section 6. Effective Date.** This ordinance shall become
20 effective upon signature by the Mayor or upon becoming effective
21 without the Mayor's signature.

22
23 Form Approved:

24
25 _____
26 Office of General Counsel

27 Legislation Prepared By: Cherry Shaw Pollock

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