

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

5
6 **ORDINANCE 2019-889**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

27 **WHEREAS**, on November 20, 2019, the Jacksonville Historic
28 Preservation Commission reviewed the street name request, and
29 recommended to change Johnson Street to LaVilla Center Drive; a
30 copy of the recommendation and the minutes of the Jacksonville
31 Historic Preservation Commission are attached hereto as **Exhibit 2**;

1 and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

31 **WHEREAS**, James Weldon Johnson, a lawyer, was the first African

1 American to pass the Florida Bar examination before a state judge;
2 and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

30 **WHEREAS**, during a short residency in London, John Rosamond
31 Johnson toured as a Vaudeville performer; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

28 **Section 3. LaVilla Center Drive to receive an honorary**
29 **street designation for James Weldon Johnson and J. Rosamond**
30 **Johnson.** LaVilla Center Drive extending from Bay Street to Adams
31 Street in Council District 7 shall hereby be designated as

1 contemplated by Section 745.105, *Ordinance Code*, for James Weldon
2 Johnson and J. Rosamond Johnson. A map of the road designation is
3 attached hereto as **Exhibit 4**.

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

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

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

21
22 Form Approved:

23
24 _____
25 Office of General Counsel

26 Legislation Prepared By: Cherry Shaw Pollock

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