

1 Introduced by Council Member Pittman and Co-Sponsored by Council
2 Member Newby and amended by the Neighborhoods, Community Services,
3 Public Health and Safety Committee:
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6 **ORDINANCE 2022-718-E**

7 AN ORDINANCE REGARDING CHAPTER 745 (ADDRESSING
8 AND STREET NAMING REGULATIONS) ORDINANCE CODE;
9 ESTABLISHING AN HONORARY STREET DESIGNATION AND
10 ASSOCIATED ROADWAY MARKERS FOR APOSTLE DR.
11 GENTLE L. GROOVER, SR.; ESTABLISHING AN HONORARY
12 STREET DESIGNATION ON ROWE AVENUE EXTENDING FROM
13 LEM TURNER ROAD TO MONCRIEF ROAD IN COUNCIL
14 DISTRICT 8 FOR APOSTLE DR. GENTLE L. GROOVER,
15 SR.; PROVIDING FOR THE INSTALLATION OF TWO
16 HONORARY ROADWAY MARKERS TO BE LOCATED IN
17 APPROPRIATE LOCATIONS ON THE DESIGNATED ROAD IN
18 COUNCIL DISTRICT 8; WAIVER OF SECTION 745.105
19 (I) (2) WHICH REQUIRES THAT THE HONOREE BE
20 DECEASED FOR AT LEAST FIVE YEARS; WAIVER OF
21 SECTION 745.105 (I) (3) WHICH REQUIRES THAT THE
22 HONOREE LIVE IN THE COMMUNITY WITHIN FIVE MILES
23 OF THE STREET BEING DESIGNATED FOR AT LEAST 10
24 YEARS; DIRECTING THE LEGISLATIVE SERVICES
25 DIVISION TO FORWARD THIS ORDINANCE TO THE
26 PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT, ADDRESSING
27 DIVISION FOR PROCESSING, IMPLEMENTATION AND
28 COORDINATION WITH THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT,
29 TRAFFIC ENGINEERING AND OTHER AFFECTED AGENCIES
30 AND ORGANIZATIONS; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.
31

1 **WHEREAS**, Apostle Dr. Gentle L. Groover, Sr., was known for his
2 "gentle" spirit, and a gift for motivational speeches; and

3 **WHEREAS**, during the early 1950s, Apostle Groover served in the
4 United States Army until his honorable discharge; and

5 **WHEREAS**, in 1963, Apostle Groover moved to Jacksonville to start
6 a mission church, initially, on Cord Avenue; and

7 **WHEREAS**, over the years, and anticipating numerous building
8 locations for the church, Apostle Groover eventually settled at 1317
9 Rowe Avenue for the church location; and

10 **WHEREAS**, Greater Refuge Temple has been located at 1317 Rowe
11 Avenue for the past 24 years, and Apostle Groover served as the lead
12 minister from the beginning; and

13 **WHEREAS**, through his motivation of others, Apostle Groover made
14 a positive impact on the Jacksonville community; and

15 **WHEREAS**, in 1981, Mr. Groover, along with his sister, Catherine
16 Hester McNair established Bridge The Gap, Inc., to serve the community
17 with several notable programs such as: the Annual Law Enforcement and
18 Fire/Rescue Thanksgiving Day, the Annual Gift Giving Day, the Annual
19 Walk for Wellness, The Youth Program, and the Adopt-a-Grandparent
20 Program which was established in 1983 to provide support and
21 companionship to Jacksonville senior citizens; and

22 **WHEREAS**, Bridge the Gap, Inc., is still in existence today
23 operating a successful community program by partnership with UF
24 Health, Florida Blue, First Coast Black Nurses Association, City of
25 Jacksonville Parks and Recreation, Winn Dixie, Jacksonville Housing
26 Authority, and Feeding Northeast Florida among others; and

27 **WHEREAS**, Pastor Groover became a Bishop in 1983, and was
28 appointed to serve over 1,200 church organizations nationwide and in
29 22 countries including Mexico, Canada, Haiti, England, and the
30 Philippines; and

31 **WHEREAS**, in 1984, Bishop Groover was elected as an Apostle,

1 which is a part of the highest governing body of his church
2 organization, and 10 years later, in 1995, was elected as the
3 Presiding Prelate which bestowed leadership to him over hundreds of
4 churches; and

5 **WHEREAS**, during Groover's leadership, the church experienced a
6 significant increase in membership all due to his novel initiatives,
7 ideas, and programs for senior and youth members; and

8 **WHEREAS**, in June of 1988, former Governor Lawton Chiles, lauded
9 Pastor Groover at the dedication of the sanctuary of Greater Refuge
10 Temple on Rowe Avenue; and

11 **WHEREAS**, Pastor Groover also lead the ministry services at the
12 Lakeland Florida church location, and from 2015-2019, Lakeland Mayor
13 Bill Mutz acknowledged Pastor Groover for his diligent work and
14 philanthropy in the Lakeland community; and

15 **WHEREAS**, internationally, Apostle Groover mentored, and guided
16 other church pastors by building new churches and schools in Monrovia,
17 Liberia, Ghana, West Africa, and Hyderabad, India; and

18 **WHEREAS**, stateside, Pastor Groover was instrumental in obtaining
19 and supplying much needed food during several hurricanes in South
20 Carolina and Louisiana; and

21 **WHEREAS**, on a local level, Pastor Groover ministered sorrowing
22 families at numerous Jacksonville hospitals as well as provided
23 extended shelter to homeless individuals; and

24 **WHEREAS**, a man of humility and integrity, Apostle Dr. Groover
25 dedicated almost 60 years in ministry, and lived to contribute to
26 others; and

27 **WHEREAS**, in 2018, St. Thomas College bestowed an Honorary Doctor
28 of Divinity to Mr. Groover; and

29 **WHEREAS**, also in 2018, Pastor Groover contributed, generously,
30 to fund the establishment of the Ribault High School Medical Clinic;
31 and

1 **WHEREAS**, Pastor Groover passed away in October 2022 after
2 decades of service to the community; and

3 **WHEREAS**, pursuant to Section 745.105 (j)(10), Ordinance Code,
4 the Planning and Development Department mailed written notifications
5 on July 11, 2022, and on August 11, 2022, to 65 affected property
6 owners requesting the affected property owners to indicate their
7 written consent or objection to the proposed honorary street
8 designation. A copy of the first and second written notifications are
9 attached hereto as **Revised Exhibit 1**, labeled as "Revised Exhibit 1,
10 Rev 1st Notice, January 3, 2023 - NCSPHS" and **Revised Exhibit 2**,
11 labeled as "Revised Exhibit 2, Rev 2nd Notice, January 3, 2023 -
12 NCSPHS". Subsequently, nine additional affected property owners were
13 identified, and written notifications were mailed to those owners on
14 October 6, 2022 and November 6, 2022. A copy of the first and second
15 written notifications to the additional affected property owners are
16 attached as **Exhibit 10** and **Exhibit 11**, respectively. A complete
17 listing of the 74 total affected addresses is attached hereto as
18 **Revised Exhibit 3**, labeled as "Revised Exhibit 3, Rev Address List,
19 January 3, 2023 - NCSPHS"; and

20 **WHEREAS**, four (4) affected property owners that were initially
21 notified indicated their consent of the proposed honorary
22 designation. Copies of the written consents are attached as **Revised**
23 **Exhibit 4**, labeled as "Revised Exhibit 4, Rev Consent Letters, January
24 3, 2023 - NCSPHS". Additionally, one (1) of the affected property
25 owners who was subsequently notified indicated their consent of the
26 proposed honorary designation. A copy of their written consent is
27 attached hereto as **Exhibit 12**; and

28 **WHEREAS**, four (4) affected property owners indicated their
29 objection to the proposed honorary designation. Copies of the written
30 objections are attached as **Exhibit 5**; and

31 **WHEREAS**, fifteen (15) of the notification letters were "Returned

1 to Sender," and "Unable to Forward." Copies of the envelopes are
2 attached as **Exhibit 6**; and

3 **WHEREAS**, pursuant to Section 745.105 (j)(10), Ord. Code, the
4 remaining affected property owners are deemed to have consented to
5 the proposed honorary designations due to their non-response to the
6 written notifications; and

7 **WHEREAS**, the applicant remitted the required funds to satisfy
8 the cost for the honorary markers. A payment receipt is attached as
9 **Exhibit 7**. A completed application is also attached as **Exhibit 8**; now
10 therefore

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

12 **Section 1. Rowe Avenue to receive an honorary street**
13 **designation for Apostle Dr. Gentle L. Groover, Sr.** Rowe Avenue
14 extending from Lem Turner Road to Moncrief Road in Council District
15 8, is hereby designated as contemplated by Section 745.105, Ordinance
16 Code, for Apostle Dr. Gentle L. Groover, Sr. A map of the road
17 designation is attached hereto as **Exhibit 9**.

18 **Section 2. Honorary Roadside Markers for Apostle Dr. Gentle**
19 **L. Groover, Sr. to be installed.** Two honorary roadside markers, as
20 contemplated by Section 745.105, Ordinance Code, recognizing and
21 honoring Apostle Dr. Gentle L. Groover, Sr. shall be placed in
22 appropriate locations on Rowe Avenue.

23 **Section 3. Waiver of Section 745.105 (i)(2), Ordinance**
24 **Code.** Section 745.105(i)(2) which requires that the honoree be
25 deceased for at least five years is hereby waived to honor Apostle
26 Groover, who passed away in October 2022, for his contributions to
27 the community.

28 **Section 4. Waiver of Section 745.105 (i)(3), Ordinance**
29 **Code.** Section 745.105(i)(3) which requires that the honoree live in
30 the community within five miles of the designated road for at least
31 10 years is hereby waived because Apostle Groover served as the lead

1 pastor at Greater Refuge Temple Church which is located on the
2 designated road.

3 **Section 5. Directing Legislative Services Division to**
4 **forward a copy to the Planning and Development Department.** The Chief
5 of Legislative Services is requested to send a copy of this
6 legislation, once enacted, to the Planning and Development
7 Department, Addressing Unit, for processing, implementation, and
8 coordination with the Public Works Department, Traffic Engineering
9 Division and other affected agencies and organizations.

10 **Section 6. Effective Date.** This ordinance shall
11 become effective upon signature by the Mayor or upon becoming
12 effective without the Mayor's signature.

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14 Form Approved:

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16 /s/ Mary E. Staffopoulos

17 Office of General Counsel

18 Legislation Prepared by: Cherry S. Pollock

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