

**Report of the Historic Preservation Section and
Advisory Recommendation of the Jacksonville Historic Preservation Commission**

TO: Council Secretary, Jacksonville City Council

FROM: Arimus Wells, City Planner Supervisor – Planning and Development

RE: **Proposed Naming of 515 Julia St – Ordinance No. 2024-555**

DATE: August 15, 2024

On July 23, 2024, Ordinance 2024-555 was introduced to propose naming the City-owned building located at 515 Julia Street as the “Gary F. Keys, Sr. Fire Rescue Headquarters.” Consistent with Chapter 122.105 of the Jacksonville Ordinance Code the naming and renaming of public buildings, public facilities and public parks, requires a Report from the Historic Preservation Section and an advisory recommendation on the renaming proposal from the Jacksonville Historic Preservation Commission. The Report is required to address the following criteria:

1. The origin of the existing public building, public facility, or public park name, if applicable;
2. Any historical significance of the existing public building, public facility or public park;
3. Whether there are any historical structures or landmarks on the subject property
4. Whether the existing building name, name of public facility, or public park name is part of a common theme of names throughout the community where such building, park or facility is located;
5. The age of the public building, public facility or public park name
6. Whether there are other public buildings, public facilities, or public parks with the same or similar name; and
7. Whether the person (or persons) to whom the public building, public facility or public park is proposed to be named or renamed has contributed to the development of, or is a reminder of the history and/or culture of the City, State, or Nation.

Location: 515 Julia Street, RE# 073854-0000

Reason for Change: At the request of City Council to honor the life and legacy of Gary F. Keys, Sr, former Chief of the Jacksonville Fire and Rescue Department, by naming the City-owned building located at 515 Julia Street as the “Gary F. Keys, Sr. Fire Rescue Headquarters.” Chief Keys served with the City from 1960-1989.

Criteria:

1. The origin of the existing public building, public facility, or public park name, if applicable:

The existing City-owned building is currently being used by the Jacksonville Fire and Rescue Department and does not have a formally designated name.

2. Any historical significance of the existing public building, public facility or public park:

According to archival records, the subject building was constructed in 1952. This building is identified as the work of master architect Henry J. Toombs of Atlanta, Georgia, and constructed by the George D. Auchter Company. This five-story reinforced concrete building is characterized by its Federal Art Deco styling, which consists of its Indiana limestone exterior, bas-relief entrance panels, metal balustrades, and louvred windows. Based on these findings, the Historic Preservation Section considers the building eligible for designation as a local landmark.

3. Whether there are any historical structures or landmarks on the subject property:

The subject property does not consist of any locally designated or nationally designated historical structures or landmarks. However, the Historic Preservation Section considers the existing building eligible for designation as a local landmark.

4. Whether the existing building name, name of public facility, or public park name is part of a common theme of names throughout the community where such building, park or facility is located:

The existing building does not have a formally designated name and is thereby not part of a common theme of names throughout the community.

5. The age of the public building, public facility or public park name:

The existing building does not have a formally designated name. Constructed in 1952, the subject building was originally occupied by the Federal Reserve. The City purchased the property in 1994 and currently uses the building for Jacksonville Fire and Rescue Department operations.

6. Whether there are other public buildings, public facilities, or public parks with the same or similar name:

There are no other public buildings, public facilities, or public parks with the same or similar name.

7. Whether the person (or persons) to whom the public building, public facility or public park is proposed to be named or renamed has contributed to the development of, or is a reminder of the history and/or culture of the City, State, or Nation:

Gary France Keys, Sr. was born in Jacksonville, Florida on September 1, 1938. Mr. Keys graduated Andrew Jackson High School in 1957 and joined the Jacksonville Fire Department in 1960. He would later become an original member of the City's Rescue Division that was established in 1968.

For nearly three decades, Mr. Keys served as Chief of the Fire and Rescue Department. During his tenure, Chief Keys rose through the ranks and would serve in variety of positions such as Chief of Operations, Chief of Fire Services, Deputy Director of Public Safety, and in 1988, Fire Chief, which is the highest-ranking position within the Jacksonville Fire and Rescue Department. Chief Keys simultaneously served three terms as President of the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) Local 122 Union

In addition to his many accomplishments and accolades, the impact of Chief Keys can still be felt within the Jacksonville Fire and Rescue Department where he created multiple tactics, procedures, and policies.

PDD Recommendation:

It is the opinion of the Planning and Development Department (PDD) that the proposed naming of the City-owned building located at 515 Julia Street as the "Gary F. Keys, Sr. Fire Rescue Headquarters" will be named after a person that has made significant contributions to the Jacksonville Fire and Rescue Department as outlined in Ordinance 2024-555.

JHPC Recommendation:

On August 28, 2024, the Jacksonville Historic Preservation Commission (JHPC) will review and issue an opinion on the proposed naming of the City-owned building.



Aerial View of Subject Property



View of the Building's Main Entrance