

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

5 A RESOLUTION ENCOURAGING AND REQUESTING THE
6 DOWNTOWN INVESTMENT AUTHORITY ("DIA") TO EXPLORE
7 THE SALE OR LEASE OF PROPERTY LOCATED AT 816
8 UNION STREET WEST, WITHIN THE DOWNTOWN CRA
9 BOUNDARY, TO THE JACKSONVILLE BROTHERHOOD OF
10 POLICE OFFICERS; PROVIDING DIA TIME TO REVIEW
11 AND REPORT ITS FINDINGS TO COUNCIL; PROVIDING AN
12 EFFECTIVE DATE.
13

14 **WHEREAS**, when the first six Black police officers were hired in
15 Jacksonville, Florida on July 16, 1950, they were not trained at the
16 same police academy as their white counterparts and they were not
17 allowed to gather at the same precincts as the white officers; they
18 were assigned a separate precinct, known at the time as Precinct #3;
19 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 cars,
25 the Black officers were assigned to walking beats within the Black
26 community around downtown and LaVilla, called the "Black Beats", and
27 the Black officers often connected with the community by interacting
28 with the black businesses, citizens, children and entertainers on a
29 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 finally
2 closed so that the Jacksonville Police Department could integrate;
3 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 and
10 discussed creation of a new organization which would combat juvenile
11 delinquency and address the status of the Negro Officer, the group
12 calling itself the "Negro Police Savings Club"; and

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

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

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

30 **WHEREAS**, 816 Union Street W. is a City-owned property located
31 in the boundary of the Downtown CRA and is due north of the area

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

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

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

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

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

29 **Section 1. Encouraging DIA to Explore Sale of Lease of 816**
30 **Union Street W. to the Brotherhood.** The DIA is requested to explore
31 whether the sale of lease of 816 Union Street W. to the Jacksonville

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

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

19 **Section 3. Effective Date.** This Resolution shall become
20 effective upon signature by the Mayor or upon becoming effective
21 without the Mayor's signature.

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23 Form Approved:

24
25 /s/ Paige H. Johnston

26 Office of General Counsel

27 Legislation Prepared By: Paige H. Johnston

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