

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY



CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

OAKLAND CITY COUNCIL

RESOLUTION NO. _____ C.M.S.

INTRODUCED BY MAYOR KEVIN JENKINS

RESOLUTION TO (1) COMMEMORATIVELY RENAME THE INTERSECTION AT SEVENTH STREET AND CAMPBELL STREET AS 'ELAINE BROWN WAY' AND (2) AUTHORIZE THE INSTALLATION OF A PLAQUE OR SIGN HONORING ELAINE BROWN, PURSUANT TO THE POLICY AND PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED BY OAKLAND CITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION NO. 77967 C.M.S.

WHEREAS, California Government Code section 34091.1 allows a jurisdiction by resolution to name a new public street or to rename an existing public street; and

WHEREAS, the naming of a new public street or the renaming of an existing public street is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970; and

WHEREAS, the City Council will occasionally honor the contributions of an outstanding individual with commemorative street names or by the renaming of a public street such as with Bruce Lee Way, Herbert Guice Way, Peter Van Kleeef Way, Dr. Huey P. Newton Way, Deontae Bush Way, Dorothy King Way, and Too \$hort Way; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Oakland City Council Resolution No. 77967 C.M.S. (passed July 15, 2003), the City Council may, on its motion, consider the renaming of a public street as a tribute to an individual or as a result of a significant event or activity, if one of the following criteria is met: (1) the individual has positively impacted the lives of a nation or the world; or (2) the name change is related to an economic development or redevelopment activity; or (3) The renaming commemorates a significant historical event; and

WHEREAS, the City Council may commemorate a nominee either by: (a) retaining the existing street name and installing commemorative plaques or signs; or (b) renaming the existing street for the individual and installing new street signs; and

WHEREAS, Elaine Brown grew up in North Philadelphia, raised by a hardworking mother who, despite limited means, ensured Elaine had access to education, music, and the arts—early experiences that shaped her lifelong commitment to learning, culture, and justice; and

WHEREAS, as a young woman, she pursued a career in music, moving to Los Angeles with little more than ambition and determination, but soon found herself drawn into the Black Liberation Movement, setting Elaine on a path toward a life of activism and leadership; and

WHEREAS, in 1968, following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Elaine joined the Black Panther Party, where she quickly rose to leadership, becoming Minister of Information and later making history as the first and only woman to chair the Party; and

WHEREAS, in 1973, as part of the Black Panther Party's commitment to electoral politics, she ran for Oakland City Council, earning an impressive 30% of the vote, and again in 1975, increasing her support to 44%, helping to lay the groundwork for greater Black political representation in the city; and

WHEREAS, in 1974, when Black Panther leader Huey P. Newton fled to Cuba, he appointed Elaine Brown to lead the organization, making her the first woman to chair the Party, a position she held until 1977. During her tenure, the Black Panther Party's programs extended beyond political activism into practical educational and social initiatives; and

WHEREAS, one of the standout community programs under Elaine's leadership was the Panther Liberation Schools, both a pioneering and enduring exemplar of the community school educational model, with the Oakland Community School earning recognition from the California Department of Education as a "model" elementary school in 1977; and

WHEREAS, in 1977, she successfully managed Lionel Wilson's mayoral campaign, leading to his historic election as Oakland's first Black mayor, furthering the Party's mission of gaining political power for the Black community; and

WHEREAS, in her role as executive director of the Michael B. Lewis Legal Defense Committee, Elaine led more than 27 years of advocacy on behalf of Michael "Little B" Lewis, who was sentenced at age 13 to life in prison for a crime he did not commit. In 2023, she saw those efforts come full circle when Lewis was finally released; and

WHEREAS, Elaine is the author of *A Taste of Power* and *The Condemnation of Little B*, books that tell the truth about struggle, resistance, and the fight for justice. Further cementing her story in history, *A Taste of Power* is now set to be adapted into a film; and

WHEREAS, believing that true freedom includes economic independence, Elaine founded Oakland & the World Enterprises, a nonprofit dedicated to launching and sustaining businesses created by formerly incarcerated individuals and others facing systemic barriers, ensuring that people who have been shut out of opportunities have the chance to thrive; and

WHEREAS, through this work, as CEO of the nonprofit Oakland & the World Enterprises, she secured the land for, and led development of, 79 units of 100% affordable housing in West Oakland, complete with community-driven businesses including West Oakland Farms at 7th and Campbell Streets, proving that justice is not just about words—it's about action, investment, and building a better future; and

WHEREAS, Elaine Brown has made Oakland her home, pouring her heart into this city and fighting for its people, never backing down in the face of injustice, and always pushing forward toward a more just and equitable world; and

WHEREAS, the City Council intends that the costs associated with such a commemorative act will be borne by the office of Mayor Kevin Jenkins; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That the Oakland City Council hereby approves the commemorative renaming of the intersection at Seventh Street and Campbell Street as ‘Elaine Brown Way’; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED: That the Oakland City Council directs the City Administrator to proceed with the commemorative designation of ‘Elaine Brown Way’ and placement of street sign(s) or plaque(s) to that effect at the intersection of Seventh Street and Campbell Street.

IN COUNCIL, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA,

PASSED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES - BROWN, FIFE, HOUSTON, KAPLAN, RAMACHANDRAN, UNGER, AND PRESIDENT
PRO TEMPORE GALLO

NOES –

ABSENT – COUNCIL PRESIDENT JENKINS (serving as Mayor pursuant to Charter Section 303)
ABSTENTION –

ATTEST: _____

ASHA REED
City Clerk and Clerk of the Council of the
City of Oakland, California

3409927/jb