

Ordinance No. 617-2024

AN EMERGENCY ORDINANCE

Designating West 31st Place with a secondary and honorary designation of “George Hrbek Way”.

By Council Member McCormack

FOR PASSAGE

June 3, 2024

WHEREAS, Reverend George Hrbek, a social justice giant in Northeast Ohio and former head of Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry, lived on West 31st Place, where he and his wife Stephanie raised their family, until his passing in February 2023 at the age of 91; and

WHEREAS, Hrbek, the Lutheran pastor, spent much of the civil rights era in Alabama where he attempted to desegregate churches, and helped create the Selma chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, a civil rights organization founded by Martin Luther King Jr. with whom he had a personal relationship; and

WHEREAS, Hrbek moved from Alabama to Chicago, where he worked to educate other white people about allyship and racism; his messages were often advised by King, who was also working in Chicago at the time; and

WHEREAS, in the early 1970s, Hrbek was hired as one of the first staff members of Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry, a Cleveland social services organization that began operating the 2100 Lakeside Men’s Shelter when Hrbek became the ministry’s interim executive director; and

WHEREAS, those who worked closely with Hrbek described him as bold and not afraid of consequences, having been arrested multiple times for advocacy and demonstrations; and

WHEREAS, he was at the forefront fighting racial injustice, and was never afraid to stand up to institutions that stood in the way of equity; and

WHEREAS, Hrbek was an activist until the end, as demonstrated in his extensive interview with historian Lynn Burnett just after his 90th birthday; and

WHEREAS, in an article published by Ideastream Public Media on February 21, 2023, friend Charles See was quoted saying, “When we think in the days ahead and the years ahead, we certainly will remember George...we’ll be encouraged and his example will continue to be there to spur the best of us on.”; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of Cleveland want to honor George Hrbek with a secondary street sign designation of “George Hrbek Way” in recognition of his dedication to racial and social justice and community activism; and

WHEREAS, this ordinance constitutes an emergency measure for the immediate preservation of public peace, property, health or safety; now, therefore,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CLEVELAND:

Section 1. That West 31st Place is designated with a secondary and honorary designation of “George Hrbek Way”.

Section 2. That this ordinance is hereby declared to be an emergency measure and, provided it receives the affirmative vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to Council, it shall take effect and be in force immediately upon its passage and approval by the Mayor; otherwise it shall take effect and be in force from and after the earliest period allowed by law.

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REPORT
after Second Reading

By Council Member McCormack

AN EMERGENCY ORDINANCE

Designating West 31st Place with a secondary and honorary designation of "George Hrbek Way".

READ FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD TIME

READ FIRST TIME

REPORTS

and referred to

CITY CLERK

READ SECOND TIME

CITY CLERK

READ THIRD TIME on JUNE 3, 2024

PRESIDENT

CITY CLERK

APPROVED

MAYOR

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