

Ordinance No. 177-2020

Council Member B. Jones

AN EMERGENCY ORDINANCE

Changing the name of “E.J. Kovacic Recreation Center” located at 6250 Saint Clair Avenue to “Muhammad Ali Recreation Center.”

WHEREAS, the late Muhammad Ali was an American former heavyweight champion boxer and one of the greatest sporting figures of the 20th century; and Olympic gold medalist and the first fighter to capture the heavyweight title three times, Ali won 56 times in his 21-year professional career; and

WHEREAS, Ali’s outspokenness on issues of race, religion and politics made him a controversial figure during his career, and he was recognized later in life as a humanitarian and ambassador of peace and social responsibility; and

WHEREAS, born Cassius Clay Jr. in 1942, he changed his name to Muhammad Ali in 1964 after joining the Nation of Islam shortly after winning his first title as heavyweight champion of the world; and

WHEREAS, citing his religious beliefs, he refused military induction into the U.S. Armed Forces during the Vietnam War, and was stripped of his heavyweight championship and banned from boxing for three years during the prime of his career; and

WHEREAS, after being convicted of draft evasion, his popularity plummeted, but he spoke out against the Vietnam War and as public attitudes turned against the war, his support grew; in 1970 the New York State Supreme Court ordered his boxing license reinstated, and the following year the U.S. Supreme Court overturned his conviction in a unanimous decision; and

WHEREAS, after 43 months in exile, Ali returned to the ring in 1970 and by 1971 regained his heavyweight crown in the “Fight of the Century”, and went on to numerous victories before retiring in 1981 with a career record of 56 wins, five losses and 37 knockouts; and

WHEREAS, Ali was diagnosed with Parkinson’s syndrome in 1984 which severely impaired Ali’s motor skills and speech, but he remained active as a humanitarian and goodwill ambassador, even negotiating the release of American hostages in Iraq in 1990 and traveling to Afghanistan in 2002 as a United Nations Messenger of Peace; and

WHEREAS, Ali visited Cleveland several times, notably at the “Ali Summit” in Cleveland in 1967 when a group of African American sports greats and civic leaders met regarding his opposition to fighting in Vietnam and lent support to his decision following the meeting in a press conference; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of Cleveland want to honor Muhammad Ali in recognition of his exceptional contributions to boxing, humanitarianism, and peace and social justice causes; and

WHEREAS, this ordinance constitutes an emergency measure providing for the usual daily operation of a municipal department; now, therefore,

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

Section 1. That the name of “E.J. Kovacic Recreation Center” located at 6250 Saint Clair Avenue to “Muhammad Ali Recreation Center”, and that the Director of Public Works is authorized and directed to take the necessary action to affect said name change and to post the proper signs at the recreation center.

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 adoption 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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READ FIRST TIME on FEBRUARY 3, 2020
and referred to DIRECTORS of Public Works,
City Planning Commission, Finance, Law;
COMMITTEES on Municipal Services and Properties,
Development Planning and Sustainability, Finance

REPORTS

CITY CLERK

READ SECOND TIME

CITY CLERK

READ THIRD TIME

PRESIDENT

CITY CLERK

APPROVED

MAYOR

Recorded Vol. **107** Page _____

Published in the City Record _____

REPORT
after second Reading

PASSAGE RECOMMENDED BY
COMMITTEE ON
**MUNICIPAL SERVICES
AND PROPERTIES**

FILED WITH COMMITTEE

PASSAGE RECOMMENDED BY
COMMITTEE ON
**DEVELOPMENT, PLANNING AND
SUSTAINABILITY**

FILED WITH COMMITTEE

PASSAGE RECOMMENDED BY
COMMITTEE ON
FINANCE

FILED WITH COMMITTEE

