March 11, 2019

HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL

RE: Petition #700: Secondary Street Sign for Reverend Edward L. McCoy

The family of the late Reverend Edward Leon. McCoy Sr., and the members of New Harmony Missionary Baptist Church Ladies Auxiliary submitted a petition requesting that the intersection of Mt Elliott and Hendricks be assigned the secondary street name the Rev. Edward L. McCoy, Sr. Street in celebration of his contributions in the field of music, a community leader and as a minister to the city of Detroit. A professional musician, Rev. McCoy owned and operated McCoy Recording Company. Under the his record labels Big Mack Records and Brighter Day Records, Rev. McCoy wrote, produced and recorded numerous albums and managed many artists. In 1988, Rev. McCoy was installed as pastor of New Harmony Missionary Baptist Church and served in that capacity for twenty-six years.

Upon review of the documentation submitted by the petitioner staff has concluded that the petition does meet the criteria for Secondary Naming of Street in accordance with Article VII Sections50-7-31 through Sections 50-7-50 of the 1984 Detroit City Code.

Criteria

As stated in Chapter 50 of the 1984 Detroit City Code, Streets, Sidewalks and Other Public Places, Article VII, Opening, closing, Extending, Widening, Vacating, Naming and Renaming of Streets and Assigning Secondary Names to Streets. A secondary street name designation may be sought to recognize a person who achieved prominence as a result of his or her significant, position, contributions to the City of Detroit, State of Michigan, the United States of America, or the international community.

1. Sites, buildings, structures where cultural, social, spiritual, economic, political, architectural history of the community, city, state or nation is particularly reflected or exemplified.
2. Sites, buildings, structures, which are identified with historic personages or with important events in the community, city, state or national history.

Attached for you review and consideration is a resolution setting the required public hearing as well as a resolution which will authorize the establishment of a Secondary Street Name in honor of Reverend Earnest O. King Sr. upon the conclusion of a favorable public hearing, which must be held in accordance with Section 50-7-35 of the Detroit City Code.
Staff is available to answer any questions you may have.

Respectfully submitted,

[Signature]

Janese Chapman, Deputy Director, Historic Designation Advisory Board

Attachments
RESOLUTION

BY COUNCIL MEMBER __________________________

Resolved, That a public hearing will be held by the Detroit City Council Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee in the Committee of the Whole Room, 13th Floor of the Coleman A. Young Municipal Center on Thursday, __________, 2019 at ________ a.m., for the purpose of considering the petition of the New Harmony Missionary Baptist Church Ladies Auxiliary requesting the secondary street name in honor of the late Reverend Edward Leon McCoy, Sr. in the area of Mt. Elliot Street and Hendricks Avenue to “Reverend Edward L. McCoy, Sr.”
BACKGROUND

Rev. McCoy was born and raised in the City of Detroit. He was a stand-out football player in high school as well as at Morehouse College, where he majored in Math. He served his country in the US Army National Guard, and returned home to work as a local musician and businessman. He operated a recording studio under the label Big Mack Records, and his recordings have been sought after by international production companies (ie., Eccentric Soul-Numero Group). Following the 1967 civil unrest and riots in Detroit, Rev. McCoy was appointed by then Mayor Jerome P. Cavanaugh to a committee to help restore and rebuild the neighborhoods.

From the age of 14 and throughout his adult hood, he served as a minister of music in local Detroit churches, including Pilgrim’s Baptist Church, Gospel Temple Baptist Church, West Side Central Baptist Church, True Love Baptist Church, Pine Grove Baptist Church, New Harmony, and others. Finally, in 1987 he answered the call to serve as a pastor at New Harmony Baptist Church, where he remained for 28 years. Along the way, he was married for 54 years to his wife, with whom they raised three children and numerous grandchildren. As testament to their father’s commitment to service, two of his children dedicated their lives as police officers for the City of Detroit, and another serving as a risk management specialist in educational systems for children.

SERVICE AS PASTOR

As pastor of New Harmony Baptist Church, Reverend McCoy made it his mission to be a mentor for his congregation, especially to the youth. He established the children’s “Young Voices” choir and purchased a bus to pick up neighborhood children and adults for Sunday, Saturday, and Wednesday services. He initiated a Saturday tutorial program for children at risk (youth with learning and emotional challenges). Reverend McCoy also provided tutoring to adults with reading difficulties.

Recognizing the need for his congregation and the surrounding neighborhood to have a sense of pride in their community, he over saw the designation of New Harmony as a Historical District within the City of Detroit. Built in 1904, the church has been serving the community without interruption, and has been a place of spiritual guidance to the African American community since the late 1940’s.

His pastoral service included a radio outreach ministry. Reverend McCoy broadcast for more than 16 years on the former WJLB radio station with the task of “Reaching out to a city in need with the word it needs.” He read from the Bible, prayed, preached, and counseled callers to the station, sometimes to those in life threatening situations.
Reverend McCoy had several affiliations. He was an active member and supporter of the “McDougal-Hunt” Council Community group, which was non-profit group representing the neighborhood around New Harmony. He was an active member of the Wolverine State Baptist Convention (Saginaw, Michigan), which serves the various needs of thousands throughout the State of Michigan. He also was a member of the National Baptist Convention, USA, whose mission is to serve all people through teaching, preaching, and healing.

Committed to his role as a mentor, Reverend McCoy confronted stage 4 throat cancer without relinquishing his pastoral duties. Faced with the possibility of disfiguring surgery to his face, he never questioned his circumstances, even though he was a non-smoker and a non-drinker. He expressed his faith in God, and as New Harmony’s pastor his plight was on public display. Following radiation and chemo treatment, he was even called upon by his doctors at Beaumont Hospital to counsel other cancer patients. Finally, after the ordeal of his aggressive treatment, Reverend McCoy was declared cancer free. He took gratification that he was able show his congregation that he could not only encourage them to have faith, but to possibly give them hope as they confronted their own challenges. In later years, Reverend McCoy continued to preach right up until his death in 2015.

As a solid citizen, leader, inspiration, and positive role model in the City of Detroit, it is hoped that Bulage Place be renamed in honor of Reverend Edward L. McCoy.
Dedicated to church, community

By Val Thompson

The Rev. Edward McCoy was called to the ministry in May, 1992 and ordained in December, 1997. He was installed as pastor of New Harmony Baptist Church in October, 1992.

Rev. McCoy came into the ministry running and he hasn't lost a beat since then. Frankly, he has picked up steam and it has had a tremendous affect on the community surrounding the east side church located at Mt. Elliott and Vernor.

A professional musician as well, Rev. McCoy's greatest ambition now is to continue his broadcast over WKMK-Radio on Thursdays at 91 a.m. The broadcast has been lauded by shut-ins and various age groups.

The broadcast is an extension of the outreach ministry, started by Rev. McCoy, to serve members who were separated from regular church fellowship and to reach out to a city in need of the word of God.

The membership is encouraged by the broadcast, which has resulted in the growth of the church bringing in some 60 new members in one year. Other programs have been developed to address the needs of the community and

Kenyan choir at Fellowship Chapel

The Muungano National Choir from Nairobi, Kenya, will be in concert at Fellowship Chapel, 15596 W. McNichols, on Saturday, July 12 at 7:30 p.m. For more information, call 336-9966. The event is sponsored by the Fellowship Music Dept. Wendell Anthony is pastor.

Rev. McCoy is a graduate of Cincinnati Conservatory of Music in Ohio. He and his wife, Madeline, are the parents of three children.