



## SAVANNAH-CHATHAM COUNTY HISTORIC SITE AND MONUMENT COMMISSION

### HONORARY STREET DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION

**PETITIONER:** Doretha Rice & Jaceln Johnson

**FILE No.:** 25-001257-HM

**LOCATION:** Essex Avenue between 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and Corvair Street

**DATE:** April 3, 2025

#### **NATURE OF REQUEST:**

The applicant is requesting approval of an honorary street designation on a portion of Essex Avenue to have an honorary name of “Annie B. Graham Street”. The proposed designation would cover the portion of Essex Avenue between 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and Corvair Street.

As per the applicant:

“An Honorary Street Designation for Annie Bell Graham within Tremont Park neighborhood. Located on Essex Street between 2<sup>nd</sup> and Corvair Streets.”

#### **FINDINGS:**

The following standards apply:

##### ***Article E- Naming and Renaming of Public Property, Facilities and Streets.***

***General policy.*** As a general policy, the Mayor and Aldermen find that public property should be named after its principal function, location, or historical reference; however, significant community events, organizations or well-known persons with important contributions to the community, state or nation may deserve public recognition, which may occur by way of naming or renaming public rights-of-way or facilities.

##### ***Naming criteria and requirements.***

***Criteria.*** Naming or renaming of a public right-of-way or facility shall occur only when the proposed naming or renaming satisfied at least one of the following criteria:

*It honors and commemorates a noteworthy person associated with the City of Savannah, Chatham County, the State of Georgia or the United States of America;*

The standard is met. Annie Bell Graham had a notable impact on the Tremont Park neighborhood in the City of Savannah through her six decade involvement with the Tremont Park Missionary Baptist Church, as a community organizer for the residents of Tremont Park, and notably through her providing of childcare to hundreds.

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*It commemorates local history, places, events or culture;  
It will strengthen neighborhood identity; or  
It recognizes native wildlife or natural geographical features.*

The standard is met. It commemorates the local history of the area and will strengthen the neighborhood identity through bringing attention to the local efforts of Annie Bell Graham.

**Exclusions.** *The following shall not be considered for purposes of naming or renaming:*

*Persons that resided in the City of Savannah for less than five years, other than prominent national figures;*

The standard is met. Annie Bell Graham lived in Savannah for decades and had a notable impact on the lives of the residents of the Tremont Park neighborhood and the City of Savannah.

*Names assigned to existing public property within the City or unincorporated Chatham County where duplication of the name is likely to lead to confusion; and*

The standards is met. Staff is not aware of any other existing public property with a name duplication.

*Except as set forth in Section 4-1106 of this Article, commercial names where usage of such name would amount to advertising.*

The standard is met. This is not advertising.

**Considerations.** *Naming requests shall consider:*

*The number of residents and businesses directly affected;*

*Community diversity;*

*The historical significance of preexisting name or location;*

*The appropriateness and compatibility of the request in relation to the existing area;*

*The impact on emergency service delivery; and*

*Continuity and stability.*

The standard does not apply as the honorary street naming will not change the official name of Essex Avenue between 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and Corvair Street. However, it will allow for the acknowledgment of the contributions of Annie Bell Graham to the Tremont Park neighborhood and to the City of Savannah.

**Additional considerations for persons.** *Requests to name a public right-of-way or facility in honor of a natural person should also consider the following:*

*Absent extraordinary or extenuating circumstances, the proposed honoree shall be deceased;*

*Whether the proposed namesake made a sustained contribution over an appreciable time period, exerted efforts of benefit or significance to local, state or*

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*national affairs and/or demonstrated leadership in governmental, cultural or historical affairs, humanitarian efforts, or community development;*

*Contributions that beneficially changed the nature and characteristics of the community; and*

*Achievement by a native Savannahian of national or international acclaim in a specific field of endeavor that has reflected positively on Savannah.*

Honorary street names are symbolic and do not change the official name of the street. Annie Bell Graham is deceased, and through her work in the community had a notable impact on the Tremont Park neighborhood and the City of Savannah, including her work with the Tremont Park Missionary Baptist Church, as a community organizer including her work to secure the funding for the Tremont Park Community Center, and notably her tireless commitment to children through her providing of childcare for hundreds.

***Renaming of public property facilities or streets.*** *All requests to rename public property shall be made in writing and directed to the attention of the City Manager. Such requests shall include:*

***In the instance of a park, playground, trail, recreational area or space;***

*A supporting petition signed by not less than 51 percent of all property owners abutting the subject property;*

*The present official name of the property;*

*The proposed new name;*

*The specific location of the property;*

*The name address and telephone number of the person requesting the name change;*

As part of the submission, the applicants included the names of the property owners abutting the subject right-of-way and a signed petition showing the support of 58% which meets the threshold requirements for approval from the City.

*A statement of reasons supporting the renaming request;*

Per the applicant, “Mrs. Annie Bell Graham’s legacy endures through countless lives she touched. She is a true legend and will forever be known as the “Matriarch of Tremont Park”.”

*A thorough discussion regarding the history of the property, including all prior names associated therewith; and*

The standard does not apply to this situation because an honorary renaming does not affect the legal name of the street, however, the applicant provided a history of the impact of Annie Bell Graham on the Tremont Park neighborhood and the City of Savannah.

*An endorsement by the current Mayor, an at-large alderman or the alderman representing the district in which the property is located.*

The City of Savannah, Alderwoman Alicia Miller Blakley, is endorsing this honorary street designation.

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**PUBLIC NOTICE:**

As required in the Master Plan and Guidelines, written notice was sent to all property owners, and the neighborhood association, within 200 feet of the subject property. A sign was posted on the property fifteen days prior to the meeting. As of the writing of this report no comments were received from the public.

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

**The Historic Site and Monument Commission recommend approval to the Savannah City Council for an Honorary Street Designation as requested because the proposed honorary street designation meets the standards within *Article E- Naming and Renaming of Public Property, Facilities and Streets*.**

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**Catherine D. Kostilnik, Chair**  
**Historic Site and Monument Commission**

**September 5, 2024**  
**Date**

DocuSigned by:  
  
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**Melanie Wilson, Executive Director & CEO**  
**Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission**

**September 5, 2024**  
**Date**

Signed by:  
  
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**Jonathan Mellon, Director of Historic Preservation & Urban Design**  
**Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission**

**September 5, 2024**  
**Date**

**MW: JM**