

**OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER
LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS**

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS COMMUNICATION
MAY 21, 2024 AGENDA**

Subject:	Action Required:	Approved By:
<p>To rename the portion of Maryland Avenue/South Taylor Street, between Fair Park Boulevard and West 12th Street, to Darius Nelson Way (G-25-232).</p> <p>Submitted By:</p> <p>Planning & Development Department</p>	<p>Ordinance √ Resolution</p>	<p>Emily Cox Acting City Manager</p>
SYNOPSIS	<p>The request has been made to rename the portion of Maryland Avenue/South Taylor Street, located between Fair Park Boulevard and West 12th Street, to Darius Nelson Way.</p>	
FISCAL IMPACT	<p>None.</p>	
RECOMMENDATION	<p>Staff recommends approval of the renaming. The Planning Commission recommend approval by a vote of 11 ayes, 0 nays, and 0 absent.</p>	
BACKGROUND	<p>Darius Nelson, a Little Rock native, served as the Minister/Pastor of Worship and Arts at St. Mark Baptist Church Little Rock for twenty-three (23) years before his passing on October 6, 2023. Darius was a trailblazer and trendsetter in the gospel music ministry, and brought national recognition and funding to Arkansas through his musical gifting and leadership. Darius demonstrated integrity, unwavering commitment and a spirit of excellence in his personal and professional life. Although he wanted his music to be enjoyable, Darius’ primary goal was impacting people, not simply entertaining them.</p>	

**BACKGROUND
CONTINUED**

While attending the award-winning Philander Smith Collegiate Choir on a full choral scholarship, Darius performed for the National Democratic Convention and at the Inauguration of President William “Bill” Jefferson Clinton. Darius graduated with a degree in Social Work and worked for ten (10) years for Children and Family Services.

In 2000, Darius was hired as full-time Worship Leader at St. Mark Baptist Church. He served at the Little Rock and Jacksonville locations as leader of the Praise Team, a group which became a model for many area worship teams. Darius led the entire Music & Arts Department at St. Mark and in 2005 was promoted to Minister of Music.

The applicant, Dr. Michelle Nelson, submitted a petition signed by residential and business owners along the length of the proposed street name change, which included Mr. Gary Iverson, President of the Oak Forest Neighborhood Association.

The Planning Commission reviewed the request at their April 11, 2024, meeting and there were no objectors present. All owners of property located within 300 feet of the site and all neighborhood associations registered with The City of Little Rock were notified of the public hearing. Please see the attached Planning Commission minute record for the complete staff analysis.