

## ACTION FORM BRYAN CITY COUNCIL

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|--|---|---|--|
| <b>DATE OF COUNCIL MEETING:</b> April 23, 2013   |   | <b>DATE SUBMITTED:</b> March 22, 2013           |  |
| <b>DEPARTMENT OF ORIGIN:</b> PW – Traffic Ops.   |   | <b>SUBMITTED BY:</b> Dale Picha                 |  |
| <b>MEETING TYPE:</b>   | <b>CLASSIFICATION:</b>                      | <b>ORDINANCE:</b>                               | <b>STRATEGIC INITIATIVE:</b>                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BCD   | <input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC HEARING     | <input type="checkbox"/> 1ST READING            | <input type="checkbox"/> DIVERSITY                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SPECIAL   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CONSENT | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2ND READING | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION                 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> REGULAR  | <input type="checkbox"/> STATUTORY          |   | <input type="checkbox"/> GROWTH                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> WORKSHOP  | <input type="checkbox"/> REGULAR            |   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IMAGE          |
|  |   |   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INFRASTRUCTURE |
|  |   |   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC SAFETY  |
| <b>AGENDA ITEM DESCRIPTION:</b> Consideration of an ordinance to assign a new street name to an unnamed public street that connects Finfeather and West Villa Maria Roads.   |   |   |  |
| <p><b>SUMMARY STATEMENT:</b> The highway/rail grade separation at West Villa Maria Road and the Union Pacific Railroad features a 700-foot long public street that connects Finfeather Road to a signalized intersection at West Villa Maria Road just west of the interchange. This short street has been open to vehicular traffic for more than four (4) years but has never been officially named. The lack of name for this street has proven confusing for both motorists (for wayfinding purposes) and emergency responders (for public safety purposes).</p> <p>As this is an opportunity to commemorate a street name for a local person, on February 13, 2013, staff presented various street name suggestions to the Historic Landmark Commission (HLC) for them to consider for this public street (reference attachment Memorandum to the HLC). It is the responsibility of the HLC to formulate suggestions for private and public action, which may involve various City departments in historic preservation. The HLC discussed various naming possibilities and ultimately chose the name “Willis VanHook” as an appropriate street name for City Council consideration.</p> <p>Born in 1820 in North Carolina and a former slave, Willis VanHook came to Bryan between 1866 and 1868, was a founder of what is now the Lee Chapel United Methodist Church, and was one of the first African Americans to serve on what is now the Bryan City Council. During Reconstruction (1866-1874), Reverend VanHook was appointed by Governor E.J. Davis as one of the first aldermen in Bryan. A blacksmith by trade, VanHook’s home, farm, and shop were located outside of the Bryan Original Townsite near the present day intersection of State Highway 21 and North Texas Avenue. Reverend VanHook died in October 1907.</p> |   |   |  |
| <b>STAFF ANALYSIS:</b>   |   |   |  |
| <p><b>A. PROS:</b> Ratifying the recommendation of the HLC to name this street section Willis VanHook will honor an individual who served the citizens of Bryan during a difficult time and helped establish the Lee Chapel United Methodist Church, which today is one of the community’s oldest institutions. Since the street is currently unnamed, there will be no inconvenience or hardship placed on anyone due to a requirement to change an address.</p> <p><b>B. CONS:</b> Other than the labor and materials to fabricate and install the street name signs (three signs will be required), staff is unable to discern other factors related to this street name request that will adversely affect health, safety, morals, or general welfare. The estimated material cost for the signs is \$1,000.00, and will be paid for out of the Traffic Operations General Fund.</p>   |   |   |  |
| <b>STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION (Including Rationale and Justification):</b> Staff recommends approving the recommendation of the Historic Landmark Commission to honor former Bryan Alderman Willis VanHook by naming a street in his memory. The proposed street name has been approved by Brazos County 9-1-1 and there are   |   |   |  |

no naming conflicts with any existing street names. Staff finds that public recognition of Reverend VanHook is appropriate and deserving.

During its regular meeting on February 13, 2013, the Historic Landmark Commission unanimously recommended approving the name Willis VanHook for the unnamed public street that connects Finfeather and West Villa Maria Roads.

**OPTIONS (In Suggested Order of Staff Preference):**

1. Approve the recommended street name.
2. Approve another name for this section of unnamed street, which may require consideration at a future City Council meeting.
3. Deny the requested street name.

**ATTACHMENTS:** (all attachments are part of the Council Action Form)

1. Location Map.
2. Draft Ordinance and Exhibit.
3. Excerpt from Historic Landmark Commission meeting minutes.
4. Memorandum to the Historic Landmark Commission.

**FUNDING SOURCE:** General Fund: Traffic Operations Budget (i.e., for two (2) signs estimated at \$1,000.00 total)

**APPROVALS:** Jayson E. Barfknecht 03/26/13; Hugh R. Walker, 03/27/2013

**APPROVED FOR SUBMITTAL: CITY ATTORNEY** Janis K. Hampton, 04-01-2013

**APPROVED FOR SUBMITTAL: CITY MANAGER** Kean Register, 03-27-2013

**Location Map**



**ORDINANCE NO. \_\_\_\_\_**

**AN ORDINANCE NAMING THE 700-FOOT LONG PUBLIC STREET CONNECTING FINFEATHER ROAD TO WEST VILLA MARIA ROAD IN MEMORY OF WILLIS VANHOOK; REPEALING ALL ORDINANCES OR PARTS OF ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT THEREWITH; PROVIDING A SAVINGS CLAUSE; FINDING AND DETERMINING THAT THE MEETINGS AT WHICH THIS ORDINANCE WAS PASSED ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AS REQUIRED BY LAW; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

**WHEREAS**, the City of Bryan, Texas is a home rule city with the specific general powers of such under the Constitution and Laws of the State of Texas; and

**WHEREAS**, the intersection of Finfeather Road and West Villa Maria Road features a 700-foot long public street connecting Finfeather Road to a signalized intersection at West Villa Maria Road just west of the highway/rail grade separation of West Villa Maria Road and Union Pacific Railroad; and,

**WHEREAS**, this short street has been open to vehicular traffic for more than four years, but has never been named; and,

**WHEREAS**, the lack of a name for the said street has proven confusing in both wayfinding and public safety purposes; and,

**WHEREAS**, it is the responsibility of the Bryan Historic Landmark Commission to formulate suggestions for private and public action which may involve various City departments in historic preservation; and,

**WHEREAS**, during its regular meeting on February 13, 2013, the Historic Landmark Commission unanimously recommended approving the name “Willis VanHook” for the unnamed public street that connects Finfeather and West Villa Maria Roads; and,

**WHEREAS**, Willis VanHook was born in 1820 in North Carolina, a former slave, Willis VanHook came to Bryan between 1866 and 1868 and was a the founder of what is now the Lee Chapel United Methodist Church; and,

**WHEREAS**, during Reconstruction (1866-1874), Willis VanHook was appointed by Governor E.J. Davis as one of the first aldermen in Bryan and thus was one of the first African Americans to serve on what is now the Bryan City Council; and,

**WHEREAS**, naming this street section “Willis VanHook Drive” will honor one who served the citizens of Bryan during a very difficult time and helped establish what is today one of the community’s oldest institutions; and,

**WHEREAS**, the City Council of the City of Bryan, Texas is of the opinion that the best interest and welfare of the public will be served by naming a 700-foot long street in memory of Willis VanHook , a public street that connects Finfeather and West Villa Maria Roads.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BRYAN, THAT:**

1.

That the 700-foot long public street connecting Finfeather Road to a signalized intersection at West Villa Maria Road just west of the highway/rail grade separation of West Villa Maria Road and Union Pacific Railroad, shall be named Willis VanHook Drive as further shown on the attached Exhibit "A" detailing the geographic location of the area,

2.

That all ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict with the provisions of this ordinance are hereby repealed to the extent of such conflict.

3.

Should any section, paragraph, sentence, clause, phrase or word of this ordinance be declared unconstitutional, or invalid for any reason, the remainder of the ordinance shall not be affected thereby, and to this end the provisions of this ordinance and declared to be severable.

4.

It is hereby found and determined that the meetings at which this ordinance was passed were open to the public, as required by b Section 551.001, et seq., Texas Government Code, and that advance public notice of time, place, and purpose of said meeting was given.

5.

This ordinance shall take effect immediately upon its second and final reading and passage.

**PRESENTED AND GIVEN** first reading of the 9th day of April, 2013, at a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Bryan, Texas; and given a second reading, **PASSED AND APPROVED** on the 23rd day of April, 2013 by a vote of \_\_\_ yeses and \_\_\_ noes at a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Bryan, Texas.

**ATTEST:**

**CITY OF BRYAN:**

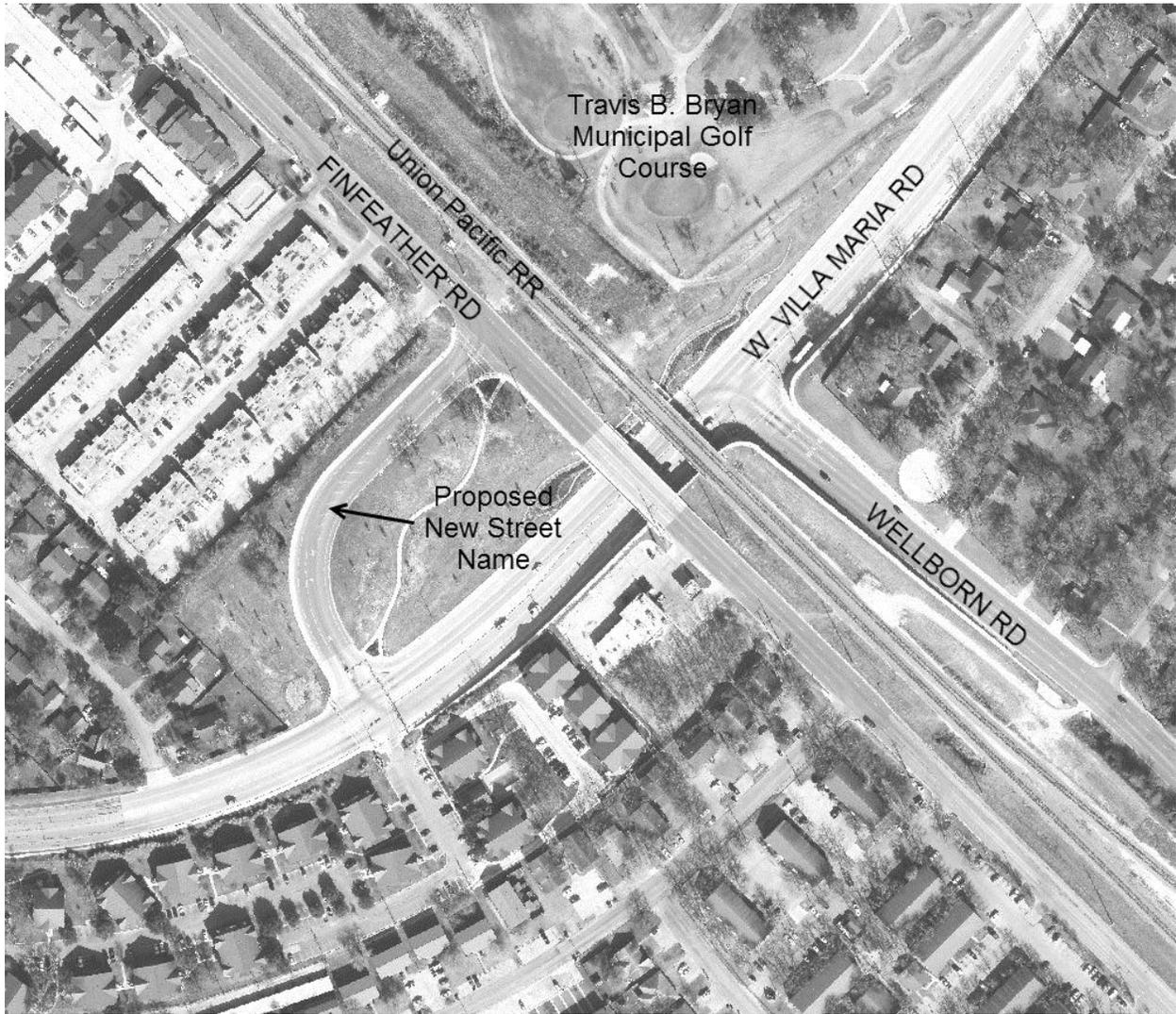
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mary Lynne Stratta, City Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jason P. Bienski, Mayor

**APPROVED AS TO FORM:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Janis K. Hampton, City Attorney

**EXHIBIT A**



**Excerpt from the draft meeting minutes of the Historic Landmark Commission Regular Meeting, February 13, 2013:**

**PRESENTATION, DISCUSSION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION CONCERNING THE NAMING OF AN UNNAMED STREET CONNECTING FINFEATHER AND WEST VILLA MARIA ROADS.**

Mr. Randy Haynes presented the staff report (on file in the Development Services Department).

Commissioners discussed the following:

- The road's inability to be expanded in either direction
- Whether any of those persons the street might be named after are still alive
- What street names were already in use
- The ability of the name Willis VanHook to both honor a person and represent the hook shape of the road

**Commissioner Holzweiss moved to recommend the name Willis VanHook. Chairperson Saginor seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.**

# Memorandum

To: Historic Landmark Commission  
From: Randy Haynes, Project Planner  
Date: February 13, 2013  
Re: request for Historic Landmark Commission assistance selecting a street name for an unnamed street connecting Finfeather and West Villa Maria Roads

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The roadway design at the intersection of Finfeather Road and West Villa Maria Road features a 700-foot long access road connecting Finfeather to the controlled intersection just west of the grade separation of these two streets. This short street has been open to vehicular traffic for more than 4 years, but has never been named. Lack of a name for the street has proven confusing in both way finding and public safety situations. City staff believes that this is an opportunity to commemorate a historical feature existing in the area or a local person.

The Historic Landmark Commission is, among other things, charged with making recommendations to the proper agencies on activities designed to encourage historic preservation.

With the help of local historian Mr. Bill Paige, staff has compiled the following list of suggestions that may merit consideration for a street name. While these suggestions have diverse roots in the history of Bryan, they certainly do not represent all possibilities.

**Levi Neal** Deputy City Marshal Levi Neal was shot and killed on February 24, 1900 while escorting a man to jail. He had arrested the man and while walking towards the jail the man pulled out a pistol from under his coat and shot Neal. Neal was the first African American law enforcement officer to be killed in the line of duty in Texas. Neal had been in law enforcement for about 20 years, and was also the first African American peace officer on record to have served in Texas. He was buried in an unmarked grave in the Bryan City Cemetery. His grave site could not be located but a marker commemorating his service was erected in 2000.

**Zeno Philips** One of Stephen F. Austin's Old Three Hundred colonists, Zeno Philips moved to Texas around 1824. In 1832 Philips was granted land immediately southwest of what would become the Bryan Original Townsite. The land occupied by the unnamed street is located in the Zeno Philips League; a league being a 4428 acre tract of land.

**Willis VanHook** A former slave, Willis VanHook came to Bryan between 1866 and 1868 and was one of the founders of what is now the Lee Chapel United Methodist Church and was one of the first African-Americans to serve on the Bryan City Council. During the time after the Civil War when ex-confederates were not allowed to vote,

VanHook was appointed by Governor E.J. Davis as one of the first aldermen in Bryan. A blacksmith by trade, VanHook's home, farm and shop was located outside of the Bryan Original Townsite near the present day intersection of State Highway 21 and North Texas Avenue.

**Jack Burke Sr.** Active as a pro between 1909 and 1930, Jack Burke Sr. was the club professional at Houston's River Oaks Country Club and designer of the Bryan Country Club Golf Course in 1917. Burke finished 2<sup>nd</sup> at the 1920 U.S. open and was the father of Jack Burke Jr.; a professional golfer who won both the U.S. Open and the Masters in the 1950's.

**Harmon Bell** Elected in 1968, Harmon "Son" Bell was the first African American elected to the Bryan City Council since reconstruction. Mr. Bell served on the Council eight years.

**Iron Bridge** Finfeather Road is named for the Fin-Feather Club, a private sportsman's club founded in 1900 after the construction a water supply lake by the International & Great Northern Railway. Local business men leased land around the new lake and stocked it with various types of game fish. The club survived until sometime in the 1950's. Previous to the name Finfeather, the road was called Jones Ferry, Jones Bridge and Iron Bridge Road. Since there are a number of streets in the area named Jones, Iron Bridge Road may cause less conflict.

**Powder Magazine** A city ordinance prohibited storage of significant quantities of explosives within the City of Bryan. A municipal powder magazine was located alongside the H&TC tracks about a mile south of town. The location may have been near what is now the intersection of Bittle Lane and Finfeather Road.

**Skull Prairie** Located in the area of present day Leonard Road, in 9 May 1881, a report on the Bryan & Skull Prairie Road noted that it intersected with the Jones Ferry Road "at or near the powder house." (Brazos County Commissioners Minutes, Book C, page 187).

Commissioners may

1. recommend that one of the above suggestions be used to name this street section; or
2. recommend that a different name or phrase be used to name this street section; or
3. decide not make a recommendation to name this street section.

Any street name recommended by the Commission must be approved by the City of Bryan Police and Fire Departments so as to not conflict with existing names and thereby potentially cause confusion.