City of **JOPLIN** City Council Agenda Item

Requested Council Meeting Date: June 6, 2016

Item: COUNCIL BILL NO. 2016-264
Originating Department: PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Attachments: 1) Copy of Council Bill
2) Planning Report
3) Commission Minutes

Planning/Community Development Manager: Troy Bolander
City Attorney: Peter C. Edwards
City Manager: Samuel L. Anselm
Board or Commission: Planning and Zoning Commission Date: 5/9/2016

Recommended Action: Planning and Zoning Commission recommended approval by a vote of "7 in favor, 0 absent"

SUMMARY/REQUEST:
Case 016-16: Beginning at 33rd St. and extending south to the current City of Joplin boundary – A request to rename the existing public right-of-way from "Hearnes Boulevard" to "Main Street" – City of Joplin.

STAFF SUMMARY:
The City of Joplin is requesting the name change of Hearnes Boulevard to South Main Street. Currently, South Main Street ends at 33rd street, while Hearnes Boulevard continues south from 33rd Street south to the City limits of Joplin. Local citizens do not often know about or acknowledge the street name change at 33rd Street, and the change can be confusing for those who are traveling.

A name change from Hearnes Boulevard back to South Main Street would allow the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) to mark the I-44 exit as 'MAIN STREET EXIT'. Because Main Street does not touch this interchange, Federal Highway Administration regulations prohibit the exit being named for Main Street. If visitors try to access Main Street or downtown, this can be confusing. This is especially important for those visiting the new Mercy Hospital situated at the interchange of I-44 and Hearnes Boulevard.

Currently, there is an effort to rename the portion of the 249 bypass east of Joplin in honor of Governor Warren E. Hearnes.

Staff recommends approval of Case 016-16.

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION TESTIMONY:
Mr. Patrick Tuttle, Convention & Visitors Bureau Director for the City of Joplin, presented this request to the Planning and Zoning Commission and the City Council a year ago, with the City Council not approving the request at that time.

On April 13, 1965, the City Council named the newly developed roadway as Hearnes Boulevard. Former Governor Warren E. Hearnes is credited with giving Joplin its four-year university. The new part of Main Street extending from 33rd Street to the south city limits was dedicated to the governor's honor. Mr. Tuttle is working on a project to name the Route 249 Bypass in Governor Hearnes' honor as a memorial highway, creating a longer and better legacy for the governor.

Mr. Tuttle discussed the impact of Mercy Hospital being in the south part of Joplin, with the area changing to commercial with more medical influence. People traveling between Freeman and Mercy hospitals must use a roadway that may not be familiar to them. This is not a positive part of the Joplin community when people are in timeless stress or dire need to find their loved ones.

Mr. Tuttle stated the name Main Street cannot be placed on signage on I-44. The federal highway standards do not allow that because Main Street does not touch I-44. Joplin's downtown businesses or historical districts cannot be promoted along I-44 since the roadway is named Hearnes Boulevard in that area. Access to the Joplin Regional Airport is now being directed from I-44 via Range Line Road and through Webb City, even though the airport terminal has been moved onto North Main Street.

Mr. Tuttle has visited with Mrs. Hearnes since this request was initially presented last year. She is very much appreciative that the City of Joplin is taking the time to consider naming Route 249 in Governor Hearnes' honor and understands the growth along Main Street with Mercy Hospital. She supports the name change to Main Street and has endorsed a letter to the City of Joplin stating such. The letter is to support the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) application for naming Route 249 in the governor's honor.

Mr. Tuttle asked for a recommendation to change the name of Hearnes Boulevard to Main Street for the sake of tourism, for the sake of Mercy Hospital, and for the sake of the area businesses.

Mr. Ramsour asked if the roadway between 32nd and 33rd Streets is actually named Main Street, and Mr. Tuttle replied that block is South Main. The ordinance states the roadway is named Hearnes Boulevard from 33rd Street to the city limits, which has moved over several years' time. The current city limits lie south of Riviera Drive near the Silver Creek bridge.

Mr. Duncan asked why the commissioners are not looking at the application to move the name Hearnes to Route 249. Mr. Tuttle replied MoDOT suggested doing the renaming first, with renaming to follow. The City Council wanted to do both simultaneously.

Mr. Tuttle stated the Missouri Southern State University (MSSU) Board of Governors thought this was a decisive issue amongst the City Council, even though the vote was split. The Board of Governors will not support this request without a letter from the Mayor. Mr. Tuttle will present to the City Council a prepared letter to the president of the MSSU Board of Governors asking for their full support and endorsement of the application as well. The application has a 100-person signature with a $2,000 fee, and an application signed by all parties of interest, as well as the area legislators, who are all in favor of the request.

Mr. Smith asked if the entire roadway will be named Main Street, and Mr. Tuttle replied yes.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.