



Department of Public Works  
Infrastructure Services Division

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January 28, 2022

To The Public Works Committee

Subject: Honorary Street Name Request – Bezelee Martin  
North Vel R Phillips Avenue between West Garfield Avenue to West Meinecke Avenue

Dear Honorable Members:

This letter is in reply to an application dated December 23, 2021 regarding a request for an honorary street name of Bezelee Martin on North Vel R Phillips Avenue between West Garfield Avenue to West Meinecke Avenue.

Chapter 113-3 of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances provides the guidelines to consider when reviewing honorary street name requests. The guidelines provided in the code have been reviewed and the following comments are offered:

Bezelee Martin moved to Milwaukee, WI to attend Milwaukee Area Technical College and subsequently became Wisconsin's first Black licensed car dealer in 1950. In 1960, Martin and his wife, Lena, opened the first Lena's Food Market in the Harambee Neighborhood and, due to their success, grew their food market operation to six locations and employed over 600 people. Martin was a well-respected and admired role model to many in the community.

The request to honor Bezelee Martin posthumously with an honorary street name of "Bezelee Martin" includes 14 letters and spaces. The letter size of the honorary street name will be sized to fit the standard honorary street sign space.

Four (4) blue honorary street signs will be needed. Please refer to the attached map showing where the honorary street name signs will be located. The petitioner may choose to furnish the honorary street signs, but they must be fabricated to established City standards. The City can fabricate the signs at \$50 each. In either case, the City will install the honorary street signs at a cost of \$50 per sign. The petitioner is to deposit \$200 to the City if they furnish the signs or \$400 if the City fabricates and installs the signs. If a sign needs to be replaced in the future, the City is to be notified of the missing or damaged sign and the petitioner is to cover the cost to fabricate and mount the sign as described above. The City's cost to fabricate and install future signs is subject to change.

North Vel R Phillips Avenue will remain the official street name so addresses will not change.

Sincerely,

Jerrel Kruschke, P.E.  
City Engineer

Karen Dettmer, P.E.  
Interim Commissioner of Public Works

