

Wilmington, Delaware
November 16, 2017

#4444

Sponsors:

**Council
President
Shabazz**

**Council
Member
Chukwuocha**

Co-Sponsors:

**Council
Members
Turner
Harlee**

WHEREAS, pursuant to Sec. 2-3 of the Wilmington City Code, the Mayor retains authority to sub-name by executive order any City street and designate the appropriate sub-name signage pursuant to subsection 2-298(17); and

WHEREAS, former Mayor James M. Baker used this authority to sub-name a portion of Eastlawn Avenue the “Al O. Plant and Hazel D. Plant Memorial Route” in honor of the dedicated husband and wife who both served multiple terms in the Delaware House of Representatives; and

WHEREAS, former Mayor Dennis P. Williams used this authority to sub-name a portion of Washington Street “Bishop Aretha E. Morton Way” in honor of Wilmington’s first female and African-American Fire Department Chaplain who broke barriers for women in the ministry; and

WHEREAS, throughout its history, such residents as Bishop Morton and Mr. and Ms. Plant have transformed and enhanced Wilmington through their dedicated efforts and service; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the City take steps to properly recognize and pay tribute to the contributions of those residents; and

WHEREAS, another such resident is the renowned Reverend Peter Spencer, who in 1813 founded the nation’s first independent African American church denomination, the Union Church of Africans; and

WHEREAS, the Union Church of Africans later split into what are now referred to as the “Spencer Churches,” the African Union Methodist Protestant (A.U.M.P.) and Union American Methodist Episcopal (U.A.M.E.) denominations; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Spencer founded the nation’s oldest African American festival, the August Quarterly, which celebrates religious freedom, freedom of speech and the right of assembly and which, during the antebellum period, also helped slaves escape to freedom by serving as a conduit to the Underground Railroad; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Spencer, who was born into slavery in Maryland and moved to Delaware after gaining his freedom, was well known in Wilmington not only as a pastor, but also as a community organizer, a dedicated educator who worked tirelessly to teach community members how to read and write, and a committed anti-slavery activist; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Spencer’s Union Church of Africans, which later became the African Union Methodist Protestant Church, stood on the 800 block of North French Street from 1813 until 1970, when it was razed to make way for the governmental buildings that now stand in its place; and

WHEREAS, City Council wishes to recognize the contributions of Reverend Peter Spencer, the father of the independent black church movement in Delaware, through encouraging the Mayor to sub-name the 800 block of North French Street as “Reverend Peter Spencer Way.”

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WILMINGTON, that City Council respectfully encourages the Mayor to designate the 800 block of North French Street as “Reverend Peter Spencer Way,” in recognition of

Reverend Spencer’s significant contributions to the City of Wilmington. City Council looks forward to joining the Administration in celebrating this designation.

Passed by City Council,

Attest: _____
City Clerk

Approved as to form this _____
day of November, 2017.

Senior Assistant City Solicitor

SYNOPSIS: This Resolution encourages the Mayor to sub-name the 800 block of North French Street as “Reverend Peter Spencer Way,” in recognition of the renowned Wilmington Pastor’s significant contributions to the City and nation’s history.