MINUTES
Regular City Commission Meeting
6:00 PM - Thursday, April 21, 2022 - City Hall

INVOCATION: MOMENT OF SILENCE OBSERVED

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: COMMISSIONER HAWKINS

CALL TO ORDER: 6:02 P.M.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF QUORUM AND PROPER NOTICE

PRESENT: Commissioner Willie Hawkins, Vice Mayor Emily Lee, Commissioner Karen LeHeup-Smith, Commissioner Nan Cobb and Mayor Michael Holland

1. AGENDA UPDATE

Tom Carrino, Interim City Manager, introduced the new Development Services Director Mike Lane.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

March 17, 2022 - Regular City Commission Meeting
April 7, 2022 - Regular City Commission Meeting

Moved by Vice Mayor Lee, seconded by Commissioner Hawkins, to approve the Minutes as submitted. Motion carried by the following votes:

Ayes: Commissioner Hawkins, Vice Mayor Lee, Commissioner LeHeup-Smith, Commissioner Cobb and Mayor Holland

3. PRESENTATIONS

3.1 Proclamation declaring May 2022 as Historic Preservation Month

Mayor Holland read a proclamation declaring May as Historic Preservation Month within the City. He presented the signed proclamation to Kirk Musselman, Vice Chair of the Historic Preservation Board.

3.2 Presentation by Eustis Community Alliance organization

Kelly Hadley provided a report to the Commission regarding their activities and programs being held in the City's facility on Clifford Street. She introduced other members present including Kirk Musselman and Theresa Jackson. She noted they had recently partnered with Hope with a Purpose and presented Pandora Jackson.

The Commission thanked the organization for their efforts to assist the community and asked that they add the Commissioners and City to their email list. They noted that City employee Laurie Johnson also provides healthy cooking classes and could possibly help with those.

4. APPOINTMENTS

4.1 Appointment to Historic Preservation Board - Dina John

Moved by Commissioner Cobb, seconded by Commissioner Hawkins, to approve the appointment of Dina John to the Historic Preservation Board for a three-year term to expire April 21, 2025. Motion carried by the following votes:

Ayes: Commissioner Hawkins, Vice Mayor Lee, Commissioner LeHeup-Smith, Commissioner Cobb and Mayor Holland

5. AUDIENCE TO BE HEARD

5.1 Vance Jochim addressed the Commission regarding traffic issues caused by annexation. He expressed concern that the traffic studies are biased in favor of the developers and questioned whether or not cities make or lose money when they annex property.

Gail Isaac Thomas asked about repaving Hollywood, Pinkney and Bates where the sewer lines have been installed.

Rick Gierok, Public Works Director, stated that the lines are for the connection to Umatilla. He indicated that the roads will be repaired after the lines are completed. He explained that the contractor is working for Umatilla not the City. He stated that they still need to test the lines once they are completed and won't do paving until that is done.

Ms. Isaac Thomas expressed concern regarding smells coming from the Bates Avenue wastewater treatment plant with Mr. Gierok indicating he has not received any complaints regarding odors from the plant. He noted that the City puts odor reduction chemicals in the lines not at the plant.

Mayor Holland asked Ms. Isaac Thomas to call him the next time they have an issue with the odor and he would drive out and check on it.

Pandora Jackson, 216 Lakeview Ave., announced that her church - Advancing the Kingdom Ministry - would be hosting a gas giveaway on June 1st and wanted to invite the Mayor and Commission to attend.

Mayor Holland asked her to contact the City Clerk to get it on the Commissioners' calendars.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

6.1 Resolution Number 17-80 Correction: Amending Resolution Number 17-80 to correct a scrivener's error

Moved by Commissioner Hawkins, seconded by Vice Mayor Lee, to approve the corrected Resolution Number 17-80. Motion carried by the following votes:

Ayes: Commissioner Hawkins, Vice Mayor Lee, Commissioner LeHeup-Smith, Commissioner Cobb and Mayor Holland

7. ORDINANCES, PUBLIC HEARINGS & QUASI-JUDICIAL HEARINGS

7.1 Resolution Number 22-27 Confirming the appointment of Christine Halloran as City Clerk

Derek Schroth, City Attorney, announced Resolution Number 22-27: A Resolution by the City Commission of the City of Eustis, Lake County, Florida; approving the appointment of Christine Halloran as City Clerk, effective May 5, 2022.

Mr. Carrino explained the search for a new City Clerk and the interview process. He announced that Christine Halloran was the unanimous choice of the interview committee.

Mayor Holland asked Christine Halloran to introduce herself with Ms. Halloran reviewing her background. She thanked City staff, the City Manager and City Clerk for their support and stated she is excited about working for the City.

Mr. Schroth opened the public hearing at 6:24 p.m. There being no public comment, the hearing was closed at 6:24 p.m.

Moved by Vice Mayor Lee, seconded by Commissioner Hawkins, to approve Resolution Number 22-27. Motion carried by the following votes:

Ayes: Commissioner Hawkins, Vice Mayor Lee, Commissioner LeHeup-Smith, Commissioner Cobb and Mayor Holland

7.2 Resolution Number 22-26: Preliminary Subdivision Plat Modification for Royal Brothers (Grafton Ridge) Subdivision

Mr. Schroth announced Resolution Number 22-26: A Resolution of the City Commission of the City of Eustis, Florida; approving a preliminary subdivision plat modification for the Royal Brothers Subdivision, a 77 lot single family residential subdivision, on approximately 15.13 acres on the east side of David Walker Drive, approximately 1,000 feet north of Mount Homer Road.

Jeff Richardson, Deputy Director of Development Services, reviewed the requested modifications to the preliminary subdivision plat for the Royal Brothers subdivision as follows: 1) Addition of an amenity center with pool and associated infrastructure; 2) Retaining wall revised to accommodate the amenity center; 3) Additional park was added in the northern section of the site by lots 15 through 17; 4) Update of the tree removal plan to accommodate the amenity center and an area that was previously missed by lots 66 through 77; 5) Addition of a four foot wall along the front of the property facing David Walker; and 6) Removal of side and rear buffers along the property as not required by the City's Land Development Regulations. He cited the previous addition of an emergency access.

Mr. Richardson compared the original subdivision plan and landscape plan with the proposed citing the various changes. He reviewed the previous waivers approved. He stated staff's recommendation for approval.

The Commission questioned the removal of the buffers with Mr. Richardson indicating those aren't required by the City code. He provided a review of what is adjoining the subject property. The Commission commented on the probability that they would want a buffer between them and the City property to the north with Mr. Richardson noting that they have included a 6-foot vinyl fence but staff would like to see them come back with some supplemental plantings.

The Commission expressed concern regarding the developer having prior approval and then coming back with changes with Mr. Richardson confirming they have not changed the lot sizes.

Mr. Schroth opened the public hearing at 6:37 p.m. There being no public comment, the hearing was closed at 6:37 p.m.

Moved by Commissioner LeHeup-Smith, seconded by Vice Mayor Lee, to approve Resolution Number 22-26. Motion carried by the following votes:

Ayes: Commissioner Hawkins, Vice Mayor Lee, Commissioner LeHeup-Smith, Commissioner Cobb and Mayor Holland

7.3 Resolution Number 22-29: Amending the Gateway Corridor Improvement Matching Grant Program

Mr. Schroth announced Resolution Number 22-29: A Resolution of the City Commission of the City of Eustis, Florida; amending a corridor improvement matching grant program now known as the Gateway Corridor Improvement Matching Grant Program.

Tom Carrino, City Manager, provided a brief history of the Gateway Corridor Improvement Matching Grant Program and previous amendments. He explained the changes are to add the following streets to the program: 1) McDonald Avenue, 2) Bates Avenue; 3) Palmetto Street and 4) Kensington Street.

Mr. Schroth opened the public hearing at 6:40 p.m.

Vance Jochim commented on how the CRA funding is derived and stated that those properties would not be contributing to the General Fund and other City programs due to the incremental increases going to the CRA.

The Commission expressed concern regarding businesses that want to improve their signage but they can't afford to bring it up to code.

Mr. Carrino confirmed that signage is an allowable expense; however, the sign must be totally code compliant and in conformance. He explained that the Gateway Program can't help with bringing a sign up to code. He indicated a sign may be legally nonconforming so the businesses just want to change out the verbiage rather than bring the signs up to full code compliance. He indicated they can help with other improvements but often can't help with the signage.

In response to Mr. Yochim's comments, Mr. Carrino then explained that, if the property is located within the CRA, it is the CRA that funds the improvements not the General Fund.

The Commission expressed concern regarding the entrances to the City off of 441 and the need for FDOT to make improvements as they previously agreed to.

There being no further public comment, the hearing was closed at 6:48 p.m.

Moved by Commissioner Hawkins, seconded by Vice Mayor Lee, to approve Resolution Number 22-29. Motion carried by the following votes:

Ayes: Commissioner Hawkins, Vice Mayor Lee, Commissioner LeHeup-Smith, Commissioner Cobb and Mayor Holland

8. OTHER BUSINESS

8.1 Consideration of extension of the Annexation Incentive Program

Mr. Richardson provided an overview of the annexation incentive program and reviewed the number of properties and acreage annexed under the program. He indicated that the early years of the program brought in more enclave parcels that the later years. He stated staff's recommendation to renew the program for an additional year through April 30, 2023.

The Commission discussed the County's school impact fee waiver program.

Mr. Carrino stated his belief that the incentive programs were not intended to continue in perpetuity, although staff is recommending renewal for another year. He stated his belief that the City needs to put the developers on notice that the programs would not continue forever.

Discussion was held regarding possibly in the future only waiving a percentage of the fees.

CONSENSUS: It was a consensus of the Commission to extend the program for one year.

8.2 Consideration of extension of the Development Incentive (Water and Sewer Impact Fee Waiver) Program

Daniel Millan, City Engineer, explained the purpose of the water/sewer impact fee waiver program. He provided some statistics regarding properties approved for the waivers to date. He stated staff's recommendation for approval of the extension for one more year.

The Commission discussed extending the program for one more year but with the understanding it would not be continued beyond that.

CONSENSUS: It was a consensus of the Commission for the program to be extended for one more year.

8.3 Discussion on the Housing Rehabilitation Program and the Lake Community Action Agency

Mr. Carrino reviewed the housing rehabilitation program to date and the results from the program. He reported that he and Commissioner Hawkins had toured homes completed under the program. He stated that the improvements made the homes more efficient and lowered their utility bills. He indicated that the recipients have stated they are satisfied with the improvements to their homes. He noted that the Commission had placed a hold on the program. He recommended that they re-open the program to begin working through those homes that have already applied for the program and then evaluate how much funding is left for the program. He confirmed there is a list of ten homes currently. He noted that there is one home that applied that was later determined to be located in an enclave that was inadvertently improved. He stated there are nine or ten homes left on the list that are eligible.

The Commission asked staff to do a cost analysis on the County home that was improved and encourage them to annex if they are contiguous.

Commissioner Hawkins expressed concern regarding how the program was run previously but stated his support for proceeding with four homes at a time in order to better control the money.

Tim Bridges, Lake Community Action Agency, explained how the program is being run and how someone applies and qualifies for the program. He noted that the Dept. of Economic Opportunity weatherization assistance funds cannot be used for roof repairs; however, the City's funds can be used for that. He explained how they combine the two programs to be able to improve someone's home. He stated they have done 22 inspections since January. He explained that the state inspects their work before they get reimbursed for their work. He then commented on a new program they will be implementing regarding water and sewer.

Mr. Carrino explained that Mr. Bridges is also working with the City's Code Enforcement Supervisor Eric Martin and that Mr. Martin has been holding off on code enforcement action on two homes with roofing issues to allow them to obtain services from LCAA and the City.

The Commission confirmed how quickly the next four homes could be done with Mr. Bridges responding probably within two weeks but they give themselves 60 days due to supply chain issues.

The Commission expressed concern regarding the administrative fee with Mr. Bridges explaining the program has been revamped and they will provide documentation regarding the pre-inspections. He also confirmed that the homeowners are receiving education regarding how to not let their homes deteriorate after the improvements. He explained they obtain 30, 60 and 90 day utility bills to confirm that the program is effective. He added that recipients can only get help once every ten years. He further explained how the City's program helps them leverage other dollars.

CONSENSUS: It was a consensus to move forward with homeowners that have already applied and only to proceed with four homes at a time.

9. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

9.1 Commissioner Cobb asked to have a presentation regarding the Bert Harris Act and private property rights at the next Commission meeting.

Mayor Holland asked to have an update on the cemetery at the next meeting as well.

10. COMMENTS

10.1 City Commission

Commissioner Cobb commented on the Easter egg hunt in the park sponsored by Toddlers of Lake County.

Commissioner Hawkins complimented Parks and Recreation on the Easter egg hunt event. He also commented on the Easter event held by the Eustis Community Alliance. He asked if the City was going to schedule another meeting with Lake County.

Mr. Carrino responded that he and the Mayor had attended the group meeting with Lake County and all of the cities. He indicated that Lake County has not reached out for any further meetings.

Vice Mayor Lee complimented Parks and Recreation on the event with "Blippy". She thanked Chief Capri and Eric Martin for their work in cleaning up the community. She reported that she attended a committee meeting with Daniel Millan and Melissa Fuller for the Upper Ocklawaha River Basin. She stated the City has three lakes involved in the program - Lake Eustis, Lake Yale and Trout Lake – which are being monitored for pollutants. She then commented on her involvement in the revitalization of the Eustis Community Alliance and thanked Horace Jones for his support of the grant and also thanked the members of Hope with a Purpose.

Commissioner Cobb thanked City staff for their assistance with the Easter event.

10.2 City Manager

Mr. Carrino noted that the Commission previously asked for discussion about a donation to the Eustis High FBLA for their students to attend the summer competition. He stated they could donate about $500.

CONSENSUS: It was a consensus of the Commission to proceed with the $500 donation.

Mr. Carrino cited the number of fence violations that have come before the Code Enforcement Board. He indicated that the fences are often attractive but do not meet City code. He stated that the CEB Chair has asked if the Commission would consider some changes to the fence ordinance. The Commission questioned how many of the property owners being code enforced actually pulled a building permit before installing the noncompliant fence.

Mr. Carrino responded that the one probably did not as it is actually in the right-of-way and staff would have caught that, if they had applied for a permit. He cited one issue with the City regulation that limits the front yard to 4-feet with a 2-foot lattice on top; however, the lattice is not commercially available.

Discussion was held regarding whether or not to review the fence ordinance and not regulating aesthetics.

CONSENSUS: It was a consensus of the Commission for staff to schedule a review of the ordinance.

Mr. Carrino noted the May 2nd CRA Review Committee meeting. He stated they were also going to schedule a design charrette for Palmetto Plaza. He indicated the original designer Ramone Murray has proposed the date of May 17th.

Discussion was held regarding whether or not to utilize the same designer. It was noted how long the current plaza took to build between inception and completion.

CONSENSUS: It was a consensus to hold the charrette on May 17th with a location to be determined.

Mr. Carrino announced that there has been a request from the high school to provide a presentation regarding their ballfields. The Commission agreed to allow the presentation.

Mr. Carrino announced that a private party already has the Post Office property under contract. He then reported that a letter was prepared for the Mayor's signature regarding the fairgrounds. He stated that the County previously had responded with an appraisal of $2.8 million. He indicated that the City's response stated the $2.8 million was unrealistic and the City believes some consideration should be given since the City originally donated the property to the County.

10.3 City Attorney - None

10.4 Mayor

Mayor Holland announced that the new Lake Sumter State College President Heather Bigard has asked to provide a presentation at the June 2nd Commission meeting. He thanked ECA and other local organizations for their assistance. He also thanked Parks and Recreation and other City staff for their work on the Easter events and the Library staff for the Library Week events.

11. ADJOURNMENT: 7:37 P.M.

These minutes reflect the actions taken and portions of the discussion during the meeting. To review the entire discussion concerning any agenda item, go to www.eustis.org and click on the video for the meeting in question. A DVD of the entire meeting or CD of the entire audio recording can be obtained from the office of the City Clerk for a fee.

Mary C. Montez
MARY C. MONTEZ

MICHAEL L. HOLLAND, Mayor/Commissioner