



# MINUTES

## City Commission Meeting

APPROVED 4/18/2024

6:00 PM – Thursday, March 21, 2024 – City Hall

**INVOCATION: MOMENT OF SILENCE**

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: VICE MAYOR EMILY LEE**

**CALL TO ORDER: 6:01 P.M.**

**ACKNOWLEDGE OF QUORUM AND PROPER NOTICE**

**PRESENT:** Vice Chair Emily Lee, Commissioner Gary Ashcraft, Commissioner Nan Cobb, Commissioner Willie Hawkins and Mayor Michael Holland

### 1. **AGENDA UPDATE**

Tom Carrino, City Manager, announced due to action at the Local Planning Agency, Items 6.2 through 6.5 and Item 6.7 need to be moved to the April 4, 2024, meeting.

Motion made by Vice Mayor Lee, Seconded by Commissioner Hawkins, to move Items 6.2 through 6.5 and Item 6.7 to the April 4th agenda. The motion passed on the following vote:

Voting Yea: Vice Mayor Lee, Commissioner Ashcraft, Commissioner Cobb, Commissioner Hawkins, Mayor Holland

### 2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

March 7, 2024 City Commission Meeting

Motion made by Commissioner Ashcraft, Seconded by Vice Mayor Lee, to approve the Minutes as submitted. The motion passed on the following vote:

Voting Yea: Vice Mayor Lee, Commissioner Ashcraft, Commissioner Cobb, Commissioner Hawkins, Mayor Holland

### 3. **PRESENTATIONS**

#### 3.1 Eustis Police Department Recognitions

Craig Capri, Police Chief, presented an Outstanding Service Award to Trooper Richard Rowley for his years of service during the Eustis Georgefest parade. He announced that a plaque would be installed at Orange and Grove designating it as the Trooper Rowley intersection. He recognized Adam Abdelmessih and William Starling for their promotions to Corporal.

#### 3.2 Recognition of UF IFAS Extension Lake County 4-H Public Speaking Contest Winners

Commissioner Cobb presented recognition awards to the UF IFAS Extension Lake County 4-H Public Speaking Contest Winners. She commented on how 4-H is much more than just raising animals. She invited Emma Leslie, the first place elementary school winner who is in the 5th grade at Cypress Ridge, to present her winning speech.

Ms. Leslie presented her speech regarding teachers and the need to respect teachers.

Commissioner Cobb then introduced Jase, a Villages Elementary School 4th Grader. She invited him to also give his speech.

Jase presented his speech regarding hunting turkeys, the various species of turkey and where they are located.

### 3.3 Recognition of 2023 Chamber of Commerce Community Service Awards

Marie Aliberti, Director of the Greater Eustis Area Chamber of Commerce, presented the Chamber of Commerce Community Service Awards as follows: Arts & Culture - Bay Street Players represented by James Irving; Education - Meaningful Milestones, represented by Patrick and Stacey Callahan; Leadership - Jerry Cobb; Public Service - George Asbate; Sports - Brittany Bell; Humanitarian - Dr. Summer Young from Eustis Lakeside Dental; Public Safety - Shekita Hill who is also Mrs. Lake County; Youth - Aaron Cross, Junior at EHS; Volunteer - Robin Richter; Non-profit - Amazing Race for Charity; Health Care Provider - Rosalyn Chapel; Small Business - All American; Medium Business - Above and Beyond Pest Control; and Large Business - Sea Coast Bank.

Ms. Aliberti complimented all of the winners and expressed appreciation for their contributions to the community. She recognized a number of Chamber members that were present.

## **4. AUDIENCE TO BE HEARD**

Kim Molanson, Miss Eustis Pageant contestant parent, expressed concern on the eligibility of pageant contestants which was held during Georgefest. She indicated that the City did not follow its own rules that preclude a current title holder from competing while holding the title.

Addisyn Molanson, pageant contestant, objected to the eligibility issues with the 2024 Georgefest pageant. She asked that the pageant scores be re-examined based on the eligibility rules.

Sonya White, EHS FBLA, thanked the City Commission and business owner George Asbate for their support of their students attending the state FBLA contest. She noted Kelly Ung won first place for accounting and will attend the national competition. She cited others who attended and won awards as well.

## **5. CONSENT AGENDA**

5.1 Resolution Number 24-32: Authorizing Award of Bid Number 003-24 to RCM Utilities, LLC for the Eastern Water Treatment Plant Well and High Service Pump Project and Approving a Purchase in Excess of \$50,000

5.2 Resolution Number 24-34: Authorizing the recording of liens on delinquent utility accounts

5.3 Resolution Number 24-35: Approving a Purchase in Excess of \$50,000 for Annual Payment to CDW-G for Software Rights

Commissioner Hawkins noted the contract for service is with the tenant, not the landlord, so why is the City putting the landlord in the middle. He expressed concern regarding the landlord being held responsible for the tenant's service.

Attorney Sasha Garcia stated that liens for service can only be placed on the actual property.

The Commission asked if it is allowable to ask on the application if the customer owns or rents with Attorney Garcia noting the City requests a copy of a lease or a deed with the application.

Further discussion was held regarding holding a property owner responsible for a tenant's bill.

Mr. Carrino indicated that staff has been bringing the liens forward more often due to a request from the Commission. He added that staff can look at what other cities do and what best practices are for collecting on overdue accounts.

The Commission asked if a credit check is done on customers requesting service with Mr. Carrino responding affirmatively. He explained that, based on the credit score, determines whether or not they have to pay a deposit.

Discussion was held regarding shortening the time span and when service is discontinued due to nonpayment.

Mr. Carrino noted that Finance Director Mike Sheppard is out ill but he could discuss the situation with him upon his return. He commented on how the City tries to work with a customer when they have difficulty paying a bill.

The Commission expressed further concern regarding property owners being held responsible for a tenant's utility bill and whether or not the City reports nonpayments to the credit bureaus.

Mayor stated that under Florida law the property owner cannot be charged unless the bill is in their name. He stated that 5.2 will be pulled and voted on separately. He asked for a motion on items 5.1 and 5.3.

Motion made by Commissioner Cobb, Seconded by Commissioner Hawkins, to approve Items 5.1 and 5.3 of the Consent Agenda. The motion passed on the following vote:

Voting Yea: Vice Mayor Lee, Commissioner Ashcraft, Commissioner Cobb, Commissioner Hawkins, Mayor Holland

Mayor Holland then asked for a motion on Item 5.2 (Resolution Number 24-34) with Mr. Carrino offering to have the item postponed to obtain additional information and brought back for consideration.

Motion made by Commissioner Ashcraft, seconded by Vice Mayor Lee, to postpone Resolution Number 24-34. The motion passed on the following vote:

Voting Yea: Vice Mayor Lee, Commissioner Ashcraft, Commissioner Cobb, Commissioner Hawkins, Mayor Holland

## **6. ORDINANCES, PUBLIC HEARINGS & QUASI-JUDICIAL HEARINGS**

### **6.1 Resolution Number 24-33: Appointment of Finance Director**

Attorney Garcia read Resolution Number 24-33 by title: A Resolution of the City Commission of the City of Eustis, Florida, approving the appointment of Lori A. Carr as the City of Eustis Finance Director, effective April 11, 2024.

Bill Howe, Human Resources Director, explained that the City Charter requires that the Finance Director be appointed by the City Manager and confirmed by the City Commission. He provided an overview of Lori Carr's qualifications and stated she meets all requirements for the position of Finance Director.

Attorney Garcia opened the public hearing at 6:45 p.m. There being no public comment, the hearing was closed at 6:45 p.m.

Lori Carr addressed the Commission expressing her excitement to begin the position.

Motion made by Vice Mayor Lee, Seconded by Commissioner Cobb, to approve Resolution Number 24-33 appointing Lori Carr as City Finance Director. The motion passed on the following vote:

Voting Yea: Vice Mayor Lee, Commissioner Ashcraft, Commissioner Cobb, Commissioner Hawkins, Mayor Holland

## **6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5 and 6.7 FIRST READING**

Ordinances 24-15, 24-16, 24-17, 24-18 and 24-20 were postponed to April 4, 2024, due to an advertising issue for the Local Planning Agency.

## **6.6 FIRST READING**

**Ordinance Number 24-19: Approving a Conditional Use Permit to allow a 10,640 square foot, Commercial Retail Store in a General Industrial Land Use District at the Eustis Commerce Park on Paradise Lane and County Road 452**

Attorney Garcia read Ordinance Number 24-19 by title on first reading: An Ordinance of the City Commission of the City of Eustis, Lake County, Florida, approving a conditional use permit to allow a 10,640 square foot commercial retail store in a General Industrial land use district at the Eustis Commerce Park on Paradise Lane and CR 452.

Mike Lane, Development Services Director, presented Ordinance 24-19. He explained the property is located in the Eustis Commerce Park and is owned by JBC Management Group. He indicated that a retail establishment is a conditional use within the General Industrial land use category. He reviewed the general location and surrounding land use designations. He provided a copy of the proposed site plan and noted they held a community meeting on March 5th with eleven attendees. He explained staff's review of the application and noted that the Commission can attach limitations or conditions to the project.

Mr. Lane then reviewed staff's recommended conditions as follows: 1) Submit plans for the site plan/final engineering construction plans for DRC review; 2) Attend a pre-construction conference with DRC; 3) Submit materials and paperwork to the Building Department for a building permit and pay associated construction and impact fees; 4) Submit plans for sign approval separately to the Building Department; and 5) Obtain a business tax receipt before opening for business. He confirmed that all public notice requirements have been met.

Mr. Lane commented on concerns expressed by the Commission regarding the limited opportunities in the City for industrial development. He indicated that the Eustis Commerce Park is one of the areas in the City with a General Industrial land use designation. Currently, the sole occupant of the Park is Nutraceuticals.

Logan Opsahl, Land Use Counsel for the project, presented an aerial of the subject property. He cited the City's conditional use permit process and stated that the City's regulations note that the requested use is "generally consistent with the goals and policies, objectives of the comprehensive plan and compatible with the area." He stated their agreement with the staff's recommendations for conditions. He added that their retail use would provide buffering between the industrial uses and the residential area.

Mr. Opsahl explained that CR452 is a County road so they are working with them on the traffic conditions. He noted that a request was made to provide a golf cart cross over; however, the County has stated that is not possible due to the traffic conditions on 452.

Holly Irish, Concept Development, discussed the traffic impact analysis for a.m. and p.m. peak hours. She stated the analysis showed no deficiencies caused by the addition of the project at

the intersection with the results indicating that all intersection movements operate well with little delay for all movements.

Ms. Irish presented the architectural elevations and summarized the project upgrades. She noted they have had a pre-development meeting and community meeting to ensure the plan meets the City's codes.

Attorney Garcia opened the public hearing at 7:02 p.m.

George and Pamela Carrera, along with his father, Donald Carrera, owners of Eustis Commerce Park, commented on their future plans for the park. Mr. Carrera noted that there is only 34 acres of industrial property in Eustis and they own 32 of them. He asked what are the Commission's ideas for industrial in Eustis. He cited recent industrial development in Umatilla.

Mayor Holland recommended that the Carreras reach out to the City's Economic Development Director Al Latimer.

There being no further public comment, the hearing was closed at 7:05 p.m.

Mayor Holland requested a motion on Ordinance 24-19. The ordinance died for lack of a motion.

## **7. OTHER BUSINESS**

### **7.1 Transfer of Additional Land to Lake Sumter State College (LSSC) For Construction of CDL and Lineworker Training Facility**

Al Latimer, Economic Development Director, explained the requested transfer of additional land to Lake Sumter State College (LSSC) for construction of CDL and Lineworker Training Facility. He noted staff recommends that an additional four acres be included in the property transfer. He explained that the additional property would be a uniform shaped property that would also provide for stormwater retention.

Mr. Latimer noted that other educational facilities have approached the City regarding partnerships. He stated that the college will provide the City with any required easements and they will undertake the surveying for the legal description. They will also explore other partnerships with colleges and universities.

The Commission asked about the use of the additional property with Mr. Latimer indicating they will definitely use the additional 2.5 acres; however, the remaining 1.5 acres would not be accessible to anyone else and contains wetlands.

Mr. Carrino explained that due to Hicks Ditch the remaining property is largely inaccessible to any other users including the City. It would have to be accessed through the fire station. He indicated the college would be more likely to be able to make use of the property.

Vice Mayor Lee commented on Lake Sumter's interest in expanding their programs including solar energy, electrical engineering and several others. She stated they are most interested in discovering what the City needs in order to develop its workforce.

Commissioner Hawkins asked about LSSC providing additional scholarship opportunities for Eustis High School students in exchange for the additional property.

Vice Mayor Lee noted their intent to hold a variety of round table discussions to see what is needed.

The Commission asked that staff provide the request to LSSC for some additional scholarships.

Al Latimer commented on the architectural rendering in accordance with City Commission requests.

**CONSENSUS:** It was a consensus of the Commission for the City to provide an additional four acres to LSSC.

Mr. Carrino explained they would prepare an additional agreement and bring it back for approval by resolution.

## **8. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS AND COMMENTS**

### **8.1 City Commission**

Commissioner Cobb commented on the need for an ordinance pertaining to semi trucks. She asked about the progress on the apartment complex in downtown Eustis.

Mr. Carrino stated they are working inside the building. He explained that once a permit has been pulled they have six months between approved/passed inspections. Therefore, he has asked the Building Official to keep a close eye on the project.

Commissioner Cobb asked if the project was bonded and expressed concern regarding the project being completed. She then expressed concern regarding sand running downhill from the worksite and clogging the drain near Jeannie's Restaurant. She asked that the City correct the problem and add it to the developer's bill rather than waiting for them to fix it. She then asked about a defunct swimming pool on Lakeshore Drive.

Mr. Carrino indicated that the project passed an inspection on October 25th so they have six months from that date to pass another inspection. He added that the City asked them to add some fencing around it; however, they are in compliance at this time. He stated his opinion that they seem to be working on the project as they can.

Chief Capri indicated that Code Enforcement is on top of it. He noted that the owner works at NASA and added that there are a number of issues on Lakeshore and reported that the department wrote 650 traffic citations in that area. He stated they would have a report at the next meeting.

Mr. Carrino added that the six months is what is required under state law.

Commissioner Cobb reported on her attendance at the Eustis Chili Cook-off as well as the Leesburg St. Patrick's Day barbecue and chili cook-off. She noted that Greg Dobbins from the City competed at the Leesburg cook-off.

Commissioner Ashcraft asked about adding picnic tables in Ferran Park.

Mr. Carrino commented the redesign of Ferran Park did not include picnic tables. He noted that plans are to concrete the area where the annual Christmas tree is placed due to issues with the grass. Picnic tables will be placed there when the Christmas tree is not in place.

Commissioner Hawkins asked about adding concrete to the area in front of the bandshell with Mr. Carrino indicating he would talk to Public Works about it.

Commissioner Hawkins asked about the payment of funds allocated by the Commissioners to various organizations with Mr. Carrino indicating that Finance Director Mike Sheppard is checking meeting minutes to confirm where the Commission wanted the funds donated. He commented that some of the organizations may need to provide some documentation prior to payment being made.

Commissioner Cobb asked Mr. Gierok to make sure all of the plaques from the benches are being placed on the wall.

Vice Mayor Lee expressed concern regarding semi trucks parking at the Fairgrounds and around the city. She emphasized her concern regarding the auto repair shop on Kurt Street across from Eustis Heights Elementary. She stated it is impeding traffic and is going to cause an accident.

Chief Capri noted that someone stole the signs the Police Department installed in that area. He indicated they have been given a number of warnings and the department will start towing vehicles.

Vice Mayor Lee reported on her attendance at the Cops and Bobbers event at Alee Academy. She complimented staff on the improvements made to the Clifford House and stated it should be ready for the Mother's Day tea.

## **8.2 City Manager**

Mr. Carrino thanked the City Commission and staff for their support during his family's recent issues. He noted the recent Strategic Planning session and cited issues with staff insufficiently preparing the Commission for the meeting. He stated that he and Jason would work with them to make sure everyone is better prepared for the process. He indicated his belief that, in the end, the City will have a product it can be proud of including having good, measurable actions.

The Commission asked about the Master Plan for the former Waterman site property with Mr. Carrino indicating that is being prepared as a separate process. He stated he would present the draft to the Commission and then meet with the Commissioners individually to discuss the plan.

## **8.3 City Attorney - NONE**

## **8.4 Mayor**

Mayor Holland noted the upcoming Comedy Show and asked if the other Commissioners would like to attend. It was a consensus of the Commission for the City to get a table. He encouraged the community to attend the event. He added there would also be a number of vendors present.

Darius Kerrison announced there would be free health screenings available, OneBlood would be present for blood donations and Lake Community Action Agency would be present. He stated the event would run from 4 to 9 p.m. with the show beginning at 6 p.m.

## **9. ADJOURNMENT: 7:34 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](http://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 of the meeting can be obtained from the office of the City Clerk for a fee.*



CHRISTINE HALLORAN  
City Clerk



MICHAEL L. HOLLAND  
Mayor/Commissioner