



CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA
APRIL 5, 2022, REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING
OFFICIAL MEETING MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Watford, called the regular meeting of the City Council for the City of Okeechobee to order on April 5, 2022, at 6:00 P.M. in the City Council Chambers, located at 55 Southeast (SE) 3rd Avenue, Room 200, Okeechobee, Florida. The invocation was offered by Mayor Watford; followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Council Member Chandler.

II. ATTENDANCE

Roll was taken by City Clerk Lane Gamiotea to establish a quorum. Members present: Mayor Dowling R. Watford, Jr., Council Members Noel A. Chandler, Monica M. Clark, Robert "Bob" Jarriel, and Robert "Bobby" M. Keefe, Jr.

III. AGENDA AND PUBLIC COMMENTS

- A. There were no requests for items be added, deferred, or withdrawn from the agenda.
- B. Motion and second by Council Members Keefe and Clark to approve the agenda as presented. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**
- C. No comment cards were submitted for public participation for issues not on the agenda.

IV. PRESENTATIONS AND PROCLAMATIONS

- A. Mayor Watford presented Mr. Evan Neal, who was accompanied by his family members, with a prestigious Key to the City of Okeechobee in a custom shadow box. This is the highest distinguished award that the City bestows. The Certificate that was presented read as follows: **"Whereas, the City of Okeechobee, Florida deems it befitting to honor young adults of our community who inspire our youth to dream, do more, and become more, as future leaders; and Whereas Evan's hometown, the City of Okeechobee, is proud to recognize his dedication and achievements to athletics and academics. He attended Okeechobee High School until transferring and graduated from IMG Academy. As a five-star recruit, and No. 1 Offensive Tackle in the nation out of IMG Academy, he went on to attend the University of Alabama, where he has been a three-year starter, and most notably, a starting member of the team who won the 2021 College Football Playoff National Championship. Then, most recently, in January of 2022, announced he would forgo his senior year and enter the NFL Draft, where he has potential to be one of the top draftees; and Whereas, Evan is the first athlete in the sport of football from our community, to have achieved such a level in the NFL Draft and listed as the most physically gifted player in the nation. His academic ability is evenly paired with his athleticism, as he is on the SEC Honor Roll and will graduate in 2022 with a Bachelors in Communication from the University of Alabama. Now, Therefore, I, Dowling R. Watford, Jr., by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the City of Okeechobee, Florida, in recognition of Evan's achievements as an athlete, student, and mentor, and proudly presented on this 5th day of April 2022."**

V. CONSENT AGENDA

Motion and second by Council Members Keefe and Clark to:

- A. [Dispense with the reading and] approve the meeting Minutes for March 15, 2022 [as presented].
- B. Reappoint Mr. Phil Baughman, Mr. Rick Chartier, and Mr. Doug McCoy as Regular Members to the Planning Board, Board of Adjustment, and Design Review Board, terms being May 1, 2022, through April 30, 2025 [as presented in Exhibit 1].
- C. Approve the disposal of obsolete and surplus equipment in the Public Works Department [as presented in Exhibit 2].
Motion Carried Unanimously.

VI. MAYOR WATFORD OPENED THE PUBLIC HEARING AT 6:15 P.M.

- A. Motion and second by Council Members Jarriel and Keefe to read by title only, proposed Ordinance No. 1251, Future Land Use (FLU) Map Amendment Application No. 22-002-SSA submitted by the property owner, Brian Keith Hickman/Huntermako "LLC" to reclassify from Single Family Residential (SFR) to Commercial (C), property located at 804 Southwest (SW) 2nd Avenue, consisting of 0.16+/- acres. Legal: Lot 1 of Block 3, SOUTH OKEECHOBEE, Plat Book 5, Page 7, Okeechobee County public records; and recommended by the Local Planning Agency [as presented in Exhibit 3]. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

VI. PUBLIC HEARING CONTINUED

- A. Continued. City Attorney John Fumero, read proposed Ordinance No. 1251 by title only as follows: **“AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA; AMENDING THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, ORDINANCE NO. 635 AS AMENDED, BY REVISING THE FLU MAP ON A CERTAIN TRACT OF LAND MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED HEREIN FROM SFR TO C, APPLICATION NO. 22-002-SSA; PROVIDING FOR INCLUSION OF ORDINANCE AND REVISED FUTURE LAND USE MAP IN THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.”**

Motion and second by Council Members Keefe and Jarriel to adopt proposed Ordinance No. 1251. City Planner, Mr. Jim LaRue of 1375 Jackson Street, Suite 206, Fort Myers, Florida, presented the Planning Staff Report findings included in Exhibit 3. Mr. Steve Dobbs of 209 Northeast (NE) 2nd Street, Okeechobee, stated he was in attendance on behalf of the client, who recently purchased the subject project and brought it into code compliance. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

VII. MAYOR WATFORD ANNOUNCED THEY WOULD NOW ENTER THE PUBLIC HEARING PORTION OF AGENDA FOR PLANNING AND ZONING QUASI-JUDICIAL ITEMS

- A. Motion and second by Council Members Jarriel and Keefe to read by title only, proposed Ordinance No. 1245 for Petition No. 22-002-R, rezoning a total of 54.8+/- unplatted acres from Holding and Residential Mobile Home (RMH) to Heavy Commercial (CHV) (16.8+/- acres) and Residential Multiple Family (RMF) (38.0+/- acres), submitted by property owner Gad Reggev/Blue Spring Holdings LLC. The vacant property is located in the NE section of the City boundaries, situated East of Taylor Creek, South of the railroad track, West of the NE City Limits (NE 13th Avenue), and surrounds River Run Phase 2 subdivision to the North, East, and South. The proposed use is a multi-family residential community and household storage facility; and recommended by the Planning Board [as presented in Exhibit 4]. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

Attorney Fumero read proposed Ordinance No. 1245 by title only as follows: **“AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA; AMENDING THE OFFICIAL ZONING MAP OF THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE BY REZONING CERTAIN TRACTS OF LAND MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED HEREIN, FROM HOLDING AND RMH TO CHV AND RMF, PETITION NO. 22-002-R; AMENDING THE ZONING MAP ACCORDINGLY; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.”**

Motion and second by Council Members Keefe and Clark to adopt proposed Ordinance No. 1245. Attorney Fumero collectively administered an Oath to Mr. LaRue of 1375 Jackson Street, Suite 206, Fort Myers, Florida; Mr. Dobbs of 209 NE 2nd Street, Okeechobee; Mr. Michael and Mrs. Sarah Nave of 909 NE 5th Street, Okeechobee; and Mr. Robert “Bob” Brandenburg of 303 NE 8th Avenue, Okeechobee. Mr. LaRue presented the Planning Staff Report findings included in Exhibit 4. Mr. Nave, Mrs. Nave, and Mr. Brandenburg individually voiced their concerns of the potential traffic impact through their subdivision. Mrs. Nave suggested the new development be required to have ingress/egress gates. Mr. Brandenburg added his support for requiring the gates at the entrance of the new development and asked that the developer construct a sound wall around the perimeter of their subdivision. **The Mayor and Council agreed with the concerns stated by the residents of River Run and noted to City Staff to ensure these issues were properly addressed during site plan review by the Technical Review Committee (TRC). Additionally, City Clerk Gamiotea was instructed to provide a copy of the TRC meeting notice to the River Run residents. Motion Carried Unanimously.**

- B. Motion and second by Council Members Clark and Jarriel to read by title only, proposed Ordinance No. 1246 for Petition No. 21-006-R, rezoning Lots 23 and 24 of Block 3, CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, Plat Book 5, Page 5, Okeechobee County public records, 0.4+/- acres from RMF to CHV. Submitted by the property owner Muhammad Nooruddin. The vacant property is located at 204 Northwest (NW) 13th Street, the proposed use is a storage facility; and recommended by the Planning Board [as presented in Exhibit 5]. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

Attorney Fumero read proposed Ordinance No. 1246 by title only as follows: **“AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA; AMENDING THE OFFICIAL ZONING MAP OF THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE BY REZONING CERTAIN TRACTS OF LAND MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED HEREIN, FROM RMF TO CHV, PETITION NO. 21-006-R; AMENDING THE ZONING MAP ACCORDINGLY; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.”**

Motion and second by Council Members Clark and Keefe to adopt proposed Ordinance No. 1246. Attorney Fumero collectively administered an Oath to Mr. LaRue of 1375 Jackson Street, Suite 206, Fort Myers, Florida, who presented the Planning Staff Report and TRC findings. There were no public comments. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

VII. PLANNING AND ZONING QUASI-JUDICIAL PUBLIC HEARING CONTINUED

- C. Motion and second by Council Members Clark and Jarriel to read by title only, proposed Ordinance No. 1252, regarding Petition No. 22-003-R submitted by the property owner, Brian Keith Hickman/Huntermako "LLC" to rezone from Residential Single Family-One (RSF-1) to Commercial Professional Office (CPO), Lot 1 of Block 3, SOUTH OKEECHOBEE, Plat Book 5, Page 7, Okeechobee County public records. Property located at 804 SW 2nd Avenue, consisting of 0.16+/- acres. The proposed use is to join the property with adjacent lot to the South [as presented in Exhibit 6]. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

Attorney Fumero read proposed Ordinance No. 1252 by title only as follows: **"AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA; AMENDING THE OFFICIAL ZONING MAP OF THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE BY REZONING CERTAIN TRACTS OF LAND MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED HEREIN, FROM RSF-1 TO CPO, PETITION NO. 22-003-R; AMENDING THE ZONING MAP ACCORDINGLY; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE."**

Motion and second by Council Members Keefe and Jarriel to approve the first reading of proposed Ordinance 1252 and set May 3, 2022, as the final public hearing date.

Attorney Fumero collectively administered an Oath to Mr. LaRue of 1375 Jackson Street, Suite 206, Fort Myers, Florida who provided the Planning Staff Report findings; and Mr. Dobbs of 209 NE 2nd Street, Okeechobee, in attendance on behalf of his client, and noted this is the same property as the previously adopted in Ordinance No. 1251. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

MAYOR WATFORD CLOSED THE PUBLIC HEARING AT 6:44 P.M.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Motion and second by Council Members Jarriel and Keefe to approve the purchase of a Vector Impact Stormwater Cleaner Truck [from Source Well Cooperative Purchasing program contract No. 101221-VTR] in the amount of \$301,488.00 funded through the American Rescue Plan Act [as presented in Exhibit 7]. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**
- B. Motion and second by Council Members Jarriel and Keefe to approve a leave of absence without pay [Personal Unpaid Leave] request for a Public Works Employee from March 23 through 24, 2022 [as presented in Exhibit 8]. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**
- C. Motion and second by Council Members Clark and Keefe to adopt proposed Resolution No. 2022-03, Fund Balance and Reserve Policy [as presented in Exhibit 9].

Attorney Fumero read proposed Resolution No. 2022-03 by title only as follows: **"A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA; ESTABLISHING A FUND BALANCE AND RESERVE POLICY FOR THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE."**

Finance Director Riedel presented a five-slide power point presentation, which has been incorporated into the official minute file. After a lengthy discussion, **a motion and second by Council Members Jarriel and Clark was made to postpone the adoption of proposed Resolution No. 2022-03 to the April 19, 2022, meeting. Motion Carried Unanimously.**

IX. CITY ATTORNEY UPDATE

- A new State law was passed by Legislation that will limit local governments' authority on home-based businesses. This will cause the City to amend its current regulations, an ordinance has been drafted and provided to City Staff for review and processing.
- The draft ordinance addressing the revised Charter to be on the ballot as a referendum will be on the next agenda.
- Continuing to work with General Services Coordinator Burnette on the issues with Planning and Zoning.
- Recently reappointed to the Florida Tax Watch Committee.

X. ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE

- Met with the new owner of the former Okeechobee Fishing Village and Resort (locally known as Roger Jones RV Park). He is making improvements to the Park and boat slips.
- Met with representatives of the new RaceTrac Truck Stop, who have agreed to construct the sound wall between their new development and the residential area, they are providing the City with enough perimeter area to properly address the drainage swales. All should be completed in a few weeks.
- The new City Planning Consultant, Morris Depew Associates, Inc will be starting on May 1, 2022.

X. ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE CONTINUED

- Reminded everyone of the Joint Workshop with the Planning Board on May 24, 2022, 6:00 p.m.
- City Staff will be presenting recommendations to revise the current salary structure.

XI. CITY COUNCIL COMMENTS

- Council Member Chandler noted his appreciation to Staff for keeping on top of everything.
- Council Member Jarriel asked Attorney Fumero what would be required to allow conditional zoning; the matter would be researched, and the Attorney will follow up with him directly.

Council Member Keefe:

- Grateful to Staff for getting the Fund Balance Policy to the Council, will make the upcoming Budget Workshops fun.
- Appreciated the comments the Mayor made about the American Rescue Funds

XII. ADJOURN, Mayor Watford adjourned the meeting at 7:51 P.M.

Submitted By:



Lane Gamiotea, CMC, City Clerk

Please take notice and be advised that when a person decides to appeal any decision made by the City Council with respect to any matter considered at this meeting, s/he may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceeding is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. City Clerk media are for the sole purpose of backup for official records of the Clerk.