



**CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA
MARCH 22, 2021, TOWN HALL MEETING
SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Watford called the Town Hall meeting of the City Council for the City of Okeechobee to order on Monday, March 22, 2021, at 6:00 P.M. at the Okeechobee Freshman Campus Auditorium, located at 610 Southwest 2nd Avenue, Okeechobee, Florida. The invocation was offered by Mayor Watford with the Star Spangled Banner being sung by Mr. Jim Clark, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Council Member Jarriel.

Mayor Watford explained those who would like to address the Council needed to complete a comment card or a written comment form. Both were to be turned into Deputy Clerk Jenkins.

II. ATTENDANCE

Members present: Mayor Dowling R. Watford, Jr., Council Members Wes Abney, Monica Clark, Bob Jarriel, and Bobby Keefe. Staff Present: City Clerk Lane Gamiotea, City Administrator Marcos MontesDeOca, City Attorney John Fumero, Fire Chief Herb Smith, Police Chief Bob Peterson, Public Works Director David Allen, and Deputy City Clerk Bobbie Jenkins.

III. INTRODUCTION

A. Administrator MontesDeOca provided a brief overview of the City's activities. Through a joint effort with Okeechobee County, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) funds were disbursed, with the City receiving approximately \$70,000.00. Through grants provided by Florida Department of Environmental Protection and Florida Department of Transportation, three projects are in various stages of completion: Southeast 8th Avenue Stormwater Conveyance Bid No. PW 02-00-12-20; Southeast 6th Street Resurfacing Bid No. PW 01-10-11-20; and Southeast 3rd Avenue Resurfacing Bid No. PW 05-10-09-20. Due to the age of pipes within the City, discussion has begun on infrastructure repairs. The City will be applying for funding for infrastructure projects.

Current development projects in various stages are: revitalization of Burger King, 604 East North Park Street; RaceTrac Truck Stop, 975 East North Park Street; Wawa Convenience Store, 200 block of West North Park Street; the construction of approximately 30 new single-family homes; and several multi-family residential projects.

Current community projects in various stages are: vehicle charging stations on East South Park Street at City Hall Park; LED streetlights; installation of traffic signal at North Parrott Avenue and North 9th Street; USB solar powered charging stations at Centennial Park; solar powered wi-fi connection points in FLAGLER PARKS; and closed captioning services for all video broadcasted meetings, which will allow the public to comment on the web during meetings.

The City remains fiscally responsible with a total operating budget of approximately \$7.5 million dollars, with \$4.5 million dollars in reserve funds. The interlocal agreement for fire services with the County is moving forward and will be in full operation June 1, 2021. The Citizens Charter Review Advisory Committee (CCRAC) began meeting in December 2020; its next meeting is March 25, 2021 at 6:30 P.M. The Flagler Park Design Review Advisory Committee (FPDRAC) began meeting in March; its next meeting is March 29, 2021 at 3:00 P.M. Both Committees have individual pages on the City's website where information is posted for the public.

B. City Attorney John Fumero provided a brief update on the purpose of the CCRAC and a summary of the meetings held to date. He explained a Charter is the foundation of local government and functions as the equivalent of a state constitution, setting the guiding principles for governance. The Charter establishes a framework for how the City operates in terms of its structure, responsibilities, functions, and processes.

III. INTRODUCTION CONTINUED

ITEM B CONTINUED: He provided examples of these components and explained the CCRAC has been tasked with reviewing the existing Charter, making recommendations for amendments, and presenting its recommendations to the Council for approval. The Council will review and decide on adoption of the proposed amendments. The proposed amendments will then be presented by referendum and voted on by City voters.

The CCRAC has developed a Citizens Bill of Rights and is currently reviewing Article II of the Charter. This Article pertains to the powers and duties of City Officers. Mayor Watford presented a historical overview of the City's form of government at the last meeting to build the groundwork of Article II's review.


As there will be on-going meetings over the next year, citizen input is paramount. He reiterated the importance of the citizens utilizing the CCRAC webpage to provide feedback. All meetings are advertised and open to the public.

- C. Mayor Watford opened the public comments portion of the Town Hall meeting and took a moment to recognize Mr. Clyde Durrance who passed earlier in the day.

There was one written comment form submitted by Ms. Genia Arbogast. She explained her property floods after heavy rainfall due to the lack of drainage maintenance along Southwest 3rd Avenue. Pictures were provided as evidence. She requested the drainage be inspected and maintained to prevent this from continuing in the future. Mayor Watford noted for the record Ms. Arbogast had reached out to him prior to the meeting and he referred the information to the Administrator. The pictures were passed to all Council Members for review.

- IV. Mayor Watford adjourned the Town Hall meeting at 6:39 P.M. The political forum for the May 4, 2021, Special Election for one City Council Member was held at the close of this meeting. The Town Hall meeting and political forum were broadcast live and recorded by WOKC. A copy of the entire recording has been incorporated in the official record.

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, he/she 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.