

MINUTES OF THE
2008 ORGANIZATIONAL CITY COMMISSION MEETING
CITY OF EUSTIS, FLORIDA
January 8, 2008 at 7:30 p.m.

THIS MEETING OF THE EUSTIS CITY COMMISSION WAS HELD AT 10 NORTH GROVE STREET, EUSTIS,
WITH MAYOR JAMES T. ROTELLA PRESIDING.

INVOCATION: Pastor Ron Holder, First Church of God

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Commissioner LeHeup-Smith

Mayor Rotella acknowledged a quorum was present with all Commissioners seated and confirmed proper notice had been given.

OTHERS PRESENT:

Steve Benetz, Senior Director of Leisure Services/Library
Paul Berg, City Manager
Fred Cobb, Senior Director of Public Safety/Police Chief
John Futch, Director of Public Works
Rich Hoon, Executive Assistant to the City Manager
Ann Isaacs, Director of Human Resources
Jim R. Myers, Jr., Senior Director of Finance
Frances Nipe, Acting Planning & Code Enforcement Manager

Alton Roane, Senior Director of Development Services
Judy Roberts, City Clerk
Mike Sheppard, Deputy Finance Director
Lewis Stone, City Attorney
Roy Tremain, Fire Chief
Susan Trewyn, Acting Recording Secretary
Rex Winn, Fire Captain

I. RETIRING MAYOR MESSAGE – James T. Rotella

This past year has indeed been one of change, challenge, and achievement for Eustis. So many issues were confronted by the City Commission that we probably set a record for the number of workshops and meetings we held. The culmination to the year was a resounding kick off of the City's 125th birthday celebration as more than a thousand enjoyed the symphony concert in the park.

The year 2007 quickly brought change to the City with the seating of two (2) new Commissioners and a commitment to involve and be more responsive to the community. Our approach shifted to slower, smarter and quality growth. Our Finance Director served as interim City Manager, and worked diligently with staff as we recruited and hired a new City Manager. A new meeting format was developed to afford the public and committees the opportunity to speak at the beginning of meetings and handle agenda items more efficiently. Despite the challenges that come with change, indeed a heightened spirit of cooperation, community service and new ideas can be felt throughout the community and within our proud staff.

Challenges were met in our Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Regulations. In 2007 we ambitiously attacked this issue, hiring a special land use attorney and planning consultants to bring our Plan into compliance and to completely revise our regulations to ensure quality development for the future. To do this, a moratorium on new building was necessary and started in April. The City then faced litigation regarding this, which to the present, tests our political will. On other fronts, we are faced and challenged with the lack of development on the Lake Community Foundation properties. Yet, we embrace the possibilities for economic development in our downtown. And, perhaps our greatest challenge, Mother Nature tested much of the community with tornados and drought.

With a rigorous schedule we met these challenges and then some. With our planning consultants, our commercial development regulations were swiftly overhauled to end the halt on commercial building. Open space and development guidelines were also established to ensure quality residential growth. Dialog was initiated with the County to designate and coordinate land use in the areas just outside our City in our Joint Planning Area, and with the State to comply with the Wekiva Protection mandates.

We are now engaged in an ambitious series of projects including a traffic circulation study for downtown, a Community Redevelopment Area update, a Kurt Street transportation study, and a downtown master plan.

A downtown parking study was completed showing no immediate need for parking structures, and a preliminary bike-pedestrian trail plan for the City was started, intending to connect to a countywide trail system. We have also begun the active tree planting to enhance our tree canopy, and through grant monies improving downtown buildings with new facades. These projects are in line with the four (4) successful visioning sessions we conducted to bring forth the desires of our residents on how the City is to look and grow. To prioritize and implement the many projects, the Commission and staff undertook leadership and strategic planning workshops to develop an organizational action plan for 2012 and 2022, incorporating our core beliefs, missions and vision.

Achievements were many this year. The City was honored with a special statewide Tree City U.S.A. award, an award from the Lake County Water Alliance for exemplary and timely completion of storm water projects, and awards by the County for arts in our City. Recognizing the importance of the arts in our community, the City funded and Ferran Park is now graced with a beautiful heron sculpture, the largest public art form in our County. Also, we provided funding for the Trout Lake Nature Center, performing and fine arts, after school activities and sports, and expanded swimming pool hours.

Public Safety always remains a top priority and our police have implemented special community service teams, bicycle patrols and soon officers will have tasers. New equipment has also been purchased for our Fire Department. Also, the Commissioners are equipped with new laptop computers to reduce paper and increase efficiency in our meetings and agendas.

Even with all the above improvements, given good fiscal management, this City lowered its millage rate by over 14%, kept water rates stable, and, for the 18th year received the Excellence in Financial Reporting award by the Government Financial Reporting Officers Association. Likewise, we maintained our strong fiscal position with an AAA bond rating and reserves to cover contingencies.

With such an abundance of activity ongoing and proud of the many treasures and accomplishments in our City, we submitted an essay to the League of Cities Awards program. We can all be proud that Eustis was one of five (5) finalists from more than 400 cities in Florida, for the City of Excellence.

Along with the celebration of the City's 125th anniversary, the coming year will present us with a new set of hurdles –property tax reform, replacing retiring department heads and the City Attorney, to name a few. I have every confidence that Eustis will triumph as a city of treasures as we work to implement our programs and projects, promote the development of our downtown and corridors, while protecting our friendly hometown charm. We have also begun exploring many exciting new opportunities for economic development.

Surmounting the tornados crises, the folks here have demonstrated their mettle and strong cohesiveness as a community of S.P.I.R.I.T. - one that can expect its City Commission and staff to excel in SERVICE, PROFESSIONALISM, INTEGRITY, RESULTS, INVOLVEMENT AND TEAMWORK. I extend my gratitude to my fellow Commissioners, City staff, volunteers, and the people of Eustis for their help in making this possible.

II. APPOINTMENT OF CITY CLERK AS TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN TO CONDUCT THE ELECTION OF MAYOR.

III. ELECTION OF MAYOR

Ms. Roberts called for nominations for the office of Mayor for the year 2008.

Commissioner Ales nominated Commissioner Smith to serve as Mayor for the 2008 calendar year.

Ms. Roberts entertained a motion to cease nominations.

MOTION by Commissioner Rotella / SECONDED by Commissioner Ales to close the nominations.
Motion approved unanimously

Roll Call vote for Evelyn H. Smith as Mayor for 2008:

Commissioner Ales	AYE
Commissioner Hale	AYE
Commissioner LeHeup-Smith	AYE
Commissioner Rotella	AYE
Commissioner Smith	AYE

Nomination approved 5-0

Ms. Roberts congratulated Mayor Smith and turned the meeting over to her.

IV. ELECTION OF VICE-MAYOR

Mayor Smith called for nominations for the office of Vice-Mayor for the year 2008.

Commissioner Rotella nominated Commissioner Ales to serve as Vice-Mayor for the 2008 calendar year.

MOTION by Commissioner LeHeup-Smith / SECONDED by Commissioner Rotella to close the nominations.

Motion approved unanimously

Roll Call vote for Scott Ales as Vice-Mayor for 2008:

Commissioner Ales	AYE
Commissioner Hale	AYE
Commissioner LeHeup-Smith	AYE
Commissioner Rotella	AYE
Mayor Smith	AYE

Nomination approved 5-0

V. SEATING OF MAYOR AND VICE-MAYOR

VI. MAYOR'S MESSAGE – Evelyn H. Smith

Thank you, Commissioners, for allowing me to serve one more time as Mayor of Eustis. I accept the challenges and the opportunities we have facing us this year and I believe 2008 will be one of the most important years in our 125 year history. This is an exciting time to be living and working in Eustis.

I want you to take a short visual train ride with me as we visit exciting places in Eustis.

Our strategic plan that we put together in 2007, with input from our citizens, will be our map for our 2008 short trip.

We need to implement this plan for 2008 and I intend, as Mayor, to lead us to accomplish this implementation.

OK now ALL ABOARD!

Our first stop will be City Hall to see the final result and completion of the best and most progressive Comprehensive Plan and LDR's. These documents will allow us to build better residential communities than any other city in Central Florida.

We will continue to follow the mandate of the citizens for slower growth and more responsible growth.

Also, we will see our City Hall demonstrating that good values should not be a thing of the past. Our citizens will be treated with honesty and fairness and we will all work together and we will work hard to make Eustis city government more efficient and more transparent for the citizens and tax payers of Eustis.

Our second stop will be to visit downtown Eustis. Let's visit the old Florida Hospital Waterman property where we will roll out concept drawings and where we will plan what will become a beautiful and inviting

downtown that blends in with our Lake Eustis waterfront and will be designed to demonstrate Florida's character.

Eustis' downtown will be a home for small businesses. An example of what we want for business in the downtown is the recent opening of the renovated Bay Pharmacy and their continued investment of \$650,000 in downtown Eustis. This was a very special grand opening on January 4th and 5th.

We need to next stop on Monterey, Chesterfield and Lakeview to visit the neighborhoods affected by the tornado. I want us to remember the spirit, of helping our neighbors, and the way we came together after the tornado and have that same spirit and togetherness carry over into other City efforts and projects in 2008.

Our fourth stop has us visiting some of our special places, such as Bay Street Players, Eustis Art Museum, Eustis Historical and Citrus Museum, and Lake Eustis Institute. These are examples of facilities that will have Eustis become a destination for arts, culture and learning.

As we chug, chug along through our tree canopied streets, which demonstrates our commitment to being a Tree City USA, we approach our fifth stop where we visit Trout Lake Nature Center. This Center is a showcase of our City's natural resources and beauty.

Our little train pulls away from the Center and we cross State Road 44 and stop and view 77 acres. These 77 acres can become fields and playgrounds that are opportunities for an active lifestyle for all ages.

Our little train could go on and on but it is time to choo-choo back to City Hall and take care of the rest of tonight's business.

As we pull into our station at City Hall we see City Manager Paul Berg hanging up a sign for our arrival. The sign says: Show the Hometown S.P.I.R.I.T. We SERVE, We are PROFESSIONAL, We act with INTEGRITY, We produce RESULTS, We are INVOLVED, WE practice TEAMWORK.

So Commissioners, let's go to work.

VII. PRESENTATION OF PLAQUE

Mayor Smith presented a plaque to outgoing Mayor Rotella.

VIII. 2008 COMMISSION POLICIES

MOTION by Commissioner Ales / SECONDED by Commissioner LeHeup-Smith to adopt the 2008 Commission Policies as written.

Mr. Berg recommended that the Commission direct Staff to put together a format and criteria for Commission policies to be more ongoing and to develop the policies as resolutions throughout the year. He would like to see a comprehensive set of financial policies that address issues like tax rates, the budget, investments, and grants.

Mr. Stone noted that traditionally the policies have been adopted for the year and then Staff can bring back recommendations for changes.

Motion approved unanimously

CONSENSUS: It was the consensus of the Commission to direct Staff to put together a format and criteria for Commission policies.

MOTION by Commissioner LeHeup-Smith / SECONDED by Commissioner Ales to adjourn and come back for the regularly scheduled meeting after a short break.

Motion approved unanimously

Adjournment: 8:08 p.m.