



**TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 19, 2022 – 4:00 PM
TAVARES CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
201 EAST MAIN STREET, TAVARES**

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

**Lori Pfister, Mayor
Walter Price, Vice Mayor
Amanda Boggus, Council Member
Sandy Gamble, Council Member
Troy Singer, Council Member**

STAFF PRESENT

**John Drury, City Administrator
Lindsay Holt, City Attorney
Susie Novack, City Clerk
Scott Aldrich, Community Services Director
Crissy Bublitz, Human Resources Director
Phil Clark, Utilities Director
James Dillon, Public Works Director
Mike Fitzgerald, Community Development Director
Lori Houghton, Finance Director
Richard Keith, Fire Chief
Sarah Coursey, Police Chief
Mark O'Keefe, Public Communications Director
Bob Tweedie, Economic Development Director**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Pfister called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. She asked those who wished to speak on an agenda item to complete and submit a Request to Speak form.

II. INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Tab 1. Pastor Mike Watkins, Friendship C.M.E. Church

Pastor Mike Watkins, Friendship C.M.E. Church, provided the invocation and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor asked for any changes to the Agenda. Mr. Drury said Staff had no changes.

MOTION

Amanda Boggus moved to approve the Agenda, seconded by Walter Price. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

IV. PROCLAMATIONS/PRESENTATIONS

Tab 2. Tavares Chamber of Commerce Update

Erika Buigas, CEO/President of the Tavares Chamber of Commerce, updated the Council on Chamber events and activities. She said the Teacher Appreciation and Taste of Tavares events would return the following year. She thanked Mr. Drury for his recent comments on the Tavares Chamber of Commerce Gala.

V. SWEARING IN BY CITY ATTORNEY AND DISCLOSURE OF EXPARTE COMMUNICATIONS

Attorney Holt stated there were no quasi-judicial matters before the Council for consideration.

VI. READING OF ALL ORDINANCES/RESOLUTIONS INTO THE RECORD

Ms. Novack read the following ordinance at First Reading by title only:

ORDINANCE 2022-16

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 17 OF THE CITY OF TAVARES LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS; ESTABLISHING REVISED WATER, WASTEWATER AND RECLAIMED WATER CONNECTION FEES; PROVIDING FOR REVIEW OF CONNECTION FEES EACH YEAR; PROVIDING FOR ACCOUNTING AND REPORTING OF CONNECTION FEE COLLECTIONS AND EXPENDITURES; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Pfister asked if anyone wished to pull an item from the Consent Agenda for discussion. There were none.

MOTION

Amanda Boggus moved to approve the Consent Agenda [Tab 3. Approval of the September 21, 2022, Regular Meeting and Budget Hearing Minutes], seconded by Troy Singer. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Tab 3. Approval of the September 21, 2022, City Council Regular Meeting and Budget Hearing Minutes

Approved on the Consent Agenda.

VIII. RESOLUTIONS

IX. ORDINANCES – PUBLIC HEARING

First Reading

Tab 4. Ordinance 2022-16 – Approve Water, Wastewater, and Reclaimed Water Connection Fee Update Study and Authorize Staff to Implement Recommendations as Presented

No discussion at First Reading.

Second Reading

X. GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Tab 5. City Donation Program

Mr. Drury made the following presentation:

The City has a Donation policy which is the framework for accepting donations. It contemplates a donor approaching the city with a donation idea and conditions for the City to consider on a case by case basis. It works well. From time to time, donors want to donate money in honor of a loved one but do not know what to donate towards. Also, they are wanting to donate smaller amounts of money and wanting recognition forever of that loved one for that small donation. An opportunity is presented to Council to create a program which satisfies this opportunity along the following lines:

Each City Department will create a "Wall of Appreciation" or "Brick Paver Path of Appreciation" along with a specific funding program. Any citizen who wants to donate \$500 in recognition of a loved one can select from a menu of City Donation programs and in return receive either 1) a small brass name plate honoring their loved one placed on the wall of appreciation or 2) an engraved brick placed on a brick paver path. Below are but three examples to help get a

sense of how it would work. If the Council approves, all programs will be developed for each department and be brought back to City Council for final approval.

Mayor Pfister asked for comments from the Council.

Council Member Boggus noted her support and said an organized program might encourage people to donate.

Vice Mayor Price noted his support and said providing options would help streamline the process for donors, and he looked forward to seeing the recommendations.

Council Member Singer noted his support and inquired about the funding approval and spending process. Mr. Drury said once the Council approves the programs, each budget cycle would identify funds, and the Council would appropriate the dollars towards the project or program.

Mayor Pfister noted her support and said she is excited to see a Mayor's Youth Council Scholarship Program. She said it would benefit the students and encourage program participation, and said all listed programs were great options.

MOTION

Amanda Boggus moved to approve the City furthering the Donation Program, seconded by Sandy Gamble. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Tab 6. Mayor's Youth Council Update

Ms. Novack said a third application was received, and Mayor Pfister was scheduled to make a PA announcement at Tavares High School on Monday, October 24, 2022.

Tab 7. Code Enforcement Fine Reimbursement Request

Ms. Houghton made the following presentation:

On December 7, 2021, the City of Tavares Code Enforcement Office issued a notice of violation to Jake Seamons, homeowner, at 1155 Wells Avenue for City Code Violations related to nuisance conditions at the property. The violations included the following:

- City of Tavares, Land Development Regulations*
- Section 12-23 Storage Prohibited*
- Section 12-13 Nuisance Prohibited*

The notice of violation was posted, and follow-up inspections were conducted by the Code Enforcement Officer. A notice of hearing was issued, and the Violation

Case was heard by the Code Enforcement Special Magistrate on January 25, 2022. The property was found by the Special Magistrate to be in violation of City of Tavares, Land Development Regulations Section 12-23 and 12-13. The Magistrate ordered a fine in the amount of \$100 per day, and a fine in the amount of \$74.86 for administrative costs.

As Mr. Seamons was actively working to sell the property he paid all fines on September 1, 2022 in order not to halt the sale of the property. After paying the fines, and the transfer of the property, Mr. Seamons provided a letter to the City of Tavares requesting a refund of the code enforcement fines that he had paid. In his letter, Mr. Seamons indicated that he experienced hardships related to the eviction of his tenant, unknown individuals dumping on the property, as well as unknown persons squatting on the property. Mr. Seamons stated that due to these challenges, he opted to sell the property.

Mr. Seamons requested to be placed on the Agenda for the September 2022 Special Magistrate to request a fine reduction. The Code Enforcement Officer indicated to him that because the fines had been paid, this would not be an item for the Special Magistrate, and that he would need to direct his request for a refund to the City Council.

The amount of the assessed fine, paid by Mr. Seamons was \$4,891.73. City ordinances prohibit the Special Magistrate from reducing fines no lower than \$125 plus cost. Based on the constraints for the Special Magistrate for fine reduction, the maximum refund of fines less base fee and costs for Council Consideration would be calculated at \$4,675.00.

The following documents are attached for the Council's review and consideration for this request.

- *Letter from Mr. Jake Seamons*
- *Copies of receipts for property clean-up from Mr. Seamons.*
- *City of Tavares Cash Receipt Detail showing payment of code fines in the amount of \$4,891.73 on September 1, 2022*

Mayor Pfister asked if Mr. Seamons was present. Mr. Drury said no, and noted Mr. Seamons lived out of state.

Mayor Pfister asked for comments from the Council.

Council Member Gamble asked if the total amount collected was \$11,099. Ms. Houghton confirmed. Council Member Gamble noted Mr. Seamons sold the property after the fines were paid and asked if he received the funds back in the sale. Ms. Houghton said she did not receive any information that he did receive those funds in the sale.

Council Member Singer noted his concern that a refund would set a precedent. He said the Code Enforcement Officer found a legitimate complaint, and the case followed all City rules and regulations. He said he could not support a refund.

Council Member Boggus noted property management companies could assist the property owner if he lives outside the area, which makes hardship a problematic argument if monies were not spent or invested in maintaining and securing the property. She said without hearing from the property owner; she was reticent to make any changes.

Vice Mayor Price asked if the homeowner made efforts to take care of the property and case. Code Enforcement Officer McCormick said the owner made no attempts to maintain the property until the Special Magistrate initiated fines. The home had no front door or windows and remained unsecured. Trash was present in the front yard, and there were issues with squatters. He said the homeowner only contacted the city once fines started accumulating, and he wanted to sell the property. Officer McCormick noted the home became unsecured several times. Vice Mayor Price stated his concern regarding setting a precedent.

Mayor Pfister said she was not in support of a reduction in fines.

MOTION

Amanda Boggus moved to deny the refund, seconded by Troy Singer. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Tab 8. Naming of the City's Downtown Waterfront

Mayor Pfister said Wooton Park was an area of the overall waterfront park donated to the children, and Tavares had since become America's Seaplane City. Mayor Pfister said she would like the remainder of the Park renamed in alignment with the City's branding efforts and recommended 'Land and See Park' as a name option. The donated portion of the Park would continue to be named Wooton Park. Mayor Pfister noted several parking areas throughout the waterfront park and said it would be helpful to identify which area of the Park an event was held.

Council Member Gamble stated the children's park was renamed Wooton Wonderland through a Tavares Elementary naming contest. Council Member Gamble said he would entertain further discussion to name the remainder of the park.

Vice Mayor Price said he would support naming a portion of the park and recommended the citizens provide input such as a contest. Mayor Pfister said the Council could come up with some names and bring them back for public input during a meeting.

Council Member Boggus noted a concern that a row of adjacent parks may confuse. She said if the park is named, it should be a unified park with Wooton Wonderland in the playground area.

Vice Mayor Price said the entire waterfront could be named Tavares Landing, such as Wooton Wonderland at Tavares Landing or the Eco Park at Tavares Landing. Mayor Pfister said she felt the City needed to follow up with the City's branding initiative and was not thinking about dividing the park up. Mayor Pfister said she would like to come up with a name that benefits the City's investment as America's Seaplane City.

Council Member Gamble said the Council could discuss the request with their constituents to get their feedback.

Kristie Furman, 204 N. Rockingham Avenue, Tavares, noted her support and said the public should have input on naming the park.

Mr. Drury said the Council could agendaize for a specific meeting and email their recommended names to him. The public would be aware of the suggested names, and citizens interested in naming could come to the meeting to discuss.

MOTION

Amanda Boggus moved to re-agendaize to December 7, 2022, with news or advertising to the public, seconded by Sandy Gamble. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

XI. NEW BUSINESS

XII. OLD BUSINESS

XIII. AUDIENCE TO BE HEARD

Kristie Furman, 204 N. Rockingham Avenue, Tavares, said a candidate meet and greet would be held at sidewalk tents outside Hemingway's on October 30, 2022, from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Bylinda Rink, 216 Fern Avenue, Tavares, said she supported the City revisiting the LEED program on a future agenda.

XIV. REPORTS

Tab 9. City Administrator Report

City Administrator

Mr. Drury thanked Pastor Mike Watkins for his leadership on the B.E.T.T.E.R. race relations meetings. He thanked Chief Coursey for attending a recent meeting and noted meetings were held four times per year.

Department Directors

Chief Coursey noted the Tavares High School Homecoming Parade would be held on October 21, 2022, on Main Street. She said she would be manning a charity dunk tank at BooFest.

Mr. Tweedie noted upcoming events; Monster Splash and Roctoberfest.

Mr. Dillon said Wooton Wonderland construction began earlier in the day, with expected completion in April or May 2023.

Mr. Aldrich provided a list of entertainment during the upcoming BooFest event.

Tab 10. City Council Member Reports

Council Member Gamble

- Said he was unable to attend the B.E.T.T.E.R. meeting as he was officiating high school and middle school volleyball and softball games.
- Said he would like impact fee waivers to be re-agendized for discussion. He said the CRA district was included in the impact fee waiver program and not the entire City and felt other areas of the City were burdened with the program.
- Said he would like an update on ARPA-funded projects.
- Noted October was Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Council Member Singer

- Thanked Pastor Watkins for holding the B.E.T.T.E.R. meeting. He said a recent meeting was well attended and great for the community.
- Said he looks forward to the upcoming fall festivities in Tavares.
- Said Wooton Wonderland was a great project, and the residents would be proud once completed. He thanked Mr. Dillon and the Public Works team for their efforts.
- Wished those present a happy and safe Halloween.

Council Member Boggus

- Said she looks forward to the upcoming BooFest event.
- Noted the upcoming Tavares High School Homecoming football game. She said the first Student-Athlete Hall of Fame award would be presented.

Vice Mayor Price

- Said he was looking forward to the upcoming events and festivities.
- Said infill areas within a CRA were good for the City as there is existing infrastructure.

Mayor Pfister

- Said she is excited about the upcoming events and festivities.

XV. ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business and Mayor Pfister adjourned the meeting at 4:52 p.m.

Respectfully,

Susie Novack, MMC, FCRM
City Clerk