City of Eatonton Council Meeting  
Monday, March 20, 2017 at 7:00 PM  
Putnam County Commissioners’ Meeting Room #203  
117 Putnam Drive  
Eatonton, Georgia 31024

Elected Officials Present:  
Mayor Walter C. Rocker, Jr.  
Mayor Pro-Tem Harvey (Chip) Walker, Jr.  
Councilman Alvin Butts  
Councilwoman Teresa Doster  
Councilman James A. Gorley  
Councilman Charles R. Haley  
Councilman William Mangum, Jr.  
Councilwoman Alma Stokes

Elected Officials Absent:

Staff Members Present:  
City Administrator, Gary Sanders  
City Attorney, Christopher Huskins  
City Clerk, Sarah Abrams  
Police Chief William K. Lawrence

Mayor Walter Rocker called the March 20, 2017 Council meeting to order at 7:00 PM.  

Invocation was given by Councilman Charles R. Haley.  

Motion was made by Haley and seconded by Mangum to approve the minutes from March 7, 2017 Council meeting. Motion carried by a vote of 5-0.  

Councilwoman Teresa Doster and Mayor Pro-Tem Harvey Chip Walker abstained from voting because of not attending the last meeting.
Public Comments

Special Recognition of Putnam County High School Boys and Girls Basketball Teams

Omitted

Old Business:

Discussion and Possible Action on the REGLG Loan to Vizitech USA

Mr. Derek Hudson spoke on behalf of REGLG Loan. Mr. Hudson asked Council to consider preparing a plan to return some of the money Vizitech invested on the application process for the loan. Vizitech is out-of-pocket between $50,000 - $60,000. Councilman Walker advised the Finance Committee met many times to discuss the REGLG Loan request and it is the desire of the committee to see businesses locate here in Eatonton and be successful. Much consideration was also given to putting the taxpayers at risk. Councilman Walker asked if anyone wanted to ask questions or make comments in reference to the REGLG Loan. There being no questions or comments, motion was made by Walker and seconded by Gorley that based upon the advice of counsel concerning changes in the sufficiency of collateral and increases in long-term debt since Council’s resolution of October 20, 2014 the City continue to assist Vizitech in finding an alternate intermediary while withdrawing as a potential candidate for the same. Motion carried by a unanimous vote of 7-0.

New Business:

Proclamation Recognizing April 2017 as Child Abuse Prevention Month

Motion was made by Doster and seconded Gorley to approve the Proclamation recognizing April 2017 as Child Abuse Prevention Month and urge residents to commit to ending the cycle of child abuse and neglect by working together to support the children of the City of Eatonton, Georgia. Also, authorize Mayor Rocker and Council members to sign the Child Abuse Prevention Proclamation. Motion carried by a unanimous vote of Council by a vote of 7-0.

Discussion and Possible Action on Wreaths Across America Program

Motion was made by Walker and seconded Haley to hear from Mr. David Ballengee on the matter. Motion carried by a unanimous vote of 7-0.

Mr. David Ballengee from the Sons of the Confederate Veterans spoke on behalf of the Wreaths Across America program. Mr. Ballengee advised this program places sponsored wreaths on veterans’ graves and he would like assistance in getting a list of and in locating all veterans’ graves in the Pine Grove and East Eatonton Cemeteries. On December 16, 2017 a live wreath will be placed on the graves. This project is to honor Veterans and help keep their memory alive. As of today, 180 graves have been located in Pine Grove and 80 in East Eatonton Cemetery. Councilwoman Stokes recommended that
Mr. Ballengee contacted Willie Frank Thompkins with POST 583. On Veterans’ Day, Thompkins puts flags on the veterans’ graves in East Eatonton Cemetery. He should be able to provide a list of veterans there.

Motion was made by Haley and seconded by Butts to approve the Wreaths Across America Program. Motion carried by a unanimous vote of 7-0.

**Proposed Resolution to Authorize the Mayor to Engage a Structural Engineer to Inspect the Plaza Arts Center Attachment #6C**

City Administrator Sanders advised $80,000 was put in SPLOST #8 for the Plaza Arts Center to help with exterior repairs, including the roof, windows, and bricks and that Mayor Rocker suggested that the City engage a structural engineer to perform a condition assessment of the Plaza Arts Center to prioritize those most urgent issues needing attention.

Motion was made by Haley and seconded by Mangum to approve the proposed Resolution authorizing the Mayor to engage a structural engineer to inspect the Plaza Arts Center in the work of performing a condition assessment of the Plaza Arts Center for a total amount not to exceed $2,500.00 furthermore, the Mayor is authorized to sign contracts and other supporting and related documents as necessary to accomplish the goal of this resolution. Motion carried by a unanimous vote of 7-0.

**Proposed Resolution to Amend Chapter 42 (Historical Preservation) of the Code of Ordinances Attachment #6D**

Councilwoman Doster advised the Ordinance Committee met and discussed the proposed changes to Chapter 42 (Historical Preservation) of the Code of Ordinances. The changes were made to update and streamline the process. City Attorney Huskins read and discussed all proposed changes to the chapter.

Motion was made by Doster and seconded by Butts to approve the Resolution amending Chapter 42 (Historical Preservation) of the Code of Ordinances as presented tonight. Motion carried by a unanimous vote of 7-0.

**Historic Preservation – Request by Tom and Mary Barrett for a Certificate of Appropriateness at 302 North Washington Avenue Attachment #6E**

Motion was made by Doster and seconded by Walker to accept the recommendations from the Historic Preservation Commission in approving a Certificate of Appropriateness requested by Tom and Mary Barrett at 302 North Washington Avenue. Motion carried by a unanimous vote of 7-0.

Zoning: None

**Committee Reports:**
Councilman Walker expressed words of appreciation to committee members on the hard work and efforts they put in on the REGLG Loan.

Motion was made by Walker and seconded by Doster to pay the bills if and when the funds become available. Motion carried by a unanimous vote of 7-0.

Councilwoman Teresa Doster thanked committee members for work on updating the Historical Preservation Code of Ordinance.

Councilwoman Doster asked about work on Highway 44. City Administrator Sanders advised the Gas Department is installing a new gas service to Georgia Butts’ at their new location. The tap required a bore under the road.

Councilwoman Alma Stokes advised the Women in History Month program will take place on March 31, 2017 at Putnam County Commissioners’ Administration Building at 12 noon. Councilwoman Stokes talked about tire issue at the tire store next to City Hall. Councilman Haley asked if the City could withhold issuing their business license. Also if the Health Department could get involved with getting them to cover up the tires or clean up due to the Zika virus carried by mosquitos’ breeding in standing water.

City Administrator Sanders advised that EPD checked the store’s inventory and have checked their site. The City of Eatonton has a Scrap Tire Ordinance in place but the ordinance does not address used tires inventory. The business next door is selling tires as used tires. One of the owners was arrested for dumping tries and City Marshal Veal is working on the case with EPD.

City Attorney Huskins advised if a business is in violation of the City’s code, a license can be denied. Administrator Sanders advised he would look up when the business was permitted.

City Administrator Gary Sanders reported Council is invited to attend an Unmanned Systems Space Launch at the Putnam County High School on Thursday, March 23. The event begins at 9:00 AM with a demonstration by NASA.

Administrator Sanders reported meeting with the contractor for the resurfacing projects on Lower Harmony Road and Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive on March 13. We expect work to begin as early as next week or the first of April. Motorists may experience delays in those work zones.

Administrator Sanders advised projects for consideration by the Executive Committee of the T-SPLOST Round are due by April 14. The Streets, Buildings, and Grounds Committee will meet again to consider the project list prior to the April 4 Council meeting.

Administrator Sanders advised we will hold a public hearing pertaining to exempting the placement of identification decals on certain City vehicles just prior to the next council meeting on April 4 at 6:645 PM. Reminders will be sent out.
Mayor Rocker asked if there was any more business to be discussed. There being none, motion was made by Walker and seconded by Haley to adjourn. Motion carried by a unanimous vote of 7-0. Meeting adjourned at 7:36 PM.

ATTEST:

Walter C. Rocker, Jr., Mayor

Sarah E. Abrams, City Clerk