City of Eatonton Council Meeting  
Tuesday, May 3, 2016 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  

Mayor Walter C. Rocker called the regular Council meeting to order at 7:00 PM.  

Councilwoman Alma Stokes called for a moment of silence for the invocation.  

Mayor Rocker advised Gatewood School boys’ and girls’ basketball teams are present with us tonight and he asked Councilwoman Doster to introduce them. Councilwoman Doster read proclamations presented by Governor Nathan Deal to the basketball teams of Gatewood School for winning the 2016 GISA State Championship. Words of congratulations were extended from the Council to the teams; also the members of both teams were asked to take a photo with Council.  

Motion was made by Doster and seconded by Haley to approve the minutes of the last meeting with any necessary corrections. Motion carried by a unanimous vote of 7-0.  
Attachment #1  

Public Comments: Shelagh Fagan - Historic Preservation Street Sign Toppers  

Reading of the Rules for Public Comments: City Administrator Gary Sanders read the rules for Public Comments.
Ms. Shelagh Fagan advised Council that the month of May is Preservation Month and the Historic Preservation Committee would like to install street sign toppers in the Historic District around the Plaza. This project would require about ten toppers. Tonight she was requesting permission from Council to do the toppers, along with the help of the City staff on locating a vendor to provide the toppers and the street department employees to help with the installation. Council questioned if the Historic Preservation had received approval from DOT or if the toppers would have an effect on keeping the city in compliance with the new street sign requirements? Sanders advised he would communicate with DOT before the project start.

Motion was made by Haley and seconded by Walker to add Street Sign Toppers to the Agenda. Motion carried by a unanimous vote of 7-0.

Motion was made by Doster and seconded by Haley to approve the Historic Preservation adding/installing Street Sign Toppers in the Historic District. Motion carried by a unanimous vote of 7-0.

Special Presentation by the Ocmulgee Drug Task Force and Police Chief William Kent Lawrence
Police Chief William K. Lawrence introduced Commander Wesley Nunn, Director of the Ocmulgee Drug Task Force. Mr. Nunn introduced his staff members and advised making 248 cases. Mr. Nunn expressed words of thanks to the Council for their help and support over the years and presented Council with a stature of an eagle. Mr. Nunn also advised Police Chief Lawrence is one of the founding members of the task force and also thanked him for his participation and service. Mayor Rocker thanked Mr. Nunn and the members of the task force for their service and asked that a photo be taken.

Old Business:

Proposed Resolution to Designate a Meeting Place for the May 16, 2016 City Council Meeting Attachment # 5A
Motion was made by Haley and seconded by Walker to approve the Proposed Resolution to designate the Hut, located at 400-A West Marion Street as the meeting place for the May 16, 2016 City Council Meeting place. Motion carried by a unanimous vote of 7-0.

New Business:

Discussion and Possible Action on Relocating the Eatonton Main Street Program Office
Councilman Gorley discussed his concerns about having an office in the glass room and the first impressions received on entering City Hall. Council discussed the possibility of installing blinds at the windows to block the inside view of the office.
Motion was made by Doster and seconded by Haley to relocate the Eatonton Main Street Program Office to City Hall. Motion carried by a unanimous vote of 7-0.

**First Reading of Proposed Article V (Naming or Renaming City-Owned Property or Facility) of Chapter 58 of the Code of Ordinances Attachment #6B**

City Attorney Christopher Huskins presented the first reading of proposed Article V of Chapter 58 of the Code of Ordinances on Naming or Renaming City-Owned Property or Facility.

**Proposed Resolution to Amend Article II (Excavations) of Chapter 58 of the Code of Ordinances Attachment #6C**

Motion was made by Doster and seconded by Gorley to approve the proposed Resolution to Amend Article II (Excavations) of Chapter 58 of the Code of Ordinances. Motion carried by a unanimous vote of 7-0.

**Proposed Resolution to Authorize the Mayor to Sign Title VI Assurances and Nondiscrimination Agreement with Georgia Department of Transportation Attachment #6D**

Motion was made by Doster and seconded by Walker to approve the proposed Resolution to Authorize the Mayor to Sign Title VI Assurances and Nondiscrimination Agreement with Georgia Department of Transportation. Motion carried by a unanimous vote of 7-0.

**Committee Reports**

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

Councilman Haley discussed an email received from City Administrator Sanders in reference to the tree in front of the billboard at City Hall. DOT commented that one of the trees in the Streetscape Project design is within 500 feet of a permitted billboard. Per OCGA §32-6-75.3, the tree cannot be planted without permission from the billboard owner. Mr. Sanders has been in touch with billboard representatives and has reached a tentative agreement that allows us to plant the proposed tree if we allow the one time substantial pruning of an existing tree that is blocking the billboard. The Tree Board and Main Street design team, as well as others, have discussed the issue and have agreed to allow the pruning. Unless Council has any objections we plan to move forward on this item.

Gorley advised the tree enhances the landscape and if cut, it should be done by a professional tree cutter.

Councilman Haley advised City Marshal Veal needs to look at commercial properties that are dilapidated in the business district as well as the residential properties.

Councilwoman Stokes advised receiving complaints about tall grass needing to be cut.
Mayor Rocker advised showing Habitat some blighted lots on Enterprise Hill which could be revitalized into a thriving neighborhood. Councilman Haley also asked for an update on the Tri-County Electrical panels. Sanders advised he would follow up and get an update.

Councilman Gorley advised voting against the signs and he wanted to reiterate that the tree in front of the billboard at City Hall should be pruned correctly and by a professional tree cutter and Council should not rush and make a quick decision on pruning the tree. Also, Gorley thanked Police Chief Lawrence for working with the Ocmulgee Drug Task Force and for doing an outstanding job.

**City Administrator Gary Sanders reported:**
The Georgia Department of Transportation will hold a preconstruction meeting on May 10 in Madison for the 17.2 mile resurfacing project on Highway 441 between Reid’s Road and Interstate 20 in Morgan County. Please be reminded that the 13.7 mile resurfacing project on Highway 16 to the Hancock County line is also scheduled to begin soon. C&H Paving of Thomson, Georgia was awarded both projects.

The month of April and May are development months for the first draft of the proposed budget for 2017, which will be presented at the first meeting in June. Please start thinking about next year’s budget.

Waterworks Drive is currently closed due to a sinkhole that developed in the road above the metal culvert. We have asked Peachstate Construction for an estimate for the necessary repair. The information will be passed along as soon as possible. Until the repair is made, the old Senior Citizens building will not be available to rent and the road will remain closed.

Huskins talked to Council about a blight tax which other cities are using to clean up dilapidated property. Mayor Rocker advised he wanted City Marshal Veal to tag the property first before implementing a tax. Haley then discussed Property represented by Dorothy Adams on East Marion Street and Putnam Avenue.

Motion was made by Doster and seconded by Haley to adjourn. Motion carried by a unanimous vote of 7-0.

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Mayor Walter C. Rocker, Jr.

ATTEST:

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Sarah E. Abrams, City Clerk