



**Village of El Portal  
Regular Council Meeting  
Date: 03/22/22  
Meeting Start: 7:00 PM  
Meeting End: 9:41 PM  
Meeting Length: 02:41:16**

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** The regular council meeting for Tuesday, March 22nd, 2022 it's called to order at 7:08 PM. Let's stand for the moment of silent meditation to pledge allegiance.

[silence]

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Thank you very much. Madam Clerk, may I please have a roll call, please?

**Village Clerk Yenise Jacobi:** Roll call. Mayor Nickerson.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Here.

**Village Clerk Yenise Jacobi:** Vice Mayor Urbom.

**Vice Mayor Anders Urbom:** Present.

**Village Clerk Yenise Jacobi:** Councilperson Pirela?

[silence]

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Thank you very much Madam Clerk, I appreciate that. Next, we're moving to approve of the agenda, I do have one change that I want to make, one adjustment which is I want to delete H3 and move it to the April meeting. If there is no more changes, do I have a motion to approve with the change, deletion of H3 to move to the April meeting?

**Vice Mayor Anders Urbom:** I'll motion to approve as amended.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Move to approve? You didn't hear the change?

**Councilperson Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward:** I didn't hear it. Did you all hear that? Nobody heard.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** No? Hello, hello, hello. You guys hear me better now? Let me move this over a little bit.

**Vice Mayor Anders Urbom:** Yes, but it might be my microphone [crosstalk] Okay.

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**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** All right, here we go. Right to the mouth. Here we go. All right, so I do have a change to make an adjustment to the agenda. I wanted to delete agenda item H3 and move that to the April meeting. If I have no more changes, if I'm hearing, no more changes, do I have a motion to approve the agenda with the adjustment of moving H3 to the April meeting?

**Councilperson Darian Martin:** So moved.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** So moved by Councilperson Martin. Do I have a second?

**Vice Mayor Anders Urbom:** I'll second.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Seconded by Councilperson Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward. All in favor say, Aye.

**Councilmembers:** Aye.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** All opposed say, nay. Hearing none. We're moving right down to the acknowledgment of visitors and or special presentations. Let me change my position. All right, here we go. Everybody hear me okay? We good? Thank you very much I appreciate that. First, before I get started, I do want to mention a couple of honorable mentions. The first one we do have here with us, we have Miss Lillian T. Taylor. If you could stand please Miss Taylor please so we can all give you--

[applause]

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** As we're moving into the Women's History Month for what I'm about to talk about now, Miss Taylor is a chaplain at the Miami VA Medical Center and she is the first and only Black female chaplain in the history of the Miami VA. We really appreciate everything that you've done.

[applause]

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** And the legendary figure that you are and I'm happy and I'm honored to have you here. I don't know if she's here, I do want to recognize Miss Julia Poliadis and she is an environmental green real estate and building consulting agent. Oh, there she is in the back, stand for us. Stand for us Julia, Miss Poliadis.

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[applause]

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** She's part of the new generation of individuals that are working really hard to change their environment, to change their neighborhood, to make the community better, and we really appreciate having you here tonight and I'm honored to have you here. Thank you very much. I didn't want to start this off on a sad note, Madam Manager, but as you know-- not a sad note, but as you know there's a lot of things that come up.

With me being mayor, you and I talked about so many things all the time, and a lot of things that we just handle ourselves and we just taking stride and we just never bring up again. Manager Alou knows that when our agenda came out, we're going to be honoring Women's History Month at this meeting, so I got a couple of phone calls, Madam Manager and she knows about this, from a couple of men that reside in the community.

They were upset because we're honoring Women's History Month and they said it was ridiculous. They called me all type of names, right Madam Manager? They said, "I used to like you, but now that you're celebrating Women's History Month, I don't like you anymore Mayor." They said in a different way Madam Manager.

I said, "Well, you know what?" I said, "For who you are and for what you're saying, not only would I not want your vote, but if you think that type of person that you are that you should vote for me, you shouldn't even vote for me because if you and I see eye-to-eye then I'm doing something wrong." I told him I take pride, and the manager knows this. I told him I take pride that we do not see eye-to-eye. Being that's the case, I want to say to him, I hope he's watching, that we are now about to honor Women's History Month.

[applause]

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** We're going to start off like this, the first Women's History Day took place in 1909. International Women's Day became a holiday in 1911. Women's History Day became Women's History Week in 1978. Women's History Month began in 1987. This year, 2022, the Women's History theme is women providing healing, providing hope, and to that gentleman out there, I hope you find some healing and I still have hope for you. I love you regardless and I hope you find the happiness in your life that you are missing currently.

Shout out to Wyoming. The Wyoming territory was the first place to grant women the right to vote. That's also where the first woman governor came from, Governor Ross. The 19th

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amendment that we hear about often did not give all women the right to vote. Unfortunately, they were American women, African American and Latin women were not given the right to vote with the 19th Amendment.

I want to give a shout-out to Geraldyn Jerrie Cobb, that was the first woman to pass and be an astronaut, passed the astronaut test, that was in 1961. I want to give a shout-out to Elizabeth Blackwell who became the first woman to own a medical degree in the United States. I want to give a shout-out to Title IX. Last month Madam Manager, we just renewed our Title IX for the Village of El Portal. I was happy to do that, we did that in the resolution last month.

I do want to point out that for all of us men out there, that women have always, and the stats show they continue to outlive us in every single society. All of us men out there, I know it's hard, I know we want to eat that red meat. [laughs] I know you want to eat that steak and ribs. I know, but we have to listen to our wives and the women in our lives because when it comes to health, they outdo us by landfall.

I do want to point out Miss Jane Addams was the first woman to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Madam C.J. Walker was the first Black female millionaire in the US. Charlotte E. Ray was the first Black American female lawyer in the US. Recently the Winter Olympic Games ended probably about a month ago or something like that.

I do want to point out that in 1924 when the first Winter Olympic Games took place, women were only allowed to be in the figure skating competition and if you looked at the Olympic Games recently, you see women all over the place and I'm just happy to see that happen. Shout out to the Queen of Soul, Aretha Franklin. She was the first woman inducted into the rock and roll hall of fame. Shout out to Sandra Day O'Connor, you all know she was the first female justice the Supreme Court.

Shout out to Kamala Harris, she's the first woman Vice President, regardless of your politics. [chuckles] Councilperson Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward, I hear you. I do want to bring up, at this time, the leader of an organization-- I see you, Tai. I see you. Tai, you're going to come up with her. She has a wonderful daughter also, who's here with her, who is the future of women's rights, the future of equality but right now, her mother is the current legendary stature that appeals to women's rights and equality.

Not only that but through her organization, which she is president of, she does many things throughout the community. Vice Mayor Urbom, I appreciate you filling in for me when it

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comes to that, with the key and the situation that we have going on. They just recently had this past weekend, movie night. Oh, look at that. That's right. Councilperson Pirela, I heard you were passing out cookies too. That's was up, Councilperson Pirela. I've got to come see next time.

I was out of the country but next time, I'm going to make sure I'm there so that I can get some of those cookies, Councilperson Pirela. Last month, Vice Mayor Urbom, we didn't have cookies. He wasn't there. You wait for the month that I'm out of the country, now you want to bring cookies to the movie night. There you go. Our movie nights are wonderful events and a lot of people come out to the movie nights and we really appreciate that.

Not only that, the plant-swapping stand and many different things that she does with her organization, which is the El Portal Woman's Club. She's going to come up and Tai, her daughter, is going to come up with her. She's going to tell us a little bit about her Woman's Club. She's going to record you. [chuckles] She's going to tell us a little bit about the Woman's Club and about her members and about what they do. Thank you.

[applause]

**Maribel Fruitstone:** Thank you. Thank you, Mayor. We have a history with El Portal. In 1946, the Mayor established the first Woman's Club of El Portal. It was a very simple ceremony and he said, "You will be a woman's club." There was a lady by the name of Mae Bush, and she was the first president of the Miami Woman's Club of El Portal. We were an organization, which is a wonderful organization because it is responsible for being a part of the creation of the Everglades.

In September 17th, 1946, the Woman's Club of El Portal became part of the District 11, which is responsible for our national park, The Everglades, and it's a true honor. They continue to do many different things. Through looking at their yearbook, we were reinstated with the idea from the Mayor, Claudia Cubillos. The last living member of the organization from 1998 gave the Woman's Club archives to Mayor Cubillos with the intention that it would be reinstated someday.

In 2015, she gathered a number of residents that had been here for a super long time and asked if anybody was familiar with what a woman's club was. The women's clubs in the history of the United States of America are responsible for the ability for women to vote. They helped create the beautiful parks that you appreciate, the libraries that you take your children to.

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They helped establish in their communities, sidewalks. In this state of Florida, they're responsible for, just in 1961, the legislation to stop free-range cattle from being on the highways of the state of Florida. We are a part of that beautiful organization of women that just care about the communities and want to make their communities a better place to live. I thank you for honoring us because we are a part of that legacy and we are continuing the legacy through the support of what we-- We love where we live and we volunteer to do whatever it takes to make the community better.

They are in the process of creating a Women's History Museum in Washington DC alongside all of the other memorials and monuments that are in Washington DC because it is so important. They are also responsible for women's suffrage in the United States and the ability for all of us to vote, including African-American women and it being so inclusive. Thank you for this honor.

[applause]

**Maribel Fruitstone:** Should I stay here or go?

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** As you guys know or could imagine, I ordered a plethora of awards for Women's History Month. This award came and you see right there, it says, "GFWC El Portal Woman's Club." It says, "You are valued and appreciated. Women's History Month, March 2022." [chuckles] It's hard to see the words because they were supposed to be colored in.

You know how it is, President Fruitstone, when you order so many different things, it's bound that something gets missed along the way. When you order so many different awards at one time-- I'm going to contact them and we're going to be, "Hey, what happened to--?" Because it was supposed to be colored green and blue.

**Maribel Fruitstone:** [chuckles] Our colors.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Our colors.

**Maribel Fruitstone:** We adopted the peacock colors.

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**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** I got it. We just opened it, myself and the village clerk, we were back there scrambling them. We were opening everything and I was like, "What happened to my green and blue?" They skipped over it.

**Maribel Fruitstone:** It's beautiful, though.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** I have that and this holds it up.

**Maribel Fruitstone:** Thank you.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** I'm going to contact them and have them send me a free one that's green and blue.

**Maribel Fruitstone:** Thank you.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Thanks for everything.

[applause]

**Maribel Fruitstone:** Thank you

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Thank you very much. It's beautiful. This is what we're going to do. For sake of time, I'm going to go through the awards, and then, after I'm done, we can all get down and take all the pictures, the individual, the family pictures, and things like that because if we get up, take pictures and sit, it takes a while to get everybody sitting back down and things like that. If anybody from the council-- You guys know how I am. If you guys want to jump in, if you guys have anything that you want to say about any of the individuals getting their awards, you guys are welcome to do so, of course.

**Councilperson Darian Martin:** Just a quick note that I do love celebrating Women's History Month, but I encourage everyone out there to celebrate the women in your lives every day because as we all know, women are the backbone of countless civilizations and communities and deserve to be celebrated every single day. I encourage you guys to do that.

[applause]

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Absolutely. Thank you very much, Councilperson Martin. I appreciate that. Next up, there are two individuals that are the backbone of this municipality.

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They're two women that make sure that everything runs right, make sure that everything's held up the right way. The first one, wherever we go on a daily basis, we're constantly and consistently in communication with one another. We're going to meetings all over the place. Since COVID ended, we're going to meetings.

Every morning it's like, "All right, Madam manager. You take this meeting and I'll take this meeting. What do you have?" "I have an eleven o'clock." "I have an 11:30. Okay, where's your eleven o'clock? Look, I'll take your eleven o'clock. You take my--" We do that. That's a day-in, day-out situation. It's no secret, especially for the residents here-- President Fruitstone is always saying, "Mayor, all these great things happening. Promote it more [laughs]. Promoted it more." [laughs]

In my first year as Mayor, our first year as a council, we brought in more funding to the village of El Portal than has ever been brought in in the entire history of El Portal, and that's 85 years. We started in 1937. She's like, "Promotion." [laughs] Being that's the case, all of that funding that we got, all the successes that we have-- It's on the agenda. If the council supports me tonight-- When I put out those letters on the marquee yesterday for Major Harrison, shout out to Major Harrison, she's going to be up later, and the new officers. When I put those letters out, I said to myself in my mind, "Tonight may be the night, after all these years

that within a few weeks, we'll be able to see a digital marquee out there. We'll never have to put let our letters out ever again." We'll have a beautiful digital marquee that will be out there, and that's on the agenda tonight. That also just with like everything else Madam Manager, if that pass tonight, that is done with no taxpayer dollars, that is done with funding that we went after, and we received, Madam Manager.

All of the success that we have could not have been done without Manager Alou. She's not only my backbone, when we go to places, Manager Alou, they say that we're tag team champions of success. They say, "How does little El Portal, the smallest municipality with barely any, we're just starting to get business taxes, barely any income, any money, how are we doing so many things?"

The *Miami Herald* just a couple of months ago, I was in there with Mayor Levine Cava and Keon Hardemon, where we were breaking ground over on the east side for future septic in the sewer they say is coming west and will be here eventually, we hope so. We have some of the sewer going on the west side. We have so many different things. Councilperson Pirela always looking out for public works, always looking out for things like that.

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Vice Mayor Urbom, Councilperson Martin, Councilperson Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward, and for us being so small, we always do everything we can possibly do before we ask anybody for anything. That's because of the culture that you've instilled in me, Madam Manager. I've said it before, you are when it comes to co-workers out of my long life of working, you are the most efficient individual that I've ever worked alongside. Most efficient, ever.

[applause]

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Please come up here, Manager Alou. Come up here and receive your award. I appreciate you, and we all appreciate all the stuff you have done for El Portal. Thank you very, very, very much.

[applause]

**Village Manager Christia E. Alou:** Thank you. I'm not-- Oh, I got to say a few words. I'm going to keep it very short because I know we have so many people to recognize tonight, but I really appreciate the recognition. Thank you, Mayor Nickerson. You're an excellent co-worker, too. We get it done because we are a dream team in making this village everything that we envision.

I'm happy to receive this tonight. I thank the entire council for your support. You guys, you rock for me as well, so I appreciate that. Our police force, thank you so much. We really have changed a lot at the Village of El Portal. I'm happy to receive this, and I'm honored, and I will continue to do good work with you. Thank you.

[applause]

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** This next individual, always say, you know what I say, Clerk Jacobi. More than a clerk, we talk often, she'll call me just to ask, and you guys know the past, just to ask how my kids are doing. She'll call me just to ask, "How are you doing, Mayor?" She says, "Nobody never asked you how you're doing? You work so hard. [chuckles] You put in 14-hour a day, every day."

She's like, "I just want to know how you're doing." I appreciate that. She's a ray of sunshine in village hall. You guys know that. When you walk into her office, it always smells good, always is really calm and relaxing. I just want to say thank you for everything, Madam Clerk. What it takes, we come here, and these meetings are set up, they're ready to go.

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The process that you helped me out with, you and I have to go through in the week leading up to the meeting, to make sure everything is done, to make sure all the resolutions, the ordinances are right, to make sure that all the supporting documents are done the right way, to make sure that everything all the i's are dotted, all the t's are crossed. These meetings wouldn't run the way they run without you, and your expertise in helping me get everything organized. Clerk Jacobi, please come up.

[applause]

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Say a couple of things for the audience.

**Village Clerk Yenise Jacobi:** First of all, [chuckles] I want to say thank you. Thank you to everybody who I've had the pleasure of working with until this moment. I think that the women's role is actually, the women, in general, is the most unselfish human being there is. They think about everybody first before them. Kids, husband, other people, and a lot of them go unappreciated.

I agree with Councilperson Martin, thank the women that are in your life. I want to thank, first of all, my mom, my grandparents, my grandma, and I also want to thank the good women I've had the pleasure of working with and the women that I worked with now. Also, the women I surround myself with. Thanks to them, I'm here where I am today.

I also want to honor my daughters because they're the future women. You got to keep encouraging those girls. Like Tae, I know that her mom encourages her, I see it. You got to. This is the women of tomorrow. I want to say thank you for making me feel-- I'm humbled, and honored, and appreciated. It goes a long way, it goes a long way. Thank you.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Thank you very much for your service.

[applause]

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Thank you.

**Village Clerk Yenise Jacobi:** Thank you.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Next, Councilperson Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward. Councilperson Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward, we're honored to have you back on the council.

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Councilperson Lightfoot-Ward was, and you guys are going to clap for this, she was the first Black mayor in El Portal's history.

[applause]

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** [laughs] She didn't expect this, none of them did. I didn't tell anybody who was getting an award. Councilperson Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward, we're also brothers and sisters in the Native American world. That's where that name Lightfoot comes from for her. Anybody who knows me, you guys know my dad is African-American and my mom is Native American. My mom still lives on the reservation in South Dakota. You're a Cherokee, I'm Blackfoot Sioux Lakota. There we go, we're brothers and sisters.

Councilperson Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward, you believe in yourself, you believe in others, you stick to your guns no matter what anybody says, you have a distinct vision for this community that you've lived in for so long. I know, 30, right? That's a long time. [laughs] You have that distinct vision, and we're here to not only realize that vision, but we're here to associate ourselves with you in helping you achieve that vision. We're happy to have you back, Councilperson Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward. Please come down, please.

[applause]

**Councilperson Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward:** Anybody that knows me knows that I'm a crier. I'm doing everything I can not to embarrass myself. Thank you so much. I did not expect this. I will make a correction. Daisy Black was the first.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Daisy Black was the first.

**Councilperson Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward:** Daisy Black was the first. On her shoulders, I stood. She's deceased now but did a great job, and we can't leave her out. I don't know about you all, but when you're put on the spot, how do you do that? What do you do with that? Thank you so much. I enjoy what I do.

Everybody knows that I'm a trained city manager by profession. What greater place to be than on a city council. Am I right, Joe? What better place to be? There's no reason to be a professional administrator and never do anything in your community. Keep that in mind. Encourage the daughters, encourage your nieces, encourage your sons for crying out loud, encourage the women in your life that you think so highly of.

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It's not just the most important thing that all of us did was get a high school diploma. Did you know that? They call me doctor today, but the one thing that's the most important is that high school diploma because you can't go anywhere without it. Take it into the arms when you have to discipline the children, don't be ashamed because all three of mine much disciplined are very making me very proud. They're all professionals today. Thank you all so much, this one.

[applause]

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** [laughs] Let me just say that-- you know I love you, you know I love you, you know I love you. Let me just say that yes, I did misspoke. I want to say that you were the oldest living mayor. Let me say also in respect

for Daisy Black, who, when I first became a councilperson 12 years ago, she was the mayor. She was the mayor and let me say this, when I first became a councilperson, Daisy Black, who we love so dearly.

The night that my election came through, and I was voted in to this council, 12 years ago, the first person as I walked out of these doors-- because remember how we do it, that they post results in the window, so you come up around like 9:30, ten o'clock at night, you look in the window and you could see who won and things like that. I looked and I saw that I won, and when I ran, there were two sitting members of the council running against me.

**Councilperson Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward:** That's right.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Right? They were backing somebody against me. I did it all on my own and I walked around. I did it, and when I saw the results and saw that I won, I turned and started walking and as soon as I turned the first person that-- she was driving her car, pulled over, jumped out of her car and gave me the biggest hug and that was Daisy Black. The next person I talked to was you.

**Councilperson Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward:** He's a miracle. It was a miracle because everybody thought he's an Indian with braids, and I'm going, "That makes him great."

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Thank you very much. [unintelligible 00:31:08] Appreciate you. Councilperson Martin, one of our newest members of the council, but your impact was felt from day one. Councilperson Martin and Clerk Jacobi knows it, Manager Alou knows it, I've said repeatedly, council person Martin is a breath of fresh air. I've said it repeatedly to you

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guys, right? A breath of fresh air. The way that you-- you're so not only intelligent, but intellectual, and you think through-- your thought process, it's just so logical in the most beautiful sense and form.

Your deductive reasoning and the way your conclusions come about is straight, is right to the point, is very well thought out and I really feel that this council would not be anywhere where we've had all this success that we've never had before, and you're also a reason-- a reason that that's happening because of how you are and just how, like I said, smart and intelligent and intellectual you are. I'm just blessed to have met you and we're just honored to have you on this council. Come on down Councilperson Martin.

**Councilperson Darian Martin:** That is so sweet of you. Thank you so much. I will say something. I feel like it's an Academy Award. I got to put it next to me. I guess-- Yes. What do you say? Those are very kind words. I guess I don't know what else to say but thank you so much. I think I will elaborate on something that I set up there, which is that women are the backbone of civilization and communities and some of us lead in big, visible ways like we're on council or the Vice President of the United States of America, but every woman is leading her household, is leading her family.

Every day, we have always been leaders, we have always been the people who are determining the ways that communities go. To every woman out there, I say women's history is American history, just like African American history is American history. I remember a quote by Maya Angelou that every time a woman stands up for herself, unbeknownst to her, she's standing up for all women.

To all the women out there, you are capable of leading, continue to lead, continue to stand up for yourself, continue to make a way so that other women can be recognized for the work that we have always done and will continue to do to move our communities forward. I appreciate the sentiments and I appreciate the award. This is very sweet. Thank you so much.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Later on we're going to be swearing in some new officers, but for Women's History Month, I do want to recognize a couple of individuals. Let me just say officer Garcia, I see you in the back back there. I want to say Officer Garcia, thank you for being you. Thank you for everything that you do and because madam manager, we're-- this is a governmental center, right? This is a political center. There's a thing called PC or politically correct, which we stay, but we're still honest, and we're still truthful.

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I just want to say, Officer Garcia, that there's always things that we go through in life. Life is always hills and valleys, but it's no fault of our own if we get through. With us getting through it, you have to have individuals that see you for who you are, and support you for who you are, and will always protect you for who you are. Just like I was speaking about the beginning with that gentlemen, that I got the-- the two gentlemen I got the phone calls from, the one in particular--

There is never going to be a time when I'm not mayor of this community, there's never going to be a time where I don't protect individuals who deserve to be treated equally, who deserve to be treated fairly when they are not being treated that way. Madam Manager, as long as we're here, everyone will be treated fairly. Officer Garcia, would you please come up and receive your award? It says on here Officer Emily Garcia, police officer, you are a diamond that shall shine bright. Women's History Month, March 2022.

**Officer Emily Garcia:** Thank you [unintelligible 00:37:17]

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Do want to say anything?

**Officer Emily Garcia:** [unintelligible 00:37:19]

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Let me also bring out really quickly her son David. David, come up here for a second, David. Come be with your mom. This is not only for Women's History Month, but she's a mother. I just met David in the back and when I met him, I said, "What do you like?" He said he likes rap music. I said, "Okay, what's your name?" He said, "David." I said, "Well, you need a rap name now, see?" What's your rap name? Little D. His rap name is Little D. I said, "Your rap name is little D. Now you need your first rap lyric." His first rap lyric was what?

**David:** I'm Little D.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** I'm Little D. That's his first rap lyric, so we have a future artist or future superstar right here in our midst. I just gave him his rap name about half an hour ago and so his name-- his rap name is Little D. He says he likes rap, so he's good. He's ready to go, and we even have-- I just met him. We just met, right? How that handshake go? Look at that. All that in the last half an hour. Little D, is ready to go. Much love and much love and respect, Officer Garcia.

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**Officer Emily Garcia:** Thank you so much. Thank you. Man, I'm on the spot here. I just want to say thank you. I'm happy to be a part of this agency. I'm happy to work with the wonderful women that I work with and I'm just caught off guard. Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Appreciate it. Thank you.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Is Miss Torres here tonight? Unless she's getting sworn in. Cassandra. Miss Torres is going to be sworn in a little bit later. She says she hasn't been sworn in yet, but she's a woman, and so when I saw that we had a slew of new officers that were going to be sworn in. Nice to meet you. I haven't even met you yet. How you doing? My name is Mayor Omar, they call me. How are you doing Cassandra Torres? It's good to meet you. When I saw that we had new officers that are going to be sworn in and I saw her name, I said, "This is Women's History Month, so if she's going to be sworn in and we're celebrating Women's history month, we have to bring her

in the right way." Madam Clerk, Madam Manager, so I got this plaque for her and it says "Sandra Torrens, police officer, welcome to the El Portal Police Department. Welcome to the team, women's history month, March 2022."

**Cassandra Torres:** Thank you so much. Thank you. I just wanted to say thank you. This caught me off guard as well. [laughs] I don't even know what to say. I'm just very grateful for this opportunity and I can't wait to work with you all. Thank you.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** In a second I'm going to ask Councilperson Lightfoot-Ward to join me for a second. There is one more award there and I just want to say very quickly that that award I got for my predecessor, Mayor Cubillos who was the last mayor of El Portal, and I reached out to her, she had in a previous engagement tonight, so she couldn't be here. She actually had to be with her family. Mayor Cubillos shout out to you, spending family time. She said that she couldn't make it tonight. I spoke to her the other day.

I said, "You know what, Mayor Cubillos what I could do is, if you want me to, later on in the week, I'll call you Wednesday," which is tomorrow. I said, "Later on in the week, or next week before April hits, while it's still Women's History Month," I said "What I could do is, I could come down to your school and I could present you the award in front of your students and your staff and employees." She said "That'd be wonderful." I'm going to reach out to her tomorrow. We're going to settle that.

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If anybody wants to join me, just grab me and say, "Hey, I want to come with you, Mayor Nickerson," and I'll make sure that I tell you when I'm going to be over there. All right? I'm bringing a Councilperson Lightfoot-Ward here because now we're going to be moving on to recognizing a couple of individuals, and the first individual we're going to be recognizing is Joe Geller. Because Joe Geller, who is the attorney, but Joe Geller is also a former mayor, and Joe Geller, we were just in Tallahassee with him, weren't we?

We were just there with him in Tallahassee because Joe Geller is a state representative in Tallahassee and he is termed out. Did not lose, but he is terming out. I did want to recognize Joe Geller for his years and years of local government expertise, and I know you and attorney Geller have been friends for a very long time. I'm going to allow you to speak about him Councilperson Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward.

**Councilperson Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward:** Joe Geller. Joe Geller and I came here about the same time, 30 years ago. He didn't know much about city management. I did. I didn't know much about legal. He did. He has been such a blessing to this village. He came under attack a few times but they didn't last long in the battle, he won.

He's a great family man, an excellent mentor, knows his stuff, everybody. This is a truly real, honest to goodness, excellent attorney, and I don't say that because it's been that long. It's been that long that I've had to experience him on the good side and the bad side. He prevailed. He's a wonderful man. How am I doing, mayor?

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** You're doing well. You're doing great. Attorney Geller, please come up. You've got to give one of your speeches. **[unintelligible 00:44:18]**

**Attorney Joseph Geller:** I won't make a speech, but I will say this. I just tell you one very quick story about how I came here. Let me take this off so you can hear me. How I came to El Portal, as long time ago as one of my former mayors, Councilman now. Councilperson Lightfoot-Ward said in 1994, Daisy Black and a fellow named Philippe Derosé, who was the first Haitian mayor of El Portal, came to me because there was an old guard on the council that just held on tight to power. Bunch of old white men. What I've turned into.

They actually closed the Village Hall during budget, so nobody could come in, so nobody could bother them to hear what they had to say, and they said, "We got to do something. We don't have any money but can you help us?" We filed a suit under the Sunshine Law, saying, "You can't do this, it's against the law," and we had it set for the first hearing, and they all up

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and quit and left town, Mayor moved to Colorado, and they all dispersed and we had a brand new council.

Now it's 1995, a long time ago, and I've been asked to leave as attorney here twice, and I've been invited to be here three times. Right now I'm up one. Never know how long that lasts. It's like being a manager in baseball, but over the years, I've learned to deeply love this village and care about what happens to it. I remember being out in the park with the late Mayor Daisy Black, at an event we had with mothers against gun violence, whatever the proper title is, but we were out there in the park trying to do something.

I am very happy and humbled to be with you, to see this incredible energetic mayor, and this dynamic, diverse council I want to say, with deference to my dear friend and former mayor colleague and we worked in [unintelligible 00:46:38] together, Councilperson Lightfoot-Ward and with deference to Councilperson Martin who I agree, is a breath of fresh air.

Let me just say a word for the vice mayor and councilperson Pirela, two strong figures that support not just these two women, but these two women and every member of that police department that keeps everybody here safe. They support them all. They're behind them and I'm happy to be behind them. Thank you all very much.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** For your retirement from local elections or local office, I got you some stuff you can relax to, so we all got you-- In here-- I'm going to let you unwrap your gift because that's part of the fun of everything. In here you have a wooden pin set of four different pins. Very nice, very nice wooden pin set. It has an ink pen.

**Attorney Joseph Geller:** [unintelligible 00:47:41]

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Right here you have a plethora of desserts that you can indulge in. Here is all type of desserts and muffins and all type of stuff and chocolate and things-

**Attorney Joseph Geller:** My wife and daughter will want those.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** There you go and here, the large one. The large one is a variety of different meats and cheeses and stuff like that so, while you're going into your retirement from local elections you can sit back and relax, but I know you're such an astute intellectual, so we did get you the pen set so you can still jot down in all your wonderful thoughts.

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**Attorney Joseph Geller:** I'm speechless. That doesn't happen much.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Thank you very much, Joe Geller.

[applause]

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** If you guys didn't know the Geller name is a very historical name in politics. Him and his brother was heavily involved with the 2000 recount with George Bush and Al Gore, him and his brother. His brother currently, Steve Geller, his brother is the current Mayor of all of Broward County. That is just an historical name, the Gellers.

Now, check this out. The connection, Madam Clerk. Attorney Geller has termed out of his state representative seat in Tallahassee and one of his good friends-- I should probably bring you in to talk about him, attorney Geller. One of his good friends, Jordan Leonard, who was recently-- he's the former Mayor of Bay Harbor Islands, the former mayor of Bay Harbor Islands.

Stand up Jordan, because you're going to come up. Former Mayor Bay Harbor Islands, he is now leaving Bay Harbor Islands to run for Joe's open seat for a state representative. [unintelligible 00:49:38] all this is connected. That is not why he's up here. He is up here because Jordan for years, I should say Mayor Leonard for years has been telling me-- back then I was vice mayor, I'm a mayor now. He was like, "Vice mayor." Because mayor Leonard was one of the first clerks of El Portal. He used to be a clerk, of El Portal. He was one of our first clerks, the position that Jacobi has now. Look at all these connections. He's been telling me-- he said "Mayor," or vice mayor back then it was vice mayor. "When I was clerk, they promised me the key to the city."

[laughter]

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Every meeting that he would see at, every event, he'd say, "Vice Mayor, they promised me when I left El Portal, they'd give me the key to the city." so I looked into what you have to go through to provide the key to the city. Okay. It's a pretty high threshold. I wasn't able to meet that threshold but what I was able to meet-- Check this out. [unintelligible 00:50:58]

[applause]

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**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** It is not the official key to the city that you get officially through the government process, but I said, "You know what?" Once they told me no, it was too hard to get. I said, "We can't let them hold us back. We can't let them hold us down." I got this made into a key, and it says, "Jordan W. Leonard, thank you for your service to the village of El Portal." From when you were clerk and has our seal in there.

**Jordan Leonard:** I appreciate that.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Thank you very much for that. Attorney Geller, you're going to be up next, hold on a second. This right here, I had got you a star, and this is for your future because you're going to be moving to the state level, from local level you hope so. It says "Jordan W. Leonard, we are proud of you. You are a rising star." I appreciate that and I got you a star. Attorney Geller, come here and just say a few things about Jordan and your history him.

**Attorney Joseph S. Geller:** Sure. I've been there eight years in Tallahassee, and it's not an easy job sometimes. It needs somebody that's really capable of doing it. I met Jordan when he was in the young democrats in college. He helped run one of my first campaigns for the house. One of the ones that didn't work. Thereafter, he worked with me at Opa-Locka, just like I worked with Councilperson Lightfoot Ward, he was an assistant to the city manager.

He was in Homestead, he ran this community reinvestment agency. He worked for the county in economic development. He got elected in Bay Harbor Islands. Might say lost his first one-by-one vote, came back, has served 13 years on the council in Bay Harbor Islands, became the president of the Dade League of Cities. He's married, his wife is a-- say it right for me.

**Jordan Leonard:** A speech-language pathologist.

**Attorney Joseph S. Geller:** A speech-language pathologist. I always miss one of those words, never the same one, but always one. Jordan runs the business side of that, deals with Medicare, Medicaid, and he's also got three of the most energetic, smart, get into everything kids you've ever met in your life. What could better prepare you to know what real people encounter and real problems than the life Jordan has lived? I can't think of anybody who has more qualifications to go to Tallahassee to represent us. It's why I've endorsed him, and why I really hope he's going to win this election.

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**Jordan Leonard:** Thank you. First of all, thank you so much. I really do appreciate it. When I became the clerk here, I was one of the first clerks that came after the charter was changed. Originally, El Portal's government used to have a strong Council form of government. There was no city manager, so the clerk literally did everything, as per the council, so they changed the charter, but as I noticed when I got the job, there was a lot of things that I had to do as the clerk that typically a clerk doesn't really do.

The clerk handles the agenda and handles public records and whatnot and writes the minutes. In El Portal, you had a system where you had a committee system, which you still have today. You're talking about seven public meetings a month. That's a lot of work. In addition, I handled payroll, I handled all the Employee Relations retirement. All the keypunch for-- everyone needs to get paid, procurement, you need to buy things, everything from a car to a pencil went through my office. When I say went through my office, it was just me.

Chances are if you called Village Hall, I'm the guy that picked up the phone too. If you need to get a building inspection or a hot mop for your roof, chances are I'm the guy that did that too. When I came from the county and I worked here, it was a lot of work, but El Portal gave me my first big break and I'll never forget that. Believe it or not, it's interesting that the mayor was talking about women's history month because three of the individuals that really got me here were women.

Audrey Edmonson was the mayor at the time, Mariette SaintVil was the vice mayor who later became mayor, and Linda Marcus. Those were three women, that without their support and their continuous support, I wouldn't have had the job because the clerk's hired by the council, and those three women supported me and hired me. The whole council were my bosses, but those three women gave me an opportunity from a guy who was sitting in a cubicle at the county, to being a village clerk in my 20s and I'll never forget that.

The only other thing I'd mentioned, and again, as you've probably surmised, I've been elected for almost 13 years. I've been a mayor. I've been president of league of cities. I've done a few things. One of the things when you work in a place, especially for a couple of years, you get to know people, and you move on, and then you get to a new place and you meet new people. Very rarely, when you work from agency to agency, do you have a strong connection that lasts this long, and I will never forget the strong connection I have here with El Portal.

Unfortunately, Joe knows this, I lost my mom at a very young age in a very unfortunate way. When I lost my mom, I was the village clerk here and I'll never forget the support that my

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bosses, your council at the time had for me. It was their compassion, their empathy, that helped me get through probably the hardest time in my life, as an only child, as someone to lose their mom at such a young age, in such a horrible way. It was nice to know that your work family supported you.

It's nice and it's great to get recognition, but when you really need it, it's nice to know that your people support you and it's something that as an administrator-- I was an assistant city manager myself, and I've been a mayor. It's something I'll never forget. It's not something you can show, it's only something you can do. Thank you to all of you because your predecessors were the ones that always supported me and I'll never forget that ever. Thank you. Thank you so much.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson: [inaudible 00:58:29]**

**Jordan Leonard:** Sure. Thank you.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Thank you very much. Appreciate you. Thank you very much and good luck. Yes, take your key box, man. I was wrapping my brain trying to figure out what can I do about that key situation. We're going to move on to the portion right now where we're going to-- Chief Mendez why don't you just come on up, while I'm getting ready to do this.

When we get **[unintelligible 00:59:12]** with the police, the police are swearing ins, they will do all the pictures and everybody can conversate and things like that, because I know the kids and stuff everyone wants to move around. We appreciate your patience and then I also have some goodies up here for the recipients of all the women History Month awards. We'll get to that. I'm trying to give them out to you guys, once we get finished. Chief Mendez. My man. You know, a while ago, when we had the holiday thing that we had, the holiday celebration, I stood over there and the DJ was over there and I took the mic, and I said that I was reading

an article, I believe it was in the Washington Post or New York Times or something like that. I said at that event-- I said that there were so many-- I was reading about so many different ways around the country, that you had other municipalities trying to defund their police departments.

I stood right there, with the microphone in my hand and I promised you, you got-- you are new to the chief position, and I said to you and all officers that were standing back there with you, I said that, as long as I'm mayor, we're going to support our police department 100% and we're going to always--

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[applause]

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** We're going to always do whatever we can to get you whatever you and your officers need because you guys are the first element to any successful community. It doesn't matter how much funding we bring, it doesn't matter that we brought in the most funding ever. It doesn't matter that we do all these different things. If people don't feel safe in their neighborhood, it doesn't matter. We're going to always be there for you and we're going to always do whatever we can to make you all feel safe so that you can make our residents feel safe.

I do want to say, shout out to you, shout out to the incoming major. Major Harrison standing in the back, because you both have hit the ground running and I said this before, when you first became chief, that you hit the ground running, and things that I had as my vision, things that we had as our vision, you just made them come true. Just like I said before, they call politically correct, which we are, but we're also truthful.

You'll have individuals who will complain about the police department. You'll have individuals who will-- individuals who ask for certain things, receive those things, and still complain. I remember chief, that for so long, one of the things I would always hear when I was the vice mayor, and when I was a council member, one of the things I would always hear is, "Nobody wants to go work for El Portal's Police Department." How often have I been up here and we've been swearing people?

Isn't this like every other month for swearing somebody in? Because all the people that you're bringing in, you and upcoming Major Harrison, for so long I've heard about the cars. I've heard about the instruments that you guys need to be successful, and we've done everything we can to provide that. Let me just say, Chief, that if anyone doubts yourself, if anyone doubts your department, if anyone doubts the great things you've been doing for the department, Madam manager, correct?

The great things you've been doing for the department, then those individuals are just individuals that just want to be negative for no reason. Madam manager, we've given them everything, and we're backing you up. We love how you're backing us up. Chief, you got some new officers to swear in Chief. My brother, I appreciate you. What we're going to do for time purposes, he's going to swear everybody in at one time. Chief, you might want to come to the mic and just say who's getting sworn in for what, so that we know.

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**Chief Mendez:** Ladies, gentlemen, thank you. We are welcoming Tommy Harrison as our full-time major. We are promoting Danielle Sano from officer to corporal.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Tommy Harrison for major. We want the camera to see you, my brother. Tommy Harrison is the major.

**Chief Mendez:** We're promoting Carlo [inaudible 01:04:38] from officer to corporal, and we are welcoming four more reserve officers to our family and we're very happy to do so.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** I want to-- You guys come back here. Say the names individually, Chief. We want to recognize the new officers also, Chief. Say the names individually. You guys come back here.

**Chief Mendez:** Alejandro [unintelligible 01:05:08] Ernesto [unintelligible 01:05:11]

Speaker 1: Say the names in the mic, Chief. We want the camera to see them. Right here we have--

**Chief Mendez:** Alejandro Marin.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Marin. Right here we have [unintelligible 01:05:26] Say your name.

**Speaker 3:** [inaudible 01:05:30]

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Right here, the corporal [unintelligible 01:05:34] My brother, Thomas Harrison. Say your name again.

**Thomas Harrison:** Thomas Harrison.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Alejandro [unintelligible 01:05:46] Because we're going to swear them all in at the same time.

**Chief Mendez:** Raise your right hand, please. All right, state you name.

**Councilmembers:** I [unintelligible 01:06:07]

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**Chief Mendez:** [unintelligible 01:06:09] newly sworn by the Chief of El Portal police department.

**Councilmembers:** Having been sworn by the Chief of El Portal police department.

**Chief Mendez:** Do solemnly swear I will support, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States of America and the state of Florida.

**Councilmembers:** Do solemnly swear I will support, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States of America and the state of Florida.

**Chief Mendez:** I will in all respect, observe the provision of the Constitution of the State of Florida and the charter of the Village of El Portal.

**Councilmembers:** I will in all respect, observe the provision of the Constitution of the State of Florida and the charter of the Village of El Portal.

**Chief Mendez:** I will faithfully discharge the duties of which I'm about to undertake.

**Councilmembers:** I will faithfully discharge the duties of which I'm about to undertake.

**Chief Mendez:** I further swear, I will faithfully to the best of my ability to serve and protect all citizens regardless of race color, or creed.

**Councilmembers:** I further swear, I will faithfully to the best of my ability to serve and protect all citizens regardless of race color, or creed.

**Chief Mendez:** I accept the [unintelligible 01:07:05] code of ethics as my standard of conduct when I'm on and off duty.

**Councilmembers:** I accept the [unintelligible 01:07:10] code of ethics as my standard of conduct when I'm on and off duty.

**Chief Mendez:** I swear to faithfully abide by and defend the city.

**Councilmembers:** I swear to faithfully abide by and defend the city.

**Chief Mendez:** Congratulations.

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[applause]

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Let's have families come up, let's take pictures. You guys, let's take pictures. The Women's History Month recipients, we're going to take pictures. The police officers' families come up, take pictures with your family member.

How're doing JP? All right, let's get ready to knock this out, get back to it. All right, everybody can hear me okay? You guys good? We had our acknowledgement of visitors and our special presentations, so we're going to move along. The rest of the meeting should not be long at all. Next is good and welfare. This part right here is for anybody that has any questions or comments about anything that's on the agenda.

Now's your time to come up. You have three minutes to say your name and address for the record, and you can say whatever you want to say about any item that's on the agenda. That's good and welfare. I'm seeing none. Moving on to the consent agenda.

**Councilperson Lightfoot-Ward: [unintelligible 01:10:01]**

[silence]

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Next consent agenda this right here is just the approval of the minutes for February 2022. That was our last regular council meeting. Do I have a motion to approve the consent agenda?

**Councilperson Lightfoot-Ward:** So moved.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** So moved by Councilperson Lightfoot-Ward. Do I have a second?

**Councilperson Darian Martin:** Second.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Second by Councilperson Martin. All in favor say aye.

**Councilmembers:** Aye.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** All opposed say nay. Hearing none. Moving on. The next item is item H1, Little River Cleanup. You guys only reason why I have this on here is not even to discuss it really. The Little River Cleanup is planned already by the Little River Conservancy.

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It's going to take place on April 2nd, 2022 at 8:30 AM. I'll be sending out an email tomorrow morning with the flyer and all the information for everybody to see and it's just April 2nd, 2022 at 8:30 AM. That's the Little River Cleanup and they've organized the whole thing.

There's nothing really for us to do. I just wanted to have it on here to announce it. Do I have any questions or comments about the Little River Cleanup? It's a Saturday. Saturday morning, April 2nd, 2022 at 8:30 AM. The gates--

**Councilperson Lightfoot-Ward: [inaudible 01:11:29]**

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Yes, there will be kayaks there and canoes there. When I send out the email tomorrow you'll see the map where the entrance is. The entrance is off of 82nd Street right there where the river is off at 82nd Street. You just pull in there. You'll see all the cars. Gates open at eight o'clock AM and we start to do our launch at 8:30. If you get there 8:30, 8:45, nine o'clock you can still go out up to about 10:30. I think eleven o'clock is when all the boats or canoes have to be back eleven o'clock or 11:30.

If you get there any time before about 10:30 maybe, you can still be able to get out and get some trash out of the river before they call all the canoes in.

**Councilperson Lightfoot-Ward:** Or bring some trash with you.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** [laughs] Or bring some trash with you. All right, any questions or comments about the Little River Cleanup? Hearing none. Moving on to H2. The owner of the Skateboard Park, Jonathan Strauss, reached out to me and he wanted to know what we were doing for the spring egg hunt this year. He suggested or he asked if we wanted to do it at the Skateboard Park. I wasn't necessarily against that the Skateboard Park is a huge facility. You can hide things all over the place.

The only problem is when I was speaking to the clerk, we were just talking about how-- is this too close to me? Am I good? We were just talking about how the Skateboard Park is concrete, and if little kids do a mad dash once you say, "Okay, go look for the eggs." That's the only concern that myself and Clerk Jacobi had was should it really be at the Skateboard Park because of the concrete, otherwise the Skateboard Park's a huge, nice, and beautiful facility, but I don't know. What does-- anybody from the council, what do you guys think?

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**Vice Mayor Anders Urbom:** I'm not on. I don't know and now? A little bit better? Okay, from their grand opening I know that everyone who went on that property essentially completed like a waiver. If they have that in place and everyone's essentially filling out a waiver as they go onto the property it sounds like they've already got that covered for their daily operations.

I don't know if that suffices. It also gives notice. It certainly gives notice to anyone coming on the property to use caution, care what have you and one of my concerns was the drops, right? If they're-- if it's designed for someone to be rolling along, right? If you have people who are unfamiliar with a skate park and they're staying at the top of one of the precipices, then they don't really navigate that well you could have people or kids falling down if it's not really well controlled about where everyone's running to and how they're going about it.

At the same time, I don't know. I was amazed the day of the grand opening because I saw these tiny little kids out there and I remember this one girl, in particular, I was like, "Oh, my God. Is nobody going to go stop this little girl from going down this hill?" Then obviously she had done it 100 times before because I was like, "Okay," I felt a little foolish because [chuckles] she was-she was almost expert at it. I was like, "Oh, okay. All right." My concern was completely unfounded at least in her case.

I went back and forth on this when the idea was proposed. I do think it would be-- I do think it would be a good venue for this. It sounds like they have already accounted for that liability issue in terms of the waivers that they have in place. I feel like it is a good solution to have the event there and I think I would be in favor of that overall.

Obviously, there are some concerns, but I think that they've got the experience to deal with that already and certainly there-- with anything we do, when we have the event the door-to-door last year, the concern was you've got people walk in the neighborhood and you're always just wondering, "Oh, my God," if we got someone speeding down the street or something like that. There's always going to be risk no matter what we do. In that regard, I think I would be in favor of the skate park, but we do have the nature trail and the River Shores Park there as a backup. The model from last year also could work again in theory.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Thank you very much, Vice Mayor Urbom. Yes, my concern wasn't necessarily the legality of the individual signing off on that. It was just the simple fact that little kids once you say, "Okay, you guys, all the eggs are hidden," they start running. My concern was just like you just might have little kids falling and slipping and scraping their knee

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and scraping their elbows and scraping their arms on the concrete of the skate park, but, yes, of course, the skate park is a fun place. Attorney Geller?

**Attorney Joseph S. Geller:** Yes, Mayor, and just in terms of the liability issue strictly speaking, yes, you could have everyone sign a waiver, and if everyone signs a waiver, it would certainly be difficult to successfully sue us. Hopefully, nobody gets hurt badly enough that they think about a suit, but you do have to be concerned if you have a bunch of scraped ankles and scraped elbows and scraped shins and knees and hands and stuff. You may not have a lawsuit, but you might have a lot of upset parents that their kids were hurt. It's one advantage of a park, they're usually soft.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Yes. Thank you very much, Attorney Geller. Yes, as I was saying that's my concern. My concern is not the legality or liability. My concern is for the simple fact that I don't want El Portal kids to be injured just period. I just don't want them to be injured or be hurt that's all. Councilperson Pirela.

**Councilperson Luis Pirela:** Yes. That's one of my concerns as well. It's not much of a place to be covered by their liabilities or it's mostly El Portal hosting that event and pretty much driving everybody to the venue. I think it should be within the same village, one of the parks that we have more of the nature, sand and sound grounds than a concrete stage. I don't know. It's just my opinion.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Thank you very much, Councilperson Pirela. One of the questions is, you guys. Do we want to have a spring egg hunt this year? That's also a question. I think that we-- thankfully we do have a little bit of time. I know that madam manager, we are going to end up having to have a special meeting coming up because myself and the manager and we spoke to Attorney Geller afterwards, there's a lot going on with our loan and [unintelligible 01:19:12] with that whole FEMA debacle from back then and we have to figure some stuff out with that.

We have to have a-- in the next couple of weeks we have to have a special meeting. Probably two for the two ordinance readings that we have to do, but that being said in any of one of those special meetings, we can go over-- because we don't have to do it right now. We can't go over the details of how we want our spring egg hunt to look if we want it. We do have the luxury this year that I believe that Easter is not until April 17th or something like that. It's much later. We do have that luxury and like I said, I think we're going to have to have a special meeting probably next week or we can even-- if Councilperson Martin or for this instance

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Chairperson Martin, if she ends up having her opinion and zoning meeting next week, we can do a special meeting right after that, take care of our sign-over situation, Madam Manager, and also talk about a Spring Egg Hunt if you want to do it there in detail, so we don't have to do that right now. Between now and then, what I want you guys to take away from this is think about if you want to have a Spring Egg Hunt, and if you do, how do you want it to look? Do you want it to look like last year or skatepark or whatever it is?

**Vice Mayor Anders Urbom:** We do still have 1,000 eggs from last year in the closet, and the signs. They're not all filled, some of them are still filled, but not all of them are filled, but we have them. We definitely have a lot of material already to pull this off low budget. The model from last year, I feel like it was a success. That is an option. I think if we can pull it off, I think we should as a Spring celebration. It seemed to go pretty well last year, and we have the material.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** You guys just think it over. Like I said, we'll probably be addressing this next week or the week after. Councilperson Martin?

**Councilperson Darian Martin:** Now that I know that we have 1,000 eggs, my vote would be, yes, because it just seems like an easy lift. I know my kids enjoyed it last year. If it's cost-effective, I think we should do it this year. Completely agree to not have a bunch of toddling kids on concrete. At the nature trail would probably be really good. It's already outfitted to be a Spring Egg Hunt venue. I guess, with the knowledge of the abundance of eggs in the village, I would say, yes. Let's have one.

**Vice Mayor Anders Urbom:** If we do the nature trail, we could even get the Freebee over there as parked, and even do some outreach regarding the Freebee shuttle as well.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** If it's the weekday. Remember, the weekend, the Freebee doesn't run.

**Vice Mayor Anders Urbom:** We can talk to them and see if we could at least get it parked over there for the event. Just as an extra--

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** No, if we could do it, I would 100% be with it.

**Vice Mayor Anders Urbom:** Right, just even draw attention to it.

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**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** No, 100%.

**Vice Mayor Anders Urbom:** [unintelligible 01:22:18] stop is right there in front of the nature trail.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** The Freebee individuals reached out to me recently, and they said that they want to think about having something in a tot lot, like a party or something like that. A Freebee party on a Saturday or Sunday to promote the Freebee and maybe some food, and stuff like that, and a DJ, and things like that in a tot lot. They were also contacting me about that. That's going to be coming up sooner or later. I just have to get the details down.

**Councilperson Lightfoot-Ward:** Did we decide that, no, we're not dealing with the skateboard park, and we're now talking about what we're doing for Easter egg hunt? I got two signals there, I want to know which way is up?

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Yes, so--

**Vice Mayor Anders Urbom:** Just a reminder also, we're calling it a Spring celebration.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Yes, Spring Egg Hunt. Councilperson Lightfoot-Ward, we're basically walking away right now, about to close it out. What we're deciding is that we decided that for the most part, we want to do a Spring Egg Hunt. I think, for the most part, we don't want to do it at the skateboard park, but what we are going to do because we're going to have to come back for a special meeting probably next week or the week after, we're going to come with our ideas to that meeting. We'll discuss it in detail at that meeting.

**Councilperson Lightfoot-Ward:** Very good.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** We're good for now. Do I have any last questions or comments about this item? Hearing none, moving on. Resolutions and ordinances. Resolution 11, Digital Marquee and Technology Message Board. Oh, so this right here, you guys, we'll finally be getting away from the old-school marquees if this passes. This is not taxpayer dollars. This is done from federal funding, so it's not taxpayer dollars. All we have to do is pass it, and we'll have a digital marquee within three weeks to a month. It'll be a digital marquee out there.

**Vice Mayor Anders Urbom:** The entire structure is being replaced?

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**Village Manager Christia E. Alou:** Yes, the entire structure is being replaced. They're going to use some of the concrete slabs. They'll be just retrofit, but they're coming in. It'll have Wi-Fi capabilities. It can be a scroll, so many more options. This really falls under emergency communication with our residents.

**Vice Mayor Anders Urbom:** It's the same company that we would be acquiring it from, the same company that's going to be installing it?

**Village Manager Christia E. Alou:** Yes. They're going to do the installation.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Yes.

**Vice Mayor Anders Urbom:** Okay, so this is what they do?

**Village Manager Christia E. Alou:** Yes.

**Vice Mayor Anders Urbom:** Okay.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Before I ask for any other comments, or questions, or ask for a motion, Attorney Geller, if you want to read solution II into the record, please.

**Village Attorney Joseph S. Geller:** Resolution II, a resolution of the Village Council of the Village of El Portal, Florida of Miami-Dade County, Florida. Providing for the purchase of emergency communication technological equipment for the Village of El Portal of Miami-Dade County, providing for incorporation of recitals, providing for an effective date.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Thank you very much, Attorney Geller. That said, you guys, there's no taxpayer dollars, it's federal funding. This is part of that, part of the funding, Madam Manager. It's for emergency communication technology purposes. If we don't use it by a certain time, we will lose it. We have our first report coming up, Madam Manager, at the end of March, correct?

**Village Manager Christia E. Alou:** April 30th. No, April 30th.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** April 30th? Okay. We have our first report--

**Village Manager Christia E. Alou:** We want to be ahead of the curve.

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**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Yes, we have our first report coming up, so we have to begin to purchase these materials, so we have in our reports so that they don't say, "Hey, you guys aren't using the funding. If you guys aren't using the funding, we'll take it away and give it to somebody else."

**Village Manager Christia E. Alou:** No, no, no.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Do we have any questions or comments about the digital marquee?

**Councilperson Lightfoot-Ward:** I have a question.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Yes, Councilperson Lightfoot-Ward.

**Councilperson Lightfoot-Ward:** Given the lateness of the hour, I have a question for the village attorney. [chuckles] He says, "Yes, okay." Is it there such a thing as we already know-- we've already studied this, okay. Is it-- Thank you, darling. Thank you very much. That didn't help. Y'all can? It does? Well, thank you. Okay. Is there a way we can do them all together, and then vote one?

**Village Attorney Joseph S. Geller:** What was the question, I'm sorry?

**Councilperson Lightfoot-Ward:** [laughs] Can we do them? We got three of them. We already know they all, as the Village Manager said, they're all needed for. We know they're all needed for. Can you just read all three of them, and we do one vote? Is that parliamentary--

**Village Attorney Joseph S. Geller:** Next time.

**Councilperson Lightfoot-Ward:** Next time?

**Village Attorney Joseph S. Geller:** What you can do, since you now have a consent agenda, if you have items that you don't think are going to require debate because the council is pretty much already sold on it, you could have put all three of these on consent agenda with the minutes, but now that you've adopted your agenda, and they're not there, you can't do that anymore in this meeting, but you can do it next time.

**Councilperson Lightfoot-Ward:** Anytime before we accept the--

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**Village Attorney Joseph S. Geller:** We have to read them one at a time because that's the way the agenda was approved, but for next time, if you have something that you don't think is going to attract much discussion or any debate, you can put them on the consent agenda.

**Councilperson Lightfoot-Ward:** Okay, thank you.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** I have no problem putting items like this in the consent agenda for next time.

**Village Attorney Joseph S. Geller:** Not tonight, Councilperson.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** We're breezing through them, though.

**Vice Mayor Anders Urbom:** That sparks one question for me, though.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Yes.

**Vice Mayor Anders Urbom:** With either the resolutions that have multiple quotes, will that still apply as being eligible to be placed with the consent agenda at the beginning of the meeting?

**Village Attorney Joseph S. Geller:** The way these resolutions are written, see if there was some big item with a lot of money, and you weren't sure, and it was being presented to the council to make a selection, then it is not something that you can put on consent agenda because you have to discuss it, and somebody has to move which to accept. These were, they're for dollars, again, if it's like a request for letters of interest or request for qualifications, those have to-- I shouldn't say have to. Sometimes, those require more discussion if they're going to be placed on consent.

Remember, anything that you put on your consent agenda, which is brand new to this village, and good thing Mayor, it's a good move. Anything you put on the consent agenda, any member of council can say, "Well, wait a minute. I would like that pulled off consent because I want to talk about it. I may not be against it, but I want to have some discussion." Any council member, just one, pulls it off consent.

The way these are written where they're just dollars, and one is clearly cheaper, and the Manager has evaluated them and instructed me, I have to say and the Mayor in this case who really did a lot of the work, but instructed how the resolution was to be constructed and said,

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"We are to approve this quote and this amount attached here too." Since you're not making a selection, you're approving a resolution to go with that, then it can be on consent.

Now, if you look at it, and any member of council says, "Wait a minute. This is only a buck and a quarter cheaper than the other one, and the other one has a much better track record. I'm not comfortable with the one that's being recommended, even though it's cheaper, you not only can pull it off and talk about it, but you can move to say, "I'd rather go with this other quote." That's why all the quotes are given you in the backup, so if you want to make a change, it's the council's prerogative. These are written, awarded to this group, per the attached Exhibit A, so unless somebody has a problem with that, you can just vote it, but if it went on consent agenda unless somebody wanted to pull it off, it would be qualified for consent agenda.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Thank you. Just for clarity-

**Village Attorney Joseph S. Geller:** [unintelligible 01:30:42] instances you could do first reading, but on an ordinance on second reading, you should never do consent agenda, in my opinion.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** For clarification, if a member of the council wants to pull it off, they would do that at the approval of the agenda portion of the meeting.

**Village Attorney Joseph S. Geller:** Yes, and let me just say-- reference the point the clerk correctly makes. For second reading of ordinances or certain other things that are zoning or land use related, you are by law required to have a public hearing. A public hearing can't be done on consent, because the public, even if not a single person speaks, you have to open the public hearing, you have to close it. That would never be consent agenda, but in my opinion, first reading on an ordinance that's not a specified kind of land use that requires two public hearings, they're just a few of those.

You can do first reading of an ordinance on consent agenda, if you anticipate that everybody's going to say, "Finally, good idea." Then if somebody just wants to comment, you can pull it off just for the purpose of making some comments. Yes, you're correct, Mayor, it's done when you're setting the agenda, one of the things that you would do when there are items on the consent agenda would be to say, before you take a motion to approve, "Are there any polls? Does anyone want to poll any item," and any one member can say, "No, I want to talk about it."

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**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Thank you very much. You guys, that affects my-- before we vote for an item on the resolutions and ordinances, I always open it up to the people. That kind of takes that away a little bit. Anyway, you guys know that's the first thing I passed when I was a councilperson. That was my first thing I got passed, was before we vote for-- remember that?

Remember that, President Fruitstone? Before we vote for any item, we opened it up to the residents to see if they have anything they wanted to say. All right, that being said, do I have any more questions or comments about the digital marquee resolution? If not, do I have a motion to approve?

**Vice Mayor Anders Urbom:** Yes.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** I have a motion to approve by Councilperson Lightfoot-Ward and a second by Vice Mayor Urbom. Before we go to a vote, do I have any questions or comments from the audience? If you have any questions or comments about the digital marquee resolution, come up, say your name, address for record, you have three minutes.

**Maribel Fruitstone:** Hello, I'll be very quick. Maribel Fruitstone 157 Northwest 88th Street. I just wanted to say if we could repurpose the old one and maybe put it on the west side, to use the new one here and find a place to let the West siders know the same thing. I know it's a lot to have somebody actually put all the words, but it would make us feel super special that we are actually a part of El Portal, that we have our own little marquee and we know what's going on, on top of the super cool, new electronic one that you are now passing. Thank you, repurpose it, recycle.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Thank you. I have no problem with going over there changing the words. You know I'm always around changing words and doing stuff. The only problem now-- the only question I would have Madam Manager is the cost it's going to take for us to move that over there.

**Village Manager Christia Alou:** Also, it's quite rusted out. It's painted a few times.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** If we try to take it off, it's going to break apart. Yes.

**Village Manager Christia Alou:** It's not going to make it. Let's see. We got another tranche of funding coming. Maybe we'll get one for that side.

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**Vice Mayor Anders Urbom:** We could consider the matching grant, put a second one in.

**Councilperson Luis Pirela:** We have something by the nature trail, right? Like a little marquee thing.

**Village Manager Christia Alou:** Yes, that's already been--

**Councilperson Luis Pirela:** It's already been [crosstalk]

**Vice Mayor Anders Urbom:** [unintelligible 01:34:26] That's a really good idea.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Yes, but as the manager said, though, the manager and myself, all of us, we're always going after funding. We have another tranche of funding coming in for technology. Maybe we could buy a second one for the West Side.

**Village Manager Christia Alou:** That's what I'm saying. I think that might work.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** That might work.

**Village Manager Christia Alou:** Listen, don't worry about that one. That one's out, but maybe we can find some funding for another one, maybe something smaller.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Maybe a little [crosstalk]

**Vice Mayor Anders Urbom:** Put it where the freebie stop is.

**Village Manager Christia Alou:** Right. One other thing to consider, that we do have a lot of vandalism in that area.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** We do.

**Village Manager Christia Alou:** We've had-- I don't want to put something-

**? Councilperson Luis Pirela:** Electrify it.

**Village Manager Christia Alou:** Just something to think about.

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**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Yes, we have a lot more vandalism in that area and you know what, madam manager, that being said, if we are going to do something, we should look into putting a digital one on the west side, because that will stop-- because I can only imagine with the kids walking to school over there, they'll take the letters and start spelling bad words and stuff. It'd be crazy.

**Village Manager Christia Alou:** They will kick that thing down. It's rusty, it's only held because it's been painted a few times.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Remember, we painted it all the time to make it look like it's new, but it's not. All right, you guys-

**Vice Mayor Anders Urbom:** It's also possible with the digital one that-- I would imagine there may be an option of some type of-- cameras are a dime a dozen these days and a small camera with a sign that says, "Police monitored."-

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Yes. I don't think a digital--

**?Attorney Geller:** [unintelligible 01:35:58] just a sign.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Right. Yes. A digital one over there, I don't think we'll have a problem though, because we control-- they're not going to bust it open.

**Vice Mayor Anders Urbom:** No, but I'm saying in terms of like-- they could spray paint the LCD screen or something like that.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** I see what you're saying. It's all good. All right, you guys, I have a motion.

**Councilperson Luis Pirela:** I'm sorry. I do have a question, though. About the sign. Once it's decided to pass and whatever. Are we agreeing to the design of the marquee that's on the quote from that same vendor?

**Village Manager Christia Alou:** You want to pick out what it looks like?

**Councilperson Luis Pirela:** Right. I mean, what they send in the quote is pretty much what we have. It's nothing that is a little more modernized or anything, so it's-- We're sticking with

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that? No, but the design of it, the poles with the little lanterns on top. Is the design going to be that's the one in the picture here or is it going to be something--?

**Village Manager Christia Alou:** Yes. That's what it would look like.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Yes, it's going to be--

**Councilperson Luis Pirela:** To be honest with you, I do like the one from the DDE display, whatever. It's a little bit more modern-looking. It looks better. If you're going to make the changes, just make sure that it's something that is a little more attractive. That's all.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** The DDE-

**Councilperson Luis Pirela:** The second quote. The first one.

**Councilperson Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward:** Wait, stop. I like this one.

**Councilperson Luis Pirela:** That one. That's the one I'm referring to. Yes. That's the one I like. Yes.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Okay, let me just say this. It's okay, but understand that one is 13,000.

**Councilperson Luis Pirela:** No, I'm not saying to go with that most expensive one, but I'm just saying maybe-

**Village Manager Christia Alou:** You wanted to see if that--

**Councilperson Luis Pirela:** -having the company to design something a little different.

**Village Manager Christia Alou:** We can certainly ask.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** We can ask, yes. I was just going to say that. We can ask. All right. Great. Any other questions or comments about the digital marquee? All right, hearing none. We do have a second. We do have a roll call. I mean, we do have a motion, we do have a second. Madam Clerk may I please have a roll call.

**Village Clerk Yenise Jacobi:** Role call. Councilperson Martin?

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**Councilperson Martin:** Yes.

**Village Clerk Yenise Jacobi:** Councilperson Lightfoot-Ward?

**Councilperson Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward:** Yes.

**Village Clerk Yenise Jacobi:** Councilperson Pirela.

**Vice Mayor Anders Urbom:** Yes.

**Village Clerk Yenise Jacobi:** Vice Mayor Urbom.

**Vice Mayor Anders Urbom:** Yes.

**Village Clerk Yenise Jacobi:** Mayor Nickerson.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Yes.

**Village Clerk Yenise Jacobi:** Motion passes five to none.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Thank you very much. Moving on, resolution I2. Chief Mendez, you might want to come up for the next few resolutions, please. Resolution I2, Attorney Geller.

**Village Attorney Joseph S. Geller:** Resolution of village council, the village of El Portal Florida, of Miami Dade County, Florida providing for the purchase of essential police equipment for the village of El Portal, Miami Dade County for writing for incorporation of recitals, providing for an effective date.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Thank you very much. Again, you guys, this is from funding. This is not taxpayer dollars we're using to buy this. The reason why I wanted to do this, I've been reaching out to Chief Mendez saying "Chief Mendez, we got to get back to those traffic safety laser gun, speeding situations in El Portal." We need these radars. We're going to get a couple of them so that we can slow down the traffic and as I said, this is not taxpayer dollars. It's coming from funding, also federal funding. Do I have any questions or comments for this resolution before I ask for a motion, a second and open it up to the audience, to the residence?

**Councilperson Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward:** Mr. Mayor.

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**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Yes, Councilperson Lightfoot-Ward.

**Councilperson Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward:** [unintelligible 01:39:37] department, we've been needing stuff for a long time. [unintelligible 01:39:45] We've been needing this stuff for a long time. [unintelligible 01:39:49] trying to figure it out but we figured you already know we've been needing this stuff for-- You've been here a little while. I don't think there's any objection that we we have been less than efficient when it comes to properly equipping our police service. That's all I want to say.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Thank you very much, Councilperson Lightfoot-Ward. We're correcting that now. We've been correcting that ever since this new council came aboard. I really appreciate all of you guys, definitely. Do I have any other questions or comments about the traffic safety laser radar?

**Councilperson Luis Pirela:** [inaudible 01:40:23] corrections?

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** No, there's no corrections. She was just saying that this is a good thing that we're doing this. That's all she was saying.

**Councilperson Luis Pirela:** Oh, okay. There's no corrections.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** No, there's no correction, no, no. Thank you very much. Do I have any last questions or comments before I ask for a motion? Do I have a motion to approve Resolution I2, Traffic Safety Laser Radars?

**Councilperson Luis Pirela:** I move.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Moved by Councilperson Pirela. Second by Councilperson Lightfoot-Ward. Did I hear that Councilperson Lightfoot-Ward?

**Councilperson Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward:** [inaudible 01:40:49]

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Yes, we did. Seconded by Councilperson Lightfoot-Ward. Anybody from the audience has--

**Village Attorney Joseph S. Geller:** I think she said, "I do move to--"

**Councilperson Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward:** I don't know. Pardon me.

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**Village Attorney Joseph S. Geller:** I do.

[laughter]

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Do I have any comments from the audience before I ask for a roll call? I'm seeing none. Madam Clerk, may I please have a roll call for Resolution I2.

**Village Clerk Yenise Jacobi:** Roll call. Councilperson Martin?

**Councilperson Darian Martin:** Yes.

**Village Clerk Yenise Jacobi:** Councilperson Lightfoot-Ward?

**Councilperson Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward:** Yes.

**Village Clerk Yenise Jacobi:** Councilperson Pirela?

**Councilperson Luis Pirela:** Yes.

**Village Clerk Yenise Jacobi:** Vice Mayor Urbom?

**Vice Mayor Anders Urbom:** Yes.

**Village Clerk Yenise Jacobi:** Mayor Nickerson?

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Yes.

**Village Clerk Yenise Jacobi:** Motion passes five to none.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Thank you very much. Moving on, Resolution I3. This is the GLOCK handguns.

**Village Attorney Joseph S. Geller:** Yes, sir. A resolution of this Village Council of the Village of El Portal, Florida of Miami-Dade County, Florida. Providing for the purchase of essential police equipment for the Village of El Portal of Miami-Dade County, providing for incorporation of recitals, providing for an effective date.

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**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Thank you very much. Appreciate that, Attorney Geller. Unfortunately, throughout since I've been here, we've never given our police officers new handguns, and that's not a good thing. We also have, and we'll discuss this at another time, Madam Manager, but we also have it to where when our new police officers come in, a lot of the equipments that they have to purchase themselves, which I don't think is a really good thing because then you have different people with different levels of different things, and they have to--

That's something that we can address at a later time, but at least we need to make sure that our police officers are protected, and they have the proper equipment, and they really have proper working handguns. Attorney Geller?

**Village Attorney Joseph S. Geller:** Just a reminder, Mayor, somebody needs to get me, just for the record, the final quote from [unintelligible 01:42:21] that were--

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Yes, and it was sent to me, and I will send it to you, Attorney Geller. Thank you very much. That being said, do I have any questions or comments about Resolution I3 before I ask for a motion in a second? I'm hearing none. Do I have a motion to approve Resolution I3?

**Councilperson Luis Pirela:** I move.

**Councilperson Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward:** [unintelligible 01:42:42]

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Moved by Councilperson Pirela, second by Councilperson Lightfoot-Ward. Do I have any questions or comments from the audience? Come up, you have three minutes. Say your name, address, for the record about the handguns. I'm seeing, I'm hearing none. Madam Clerk, may I please have a roll call on Resolution I3.

**Village Clerk Yenise Jacobi:** Roll call. Councilperson Martin?

**Councilperson Darian Martin:** Yes.

**Village Clerk Yenise Jacobi:** Councilperson Lightfoot-Ward?

**Councilperson Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward:** Yes.

**Village Clerk Yenise Jacobi:** Councilperson Pirela?

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**Councilperson Luis Pirela:** Yes.

**Village Clerk Yenise Jacobi:** Vice Mayor Urbom?

**Vice Mayor Anders Urbom:** Yes.

**Village Clerk Yenise Jacobi:** Mayor Nickerson?

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Yes.

**Village Clerk Yenise Jacobi:** Motion passes five to none.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Thank you very much. I appreciate that. Again, you guys this is all coming from funding, no taxpayer dollars. Chief Mendez, one last thing I want to ask you before you walk away and leave that. Madam Manager, you're going to be getting prepared to do your manager report.

Chief Mendez, one thing that I want to ask you, for the police department, in your opinion, what do you see is the dire piece of equipment that we need to focus on going forward in the next couple of months? What's the one thing that, the first thing that pops out of your mind. Don't think too deep. What's the first thing that pops out in your mind that you think you will be needing so we can start to digest that and prepare it for--

**Police Chief Alejandro Mendez:** Vehicles. Vehicles, we're growing, and we're going to grow more. Vehicles, number one, to be able to transition all officers daily and to deal with everything that we need to deal with.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Vehicles is the number one?

**Police Chief Alejandro Mendez:** Correct because we--

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** How many vehicles do you think you need to catch up to where you need to be?

**Police Chief Alejandro Mendez:** Based on what we had looked at before, the same as phase one.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Phase one and phase two?

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**Police Chief Alejandro Mendez:** Phase two, correct.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Okay, so the same amount? I can start to look at it, could I have that paper works, so could start to I look at that paperwork and see what we did and what that will entail.

**Police Chief Alejandro Mendez:** Yes.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Okay, so vehicles is the same as phase one, all right.

**Village Manager Christia E. Alou:** Just so I can chime in, Mayor, if I may.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Yes.

**Village Manager Christia E. Alou:** That would be six vehicles. The last time we did seven because [crosstalk]--

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Could we get a quote [crosstalk] from the last time, so it would be one less--

**Village Manager Christia E. Alou:** We would need six more for phase two for the fleet management plan.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Okay, we'll have to look at that. Okay, I'll look at that for upcoming meeting. All right, Chief Mendez, anything else that you want to let us know before you disperse from the podium?

**Police Chief Alejandro Mendez:** No.

**Village Manager Christia E. Alou:** I think one more thing, I'm sorry, about the technology. I know your major, you all have talked about radios being outdated as well.

**Police Chief Alejandro Mendez:** Well, the handheld radios are outdated. We purchased more. You're basically buying an old radio, you're going to have to update on the new requirements. In the near future, you'll see agencies like the Beach. They've already upgraded, the city's done the same thing, and the smaller agencies around us.

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**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** We can get that through our technology funding from the federal government, correct?

**Village Manager Christia E. Alou:** Yes.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** That's not taxpayer dollars? Okay, so we'll definitely look at radios for the next meeting. I'll start to dive into the phase two of the police vehicles, and we'll see what comes to mind.

**Police Chief Alejandro Mendez:** Yes, and you were asking about the--

**Village Attorney Joseph S. Geller:** [unintelligible 01:45:27] the new equivalent [unintelligible 01:45:34].

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Not from, yes, exactly, absolutely. Thank you very--

**Councilperson Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward:** I had a question about, what's the life cycle of this equipment? Your lasers, what's the life cycle?

**Police Chief Alejandro Mendez:** The lasers, probably, give or take with calibration and everything, we take care of them, they're probably going to be around for about four or five years.

**Councilperson Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward:** This one that we just voted, the purchase of essential equipment--

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** The guns.

**Councilperson Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward:** What's the life cycle on the weapon?

**Police Chief Alejandro Mendez:** The firearm itself, probably barring anything that comes up in the future, 15, 20 years.

**Councilperson Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward:** How often do you clean them?

**Police Chief Alejandro Mendez:** Well, that's part of the maintenance and everything else, probably--

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**Councilperson Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward:** How often do you clean?

**Police Chief Alejandro Mendez:** When we qualify, which is twice a year.

**Councilperson Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward:** Twice a year, that's it?

**Police Chief Alejandro Mendez:** I take it upon myself I clean mine all the time.

**Councilperson Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward:** I'm really serious. You know I worked in a police service in the federal. I'm really serious.

**Police Chief Alejandro Mendez:** When we qualify, part of the training that we put them through is cleaning the handgun, servicing it, and knowing that it's ready.

**Councilperson Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward:** You don't have a--

**Police Chief Alejandro Mendez:** We always encourage them that that's something they do all the time.

**Councilperson Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward:** There's no one that's watching the birdhouse? Nobody's clicking in when they clean their weapons whether they do in training? [coughs]

**Police Chief Alejandro Mendez:** We don't have anybody dedicated to it, you're correct.

**Councilperson Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward:** Officers don't feel a dedication to keeping their weapon?

**Police Chief Alejandro Mendez:** We do. That's a frame of mind that we put them at. For the most part, even in larger agencies, in the agencies, I was before. You always had one that would show up to qualify and their gun was rusted shut.

**Councilperson Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward:** That's what I'm talking about.

**Police Chief Alejandro Mendez:** There's no way around it. For the most part, that's your lifeblood, so most everybody takes care of it, and doesn't make the required maintenance. Not to mention line inspection. I inspect the car, I inspect the firearm.

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**Councilperson Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward:** I'm thinking the same thing. That's my whole question.

**Police Chief Alejandro Mendez:** I understand.

**Councilperson Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward:** Why would you have equipment, we're paying for it, it's not being maintained whether it's used or not. It still has to be maintained.

**Police Chief Alejandro Mendez:** Oh, no that's a massive part of purchase and everything else.

**Councilperson Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward:** Thank you.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Thank you very much.

**Councilperson Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward:** I appreciate that, I do.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Thank you very much, Councilperson Lightfoot-Ward. Thank you very much, Chief Mendez. Moving on to reports. Madam Manager, if you want to go ahead with your report.

**Village Manager Christia E. Alou:** Thank you, I'll make it brief everyone. Just FYI, we are going to be restructuring the loan with Synovus, turning it into a term loan, but we are going to be bringing that before the council in the next couple of weeks. Mayor and I have been meeting with Synovus, and our bond council as well as counsel for Synovus to restructure. Everything is in good stead for now, and they are willing and able to work with us to restructure and get us in a place where we can stay in a good status as we continue to finalize these 2019 and 2020 audits.

For the 2020 legislative session, it just ended. The village did not receive any funding for our request, but through much effort all of us we all went to Tallahassee. We met with people and we really advocated for the village in a meaningful way, but it wasn't our year this year. Last year we were able to get the Rotunda funding on the west side.

This year, nothing, but we still keep trying. As Mayor says often, we were out here getting lots of other funding as well. It wasn't our year this session for the request, but we'll ask again next season. The legislative team would like to come before the council and describe what happened over the session. We'll expect to hopefully see them next month, so you'll see them. The park's renovation project continues. We are awaiting plans from our landscape architect. He is

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supposed to be presenting some plans to us, something that would be visually appealing and understandable so that we can have a public meeting. We really want to engage the community, perhaps with a community forum. I've discussed this with

Councilperson Pirela who will host it. Once we get those completed plans that are more presentable.

We've gotten some really technical plans that we can't even understand, but we'll get something that's going to be a lot more digestible so we can see what these parks will look like. We don't have a date yet but please check website. For our viewers, please check the village website for more information on when we'll have a community forum to discuss the park's renovations.

The village of El Portal continues to have this lovely electrical shuttle vehicle. It's fully operating and it's lovely, and it takes you just where you need to go. Mayor Nickerson and I went this week down to the Board of County Commissioners and had an enjoyable ride, so pleasant, so nice. I really encourage anyone who has an opportunity to take the shuttle. You'll feel great about not having to drive in the traffic or park. It really does take you right to where you need to go.

Sometimes if that means an extra hop on another means of transit that's nice too, but the walk is easy as well. We did that and we're planning more activities on the shuttle but we encourage people to ride. Our ridership has actually gotten a lot better so keep up the good work of promotion and please ride the shuttle our El Portal residents.

Our building department is continuing to go through its IT digitization process. It's a long arduous process. We're building certain things to store these documents for the documents maintenance first, and then as we're doing that they are scanning. It continues but we haven't been getting any complaints. That's the beautiful thing. I'm really happy about that. We're already a lot more efficient than we have been. We're getting very close to the goal.

Once the building department is digitized, then we'll start the other administrative departments digitization. It just helps with our customer service once we're in that way. Also, it helps when things like a pandemic or something happens or a hurricane where people need to work from home but works has to be done. This is going to be helpful for us in the long run.

One other thing just for the community to know that there has been no change at the North Miami Avenue Bridge. We did get it on good authority from County Commissioner Keon

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Hardemon's office. His intergovernmental affairs coordinator reached out to us. We've met with her a couple of times, Mayor and I, over March.

She did get some answers about the Canal Bridge construction. She's saying it was delayed for approximately 16 months while the design-build team redesigned the canal embankment protection and associated permitting with multiple agencies took place. The redesign was necessary due to unexpected conditions of the canal embankment protection discovered during the construction.

We anticipate construction will resume at the end of the month and completion will be in one year. We've still got another year on this one. It's going to be a while. I don't like it. Nobody likes it, but we're hopeful that one day we'll have a safe bridge. It sounds like we've got another year to go. Just as an FYI, I will be placing this manager's report on the village website as I do every month. There's lots more that we do and it's all broken down in departments. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me or consult the website. Thank you.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Thank you very much, Manager Alou. I appreciate that. Because of time I'm going to bypass my Mayor's report. I'll put it on April's agenda. Attorney Geller?

**Attorney Joseph S. Geller:** Nobody sued us.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Thank you very much. That's a beautiful report. [claps] I appreciate that. Last, we have the last Good and Welfare. This is the time right now when anybody wants to come up and talk about anything at all. It doesn't have to be things just on this agenda anything at all. You have three minutes to come up and say your name and address for the record. Madam President.

**Maribel Fruitstone:** Good evening. 157 Northwest 88th Street, Maribel Fruitstone. There is a matter of the Arbor Day which is a Tree City USA. In order for us to stay at Tree City USA, I am wondering if the tree board has met and if they have scheduled a time or dates that they would like to celebrate Arbor Day which is usually in conjunction with Earth Day and the National Arbor Day. I am concerned not only as a resident but because the GFWC El Portal Woman's Club helps support the Arbor Day. I would like to have enough time for our members to assist in coordinating this event. Is it happening?

**Vice Mayor Anders Urbom:** I'm hoping to have a date for you by the end of next week.

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**Village of El Portal  
Regular Council Meeting  
Date: 03/22/22  
Meeting Start: 7:00 PM  
Meeting End: 9:41 PM  
Meeting Length: 02:41:16**

**Maribel Fruitstone:** Is it possible that that would be addressed at the other special meeting that we're going to be having?

**Vice Mayor Anders Urbom:** It is possible.

**Maribel Fruitstone:** Okay. All right. Good.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Thank you very much, Vice Mayor Urbom. I appreciate that. President Fruitstone, I think Attorney Geller wants you. Anybody else for Good and Welfare? Thank you very much. Seeing none. Do I have a motion to adjourn?

**Councilperson Darian Martin:** Oh, before we adjourn-- So sorry.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Yes, go ahead.

**Councilperson Darian Martin:** The short-term rental issue when is that coming back to us?

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** That's coming back-- For the short-term rental issue?

**Councilperson Darian Martin:** Yes, when are we getting something?

**Attorney Joseph S. Geller:** The issue came up in the legislature the last I heard. You would think I would know but I have to say that in the last week or so we get these messages flying back and forth. Sometimes somebody sneaks something onto one. I have to just really deconstruct that. According to the lead lobbyist for the League of Cities, nothing changed. They could not come to an agreement on a bill between the House and the Senate which is a very good thing. Anytime they fail to reach agreement that's a good thing.

My understanding is they didn't do anything which means we can put this on the agenda for our next meeting with no changes except any changes that this council wants to make. If it turns out that I'm wrong, that something sneaked through but I think would have heard about it. It's a very hot issue in Tallahassee. Apparently, I can only say we got lucky what they'll do next session, I won't be there to stop them but it looks like we can put it on for the very next meeting.

**Councilperson Darian Martin:** Is that a--

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** April.

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**Councilperson Darian Martin:** What date is that meeting, Madam Clerk?

**Village Clerk Yenise Jacobi:** April 6th?

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** The fourth Tuesday in April which is--

**Councilperson Darian Martin:** April 26th.

**Attorney Joseph S. Geller:** It would be first reading because it is--

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** It's first reading.

**Attorney Joseph S. Geller:** I don't think we had first reading or we might.

**Village Clerk Yenise Jacobi:** We did but we're going to revisit the previous meetings so she can have or include, or anybody else that [unintelligible 01:57:17].

**Attorney Joseph S. Geller:** Right. We can make any changes you want that don't violate state law.

**Councilperson Darian Martin:** Okay, that sounds good.

**Attorney Joseph S. Geller:** We're ready to get that on for the next meeting. Again, I think if somebody had snuck it through which is what they try to do. That somebody gets up in front of you and says, "We have a message from the Senate. They've amended our bill. This is what the amendment does." Assuming they speak truthfully, we would know but that's not always the case.

**Councilperson Darian Martin:** No, I completely get that caveat. I just want to make sure because last time I expected something on this agenda. I just want to make sure in my mind that I said that on April 26th agenda we will be hearing something about the short-term rental so it doesn't seem as though we forgot about.

**Attorney Joseph S. Geller:** Let me just say, Councilperson. That said, if any member of the council has any changes to the draft, we'd like to get them within, let's say, the next couple of weeks.

**Councilperson Darian Martin:** That's doable. That's good to know.

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**Attorney Joseph S. Geller:** If anybody has anything, we can-- Unless it's something that is clearly prohibited since the law hasn't changed. Let me just be clear. What we've drafted and I talked about this again with the League of Cities, it's a little aggressive. I can't tell you everything we put in there. For instance, some stuff Miami Springs does. I can't tell you it's been actually approved yet by a court, but we're not the first to do it. Other cities have done it. They've done it before us.

We could be challenged because, again, we're being a little aggressive because we're trying to do more to regulate it. We had some strong feelings obviously about some of it from our residents and whether any changes are due based on public input I leave to you guys. If there are any changes, we'd like to get them in the next couple of weeks so we can be sure that we can get them made and get this on the agenda for the next meeting.

**Councilperson Darian Martin:** Thank you so much, Attorney Geller. I think the takeaway for the council is to get our comments in to you within two weeks, and then on April 26th, we will definitely see something on short-term rentals, and then we can move forward.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** I will definitely have it on the agenda for you, Madam.

**Councilperson Darian Martin:** I like that. Thank you so much.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Thank you very much, Councilperson Martin. Any last questions or comments from the council before I ask for a motion to adjourn?

**Councilperson Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward:** Everyone likes to report it as an Airbnb but short-term rentals is what we're-- It's the same name,

it's the same thing, but they don't have any special whatever. We just don't like the noise. We don't like the confusion. We don't like, we don't like. What we're talking about is, we never put it on hold. Did we? We didn't put it on hold. It just never showed up on the agenda again, right?

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** No, we did because we put it on hold because he contacted us and said the state was deciding something in Tallahassee. We wanted to wait to see what they decided first, and then we would bring it back to the agenda. That's why we put it on hold.

**Councilperson Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward:** That's my confusion. The largest cities have enforced ordinances right now.

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**Attorney Joseph S. Geller:** We have some. We have something on the books, what we're trying to do it would make it tougher. The question was, were they going to stop us? Because every bill, they [unintelligible 02:00:50] [crosstalk] They didn't get [unintelligible 02:00:53] best of my knowledge, they didn't get anything done. We can proceed with what we were talking about and try to toughen our ordinance to copy what some other local municipalities have done. Now, if that's not what you want to do.

**Councilperson Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward:** No, no. I'm hearing. I'm with [unintelligible 02:01:13] I want to get this on the books because I know other cities have already done it. I didn't know that we had paused it at this point because this is-- it's starting to be looked at as a foreign, an alien in the village to keep talking about Airbnb.

No, I'm talking about short-term rentals, period. I don't care what you call them because it's just a nuisance and yes, sir. Yes, Ma'am. I can hear around on my side and we live just a block away. She lives on that end, I live on this end, and just want to know what happened. I thought we completed this, but now you may remember we did halt it because we didn't know what the--

**Attorney Joseph S. Geller:** It looked like they had momentum, but as it turns out, they couldn't get their act together [unintelligible 02:02:01] what happened on the Condo Bill which should have been a [unintelligible 02:02:06] unfortunately in this case, [unintelligible 02:02:10]

**Councilperson Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward:** All right [unintelligible 02:02:09]

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Thank you very much Councilperson Martin and Councilperson Lightfoot-Ward. Any last questions or comments from the council before I ask for a motion to adjourn?

**Councilperson Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward:** So moved.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Hearing none. Motion move by Councilperson Lightfoot-Ward. Do I have a second?

**Councilperson Darian Martin:** Second.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Second by Councilperson Martin. All of for will say aye.

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**Councilmembers:** Aye.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** All opposed say nay. Hearing none. The full regular council meeting for Tuesday, March 22nd is adjourned at 9:41 PM.

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