



**Village of El Portal  
Council Meeting  
Date: 03/28/23  
Meeting Start: 7:01 PM  
Meeting End: 7:45 PM  
Meeting Length: 00:43:47**

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** The regular council meeting for Tuesday, March 28th, 2023, is called to order at 7:01 PM. [sound cut]

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

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

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

**Councilman Luis Pirela:** Here.

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

**Vice Mayor Anders Urbom:** Present.

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

**Councilwoman Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward:** Present.

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

**Councilwoman Darian Martin:** Present.

**Village Clerk Yenise Jacobi:** Also present for the record Yenise Jacobi, village clerk, Christia Alou, village manager. Joseph Geller is running late. Chief Mendez and Code Enforcement Officer Fitz.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Thank you very much, Madam Clerk. I appreciate it. Approve the agenda, is there anything that anybody wants to add to the agenda? If not, do I have a motion to approve the agenda?

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

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

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

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

**All:** Aye.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** All oppose say nay. Hearing none, moving on. Good and welfare, this is the time where anybody in the audience can come up and talk about anything according to the agenda, that's on the agenda. You will also have a chance to speak when we get to your agenda items. If there's anything else on the agenda that anybody from the audience wants to talk about, come up and say your name and address for the record. You have three minutes. Hearing, seeing none, moving on to consent agenda. The consent agenda is simply the minutes from last meeting. Do I have a motion to approve the consent agenda?

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

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

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

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

**All:** Aye.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** All oppose say nay. Hearing none, moving on to the resolutions ordinances. Attorney Geller is still not here. We'll move down to Resolution G2, which is the Tree City tree planting grant. We need this to stay a Tree City USA and is leading into our Arbor Day. We have to do this every year to remain compliant with our Tree City USA so it's pretty much just a technical thing like that. Madam Manager, is there anything you want to add or any questions you guys have with the manager?

**Village Manager Alou:** I would like to add also that this resolution is allowing us to sign the contract with Miami-Dade County's Neat Streets so that we can provide the matching funds needed for the 76 trees that will go in various locations throughout the village.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Any questions or comments for the manager?

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**Councilwoman Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward:** I do. This is what, our third year of the Tree Grant?

**Village Manager Alou:** Oh, no. I think there's a lot more than that. This is an annual thing and this grant has afforded us an opportunity to make that green walk to school over on the west side and we continue to plant. I do have the locations where trees will be planted, several of them on the northwest side. Actually, about 85% are on the northwest side but we do have some locations here on the east side in which trees were requested or we had to take a tree down because of injury or illness so we're replacing as well.

**Councilwoman Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward:** The roads we have in here as long as I have remembered we didn't have trees. We didn't have a whole lot of trees, and then it started. Looking at to date, my house, my yard is [unintelligible 00:03:30]. There are two of them now. There was just a little bit of something. There are now two of them. Anybody that's listening tonight-- That's right. I keep forgetting them so [crosstalk]

**Village Clerk Yenise Jacobi:** It's okay. It was so far.

**Councilwoman Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward:** Anybody that even thinks that we might miss you, please speak up because they did miss me a couple of times, but I got a beautiful- don't I? I got a lot of shade. I've got a lot of shade and I am not at all ashamed of all the leaves. Also, I like to mention that the tree planting grant, if it were not for the grant, we would not have gotten the first set of trees at all. When I keep seeing that, I love it. it also or provides for clean air. Anybody understand that? It actually provides for clean air. Being asthmatic as I am, yes, everybody that knows me knows I'm ashtmatic, that's wonderful. Thank you so much. Every year I see this I just light up like a candle. Thank you so much. I was glad to see this.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Thank you so much Councilperson Lightfoot-Ward. I appreciate that. Anybody else in the council. You guys are good. Also, you guys, just in case anybody doesn't know, let's say for the record, Manager Alou and I, we do a lot of work with the county when it comes to heat indexes because the environmentalism, sea level rise, and also heat index, El Portal is, currently, because of all of our trees that we get, every year we get Tree City USA, we get all these trees every year, we're currently the second coolest municipality behind Coral

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Gables in heat index. It's something to be proud of. If we're going to continue the walkability aspect all throughout Miami-Dade County.

**Village Manager Alou:** Thank you. Also, if I may add, April 22nd, 2023, 4:00 to 7:00 PM at the El Portal Nature Trail, Councilperson Anders Urbom is hosting his annual Arbor Day celebration. We will be having a committee meeting of the tree board, but thereafter, a big celebration with the community as a potluck. Please bring your international dishes that represent your culture or just your mood and we'll have a wonderful celebration of our tree canopy. Perhaps, the councilperson would like to add something more about it.

**Vice Mayor Anders Urbom:** Just to say that I couldn't do it without the El Portal Women's Club. Anyone could reach out to myself or Zamira with the Women's Club, or Maribel Fruitstone with the Women's Club if you wanted to find out about the potluck, but everyone, the general public will be welcome and there will be food and entertainment and it should be a great day.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Thank you very much you guys, Madam Manager and Councilperson Urbom. Are there any other questions or comments about the Tree City USA tree planting grant before I ask for a motion to approve?

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

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Do I have a second?

**Councilwoman Darian Martin:** Second.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Thank you very much. Move by Councilperson Lightfoot-Ward second by Councilperson Martin. Madam Clerk, may I, please, have a roll call.

[background conversation]

**Village Clerk Yenise Jacobi:** A resolution of The Village of El Portal, Florida, the mayor and village council authorizing matching funds for a tree planting grant and providing for incorporation of recitals an effective date.

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

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

**Councilwoman Darian Martin:** Yes.

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

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

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

**Vice Mayor Anders Urbom:** Yes.

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

**Councilman Luis Pirela:** 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. Madam Manager, if you would, please, while we wait for Attorney Geller, move to your manager's report please and we will come back to Resolution G2.

**Village Manager Alou:** Absolutely. Thank you very much, Mayor Nickerson. What haven't we been doing in the month of March? We've been busy, and as you all know that the 2023 legislative session started this month. The Village of El Portal has two project appropriation request in. One is number 1320 for Parks Renovation Funding and the other is 1321 for the village hall expansion and renovation. These are very important to the village. We've asked for the past few years for these funds. We have not gotten anything in the last couple of years, but we will continue to ask.

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We have done so much work, Mayor Nickerson and our public works team, as well as our engineers and grants consultant, Robert Ruano, in getting funding to the village. This is one that will come from the state, we hope. Presently, our legislative team says we're in week four of the legislative session and both of our requests are still on the dockets or on the agendas in the Senate budget. We're hopeful, we're keeping our fingers crossed, and I'll keep everyone apprised as the legislative session proceeds.

The Village also this month was obligated, approximately, \$81,000 from our FEMA, Hurricane Irma reimbursement appeals. We're getting closer to the amount that we need to be whole again but we haven't received those bunch yet. Those funds have been obligated. We're still on appeal. We will continue to strive for those funds for a total reimbursement and I will, again, keep you informed what will be coming before the council in the near future. I'm hopeful next month that we will be reassessing and working another loan instrument with Synovus bank or banks so that we can move that loan forward as we have been in an extension presently as we awaited obligated funds that just don't seem to be coming out of the federal government's hands at present. We'll continue to work for that and I'll keep you all informed as that moves forward.

We do have some projects that continue to progress. The state-appropriated school safety roundabout at Horace Mann Middle School, we're getting closer. I know I tell you all every month but quite honestly, every bit helps. We're so much closer now that we're at the point where Miami Shores Village has authorized the design. The homeowner and Miami Shores has approved the design as well and we have submitted to the state. Now we're at the point where we are ready to start looking into, well, solidifying and having the MOU signed with FDOT to further the program or the project.

We hope to do this project in- it will take about three weeks to construct. I don't know when it's going to start, but I'm hopeful it will start before the fiscal year ends because we have been leaned on by the federal government for this \$300,000. We'll continue to ask for extensions if needed, but I just hope we don't have to ask for any more extensions now that we are past the point of the design being approved and now we're just ready to do the necessary RFPs to get the construction team in place so that we can construct this project and get the school safety roundabout finally installed on the west side.

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As you've seen, also, we've improved or repaired our roundabout here on the east side, as well as the intersections that have the paver. We are utilizing our funds. Those are surtax funds hard at work for the village. We will continue to not assess our residents with their tax funds. We are utilizing grant funds, federal funds, state funds, and any funds that come our way to improve our village.

We do have the Parks Renovation project still in play. We are expecting to do proposals opening here at the village hall on Friday morning at 10:00 AM. We're hopeful that we will get some good proposals from general contractors so that we can move that project forward as well. The Parks Renovation project has been going on for about two years now under Vice Mayor Pirela's leadership, and we hope to continue that effort and just stay on track. It's sometimes difficult to gather all the troops and keep everybody on point after we've installed time and time again. We're striving to get that project started before this end of this fiscal year as well.

Today, Mayor Nickerson and I, and our planning and zoning team met with the group that owns The Sanctuary Project here, the Northeast 2nd Avenue in 87th Street empty church property. We are really hopeful and seeing things will be changing very soon. They are at the point now where some plans will be submitted soon, and we will be seeing some development in El Portal that will garner a beautiful business corridor for Northeast 2nd Avenue. A lot of things are planned.

I know Mayor Nickerson is happy to tell you about some of the plans. We've been telling you about this, about the road diet that we want to do, with the reduction of the lanes, but also the beautification of Northeast 2nd Avenue, traffic calming. That will all be supported with our traffic study that was submitted to Miami Dade County this month, as well as a mobility study that is being wrapped up right now for Northeast 2nd Avenue that will also be submitted to support our request for the road diet, painted intersections or paved intersections that will make Northeast 2nd Avenue more walkable and also bring people to the new development that will be the Sanctuary Village. I think that's the name they call it now. Good things are in play here in the village of El Portal.

Our El Portal police department continues to do great things. Officers qualified and were issued their new Red Dot Firearms this month. This makes El Portal the first department in Miami Dade County to use the new technology department-wide and possibly the first department in the State of Florida. Kudos to Chief Mendez. Thank

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you so much. Officer Torrens, one of our newer officers, attended and was certified in a crime scene photography training course. El Portal staff is getting trained and they're taking on leadership roles that advance the department. We're pleased with all of those successes.

We also hosted this month a Farm Share event at Horace Mann Middle School, Tuesday, March 21st, where we got a fantastic turnout and really were able to give some needed perishables and foods for the community. It was a fantastic success. Of course, our Code Enforcement Department, Mr. Simmons here is doing his yeoman's job. This man is tireless and did not even need to be here tonight, but wanted to be in just to see what's happening, but also to continue to work on his backlog and clearing some items off of his plate in his department, as well as our Public Works and Building Department continue to do fantastic things.

I'm putting the Village Manager's March Report on the village website. If anyone has some time, take a look, keep up-to-date on what's happening in the village, and if you have any questions, feel free to reach out and contact me. Thank you.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Thank you very much, Manager Alou. We appreciate it. All right, myself and Clerk Jacobi, we have a new way that we're going to start doing the Mayor's Report. You guys will see that starting next month. I'm trying to kill time until Attorney Geller gets here. Yes, all right. Really quickly, you guys, we are looking at doing a spring egg hunt with SkateBird Miami. That's Saturday, April the 8th. That's the day before the Easter holiday day. I'm calling it the spring egg hunt. That'll be Saturday, April the 8th. It will start at 3:00 PM. Everybody in El Portal, you guys will get those flyers on your doorknob starting tomorrow or the next day or Thursday.

I did a Miami Herald interview about the the Northeast Corridor train stop locations. Again, I went through that. Manager Alou and I-- North Miami Avenue at nighttime the lights are out. It's very dark. North Miami Avenue at nighttime, the lights have been out. At first it was FPL. We were going back and forth with FPL. FPL, you guys remember the whole thing with the copper wires and things like that. FPL was saying that they needed time to replace what they needed to replace because of the hurricanes that happened. They had sent most of their manpower up north to North Florida, the hurricanes from last year that happened and occurred.

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They said, once everything's settled down, they'd come back here and they'd take care of it. They came back here. We said, "Why aren't you taking care of it? Why are the lights still out on North Miami Avenue?" They came back to us and said, "Well, there's currently something going on in Miami Dade County, where there's transition, where a lot of lights that are FPLs are now being turned over to the county. The county's taking over a lot of the lights that are FPL.

The lights on North Miami Avenue. We found out recently, Madam Manager, that those are some of the lights that are being taken over. Reached out to Commissioner Hardemon's office because he's our district commissioner, reached out to the county itself to the Public Works program, the Public Works Department. They said that they'll look into it, they'll get on top of it right away. We didn't hear back from them, we reached out again to them.

We reached out again to them, then Mayor Levine Cava's Office, Madam Manager, said to us, "Look, if within the next week or so, you guys don't see any movement on this, bypass your commissioner and come straight to us," Mayor Levine Cava's Office. That's where we're at. No longer FPL, it was for a while. They didn't move on it, but then they got transitioned over to the county and that's where we're at with those lights on North Miami Avenue but we stay on top of that all the time.

Earlier this week, myself and Manager Alou, we met with the Salvation Army, the Regional Commander for the Salvation Army and we met with the executive director of the Red Cross, both of them individuals, separately the same day, two different meetings. The Salvation Army, there's going to be senior programs I'm bringing in. You guys will be getting flyers about that, that we're doing with the Salvation Army free of charge to El Portal. Also Salvation Army they have these, okay, I'm going to get ready to wrap up my Mayor's Report in a second, they have these canteens of food that were already, you guys, already-- Madam Manager we already talked about already. If we have a hurricane or an emergency, we already have canteens of food dedicated to El Portal. Okay.

We have that already set up with the Red Cross. As I said, we spoke to them, the executive director about everything hurricane-related so that we'll be well prepared for hurricane when it comes to their stuff. Also with the Red Cross, with the Salvation Army, we have details about everything we're getting with the executive director of

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the Red Cross. We have a overall picture of what we're going to be getting, but through email we'll get those details of what we're going to be getting.

There's a lot more I want to talk about but I'll save it for next month's mayor's report. I just had a Miami Herald interview earlier today about a bunch of stuff they were here. They interviewed me earlier today. There's a lot going on you guys. We'll keep that. We had the meeting with all the owners of all the businesses on 79th. We had that big meeting recently. We did the **[unintelligible 00:20:23]**.

Next month you guys will see we have a different setup that we have, Madam Clerk, and you'll see how everything comes together next month. Look, on this thing right here I have, what is this, I have 18 items right here on this that you guys need to talk about. That's just for this month but it's all good. Next month you guys will see a lot more. We're moving you guys back to the agenda. Attorney Geller's here for the record. How are you doing Attorney Geller? Agenda item G1. Attorney Geller, if you would read that into the record for us, please.

**Attorney Joseph Geller:** Resolution of the Village Council, the Village of El Portal Florida, granting site plan approval for new construction of a two-story residence at 400 Northwest 87th Street in zone three, suburban residence in the Village of El Portal, an application by Dan Aharon. I hope I'm pronouncing that correctly. Is that right, Aharon? Providing for findings, providing for conditions, providing for appeal, providing for violation of conditions, providing for an effective date.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Thank you very much, Attorney Geller. I appreciate that. Do you want to, Attorney Geller, swear anybody in if they want to?

**Attorney Joseph Geller:** Yes, sir. If everyone who's going to provide testimony on this matter would stand and raise your right hand, please. Are you going to testify, Mr. Aharon?

**Dan Aharon:** Sure.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Maybe even your architect also.

**?Speaker 1:** Yes.

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[background conversation]

**Attorney Joseph Geller:** Okay. Raise your right hand and repeat after me please. "I," and state your name,

**All Testifying:** I- [crosstalk]

**Attorney Joseph Geller:** "do hereby solemnly swear, that this testimony I will give in this matter tonight,"

**All Testifying:** -do hereby solemnly swear, that this testimony I will give in this matter tonight-

**Attorney Joseph Geller:** will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help me, God," or you may take an affirmation.

**All Testifying:** will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help me, God.

**Attorney Joseph Geller:** Thank you. [crosstalk]

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** [crosstalk] Thank you very much, Attorney Geller.

**Attorney Joseph Geller:** We should proceed with the staff report, please

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Yes. Thank you very much, Attorney Geller. I appreciate that. You guys may have to go up there, but we may not have to. Let me just go through this real quick. We went through this already at the planning and zoning level. Ms. Zabala, representing **[unintelligible 00:22:29]**, regarding the staff report that we originally got is there any adjustments or anything that we have to look out for as far as your approval in terms of **[inaudible 00:22:38]**.

**Speaker 2:** Good evening, council. Thank you, Mayor. From the previous meeting, no Major changes have been done to the design proposed. There have been details added that may help to better illustrate what the plan is for the site and for the facade, but nothing major has changed. They provided a drainage plan, which was requested at the previous meeting but in terms of the general application and the compliance and consistency with the zoning requirements in the comprehensive

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plan, nothing has changed from the previous meeting, therefore we recommend approval. Planning is only consultants recommend approval **[unintelligible 00:23:28]**.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Approval is still recommended. Are there any questions or comments from anybody from council?

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

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

**Councilwoman Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward:** I know we discussed this last time at length. Am I right about that?

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

**Councilwoman Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward:** Okay. My concern, I have no problems with what's going on. I'm more concerned about the onsite of too many of these coming into this small village. I think this is the third one that we've had over the last couple of years. I just get concerned about that because are we going to turn the village into a-- You're going to live in this thing, right? You're going to live in this place. This is not temporary. This is yours to keep because periodically you get asked as a public official in reference to whether or not we are turning into one of those vacation cities.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Well, it is going to be partially rental, right?

**Dan Aharon:** Correct, it is.

**Councilwoman Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward:** Okay, you're on top so you know what I'm talking about. I'm really concerned about that. I don't know if I don't know I don't know. I'm not suppositioning anything, but I do know that the quaintness of this village appears to be because we're tiny, that we can be overrun. That is not the case. That is far from the case but we see these things coming up and yet we still want to maintain the quaintness of El Portal. Everybody's starting to realize that we've been here-- How long we've been here chief? That board over there says how long we've been here.

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**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** 1937, Madam.

**Councilwoman Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward:** 1937 so you can see we're almost 100 years old. Give us the 27 and we'll be 90 years old. With that in mind, that's the only thing I think about. There's no prohibition in the ordinance that I can see in, what do we call that big book, the code. There's no prohibition for it, but let's be careful of what we are doing because one thing I'm not going to-- I'm historic property. I'm already designated that' I'm telling everybody you're going to see something that shows that the county either yay or nay on historic property and I'll tell the story later once it comes over.

I'm not advocating an overrun like some cities are right now totally complaining about the overrun and how the taxes went up. They didn't go up because the county didn't have anything else to do. They went up because the value of the properties are coming in anew. That's all I need to say, Mayor. We'll keep you posted.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Thank you very much, Madam Councilperson Lightfoot-ward. Anybody else, questions or comment?

**Vice Mayor Anders Urbom:** I'll add one comment if I could. I echo Dr. Lightfoot-Ward's sentiment. I think that's the job that's a little bit in front of the citizen board of the charter review. The charter review is really the opportunity to guide where we want to go in that regard. I think that is where that conversation is going to be had and where we can make a meaningful plan of how we really do want to maintain the community of the village, so there you go. I'm glad we have the opportunity for the citizen board to address that.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Thank you very much, Councilperson Urbom. Anybody else from the council questions?

**Councilman Luis Pirela:** Yes, I do have a question for Camila because I've learned that renders are one thing, and then drawings are other things. [laughs] Renderings they present everything beautiful but it's not what really goes into the plan and finished product. As far as parking and all of that, the driveway is the size that complies with the 33% coverage area in the front.

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**Speaker 2:** The driveway approach will be narrower as we are working on proposing that, but the [unintelligible 00:27:46] were an approach where the driveway meets the right of way to be 12 feet and then within the front yard, up to 33%, they're at just that limit in this case.

**Councilman Luis Pirela:** Okay, sounds good. Thank you.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Any other questions or comments from the council?

**Councilwoman Darian Martin:** Just a quick comment. As we all know, we can't prohibit anyone from using their property in that way, and neither are we trying to do it. I think this underscores the importance of the work we're doing on the short-term vacation rental ordinance. I'm looking forward to when it comes back to the body, which will most likely be next meeting, and we can hash these thoughts out a little bit more as well.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Thank you very much, Councilperson Martin. I appreciate it. She's been working hard on that. You guys know from this weekend that we continue to see things that end up need to be continuously worked on when it comes to--

**Councilman Luis Pirela:** Unfortunately, it wasn't formally reported.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Yes, I know, unfortunately, but it's all good. Any other questions or comments from the council? Good. Any questions or comments from anybody out here in the audience? No?

[background conversation]

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Open for public hearing because you guys to go. Any other questions or comments from the audience?

**Dan Aharon:** Should I say a few words?

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Yes. Well, you've been directly spoken to and you took a oath so you can speak at any time. This is for anybody else who's out there. Close for public comment. Back to you. Go ahead, sir.

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**Dan Aharon:** Thank you. Thank you dear council. I think I met with a few of you. Oh, is the mic not on? Is that better now?

**All:** Yes.

**Dan Aharon:** Yes. Thank you for giving us this opportunity for **[unintelligible 00:29:42]**. This is the dream home that we've always wanted to build, very lush and green and resort-style. When we were looking at Miami, we're not originally from here but when we discovered El Portal-- It's shocking to me, Council Member Lightfoot-Ward, when you said that it wasn't like that a few years ago. I don't know how you did it in such a short period of time because it's so lush and green and so different from the rest of the area that it's amazing. That's what won us over.

We're going to even contribute to that. We're going to plant a lot of trees within our new house. On the days we're not living there, we will be renting it out occasionally, but we're very much committed to the short-term rental ordinance. We want to do everything possible to minimize disruption to the neighborhood and everything. We thought about all that in advance, so things like we situated the pool in a place that's very far from the property line in all directions to try and avoid noise to the neighbors.

We created this driveway that, as you pointed out, it is a little bit larger to allow for four cars to park so that we can bring down to as close to zero as possible the instances where guests will have to park on the street because it's just so pretty when it's just out there and green and the way that it looks now. We're committing to making Portal continue to be awesome and do whatever we can to contribute to the village.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Thank you very much. We appreciate that. Any last questions or comments from the council? Are you guys good? Do I have a motion to approve Resolution G1?

**Councilman Luis Pirela:** Motion.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Motion by Vice Mayor Pirela. Do I have a second?

**Councilwoman Darian Martin:** Second.

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**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Second by Councilperson Martin. Madam Clerk, may I please have a roll call on Resolution G1?

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

**Councilwoman Darian Martin:** Yes.

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

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

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

**Vice Mayor Anders Urbom:** Yes.

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

**Councilman Luis Pirela:** 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:** Congratulations. I appreciate you guys. Take care. Have a great night. Moving on, you guys. Attorney Geller, do you have any reports?

**Attorney Joseph Geller:** Well, I do, but I might defer to Chair Martin on it.

**Councilwoman Darian Martin:** No, you can definitely go ahead.

**Attorney Joseph Geller:** Just briefly to bring council up to speed about the short-term rental issue. I had a very good conversation, again, with the attorney for some of our residents and for other people, Keith Brady, very knowledgeable fellow. He called to my attention that a lawsuit was just filed on behalf of an association of rental owners against, I don't know if it's called a city or whatever, but against the municipality of Marco Island. Now Marco Island is pretty upscale, but it's not terribly

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large. I don't know what their budget is, but they're a relatively small municipality like us. The lawsuit was filed by a pretty reputable law firm, Shutts & Bowen. This just happened, by the way.

He's sending me a copy of it so I can read through it, but that's exactly what we're trying to avoid happening to this village in our conversation. I communicated to him that from what I've heard from our council, we want to do something that will provide reasonable regulation. We want to do something that will discourage bad actors, but at the same time, not penalize good actors who do a good job. He stressed to me that good actors are as upset about the bad actors as anybody else because it results in unfair competition.

Anyway, we set up a process to review in detail, I should probably say, excruciating detail, our last draft revision of an amended ordinance, and his drafted model ordinance because it's not only what's in our ordinance, but there may be things completely missing that old saying about it, you don't know the things you don't know. Looking at possible, not just deletions from our ordinance or amendments, but looking at possible additions to our ordinance.

Just as an example, we talked about ways that we could be even tougher on, for example, noise or trash that would be in keeping with the efforts of our very excellent code enforcement officer. That if we applied some of those regulations, not just to short-term rentals, they are probably unobjectionable because they're things that the village is doing to make the village cleaner and more serene for everybody. If there's a blaring noise coming late at night, Friday night next to your house, who's the source of that noise is less important than shutting down that noise.

Hopefully, that'll take place next week. We've discussed a couple of days, probably be a couple hours of conversation, but in any event, based on how much we have accomplished so far, and I've consulted with Chair Martin about this, and we're going to go over those things with her as well, we anticipate, unless something happens that we're not anticipating, that this will be on the agenda for consideration by you for a first reading at the April meeting. That's our goal and that's our plan.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson** Thank you very much, Attorney Geller. I appreciate that.

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**Attorney Joseph Geller:** That concludes my report.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson** Thank you very much, Attorney Geller. I appreciate that. Chair Martin, anything you want to add? Are you good?

**Councilwoman Darian Martin:** No, I think you pretty much stated the current affair of things. I just want to make a clarification. We haven't had a chance to read that complaint yet that's been filed by Shutts & Bowen. We don't know exactly what the reason that their ordinance is being challenged, then if we have similar issues, or if we are completely in the clear. A complete analysis on that would be forthcoming, but we haven't read the complaint yet, and that's an important piece.

**Attorney Joseph Geller:** It's hot off the press, and as I said to the gentleman, yes, we want to regulate, and we want to be efficient and fair. What we don't want is for this little village to be a guinea pig to try something nobody else has tried, and for us to be on the wrong end of that lawsuit. We want to be squarely in keeping with what other people have done that have not gotten them sued. Thank you.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson** Thank you very much. I appreciate that. Good and welfare, anybody out there who can come up and talk about anything at all. It doesn't have to be things only on the agenda for the second good and welfare. You have three minutes, name and address for the record. Hearing, seeing none, moving right along. Any last questions or comments from the council before I ask for adjournment? All right. Do we have a motion to adjourn?

**Councilman Luis Pirela:** Motion.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson** Motion to adjourn.

**Councilwoman Lightfoot-Ward:** I've got an unreadiness.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson** Okay, go ahead. Go ahead.

**Councilwoman Lightfoot-Ward:** It doesn't disturb your motion, it's just I had something to say before we adjourned.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Go ahead.

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**Councilwoman Lightfoot-Ward:** I want to bring it to the council's attention so you're not to put me on that committee. Kudos going out to the village in maintaining the swell. This is coming from residents in the area in the Nature Trail, moving and maintaining it consistently. I was asked to bring that to attention. Not only are they consistent, but they do a good job. We've never had this much participation in making sure the swell is clean. I don't know who it is that's going through the park, the Nature Trail. I don't know who it is, but that park, somebody's paying attention. I don't know if it's staff, but someone is paying attention. I appreciate that much.

Folks just starting to realize that I'm back on the council and this is getting to be like, [chuckles] I'm not a movie star or nothing, but it's getting to be really funny. They found out I retired. Abandoned property in El Portal. I was asked to keep your eye on it, that there are some abandoned properties, or at least you have an elderly population. That's the first thing. I don't even want to name it, what the abandoned properties are, but there's only a few, but we need to look out for them.

Code enforcement, speeding on 3rd Avenue continues and is very concerning. The same people all the time, I'll say it again, between the hours of 7:30 and 8:15 is when it happens. They are not even trying to stop, since it goes straight by my house. I know what I'm talking about. The International Council of City Managers annual meeting. I'd like the council to remember that, that we are a part of that. Am I right? Our presence has been lagging for years and years. Understandable, we've been through a lot, pandemics and whole bit, but the organization is not dull.

They do have their annual conference. I am familiar with it. I would invite everybody to rotate. City Manager, I'll always vote to have you go every year if it's possible but one of us needs to be with her just to appreciate how this-- Knowing the International City Management Association, they are now called the International City Managers. They used to be called- it's something else that's in that acronym, but it's a beautiful experience.

I used to go every year. If you rotate it, you can see not only do you learn a lot, we are able to enter coalitions with other cities in the State of Florida to get funding, to know things that are coming out that we might not see. I want to put that before the public notice that we are not lagging behind. We're actually an up-to-date modern-day city doing the right things.

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Thank you, Village Clerk, and Village Manager, and Village Attorney for keeping us in that status. Also, Florida grant money, state or national funds, let me know if I can help. I've written a lot of grants in my life. I'm understanding we may, and I'm not saying we are, we may be missing out on the funding just brought in because of what most cities and small cities have endured. That is my report for the benefit of the council. Thank you.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Thank you very much. I appreciate that, Councilperson Lightfoot-Ward. As we all know, El Portal, under our administration, you guys have brought in more funding than ever before in El Portal's history. We're going to continue to move forward. We appreciate that, Councilperson Lightfoot-Ward.

We have a motion by Vice Mayor Pirela, my brother. Vice Mayor Pirela, while we're doing that motion, since I felt bad about saying that right there, Vice Mayor Pirela, you guys know I'm starting to be appointed to a lot of executive boards for a lot of things all throughout Miami Dade County, the State of Florida, and things like that, usually, when you have somebody on the executive board, that board position for that municipality is up. I argued and argued with a few different boards.

There's one board in particular, which is a huge board, and I'm on the executive board for that, I'm now the treasurer of that executive board, and I said, "You know what? I don't want to lose our board seat," so they said, "Well, if you can find somebody in a day, we'll let you keep that board seat. You'll be the only municipality in Florida that has an executive board member and a board member." I said, "You know what? I know the individual. He's at it. He's always in tune with this type of stuff. He's the new vice mayor." I called him up. Vice Mayor Pirela, I'm appointing him to be a board member for one of those distinguished boards. We appreciate that, Vice Mayor Pirela.

**?Speaker 3:** What board?

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** The League of Cities.

**?Speaker 3:** Which one?

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

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**?Speaker 3:** Oh.

[applause]

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** He's good. The League.

**Councilwoman Dr. Anna E. Lightfoot-Ward:** He's in the League of Cities. All good.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** Yes, it's all good. He'll be good with that. That being said, we had the motion by Vice Mayor Pirela. Do we have a second motion for adjournment?

**Councilperson Darian Martin:** Second.

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

**All:** Aye.

**Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson:** All opposed say nay. Hearing none, the full council meeting for March 28th is adjourned at 7:45. PM. Very good, you guys.

[background conversation]

**[00:43:47] [END OF AUDIO]**

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