

1 **DRAFT MINUTES OF THE COMMISSION WORKSHOP**
2 **TOWN OF LADY LAKE, FLORIDA**

3 **February 16, 2023**

4 The Workshop of the Lady Lake Town Commission was held in the Commission Chambers at
5 Lady Lake Town Hall, 409 Fennell Blvd., Lady Lake, Florida, with Mayor Jim Rietz presiding. The
6 meeting convened at 4:00 pm.

7 **CALL TO ORDER**

8 Mayor Jim Rietz

9 **ROLL CALL**

Commissioner (Ward)	Present ⁰
Hannan (Four)	YES
Kussard (One)	YES
Gourlie (Two)	NO
Freeman (Three)	YES
Rietz (Five)	YES

11
12 **STAFF PRESENT**

13 Bill Lawrence, Town Manager; Mike Burske, Parks & Recreation Director; Aly Herman, Library
14 Director; Julia Harris, Executive Assistant; Nancy Wilson, Town Clerk

15 **NEW BUSINESS**

16 Discussion regarding the Community Building and library meeting room rentals

17 At the January 16th Commission meeting, Parks and Recreation Director Mike Burske said that
18 he, the Library Director, and the Town Clerk modified the existing ordinance related to the
19 Library and Community Building facility rentals. This change resulted from discussion at the
20 December 5, 2022 Commission meeting where Lori Blum from the Orange Blossom Lion's Club,
21 asked to be given exempt status from rental fees when using the Community Building and
22 library meeting rooms. The Commission voted to grant exempt status to organizations that
23 provide a service to the town which includes the Lion's Club, the Kiwanis Club and the
24 Supervisor of Elections. All other groups would be given 30 days' notice that their exempt or
25 partially exempt status is being revoked. Other housekeeping changes were made along with

1 new four hour minimum rental blocks on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. The Commission
2 voted to approve the changes on first reading.

3 At the February 6th Commission meeting, the second reading of Ordinance 2023-01 was
4 presented. Commissioner Kussard said the Lady Lake Garden Club does a lot for the Town and
5 she would like them to be granted exempt status because charging them a rental fee would
6 pose a hardship.

7 Conversation ensued about how to move forward. Mayor Rietz wanted to eliminate the need to
8 rewrite an ordinance each time a group was added or removed from the exempt list. He agreed
9 that those who do a lot for the Town should be granted exempted status, but everybody
10 should have to submit an application for Commission review.

11 Commissioner Hannan said that the Commission should review the list of all groups who use
12 the Community Building and determine who deserves to use it without being charged. He
13 suggested scheduling a workshop.

14 Commissioner Gourlie suggested that the Garden Club be added to the list of exempt
15 organizations and to then entertain other exemptions by having them present their benefit to
16 the community at a Town Commission meeting.

17 Town Manager Lawrence said that upkeep for the Community Building is budgeted at \$25,000
18 and the Town is only offsetting that by \$12,000. Change is difficult but we are operating at a
19 loss with fees that are the lowest in the region. The taxpayers are subsidizing those who pay
20 little or nothing to use our facilities.

21 Commissioner Freeman and Commissioner Hannan said that Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) saves
22 lives and that they provide a valuable service that warrants exempt status. The issue with the
23 Sunday AA meetings utilizing the space is that Sunday evenings are in high demand for full
24 paying customers plus there is a four-hour minimum.

25 After several motions died for lack of a second, the Commission voted 4-1 (Kussard dissenting)
26 to add verbiage suggested by the Town Attorney which was to approve the ordinance by
27 removing all references to individual groups and adding more generic language (“Any group
28 may obtain exempt status if approved by a majority vote of the Town Commission at a regular
29 meeting.”)

30 Following the February 6th meeting, it was decided that a workshop would be held on February
31 16th. Much of the same discussion from the previous meetings continued. At this meeting, there
32 was a representative from AA who asked to speak.

33 Mike Sage - 1144 W. Boone Ct.

1 Mr. Sage was there to speak on behalf of the AA group that meets on Sunday nights and have
2 been doing so for over 40 years. They are in the building from 6:30 pm – 8:00 pm. Everybody
3 knows that AA meetings are held on Sunday nights on Guava Street and on other nights, the
4 meetings are held at other locations. He argued that the revenue that could potentially be lost
5 by not having full paying renters does not amount to that much. AA saves lives and makes
6 people productive members of the community. In addition, more than half of the Sunday night
7 AA members live in Lady Lake.

8 AA was discussed and there was no argument about the many benefits that AA meetings
9 provide. The argument was about renting the Community Building to a group being charged a
10 reduced fee on a Friday, Saturday or Sunday for under four hours.

11 In the end, the Commission consented to removing from the ordinance all references to
12 individual groups or organizations; continuing to rent the Community Building and Library as
13 they have in the past for those not asking for reduced fees; and, presenting applications to the
14 Town Commission from all groups or organizations requesting exempt or partially exempt
15 status to determine if a waiver is justified. For those granted fee exemptions, a deposit will still
16 be required. The Town Commission will have the final say in approving or denying
17 applications.

18 **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

19 There were no comments from the public.

20 **ADJOURN**

21 There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:13 p.m.

22 _____
23 Nancy Wilson, Town Clerk

24 _____
25 Jim Rietz, Mayor