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Bronson stalls Internet café acceptance with moratorium;

Decorum still abysmal at Town Council meetings; Fourth of July on July 4



Seen here (from left) on Monday night (May 20) are Town Clerk Shirley Miller, Town Councilman Berlon Weeks and Vice Mayor Jason Hunt.



Seen here (from left) on Monday night Mayor Robert Partin, Town Councilman James Beck and Town Councilwoman Beatrice Roberts.

Story, Photos and Video

By Jeff M. Hardison © May 23, 2019 at 11:09 a.m.

BRONSON – The five Bronson Town Council members meeting as they do regularly almost every month, twice-a-month, again experienced a lack of decorum from the audience at the Monday night (May 20) meeting.

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This photo of the Dogan Cobb Municipal Building, taken between 6 and 7 p.m. on May 20, shows Christmas lights still hanging on the eaves of the building. Christmas was Dec. 25.

<https://youtu.be/NpmBhOi3A9s>

In this video, Bronson residents Mary Tracy and Isaiah Williams tell the Town Council what they think about a marquee not being updated. Williston resident Linda Cooper was among the people who shared their opinions or asked questions from their seats, often before being recognized by the mayor. As shown in this video, Tracy indicates that she did not want to be videotaped although she was at a public meeting addressing elected and appointed leaders.

Historically, the Town Council has taken off the month of October from having its regular twice-monthly meetings.

Isaiah Williams, an outspoken town resident who comments at many meetings; Mary Tracy, a woman who sought appointment to the Town Council when a vacancy opened after a previous member left office before her term ended; Linda Cooper, a Williston resident who is a chronic complainer at municipal and county meetings, and every other person, or almost every other person who spoke to the Town Council, did not state their names or go to the podium that night.

Instead, they sat in their chairs in the audience and simply spoke, often without even being first recognized by Mayor Robert Partin. Mayor Partin, according to the town's code of ordinances, is tasked with conducting the meeting. The town's governing laws also call for a more orderly form of meeting.

Mayor Partin has allowed the lack of civility to continue, despite publicly saying the tolerance for such behavior was going to end.

At one point in the meeting, Tracy complained that the marquee in front of the Dogan Cobb Municipal Building did not have an updated message about the meeting date. Williams chimed in that some person regularly takes care of that. Tracy added a comment to Williams statement before Councilwoman Beatrice Roberts reeled in the complainers.

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Tracy made her verbal complaint on the matter that was not on the agenda, and this “issue” was not addressed during the point on the agenda designated for public participation.

When a journalist asked if the mayor planned to start conducting meetings in a more civilized manner, Partin, who had specifically had placed decorum on the agenda two meetings ago and who said orderly meetings would begin, said this matter would be on the agenda for discussion at the next meeting.

After Roberts regained the floor so that she could speak about a matter, she told the Town Council that the Cemetery Committee was planning to address the issue of a caved-in gravesite. She said an ATV may have run over it and caused the deep depression to appear over where a person is buried.

Internet Café Issue

In regard to issue of Internet cafés in town, which was brought up two meetings ago, Town Councilman Berlon Weeks made a motion, seconded by Town Councilman James Beck, which received a 5-0 vote of approval to place a six-month moratorium on Internet cafés in Bronson.

Rather than give the businessman who is interested in having an Internet café in Bronson a “yes” or “no” answer as to whether he can open his business there, the Town Council decided it did not know whether Internet cafés were legal or illegal in Florida. Town Clerk Shirley Miller provided the Town Council with information showing other municipalities had regulated Internet cafes in regard to hours of operation and the like.



Town Attorney Steven Warm

Inmate Workers

Another action the Bronson Town Council took Monday night was to consider using

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inmates from the work release program of the Florida Department of Corrections to perform some work, such as lawn maintenance at town facilities.

Town Attorney Steven Warm said someone has to pay the inmates because the *United States Constitution's* 13th Amendment forbids slavery.

Records show the 13th Amendment, which formally abolished slavery in the United States, passed the United States Senate on April 8, 1864, and the United States House on Jan. 31, 1865.

On Feb. 1, 1865, President Abraham Lincoln approved the Joint Resolution of Congress submitting the proposed amendment to the state legislatures. The necessary number of states ratified it by Dec. 6, 1865.

The text of the 13th Amendment to the *United States Constitution* provides that "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction."

Therefore, one could argue this is part of the punishment for crime, which is exempted in that document.

In any event, the Town of Bronson is conducting research to potentially have inmate workers performing jobs on town property.

Park Security

The James H. Cobb Park has been vandalized in the past. The cost for taxpayers to repair and replace items, as well as the time taken away from other town projects has led to measures to increase security.

Cameras that have infrared capabilities, and which have excellent resolution to help identify suspected vandals and thieves have been approved for purchase.

Another measure the Town Council is taking it is to ask Town Attorney Warm to create an ordinance setting hours of use for the park.

Fourth of July Is Firm

The Town Council voted unanimously to conduct its Fourth of July celebration with fireworks on the Fourth of July.

The Town Council budgeted \$5,000 again this year for the purchase of fireworks used on the night. Bronson Fire Chief Dennis Russell said the fire department will be launching them starting at 9 p.m. that night

And with Town Councilman Berlon Weeks leading the effort, the town leaders agreed to recognize on the Fourth of July, Robbie Blake and a committee of volunteers as the founding force for the park.

Blake, Edith Brown and many other volunteers also created the Bronson Youth League years ago. This shows that people working with government are the cornerstones that led to the park for the public, and to recreational services for youth coming to fruition in Bronson.