115 West Ventura Avenue, Clewiston, FL 33440

Agenda Item # 10

TO:	**City Commission of the City of Clewiston**
FROM:	**Thomas Lewis, Chief of Police**
VIA:	**Danny Williams, City Manager**
DATE:	**April 21, 2025**
SUBJECT:	**Consideration of *Ordinance No. 2025-03* on first reading amending the Clewiston Code of Ordinance, amending Chapter 54 Offenses; Creating Article 1 Sexual Offender Residency Requirements.**

Background:

Currently in the City of Clewiston, restrictions on sexual offenders are governed by state law and typically mandate an offender to reside at least 1,000 feet from a school, childcare facility, park, and playground with exceptions noted. The Hendry County Sheriff's Office is required by state law to register sex offenders that take up permanent or temporary residency anywhere in the county to include the city limits of Clewiston.

Over the past months, the City of Clewiston has seen an uptick in the number of sexual offenders taking residency within the city limits. Through discussion with the Sheriff's Office, it was learned that the City of LaBelle and Hendry County (unincorporated areas) have stricter local ordinances (over and above the state law) that create a 2,500-foot minimum distance from each of the locations, making Clewiston a more desirable place to seek residence as it is easier to find a complaint location.

A top priority of the Clewiston Police Department is to protect our most vulnerable population (our children) from sexual offenders and sexual predators. The adoption of the proposed ordinance will remove Clewiston as a more desirable place to reside, send a message to sexual offenders that they are not welcomed here, and provide the police department with additional tools to keep predators out of our community.

The ordinance passed on first reading on March 17, 2025, hearing with a motion of 5-0.

Recommendation:

Motion to approve *Ordinance No. 2025-03* on first reading amending the Clewiston Code of Ordinance, amending Chapter 54 Offenses; Creating Article 1 Sexual Offender Residency Requirements.