



MINUTES

City Commission Workshop: CynerGreen

4:00 PM – Thursday, June 19, 2025 – City Hall

Call to Order: 4:05 p.m.

Acknowledgement of Quorum and Proper Notice

PRESENT: Commissioner George Asbate, Vice Mayor Gary Ashcraft, Commissioner Michael Holland, Commissioner Emily Lee, Mayor Willie L. Hawkins

1. Workshop Item with Discussion and Direction: CynerGreen

1.1 Presentation from CynerGreen Hospitality Development

Tom Carrino, City Manager, explained the workshop was to hear a presentation from Cynergreen Hospitality Development regarding an unsolicited proposal from Danelle and Joe Hoffer pertaining to the Community Center site.

Danelle Hoffer noted bound volumes were provided to the Commissioners regarding the proposed Aquilo Resort & Spa. She thanked the Commissioners for their consideration. She stated it is a vision grounded in economic strategies, community impact and long-term partnership. She provided an overview of their company and its attributes. She introduced her husband Joe Hoffer and their daughter Riley Hoffer, a realtor. She provided a history of her background and the development of their company, highlighting her work with Gaylord National.

Ms. Hoffer provided a history of some of their development projects including Farmstead 44 on CR 44 and Huddle Eustis. She then provided an overview of their proposal for The Aquilo Resort and Spa to be located on Lake Eustis. She provided a disclaimer regarding the artist renderings. She cited the proposed buildings and details of the proposal: 1) 80 guest rooms and 18 guest suites; 2) 20,000 sq. ft. of event space; and 3) 275 space parking garage. She provided an aerial rendering of the site.

Ms. Hoffer reviewed the parking garage which would include 200 to 250 spaces adjacent to the resort and up to five levels. She noted they could go up more levels to provide additional parking if desired.

The Commission asked about their parking requirements with Ms. Hoffer indicating they're required to have one space per room. She explained they are providing more than that in order to have additional parking for the event space. She stated they are looking at Hilton and Marriott and they would require at least one space per room. She acknowledged the parking can be a half block away with Mr. Hoffer indicating that there has to be parking dedicated to the hotel.

The Commission asked about how customers would get from the hotel to the parking garage with Ms. Hoffer providing a map that showed how vehicles would route through the property and to the garage or hotel.

The Commission commented on the dedicated retail space with Ms. Hoffer explaining how that would look. She noted hotel employees and retail would also park in the garage.

Discussion was held regarding where the parking garage should be sited.

Ms. Hoffer reviewed their planned event space which would be located near the Clifford House and would seat up to 300 people inside. She added that the event lawn, gathering barn and pool cabana area would accommodate up to 1,000 people for a standing reception. She cited various possible event types and uses. She commented on their desire to put in gardens and partner with America in Bloom so they complement the Clifford House.

Further discussion was held regarding parking with Ms. Hoffer indicating the public could park for free in the facility. She explained there would be levels dedicated to the hotel and the guests would have to pay for valet parking.

Ms. Hoffer reviewed the proposed ballroom which would be approximately 6,000 sq. ft. and could accommodate between 300 and 500 people depending on use. She highlighted the Solvita Stair rising from the 6th floor to the 7th floor. She then noted the smaller event spaces on the 7th floor specifically noting the Barrel Room, and the small to mid-size meetings rooms (The Summit Rooms). She noted that all of the meeting rooms will have A/V and other amenities.

Ms. Hoffer presented an artist's rendering of the entrance to the resort and the hotel lobby. She commented on the concierge/adventure desk. She provided some renderings of guest rooms and cited the upscale products that would be provided in the rooms. She highlighted some of the possible vendors inside the hotel. She explained their plan is to own the businesses inside the hotel and hire locals to operate them but some of the spaces may be leased out.

Ms. Hoffer then reviewed the roof top space with the Cirrus Rooftop Bar and the challenges to be addressed to have it open air.

Discussion was held regarding blind mosquitoes and how they could be deterred.

Ms. Hoffer then stated that the Prop and Pearl Steakhouse and Seafood Counter would be located immediately below the rooftop bar. She commented on the possibility of leasing space to local restaurants. She then reviewed their proposal for Bay Street retail space and the Vale Spa.

Discussion was held regarding where the planned trail would be located and if they had to develop around the railroad tracks.

Ms. Hoffer reviewed what she noted as "the big stuff" and the financial impact on the City. She stated it would generate over 100 full time jobs and \$638,000 in annual property taxes. She highlighted how the resort would align with the City's strategic plan. She reported on their Aquilo Foundation for education and community advancement. She cited various programs the Foundation would support.

Ms. Hoffer then commented on their strategy to work with Ryan Benaglio to offer seaplane and resort packages. She cited their plan to also have water taxis and nature tours.

Ms. Hoffer reviewed their anticipated construction timeline and estimated 36 to 38 months for completion. She confirmed their intent to give preference to local contractors.

Ms. Hoffer asked the City to partner with them for use of the front parcel of the Waterman site. She emphasized the need for foot traffic and energy surrounding them. She proposed putting the Lake Eustis Market Courtyard on that parcel which would feature a street front farmer's market. She provided several concepts of what that would look like.

The Commission asked if they have done a resort development before with Ms. Hoffer indicating she has been involved with similar projects. She stated they don't know yet who the General Contractor would be.

Joe Hoffer explained about the use of various contractors. He stated they have done similar projects with other companies but not on their own.

Ms. Hoffer cited a number of projects that they were involved with previously.

The Commission asked if it would be done in stages or all at once with Ms. Hoffer indicating the Waterman parcel would be first and would take 18 to 24 months.

2. Adjournment: 5:14 p.m.

**These minutes reflect the actions taken and portions of the discussion during the meeting. To review the entire discussion concerning any agenda item, go to www.eustis.org and click on the video for the meeting in question. A DVD of the entire meeting or CD of the entire audio recording of the meeting can be obtained from the office of the City Clerk for a fee.*

CHRISTINE HALLORAN
City Clerk

WILLIE L. HAWKINS
Mayor/Commissioner