



Town Council Meeting
September 25, 2023 at 6:00 PM
Howey-in the-Hills Town Hall
101 N. Palm Ave.,
Howey-in-the-Hills, FL 34737

MINUTES

Mayor MacFarlane called the Town Council Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Mayor MacFarlane led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. Councilor Reneé Lannamañ delivered an invocation.

ROLL CALL

Acknowledgement of Quorum

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councilor Reneé Lannamañ | Councilor David Miles | Councilor George Lehning | Mayor Pro Tem Marie V. Gallelli | Mayor Martha MacFarlane

STAFF PRESENT:

Sean O’Keefe, Town Manager | John Brock, Town Clerk | Rick Thomas, Police Chief | Tom Wilkes, Town Attorney | Tom Harowski, Town Planner | Morgan Cates, Public Works Director | George Brown, Police Lieutenant

AGENDA APPROVAL/REVIEW

Motion made by Councilor Miles to approve the meeting’s agenda, while moving Item #3 to between Items #7 and #8, while also tabling the *Planning Board Omnibus Recommendations Package* portion of Item #3 to the 10/09/2023 Town Council Meeting; seconded by Councilor Lannamañ. Motion approved unanimously by voice vote.

Voting

Yea: Councilor Lannamañ, Councilor Miles, Councilor Lehning, Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli, Mayor MacFarlane

Nay: None

CONSENT AGENDA

Routine items are placed on the Consent Agenda to expedite the meeting. If Town Council/Staff wish to discuss any item, the procedure is as follows: (1) Pull the item(s) from the Consent Agenda; (2) Vote on the remaining item(s); and (3) Discuss each pulled item and vote.

1. The approval of the minutes and ratification and confirmation of all Town Council actions at the September 11, 2023 Town Council Meeting.

2. The approval of the minutes and ratification and confirmation of all Town Council actions at the September 7, 2023 Town Council Public Hearing on Tentative Budget and Proposed Millage Rate.

Motion made by Councilor Miles to approve the Consent Agenda; seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli. Motion approved unanimously by voice vote.

Voting

Yea: Councilor Lannamañ, Councilor Miles, Councilor Lehning, Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli, Mayor MacFarlane

Nay: None

PUBLIC HEARING

None

OLD BUSINESS

3. Presentation: **Town Planner Presentation on Land Development Code (LDC) and Comprehensive Plan Proposed Amendments**

This item was moved during Agenda Approval to appear between Items #7 and #8.

NEW BUSINESS

4. Consideration and Approval: **November and December Town Council Meeting Calendar**

Motion made by Councilor Miles to cancel the second December 2023 Town Council meeting which would have been scheduled for December 25, 2023; seconded by Councilor Lannamañ. Motion approved unanimously by voice vote.

Voting

Yea: Councilor Lannamañ, Councilor Miles, Councilor Lehning, Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli, Mayor MacFarlane

Nay: None

5. Discussion: **Road Improvement List**

Public Works Director, Morgan Cates, gave a short presentation on the priority list of which of the Town's roads would be repaired over the next 5 fiscal years. This list included: (2024) – N. Citrus Ave., (2025) E Gardenia St. and E Holly St., (2026) E. Tangerine Ave., (2027) N. Georgia Ave., W. Pine St., and W. Palmetto Ave., (2028) N. Valencia Ave. and Mission Lane.

Councilor Miles commended Mr. Cates for his assessment of the Town's roads and added that he would like to see the remainder of N Dixie Dr. added to the list.

Mayor MacFarlane asked if there was anything the Town could do with the trees in the right-of-way down E. Gardenia St., that would assist in this process, prior to the commencement of the road repair project.

6. Discussion: **Central Lake CDD Wastewater Communication**

Town Manager, Sean O'Keefe, explained that the Town had received an email from Central Lake CDD's representative Scott Line. Mr. Line had stated in the email that there were no ERU's available to

connect any of the properties on Central Ave. to wastewater service at this time, unless the Town agreed to a list of items that Central Lake CDD wanted.

Councilor Lehning stated that he was not in favor of any part of the Central Lake CDD's offer and that Mr. O'Keefe should write a response from the Town to that effect. Councilor Lannamañ agreed with Councilor Lehning's statement.

Mayor MacFarlane opened this item up for Public Comment.

Tim Everline, 1012 N Lakeshore Blvd. – Mr. Everline asked if the Howey Market could hook up to wastewater service.

Eric Gunesch, 448 Avila Pl. - Mr. Gunesch agreed with Councilor Lehning's assessment of the Central Lake CDD's offer.

7. Consideration and Approval: **Proposed Town Hall Workshop (Approval and Date Selection)**

Councilor Lannamañ introduced and explained this item. Councilor Lannamañ was asking that the Town Council host a Town Hall Meeting so that the Councilors could hear the opinions of the Town's residents. It was decided that this meeting would take place in the LEC room at the Marianne Beck Memorial Library on October 30, 2023 at 6 PM. The public will be given 5 minutes to speak. The public will need to fill out a comment card prior to the meeting to be able to speak.

Councilor Lannamañ stated that some of the things that she would like to learn from the residents is "where do you see the Town" and "what does the Town want to be known for". With the Town coming up on its 100th anniversary, Councilor Lannamañ suggested soliciting logo ideas from the public.

Councilor Lehning asked how the Council would handle non-residents who wanted to speak. It was suggested they should be limited or pushed to the end of the meeting. Town Attorney, Tom Wilkes, stated that, while that may be legal, it also may be inviting some to engage the Town in a lawsuit. Mr. Wilkes argued that it would be better to allow the non-residents to speak.

Mayor MacFarlane stated that she thought the Town Council should come up with a scope for the proposed Town Hall meeting.

Mayor MacFarlane opened this item up for Public Comment.

Richard Mulvany, 308 Dupont Cir. – Mr. Mulvany suggested that the Council look at getting a moderator for the Town Hall meeting. Mr. Mulvany also stated that he would like to see another joint Planning and Zoning / Town Council meeting in the future.

Mayor MacFarlane closed Public Comment for this item.

Mayor MacFarlane asked Councilor Lannamañ to write down her ideas for the scope of the meeting, and items that they wanted to solicit the opinions of the public. An example would be the identity of the Town.

Councilor Lannamañ suggested that the meeting should start with an icebreaker activity in which the Town Council would solicit Town logo ideas for the 100th anniversary. Councilor Lannamañ committed to creating a PowerPoint presentation on the proposed scope of the Town Hall meeting to the next Town Council meeting.

3. **Presentation: Town Planner Presentation on Land Development Code (LDC) and Comprehensive Plan Proposed Amendments (Moved from its original space in the meeting during the Agenda Approval section of the meeting.)**

Town Planner, Tom Harowski, summarized his report on this item to the Town Council. Mr. Harowski stated that the State of Florida requires all municipalities to complete an Evaluation and Appraisal Review (EAR) Process every seven years. With the amount of proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments, Mr. Harowski suggested that the Town start the EAR process.

Mr. Harowski explained that the proposed changes to the Land Development Code (LDC) fall into two categories, Administrative and Regulatory changes. Mr. Harowski suggested that, for the regulatory changes that were proposed to the LDC, the Council should follow the standard path of LDC changes by sending the regulatory items to the Planning and Zoning Board for review and recommendation.

Mayor MacFarlane stated that the primary goal for beginning the review of the Town's Comprehensive Plan and LDC was to get developers to understand that the Town would not allow 50- and 60-foot lot lines. Mayor MacFarlane stated that the Town Council wants to put in writing that the Town will not allow 50- or 60-foot lot lines, even in PUDs.

Councilor Miles suggested that the Town do away with PUDs and create two high density zoning designations. Councilor Miles wants to abolish PUDs and allow only straight zoning. Councilor Miles showed a photo he had taken of the Venezia Townhomes development to illustrate that having a one-car garage for each unit was going to be a problem for parking. Mr. Harowski explained that the Planning and Zoning Board's Omnibus amendment package included requirements for townhomes to have two-car garages and adequate driveway parking. Councilor Miles stated that Developers got around the density restrictions in our Howey Land Use Code by doing two things; 1) using the PUDs negotiated with staff to get around the density restrictions in the existing code; and 2) using the allowance for open space to be fulfilled by the 50% limit on use of wetlands as open space. He recommended that this use of wetlands be limited to only 25% of the open space requirements in the code. He suggested adding two high density zoning codes to allow zoning of the already existing and/or approved sites in PUDs that exceed the density requirements in existing zoning Codes.

Mayor MacFarlane asked if it was a requirement that the Town allow PUDs in the future. Mr. Harowski stated that he did not believe that it was a state requirement, but that, currently in the Town's code, Village Mixed Use areas require PUDs. Mr. Harowski did state that PUDs are merely a vehicle to allow negotiation within developments and can allow things that were not normally allowable under zoning classifications, but the Town Council had ultimate approval over accepting or not accepting the proposed PUD agreements.

Town Attorney, Tom Wilkes, suggested that doing away with PUDs may not help the Town. Mr. Wilkes stated that it appears that the Council now has some ideas about what development standards it would like to implement in future developments and would like to steer developers in that direction. Mr. Wilkes suggested codifying in the Comprehensive Plan and LDC what those standards are, but to keep PUDs, which would allow the Town Council some flexibility.

Mayor MacFarlane opened Public Comment for this item.

Richard Mulvany, 308 Dupont Cir. – Mr. Mulvany stated that the Planning and Zoning Board makes recommendations to the Town Council that they feel like the Council does not listen to. This is because the Board had made recommendations in the past that the Town Council did not follow.

Councilor Lehning asked Mr. Mulvany why he did not comment on the LDC and Comprehensive Plan when he had that chance. The Town Council had asked the seven members of the Planning and Zoning

Board to make comments on the LDC and Comprehensive Plan and only one member of the Planning and Zoning Board responded.

Mr. Mulvany stated that he would like to see a joint Planning and Zoning Board / Town Council Meeting so they could collectively decide how they would like the Town to look in ten or fifteen years.

Mayor MacFarlane asked what the time frame was to get the recommendations to the Planning and Zoning Board.

Councilor Lehning stated that all he wanted to see was the compiled list of comments that all of the Town Councilors had made on amending the Comprehensive Plan and LDC.

Mr. Wilkes suggested that he work with Mr. Harowski to compile the zoning and density changes together, in an effort to focus on density and bring something back to that Town Council that they can discuss and move through the amendment process (this compilation would focus just on the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments). Mr. Wilkes suggested they he and Mr. Harowski may be able to bring something back before the Town Council in two weeks, but certainly by the second meeting in October. Mr. Wilkes stated that, once the Comprehensive Plan amendment was in process, he and Mr. Harowski could then work on the necessary changes to the LDC and could have those to the Town Council in another two to four weeks.

Mayor MacFarlane opened Public Comment for this item again.

Tim Everline, 1012 N. Lakeshore Blvd. – Mr. Everline requested that the Town Council say no to the proposed Mission Rise development.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

8. Town Manager

Town Manager, Sean O'Keefe, thanked the staff and Town Council for their hard work on the N. Dixie Dr. repair project, as it had paid off. Mr. O'Keefe thanked Public Works Director, Morgan Cates, specifically for his hard work.

Mr. O'Keefe stated that he was happy to announce that he had made a job offer to someone for the Finance Supervisor position and looked forward to introducing them to the Town Council at its next meeting.

Mr. O'Keefe announced a "Meet and Greet" with Town Staff on October 12th at 10 AM.

COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS

9. Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli

Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli congratulated the Venezia HOA on a successful block party.

Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli stated that the Town Council needed to be respectful of others. When Councilors were acting in a disrespectful manner, it was the responsibility of the other Town Councilors to correct them.

10. Councilor Lehning

Councilor Lehning wanted Town Manager, Sean O'Keefe, to craft a letter to the Lake-Sumter MPO and Florida DOT requesting a study on creating a bypass road around the Town.

11. Councilor Miles

Councilor Miles gave an update on the status of the land acquisition off of Number Two Rd. The Town's legal team was still in negotiations with the prospective land donor about the location of the park that would be in their name and other issues. Councilor Miles was hopeful that something could be brought before the Council soon.

Councilor Miles wanted a status on the proposed Pine Park. Morgan Cates, Public Works Director, stated that he was still working with the Parks and Recreation Board, but that they still wanted a bike trailhead and pickleball courts on that location.

Councilor Miles mentioned that he had seen that 663 Avila Place was up for sale again. Councilor Miles wanted to make sure that the house was safe for habitation as it had major problems with sewer backups.

12. Councilor Lannamañ

Councilor Lannamañ had nothing to report.

13. Mayor MacFarlane

Mayor MacFarlane stated that she had looked into it, and there were no Florida Statute requirements that meeting agendas and packets were required to be sent out one week before the meetings.

Mayor MacFarlane stated that she believed that a map survey of the Town needed to be a priority in the coming year. Mayor MacFarlane stated that she would also like to know the current number of rooftops in the Town and the official 2020 census numbers.

Mayor MacFarlane stated that the Town Council may want to look at sending out information to the "old parts" of the Town on how those residents could add a second meter for the sole purposes of irrigation.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Any person wishing to address the Mayor and Town Council and who is not on the agenda is asked to speak their name and address. Three (3) minutes is allocated per speaker.

Tim Everline, 1012 N. Lakeshore Blvd. – Mr. Everline asked where the 5-acre parcel was that the Town might be receiving by donation.

Andi Everline, 1012 N. Lakeshore Blvd. – Mrs. Everline spoke about two boys in wheelchairs that use the sidewalk down Lakeshore Blvd. Mrs. Everline stated that the sticks that fall off the crepe myrtle trees get caught in their chairs and people should move the sticks off the sidewalks when they see them there.

Ann Griffin, 215 E Laurel Ave. – Ms. Griffin said that residents were not picking up the waste from when they walk their dogs and asked residents to please pick up after their pets.

Councilor Miles suggested that the Town look into installing dog waste poles that he has seen in other towns.

Joshua Husemann, 671 Avila Pl. – Mr. Husemann stated that the builder had installed a wastewater grinder pump at 663 Avila Pl. in an effort to take care of that house's wastewater problems.

Banks Helfrich, 910 Sams Lake Rd, Clermont Fl. – Mr. Helfrich spoke about the themes of character and integrity. Mr. Helfrich volunteered to be a moderator for the Town's October 30th Town Hall if they wanted him.

Todd Hawkins, 1110 N Lakeshore Blvd. – Mr. Hawkins was excited about the meeting and looked forward to long-term solutions on the Town’s development problems.

George Brown, Police Lieutenant, and Events Committee Chair – Lt. Brown announced an October 3rd Events Committee meeting and thanked everyone for their assistance.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, a motion was made by Councilor Lehning to adjourn the meeting; Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli seconded the motion. Motion was approved unanimously by voice vote.

The Meeting adjourned at 8:37 p.m. | **Attendees: 35**

Mayor Martha MacFarlane

ATTEST:

John Brock, Town Clerk

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