



Town Council Meeting
January 08, 2024 at 6:00 PM
Howey-in the-Hills Town Hall
101 N. Palm Ave.,
Howey-in-the-Hills, FL 34737

MINUTES

Call the Town Council Meeting to order
Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag
Invocation by Councilor Reneé Lannamañ

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 | Morgan Cates, Public Works Director | Fred DeVito, Finance Supervisor | Tom Wilkes, Town Attorney | Don Griffey, Town Engineer | John Brock, Town Clerk

AGENDA APPROVAL/REVIEW

Motion made by Councilor Miles to approve the Meeting’s Agenda; 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.

Town Manager, Sean O’Keefe stated that Item #5 “Consideration and Approval: **Water Treatment Plant Design Proposal - Half Contract**” was not ready and asked for it to be removed from the Consent Agenda.

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

2. The approval of the minutes and ratification and confirmation of all Town Council actions at the December 12, 2023 Town Council Workshop.
3. Consideration and Approval: **10-year Water Supply Facilities Work Plan Proposal**
4. Consideration and Approval: **Parks and Recreation Board Appointment**
5. Consideration and Approval: **Water Treatment Plant Design Proposal - Halff Contract**

ITEM #5 WAS REMOVED FROM CONSIDERATION

6. Consideration and Approval: **New Account - Seacoast Money Market Account**

Motion made by Councilor Miles to approve Consent Items 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6; 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

7. Consideration and Approval: (transmittal hearing) **Ordinance 2023-013 - Comprehensive Plan Amendment - Future Land Use Element**

Mayor MacFarlane read Ordinance 2023-013 out loud by title only:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS, FLORIDA, PERTAINING TO COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING; AMENDING THE FUTURE LAND USE ELEMENT (FLUE) OF THE TOWN'S ADOPTED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PURSUANT TO SECTION 163.3184 OF FLORIDA STATUTES; DESCRIBING THE ANALYSIS AND REEVALUATION UNDERTAKEN BY TOWN COUNCIL REGARDING RESIDENTIAL DENSITIES AND LOT SIZES IN POST-2010 RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE TOWN; AMENDING CERTAIN FLUE POLICIES TO MODIFY THE REQUIREMENTS IN THE "VILLAGE TOWN CENTER" AND "MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL" LAND-USE DESIGNATIONS REGARDING DWELLING UNITS PER ACRE, LOT SIZES, AND OPEN SPACE; AMENDING OTHER RELATED REQUIREMENTS FOR THE TWO LAND-USE DESIGNATIONS; AMENDING POLICY 1.2.6 OF THE FUTURE LAND USE ELEMENT TO SPECIFY AREAS WHERE THE TOWN MAY ALLOW LOTS SMALLER THAN ONE-FOURTH ACRE (10,890 SQ. FT.); PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION, SEVERABILITY, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Mayor MacFarlane asked Town Attorney, Tom Wilkes, to introduce and explain this item. Mr. Wilkes explained the process the Town needed to follow to amend its Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Wilkes stated that this meeting was considered the Transmittal Hearing and, assuming the Town Council approved the Ordinance, the next step was transmitting the Ordinance to the Department of Economic Opportunity for State review.

Mr. Wilkes reviewed the amendments that the Ordinance would make to the Town's current Comprehensive Plan. Councilor Miles pointed out that, in different areas of the Ordinance, 10,800 square feet was used for a size of a lot and, in other areas of the Ordinance, 10,890 square feet was used and he suggested that a consistent number be chosen. Mr. Wilkes said that 10,800 square feet had been used because that was the square footage that a 90' x 120' lot would give you. Councilor Miles said that

10,890 square feet was the exact square footage of a 1/4-acre lot. Mr. Wilkes and Councilor Miles then both suggested going with the 10,890 square feet for a lot.

Mayor MacFarlane opened Public Comment for this item only.

Tim Everline, 1012 N. Lakeshore Blvd. – Mr. Everline was upset the meeting packet was late and wanted people to be held accountable.

Mayor MacFarlane closed Public Comment for this item.

Councilor Miles made a motion to approve Ordinance 2023-013 with some changes to be made during a discussion period; there was no second for this motion.

Councilor Lehning made a motion to table this item to a future meeting and this was seconded by Councilor Lannamañ. Councilor Lehning stated that an example of a reason to table this item for further discussion was that, at one point in the amendment, developers are allowed 4 units per acre if the development has a “substantial park.” Councilor Lehning wanted to know what a “substantial park” was.

Councilor Miles stated that the amendment states that at least 1/4-acre lots are required for 50% of a development, but he wants that changed to 100%. Councilor Miles stated that he thinks the edit that the Planning and Zoning Board made needed to be rewritten by the Town Attorney.

Motion made by Councilor Lehning to table this item to a future meeting; seconded by Councilor Lannamañ. Motion was approved by roll call vote.

Voting

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

Nay: Councilor Miles, Mayor MacFarlane

The Town Council decided to hold a Town Council Workshop meeting at 4 PM on January 22, 2024, to discuss this item.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

8. Presentation: **Annual Town Attorney Sunshine Law Training**

Town Attorney, Tom Wilkes, gave a 15-minute training presentation on Sunshine Law and Public Records.

9. Discussion: **FDOT Update - Hillside Groves**

Town Engineer, Don Griffey, reviewed his report about his meeting with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) regarding the proposed intersection on SR19 in front of Hillside Groves development. Mr. Griffey explained that the 4-lane divided intersection that the Town Council had wanted to require the developer to create going into the development would not be allowed due to safety issues.

Mr. Griffey stated that FDOT told him that their evaluation was currently based only off of the residential component of the development and would be reevaluated at a later time when and if the commercial component is proposed. Councilor Miles was concerned about the cost for the Town if and when the commercial phase is proposed. Councilor Miles stated that he just tonight learned that the owners of the commercial property were different from the residential property owners and Councilor Miles wanted to require them to 4-lane the intersection when they submit a proposal in the future.

Mr. Griffey stated that FDOT's preference for this intersection would be a roundabout and would be safer for traffic going through that area. Mr. Griffey stated that a roundabout would work to slow down traffic on SR 19. Mr. Griffey stated that he went and reviewed the plans, and a roundabout would fit if the Town allowed some encroachment on the Town's property on the other side of SR 19.

Mr. Griffey stated that the next step in the process for this intersection was for FDOT to issue a Notice of Intent (NOI) for the intersection. After the NOI, a permit would be issued for the construction and there would be time for the Town to consider a roundabout for the intersection.

Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli asked who would pay for a roundabout. Mr. Griffey stated that the developers would have to pay for it.

Mayor MacFarlane opened Public Comment for this item only.

Tim Everline, 1012 N. Lakeshore Blvd. – Mr. Everline stated that the intersection of SR 19 and 455 was so congested that people were cutting through the Arrowhead neighborhood.

Mayor MacFarlane closed Public Comment for this item.

Motion made by Councilor Miles to move forward with the roundabout at the intersection on SR 19 in front of the proposed Hillside Groves development; seconded by Councilor Lannamañ. Motion passed unanimously by voice-vote.

Voting

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

Nay: None

Mr. Griffey stated that he would get with both FDOT and the Hillside Groves developer to let them know about the Town's decision.

10. Discussion: **Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)**

Motion made by Councilor Miles to table this item to a future Workshop meeting; seconded by Councilor Lannamañ.

Voting

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

Nay: None

The Town Council decided that the Workshop for the CIP discussion would be on February 12, 2024, at 4 PM.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

11. Town Hall

Town Clerk, John Brock, let the Town Council know that Alpha Inspection and the Town's previous Building Official, Shane Gerwig, had gone their separate ways. In the interim of Alpha Inspections hiring/promoting a new Building Official for the Town, Jeff Gerling would be the Town's temporary Building Official. Starting on February 1, 2024 Matt Fretwell would be the Town's new Building Official.

12. Police Department

This report was included in the meeting's packet.

13. Code Enforcement

This report was included in the meeting's packet.

14. Public Works

Public Works Director, Morgan Cates, stated that the Town has contracted a surveyor for the North Citrus Ave. project.

Mr. Cates stated that the Town Engineer has contracted a geotechnical surveyor for Peak Park area. The cost of the survey would be between \$8,500 and \$11,600.

Mr. Cates stated that he had completed the Request for Proposal (RFP) for the replacement of the boardwalk at Sara Maude Mason Preserve. Councilor Miles was concerned about the cost of this project and the expected life of a new boardwalk.

Mr. Cates stated that he expected to send out the RFP for the repair/replacement of some of the Town's finger piers by the end of the month.

15. Library

Councilor Miles stated that he had seen the design for a further expansion of the library in the CIP. Councilor Miles stated that he wanted the Library Director to come and present this project to the Town Council during to the CIP workshop.

16. Parks & Recreation Advisory Board / Special Events

None

17. Town Attorney

None

18. Finance Supervisor

Finance Supervisor, Fred DeVito, stated that the Town's audit was moving forward. Councilor Miles asked about the status of the encumbrance module in the Town's accounting software. Mr. DeVito stated that he had completed a test run using the encumbrance module.

Councilor Miles stated that he wanted to see changes in the monthly finance report that was submitted to the Town Council. Mr. DeVito stated that he would work with Councilor Miles to make changes to the monthly report.

19. Town Manager

Town Manager, Sean O’Keefe, reminded the Town Council about the two Workshop meetings that the Town Council had just created. Mr. O’Keefe stated that the Town offices were closed for the holiday on Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Mr. O’Keefe stated that a resident had recently voiced concerns about the Town’s water quality, Mr. O’Keefe let the Town Council know that the Town had completed a water quality test at the resident’s house and the Town’s water passed this test.

Mr. O’Keefe wished Councilor Lehning a happy 80th birthday.

COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS

20. Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli

Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli told the Town Council that they should see more details about the wastewater treatment option during the January 22, 2024 meeting.

Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli suggested that the Town look into installing electric car chargers at the library. Mayor MacFarlane tasked Public Works Director, Morgan Cates, to direct his new Administrative Assistant, Brianna Pino, to research installing electric car chargers.

Councilor Miles congratulated the Finance Supervisor on getting a new interest-bearing Money Market account for the Town and transferring money into it. Councilor Miles noted that this change was estimated to bring over \$78,000 in previously unbudgeted revenue into the Town.

21. Councilor Lehning

Councilor Lehning stated that he wanted to see an estimate of the cost to operate a Town-owned Wastewater Treatment Plant. Councilor Lehning stated that he wanted to see this prior to making a decision on this issue and wanted an independent expert to review the numbers.

Councilor Lehning stated that a resident had complained to him about not having a good number to reach the Howey Police Department for non-emergency issues. Town Clerk, John Brock, stated that the Police Department did have a good number to use for off hours for non-emergency issues. The non-emergency phone number that a resident could use was 352-343-2101, option 4. Mr. Brock showed where the Town advertised this on the Town’s website.

Councilor Lehning reminded residents not to park on the road in a manner that blocks the roads.

22. Councilor Miles

Councilor Miles asked about a status update on the grant submission for the project that would purchase and install backup lift station pumps. Mr. Cates stated that he is in constant contact with FDEM and is awaiting their decision.

Councilor Miles asked for an update on the Stormwater Grant proposal. Mr. Cates stated he had spoken with the St. John River Water Management District and the Town would be giving them a survey of the property where the project would occur, and this process was ongoing.

Councilor Miles brought up the water quality issue that the Town Manager had brought up during his report. Councilor Miles stated that the Town has budgeted an amount each year to work on replacing ductile iron pipes in the Town. Councilor Miles suggested that the Town get a new SRF loan to pay for the project and get it done sooner, rather than breaking this up over multiple years.

Councilor Miles suggested that the Town would need more Engineering assistance than the Town's contracted Engineer, Don Griffey, could supply. Councilor Miles wanted a status update on the Town's Consultants Continuing Negotiations Agreement for Engineering Services that was underway. Councilor Miles wanted the new staff in the Town to assist with the project and assist with the Town acquiring grants.

Councilor Miles reminded the Town Council that they would be revisiting the issue of Wastewater Options in two weeks and that he would make sure that there was an answer for Councilor Lehning's cost question.

Councilor Miles asked for a status update on the Pine Park Project. Mr. Cates stated that he was working on getting the driveway and trails completed this year.

Councilor Miles asked the other Town Councilors to agree that N. Citrus Ave. should be widened to 24' during its repair project. Councilor Lannamañ and Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli were concerned about the cost of widening the road and wanted to see what this cost would be before making a decision.

Councilor Miles asked the Town Manager if Number Two Road would be sufficiently widened from the border of the Town to SR 19 once both Hillside Groves and Mission Rise were built. Mr. O'Keefe stated that it would be just within the Town's border though, not the county portion of the road.

Councilor Miles stated that he noticed in the Public Utilities Monthly Report that the Venezia Townhomes builder had caused a sewer line to need repairing. Councilor Miles wanted to know if the builder would be charged. It was stated that the builder would be charged.

Councilor Miles stated that he wanted to see a project of moving Talichet's wastewater lift station into the Town's control/inventory. Councilor Miles tasked Mr. Cates to approach Ron Roberts, the developer of Talichet, and ask him to pay for bringing the lift station up to Town specifications.

Councilor Miles stated that he had seen that there was a repair needed on one of the bathrooms in the Town's Library and asked Mr. Cates if this was a major repair. Mr. Cates stated that it was not a major repair.

Councilor Miles asked Mr. DeVito about the Police Retirement Fund and why it seemed to go down in a recent report. Mr. DeVito stated that this was because the report had incomplete information, that he was still waiting on some Police Retirement Fund banking numbers.

Councilor Miles stated that the interest rate that was on the 10-year Water Supply Facilities Work Plan Proposal that the Town Council approved had an incorrect interest rate on it and he asked the Town Manager to correct it prior to signing the contract.

23. Councilor Lannamañ

Councilor Lannamañ asked about the possibility of finding a grant to pay for repainting the Town's historic water tower. Councilor Lannamañ stated that she would like to see the water tower repainted prior to the Town's 100th anniversary.

Councilor Lannamañ suggested that the Town set up a contest to create a new logo to help celebrate the Town's 100th anniversary. Councilor Lannamañ stated she would like to see the Town's Events Committee start working on planning the Founder's Day celebration for the 100th anniversary now.

24. Mayor MacFarlane

Mayor MacFarlane stated that she would like a status update in the future about the project to replace the Town's water lines.

Mayor MacFarlane stated that Lake County was closing fire stations, like the new fire station at Lake Gem. Mayor MacFarlane wanted an update on the County's interest in land acquisition of purchasing a portion of the Town's property. Mr. O'Keefe stated that the County Fire Department wanted to purchase a minimum of 3 acres as close to the Mission Inn front gates as possible.

Councilor Miles stated that he would like to talk about the Town purchasing the Langford land during the CIP workshop.

Mayor MacFarlane asked Councilor Lannamañ for the Venezia HOA to give a definitive statement about whether the HOA would like a back entrance to the neighborhood and if the HOA would like a trail that connects to Pine Park. Councilor Lannamañ stated that the HOA would put out a poll for the residents to vote on it.

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.

Ann Griffin, 215 E Laurel Ave. – Ms. Griffin asked, when the Town widens a road, would it be the resident's responsibility to move their sprinkler system. Mr. Cates stated that it would be and that he described his process of notifying affected residents.

Ms. Griffin read out loud a letter that the owner of the Howey Mansion had given her in reference to the proposed Asma rezoning parcel, which lies next to the Howey Mansion. This letter stated that the owner of the Howey Mansion does not want the Town to allow that parcel of land to be rezoned commercial.

Ms. Griffin stated that she wants the Town's fire engine to be repaired prior to the Town's 100th anniversary.

Tim Everline, 1012 N Lakeshore Blvd. – Mr. Everline stated that he never received a Welcome Packet when he moved into the Town. Mr. Everline stated that a dog was defecating along N. Lakeshore Blvd., and he wanted something to be done about it.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, a motion was made by Councilor Lannamañ to adjourn the meeting; Councilor Miles seconded the motion. Motion was approved unanimously by voice vote.

The Meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m. | **Attendees: 29**

Mayor Martha MacFarlane

ATTEST:

John Brock, Town Clerk