



Town Council Meeting
September 9, 2024, 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 Martha MacFarlane

MEMBERS EXCUSED ABSENT:

Mayor Pro Tem Marie V. Gallelli

STAFF PRESENT:

Sean O’Keefe, Town Manager | Tom Wilkes, Town Attorney | Morgan Cates, Public Works Director | Rick Thomas, Police Chief | John Brock, Deputy Town Manager / Town Clerk

AGENDA APPROVAL/REVIEW

Town Manager, Sean O’Keefe, explained that the applicant has requested that Agenda Item #4 be moved to the next Town Council meeting.

Councilor Miles had a question that pertained to Agenda Item #7 (**Councilor Lannamañ Rebuttal to Land Development Code amendments 2024**). Councilor Miles pointed out that Councilor Lannamañ was on the losing side of the vote on this issue during the last Town Council meeting and Councilor Miles asked the Town Attorney if Councilor Lannamañ was allowed to bring up this item again under Roberts Rules of Order. Town Attorney, Tom Wilkes, stated that, typically under Roberts Rules of Order, an individual on the losing side of a vote can not bring the item back up for vote again, however, there was nothing that kept the Town Council from having a discussion on the item.

Motion made by Councilor Miles to approve the meeting’s agenda while removing Agenda Item #4; seconded by Councilor Lannamañ. Motion approved unanimously by voice vote.

Voting

Yea: Councilor Lannamañ, Councilor Miles, Councilor Lehning, 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.

Motion made by Councilor Miles, Seconded by Mayor MacFarlane.

Voting Yea: Councilor Lannamañ, Councilor Miles, Councilor Lehning, Mayor MacFarlane

1. The approval of the minutes and ratification and confirmation of all Town Council actions at the August 26, 2024, Town Council Meeting.
2. The approval of the minutes and ratification and confirmation of all Town Council actions at the September 4, 2024, Town Council Public Hearing on Tentative Budget and Proposed Millage Rate.

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

Voting

Yea: Councilor Lannamañ, Councilor Miles, Councilor Lehning, Mayor MacFarlane

Nay: None

PUBLIC HEARING

None

OLD BUSINESS

3. Consideration and Approval: **SLRTAC Agreement**

Mayor MacFarlane asked James Kinzler with Kinz Consulting to speak. Mr. Kinzler stated that he was the oversight consultant for the South Lake Regional Technical Advisor Committee (SLRTAC). Mr. Kinzler stated that SLRTAC was an advisory/fact-finding committee established for projects that promote non-traditional water supplies. The goal of SLRTAC is to aid and develop a long-term sustainable and affordable water supply for Lake County.

Mr. Kinzler stated that the City of Groveland volunteered to be the procuring agency for SLRTAC; the prior procuring agency was the City of Clermont. Mr. Kinzler stated that a member agency can exit SLRTAC with written notice of 60 days.

Mr. Kinzler stated that one of the benefits of joining SLRTAC would be that the St Johns River Water Management District strongly encourages a collaborative approach and, by joining SLRTAC, it should aid the Town of Howey-in-the-Hills in acquiring a longer Consumptive Use Permit (CUP).

Mayor MacFarlane opened Public Comment for this item only.

Eric Gunesch, 448 Avila Pl. – Mr. Gunesch stated that it seemed like a good idea for the Town to join SLRTAC and the cost of joining seemed like a nominal amount.

Mayor MacFarlane closed Public Comment for this item.

Motion made by Councilor Lannamañ to approve the SLRTAC Agreement; seconded by Mayor MacFarlane. Motion approved by roll call vote.

Voting

Yea: Councilor Lannamañ, Councilor Lehning, Mayor MacFarlane

Nay: Councilor Miles

4. Consideration and Approval: **Cedar Creek Water Agreement**

This Agenda Item was removed during the Agenda Approval section of the meeting.

5. Discussion: **N. Citrus Ave. Reconstruction Project**

Town Manager, Sean O’Keefe, gave a status update on this project. Mr. O’Keefe explained that the Town Engineer has submitted access permit applications to FDOT and a permit application to DEP for water main abandonment and replacement and hopes to have approval for these in early October. Mr. O’Keefe stated that the Town’s surveying company, George F Young, is actively working on a re-platting of 4 parcels on the north side of the Citrus and Camelia intersection. Mr. O’Keefe stated that, in addition to that re-platting work, George F Young also needs to submit sketches and describing for the 3 lots on the east side of Citrus Ave. Mr. O’Keefe stated that he expected completion from George F Young was within the next two weeks. Mr. O’Keefe stated that there would be multiple rounds of interaction with the property owners and their lawyers prior to the final completion of the re-platting project. Mr. O’Keefe stated that the final step of the re-platting project would be its approval by the Town Council.

Mr. O’Keefe stated that, when the re-platting project is complete, the Town then could schedule the repaving project with Paquette Company.

Mayor MacFarlane opened Public Comment for this item only.

Eric Gunesch, 448 Avila Pl. – Mr. Gunesch stated that this was a necessary expense and should be approved.

Graham Wells, 718 Calabria Way - Mr. Wells questioned if it was normal procedure to accept a motion on a discussion item.

Town Attorney, Tom Wilkes, stated that it could be done.

Motion made by Councilor Miles to approve Paquette’s \$414,966.75 North Citrus Ave Road improvement bid, with the \$4,356.75 to be funded out of the sidewalk maintenance budget line (in the General Fund) and the potable water improvement of \$64,490 to be funded out of the water fund and to fund the remaining portion out of the Transportation Fund with the Notice to Proceed not be done until the re-platting project is complete and the Town Manager signs off on it; seconded by Councilor Lehning. Motion approved by roll call vote.

Voting

Yea: Councilor Miles, Councilor Lehning, Mayor MacFarlane

Nay: Councilor Lannamañ

NEW BUSINESS

6. Consideration and Approval: **Deaccession of Town Inventory**

Town Manager, Sean O’Keefe, explained that the Town’s charter called for deaccessioning (or retiring or throwing away) of Town inventory to require the approval of the Town Council. Mr. O’Keefe explained that Town Staff was requesting to auction off three of the former Police Department vehicles.

Mayor MacFarlane opened Public Comment for this item only.

Tim Everline, 1012 N Lakeshore Blvd. – Mr. Everline questioned how the auction site was selected and that he felt the Town should receive more money than what the staff suggested the vehicles would receive at auction.

Mayor MacFarlane closed Public Comment for this item.

Motion made by Councilor Miles to approve of the deaccession of the 3 former Police Department vehicles; seconded by Mayor MacFarlane. Motion approved unanimously by roll call vote.

Voting

Yea: Councilor Lannamañ, Councilor Miles, Councilor Lehning, Mayor MacFarlane

Nay: None

7. Discussion: **Councilor Lannamañ Rebuttal to Land Development Code amendments 2024**

Councilor Lannamañ stated that she asked to bring this item up before Town Council because she thought the Land Development Code (LDC) amendments that were approved during the last Town Council meeting were anti-development. Councilor Lannamañ stated that, with the growth that is occurring around the borders of the Town and the economic environment, she was very concerned about the sustainability of the Town.

Councilor Lannamañ asked Town Attorney, Tom Wilkes, how easy it was to make future amendments to the LDC. Mr. Wilkes stated that it was fairly easy, LDC amendments needed to be consistent with the Town’s Comprehensive Plan (which is much harder to amend) but that LDC amendments could be done with a simple Ordinance.

Mayor MacFarlane stated that she thought the previously proposed “grandfather” clause for MDR-1 zoning was problematic, which is why she was not in support of it.

Councilor Miles stated that five developments were approved if the wastewater problem was solved. Councilor Miles stated that he thought Mission Rise, Watermark, and Whispering Heights would be nice improvements to the Town.

Mayor MacFarlane opened Public Comment for this item only.

Eric Gunesch, 448 Avila Pl. – Mr. Gunesch reviewed his views on growth in and around the Town of Howey-in-the-Hills.

Tim Everline, 1012 N Lakeshore Blvd. – Mr. Everline stated that he believed the residents want responsible growth, not “no growth”. Mr. Everline stated that he thought that the Town had a financial problem due to spending too much money before it has it in hand and believed that the Town should tighten its spending.

Fran Wagler, 409 W Central Ave. – Mrs. Wagler stated that the Town shouldn’t spend what it doesn’t have.

Alan Hayes, 111 Island Dr. – Mr. Hayes stated that the Planning and Zoning Board had recommended some reversals in garage size but does not recommend any reversals in lot sizes. He said that residents are willing to pay higher taxes for their unique lifestyle.

Peter Tuite, 300 E Croton Way – Mr. Tuite said that he agreed with the other public commenters and that, if someone didn’t know that taxes would be high here, they shouldn’t move here.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

8. Town Hall

This report was included in the meeting's packet.

9. Police Department

Rick Thomas, Police Chief, thanked everyone that had attended the Tip-A-Cop fundraiser that raised money for the Police Department's charity. Chief Thomas stated that they had raised over \$4,000.

10. Code Enforcement

This report was included in the meeting's packet.

11. Public Works

Public Works Director, Morgan Cates, stated that the Town would be participating in a Lake County Waterway Cleanup Event on September 21st.

12. Library

This report was included in the meeting's packet.

13. Parks & Recreation Advisory Board / Special Events

None

14. Town Attorney

None

15. Finance Supervisor

This report was included in the meeting's packet.

16. Town Manager

Town Manager, Sean O'Keefe, stated that he and the Public Works Director, Morgan Cates, had met with the Talichet HOA about the possibility of the Town taking over their wastewater lift station.

COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS

17. Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli

None / Absent

18. Councilor Lehning

Councilor Lehning asked about the status of the Central Lake CDD agreement, Town Manager, Sean O'Keefe, stated he was expecting to be able to see a new draft later in the week. Councilor Lehning stated that, prior to the Town Council making a decision on an additional agreement with the Central Lake CDD, he wanted to see an independent professional organization inspect the wastewater treatment plant.

Councilor Lehning stated that he was concerned about developers attempting to get PUD agreements and their ability to negotiate with future Town Councils.

19. Councilor Miles

Councilor Miles said that he would not be in attendance at the October 14, 2024, Town Council meeting.

Councilor Miles said he thought it was grossly unfair for 3 members of the Town Council to hold a conversation during the Town Council meetings without allowing dissenting conversations.

Councilor Miles stated that he believed that the Planning and Zoning Board's last-minute recommendation to the Land Development Code (LDC) amendment Ordinance were counterproductive.

20. Councilor Lannamañ

Councilor Lannamañ stated that she heard residents loud and clear and that she cares deeply for the Town. Councilor Lannamañ said she does not want the Town to be suffocated and that sustainability for the Town is most important.

21. Mayor MacFarlane

Mayor MacFarlane said that volunteers were very important to the Town and that she would not have been able to get by without them during her term. Mayor MacFarlane reminded everyone that the new Town Council will need to select a new MPO representative.

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.

Eric Gunesch, 448 Avila Pl. – Mr. Gunesch stated that he hoped the petty bickering in the Town Council would come to an end. Mr. Gunesch stated that he believed the Town needed to expand but did not know how.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The Meeting adjourned at 7:59 p.m. | **Attendees: 41**

Mayor Martha MacFarlane

ATTEST:

John Brock, Town Clerk