



Town Council CIP Workshop

January 28, 2025 at 2:00 PM
Howey-in the-Hills Town Hall
101 N. Palm Ave.,
Howey-in-the-Hills, FL 34737

MINUTES

Mayor Wells called the Town Council Meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.
Mayor Wells led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.
Councilor Reneé Lannamañ delivered an invocation.

ROLL CALL

Acknowledgement of Quorum

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Pro Tem Tim Everline | Councilor Jon Arnold | Councilor Reneé Lannamañ | Councilor David Miles | Mayor Graham Wells

STAFF PRESENT:

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

NEW BUSINESS

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

Mayor Graham Wells opened the discussion, and Town Manager, Sean O’Keefe, provided an overview of the CIP’s dual purpose: serving as both a budgeting and planning tool and as a critical document for competitive grant applications. He emphasized that many grant programs require projects to be listed in the CIP for funding consideration.

One of the most significant discussions centered around the Municipal Complex project, which proposes a new facility to house Town Hall, the Police Department, and other municipal functions. Councilor Miles strongly advocated for consolidating the Town Hall Retrofit and Police Station Expansion and Renovation projects into the Municipal Complex project, arguing that spending millions to retrofit aging buildings was an inefficient use of funds. He proposed eliminating separate allocations for Town Hall and the Police Station and instead directing those funds toward designing and constructing a new complex. Mr. O’Keefe supported this approach, suggesting that the project timeline be moved forward to expedite planning efforts. The Council reached a consensus to combine these projects into a single line item in the CIP and accelerate the design phase.

Regarding infrastructure projects, Councilor Miles proposed modifying the Venezia South Second Access project to also include an additional access point for the Talichet community. Mr. O’Keefe confirmed, that instead of handling them as separate initiatives, they would be consolidated into a single project, with implementation staggered between Fiscal Year 2027 and Fiscal Year 2029. Public Services Director, Morgan Cates, acknowledged the need for updated naming and scheduling to reflect these changes.

The Council also discussed taking over and upgrading the Talichet Lift Station. After a discussion involving Mr. Huseman, a resident of the Talichet neighborhood, the Council agreed to include \$150,000 in the current fiscal year, as well as an additional \$150,000 in the next fiscal year to leverage potential grant funding. Councilor Miles urged staff to begin the grant application process immediately, given the typical two-year approval cycle for infrastructure funding.

Another critical discussion focused on Impact Fee Studies. Mr. O’Keefe explained that impact fee rates must be based on documented capital needs, which require periodic studies to justify adjustments. Mayor Pro Tem Everline emphasized the urgency of conducting a new study to ensure the Town secures adequate funding from future development. Councilor Miles noted that the previous Council had already directed staff to conduct impact fee studies over a year ago, specifically for wastewater, stormwater, and roads. However, Mr. O’Keefe reported that consultants had advised against a stormwater impact fee, recommending a stormwater assessment instead. Mayor Wells cautioned that, while studies could justify higher fees, they do not guarantee increased revenue, citing past experiences where proposed fee hikes were ultimately lower than expected. The Council ultimately agreed to move forward with a comprehensive impact fee study, estimated to cost between \$50,000 and \$100,000 per impact fee study, to ensure future development contributes its fair share to infrastructure costs.

Another significant revision to the CIP was the Florida Avenue and Number 2 Road intersection upgrade. Councilor Miles questioned the necessity of this project, prompting Public Services Director Cates to explain that the improvements were intended to accommodate increased truck traffic resulting from the widening of Number 2 Road and the anticipated development of the Hillside Groves development. Mr. O’Keefe added that the upgrade aligns with efforts to reduce truck congestion on SR 19 at South Florida Avenue.

The Water Tower Repair and Repainting project was also debated. While the project had previously been removed from the CIP, Councilor Miles objected to its removal, citing concerns over long-term structural integrity and the tower’s visual impact. Councilor Lannamañ supported reinstating the project, recalling an estimated cost of \$400,000 but acknowledging financial constraints in Fiscal Year 2025. Mr. Cates reported that an engineering assessment had found the structure to be in relatively good condition compared to other similar towers. He recommended keeping the project on the CIP to maintain eligibility for grant funding.

The Council also discussed the potential acquisition of a privately owned wastewater treatment facility to ensure long-term infrastructure sustainability. Mayor Wells suggested initiating discussions with the facility owner to explore purchase options. Councilor Miles argued that securing ownership before approving additional Equivalent Residential Units (ERUs) for new developments would prevent unnecessary expenditures. Mr. O’Keefe confirmed that legal counsel would be engaged to explore acquisition pathways, including phased purchasing or immediate negotiations.

Town Clerk, John Brock, confirmed that the revised CIP would be sent to the Planning and Zoning Board for review, as it is part of the Town’s Comprehensive Plan. After that review, the CIP will return to the Town Council for final approval, with additional discussions expected during the budget cycle. Councilor Arnold emphasized the importance of refining budget forecasts to enhance fiscal planning.

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.

None

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 4:47p.m. | **Attendees: 20**

Mayor Wells

ATTEST:

John Brock, Town Clerk

DRAFT