



Town Council Meeting

June 27, 2022 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.

ROLL CALL

Acknowledgement of Quorum

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councilor George Lehning | Councilor Marie V. Gallelli | Councilor Rick Klein (via Zoom) | Mayor Pro-Tem Ed Conroy (via Zoom) | Mayor Martha MacFarlane

STAFF PRESENT:

Sean O'Keefe, Town Administrator | John Brock, Town Clerk | George Brown, Police Lieutenant | James Southall, Public Utilities Supervisor (via Zoom) | Tara Hall, Library Director (via Zoom) | Tom Wilkes, Town Attorney (via Zoom) | Tom Harowski, Town Planner (via Zoom)

Motion made by Councilor Gallelli to allow Councilor Klein and Mayor Pro-Tem Conroy to participate and vote during the meeting remotely via Zoom due to extenuating circumstances; seconded by Councilor Lehning. Motion approved unanimously by voice vote.

AGENDA APPROVAL/REVIEW

Motion made by Councilor Gallelli to approve the meeting's agenda; seconded by Councilor Lehning. Motion approved unanimously by voice vote.

Voting

Yea: Councilor Lehning, Councilor Gallelli, Councilor Klein, Mayor Pro-Tem Conroy, 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 June 13, 2022 Town Council Meeting.
2. The approval of the minutes and ratification and confirmation of all Town Council actions at the May 26, 2022 Town Council Workshop Meeting.

Motion made by Councilor Lehning to approve all items on the Consent Agenda; seconded by Councilor Gallelli. Motion approved unanimously by roll-call vote.

Voting

Yea: Councilor Lehning, Councilor Gallelli, Councilor Klein, Mayor Pro-Tem Conroy, Mayor MacFarlane

Nay: None

PUBLIC HEARING

None

OLD BUSINESS

3. Discussion: **Provide direction to Town staff regarding Planning Board recommendation to modify parking requirements for townhouse units.**

Mayor MacFarlane asked Town Administrator, Sean O'Keefe, to introduce and explain this topic. Mr. O'Keefe explained that the Planning & Zoning Board had made a recommendation to modify parking requirement for townhouse units.

Town Planner, Tom Harowski, explained that the Planning & Zoning Board had made a recommendation to amend the Land Development Code (LDC) to require townhouse multi-family dwellings to have a two-car garage. Currently the LDC only requires that a two-car garage for RE Rural Estate, SFR Single Family Residential, MDR-1 Medium Density Residential, and MDR-2 Medium Density Residential. Single-Family dwellings in TC-R Town Center Residential and TC-F Town Center Flex require only a one-car garage. Also, currently the LDC only requires a one-car garage for townhouses.

Mr. Harowski explained that the addition of the requirement for a two-car garage would impact the cost of new townhouses. Mr. Harowski explained that the addition of a two-car garage instead of a one-car garage would add approximately 200 square feet of garage space which, at \$80 a square foot, would equate to an approximately \$1,600 increase per townhouse to the builder.

Mr. Harowski explained that the Planning & Zoning Board had also discussed the aesthetics of the townhomes as it relates to adding a two-car garage. Mr. Harowski explained that, from the discussion of the Planning & Zoning Board, the conclusion and recommendation was that the addition of an additional off-street parking spot was more important than the aesthetics of the townhomes.

Mr. Harowski stated that, prior to the Town staff taking the time and expense to prepare an ordinance to change the LDC to require townhouses to have a two-car garage, it should be determined what the will of the Town Council was.

Mayor MacFarlane explained that this would not affect the Venezia Townhomes and Hillside Grove since their PUD agreements had already been approved with the old standards.

Mayor Pro-Tem Conroy stated that when he looked at other townhouses in the area (specifically Bishops Gate and Mission Inn), they have two-car garages already. Mayor Pro-Tem Conroy asked that, if the Town makes this rule for townhomes, whether it would preclude developers from utilizing

alleyways. Mr. Harowski explained that there would be nothing that prohibits the utilization of alleys. Mr. Harowski further explained that, if larger development had a creative idea that wanted to be considered, most of the larger developments utilize Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) which could take precedence.

Mayor MacFarlane opened Public Comment for this item only.

Peter Tuite, 200 E Croton Way – Mr. Tuite explained that he was in favor of requiring two-car garages.

Mayor MacFarlane closed Public Comment for this item.

It was decided that there was a consensus among the Town Councilors to amend the LDC to require townhouses to have two-car garages.

NEW BUSINESS

4. Consideration and Approval: Appointment of Mary Arnold to the Parks & Recreation Board

Mrs. Mary Arnold was not in attendance of the meeting.

Motion made by Councilor Gallelli to defer item to the next Town Council Meeting; seconded by Councilor Lehning. Motion was approved unanimously by voice vote.

Voting

Yea: Councilor Lehning, Councilor Gallelli, Councilor Klein, Mayor Pro-Tem Conroy, Mayor MacFarlane

Nay: None

5. Consideration and Approval: FGUA Interlocal Agreement

Mayor MacFarlane asked Town Administrator, Sean O'Keefe, to introduce and explain this topic. Mr. O'Keefe explained that the Town Council had supported the engaging of professional consulting services to research any feasible options for the management, improvement, and expansion of utility services (within the Town and the Town's Interlocal Service Boundary Agreement area) as it relates to water and wastewater utilities. FGUA has created an Interlocal Agreement to work with the Town to complete these utility studies within a six-month timeframe. Mr. O'Keefe explained that the scope of work for the project would include management components and looking for sources of funding for water and wastewater.

Councilor Gallelli asked what the benefit to the Town was. Mr. O'Keefe explained that the rate study that was included was highly needed by the Town. Mr. O'Keefe also explained that the study would be looking for where the Town could expand wastewater services and water services for expected Town growth. Also, Mr. O'Keefe explained that the studies would assist in creating plans on how to acquire the funding necessary for growth in water and wastewater services.

Mayor Pro-Tem Conroy stated that he was in favor of the project, but he wanted to know where the \$83,000 for this project would come from and if Town staff had checked with other municipalities that have utilized FGUA's services to see how happy they were with the services. Mr. O'Keefe explained that the funding for this project would come from ARPA NEU funding. Mr. O'Keefe also explained that Sumter County received their plans from FGUA, and they immediately started enacting them.

Councilor Gallelli suggested that Mr. O’Keefe should speak with Sumter County to see how pleased they were with the services. Councilor Klein suggested that maybe the Town should look for more quotes for this type of service, and that \$83,000 seemed expensive.

Mayor MacFarlane opened Public Comment for this item only.

Peter Tuite, 200 E Croton Way – Mr. Tuite stated that he did not think FGUA had been vetted enough. Mr. Tuite also stated that he thinks the Town should focus on water and wastewater services.

Mayor MacFarlane closed Public Comment for this item.

Scott Towler, Assistant System Manager of Municipal Services for FGUA, and Will Fontaine, Operations Manager for FGUA, presented a short presentation from FGUA.

Motion made by Councilor Lehning to approve the agreement with FGUA; seconded by Councilor Gallelli.

Voting

Yea: Councilor Lehning, Councilor Gallelli, Councilor Klein, Mayor Pro-Tem Conroy, Mayor MacFarlane

Nay: None

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

6. Town Hall Report

Town Clerk, John Brock, explained that the Election Qualifying period for Town Councilor seats 1, 2, and 3 would open up at noon on Monday, August 8, 2022 and would close on Friday, August 19, 2022 at noon. Mr. Brock explained that, to run for one of the Town Councilor seats, one would need to be 21 years of age or older, a registered voter, a resident of the Town of Howey-in-the-Hills for at least 1 year prior to first day of the election qualifying period, and must submit a petition of at least 25 Town Electors. Mr. Brock recommended that, if anyone had any questions, they could and should reach out to him.

Mr. Brock also reminded all those in attendance about the referendum on the Town’s two charter amendments that would be voted on during the August 23, 2022 primary election.

7. Town Administrator / Finance Manager - Finance and Development Reports

Town Administrator, Sean O’Keefe, explained that the Howey Men’s Club was working to create a Town Oktoberfest event. Mr. O’Keefe explained that the Town was working to create the Grove Square Park area that would accommodate food trucks and farmer’s market stalls. The June 30th workshop on the Thompson Grove development has been postponed to a later date due to a request from the developer.

Mr. O’Keefe also explained that the Town had closed on the purchase of the land necessary for the water treatment plant #3 and Well #5 and 6.

COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS

8. Mayor Pro-Tem Conroy

Mayor Pro-Tem asked Town Clerk Brock if Town Hall had hired a new Building Services Clerk and Utility Billing Clerk. Mr. Brock explained that both positions had been filled.

Mayor Pro-Tem Conroy explained that he had attend an MPO meeting and that State Road 19 would be receiving a Long-Range Planning Study that went from Groveland all the way to Tavares (including Howey-in-the-Hills).

9. Councilor Lehning

Councilor Lehning stated that the Lake County Library Advisory Board had recently met and it was their recommendation that Howey-in-the-Hills would not receive Library Impact Fee funding for its book collection submittal. Councilor Lehning would like to see the Town Council and Town Administrator write a letter voicing the Town's disapproval to the Lake County Board of County Commissioners.

10. Councilor Gallelli

Councilor Gallelli stated that, if anyone had any questions about the Town Charter referendum, they should email those questions to one of the Town Councilors.

11. Councilor Klein

Councilor Klein asked when Town Hall would be open to the public on Fridays again. Mayor MacFarlane stated that this item could be revisited at a later date. Councilor Klein also asked Mr. O'Keefe if there was a start date for the installation of playground border and pads for workout items at Griffin Park. Mr. O'Keefe explained that those items were expected to arrive in the first or second week of July and installation would occur shortly after arrival.

12. Mayor MacFarlane

Mayor MacFarlane explained that the Town Attorney, Tom Wilkes, had informed her that the Town could not spend money on sending out informational materials about the charter referendum votes. Mayor MacFarlane explained that the Town still could and would host a public forum meeting to help educate the public on the referendum votes.

Mayor MacFarlane reminded the Town Council that they would need to schedule meetings to try to get legislative funding for water and wastewater plants.

Mayor MacFarlane also explained the Safe Streets for All federal program and that there was \$6 billion in available funding from that program that the Town should apply for.

Mayor MacFarlane asked the Town Administrator if there were any updates on any of the grants that the Town had gone after. Mr. O'Keefe explained that the Town had received the grant that would supply 120 laptops for homeschooled kids which would be administered through the Marianne Beck Memorial Library. Mr. O'Keefe explained the Town was still waiting to hear final word on the broadband grant application.

Mayor MacFarlane explained that the Town has been working diligently with its contractor Sara Whitaker to get a renewal of its Consumptive Use Permit (CUP) from the St. John River Water Management District. The Town was hoping to get a renewal for 20 years, but the Town may only get a CUP permit for as little as seven years.

Mr. O’Keefe reminded all those in attendance that the first Budget Workshop would occur on Wednesday, July 13th from 9 AM till noon and the second Budget Workshop would occur on Wednesday, July 27th from 2 PM till 5 PM.

Mayor MacFarlane asked for suggestions about when the Town could host public forum on the Town’s Charter Referendum.

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.

Doug Hower, 444 Bellissimo Place – Mr. Hower stated that early voting for the Florida Primary Election and for the Town’s Charter Referendum would begin on August 11th.

Banks Helfrich, 9100 Sam’s Lake Road, Clermont FL – Mr. Helfrich welcomed everyone to summer and to election season and encouraged people to go out and vote. Mr. Helfrich implored people to bring civility to the election process.

Peter Tuite, 300 E Croton Way – Mr. Tuite stated that he was not in favor of allowing four lanes to go through the Town.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The Meeting adjourned at 7:30 P.M. | **Attendees: 25**

Mayor Martha MacFarlane

ATTEST:

John Brock, Town Clerk