



Town Council Workshop

December 12, 2023 at 2:00 PM

Howey-in the-Hills Town Hall
101 N. Palm Ave.,
Howey-in-the-Hills, FL 34737

MINUTES

Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli called the Town Council Meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli 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 (via ZOOM)

STAFF PRESENT:

Sean O'Keefe, Town Manager | Rick Thomas, Police Chief | Morgan Cates, Public Works Director | Fred DeVito, Finance Supervisor | James Southall, Public Utilities Supervisor | Tom Wilkes, Town Attorney | John Brock, Town Clerk

Motion made by Councilor Miles to allow Mayor MacFarlane to participate remotely via Zoom; seconded by Councilor Lannamañ. Motion approved unanimously by voice vote.

Voting

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

Nay: None

NEW BUSINESS

1. Discussion: **Wastewater Options**

Town Manager, Sean O'Keefe explained the items that were included in the packet for the meeting, including a letter from the Central Lake CDD. Mr. O'Keefe and Councilor Miles introduced this item.

Mr. O'Keefe explained that there were four wastewater options open to the Town.

1. A Town-owned option.
2. Partnering with a regional provider (City of Groveland).
3. Continuing with an expanded Privately-owned Plant (Central Lake CDD).

4. Utilizing Multiple Package Plants (built by developers).

Councilor Miles and Mr. O’Keefe reviewed the costs associated with each of the four options.

Councilor Lannamañ was concerned about the cost of the Groveland partnership option. Councilor Lannamañ was also concerned about the overall economic health of the residential housing market.

Councilor Miles stated that the current maintenance cost of wastewater lift stations was mixed in the maintenance cost for the Town’s water system and suggested that, in the current fiscal year, this be changed. It made it impossible to segregate wastewater from water costs.

Councilor Miles discussed debt services options that the Town would have to fund the Town’s wastewater expansion. Councilor Miles and Mr. O’Keefe explained what a State Revolving Fund (SRF) loan was and the expected interest of an SRF loan.

Mayor MacFarlane stated that the Town could not charge a \$10 wastewater improvement fee to the residents of Venezia, Talichet, and Hillside Groves if the fee was going to be used to pay back an SRF loan that was only being used to benefit other residents of the Town and not those in one of the previously-mentioned neighborhoods. Councilor Lannamañ agreed with her.

Mr. O’Keefe continued with the presentation and stated that only the Town-run wastewater option would have the ability to utilize Alternative Water Availability from Surface Water Treatment. Mayor MacFarlane asked why you could not add Surface Water Treatment no matter which option is chosen. It was determined that it could be possible as long as the area had a dual line connection.

Mr. O’Keefe stated that the next step was for the Town Council to communicate a consensus on which Wastewater option for the Town to target and then creating a Facilities Master Plan.

Councilor Lannamañ stated that she did not like the Groveland option or the Private (Central Lake CDD) option. Councilor Lannamañ stated she liked the idea of package plants, or the Town-owned plant.

Public Works Director, Morgan Cates, stated that the Town should use the most cost-effective option. Mr. Cates stated that he did not think the Town residents would want to have multiple package plants within the Town. Mr. Cates stated that it would be more cost effective (in terms of maintenance costs) in the long run to have one Town-owned plant compared to multiple package plants.

Public Utilities Supervisor, James Southall, stated that he thought it would be better for the Town to have its own wastewater plant. Mr. Southall said that it would be hard to run a wastewater plant with little or no wastewater running into it.

Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli asked the representatives from Woodard and Curran to speak. Brad Hayes and Justin DeMello, representatives from Woodard and Curran, spoke. Mr. DeMello explained that, if the Town decides to build its own plant, there would be two different build options, concrete, or steel, and he explained the differences between them. Mr. DeMello re-explained the differences in the four different options. Mr. DeMello stated that the process of picking a wastewater option is not simple or straightforward. Mr. DeMello also suggested that systematically going through the planning process would be very helpful for the Town Council.

Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli opened Public Comment for this item only.

Tim Everline, 1012 N. Lakeshore Blvd. – Mr. Everline thought there were a lot of discrepancies shown in the letter from Central Lake CDD. Mr. Everline thinks that the Town should further clarify these facts before a decision is made.

Peter Tuite, 300 E Croton Way – Mr. Tuite did not want to be on the sewer and thinks that these plans were much too ambitious. Mr. Tuite suggested also looking at Tavares and Leesburg as a wastewater partner. Mr. Tuite also thought that package plants should be considered.

Eric Gunesch, 448 Avila Pl. – Mr. Gunesch stated that he lived in Talichet and, when the HOA takes over control from Ron Roberts, the HOA will take over their lift station. Mr. Gunesch stated that he did not want the HOA having to manage that lift station, he wanted the Town to do it.

Joshua Husemann, 671 Avila Pl. - Mr. Husemann stated that he thought the Groveland option made the most sense.

Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli closed Public Comment for this item.

Mayor MacFarlane reminded the Town Council that the Town does not fully run its own water system right now, we utilize a contract service. Mayor MacFarlane stated that she thought the Groveland or Central Lake CDD option would be the best direction for the Town.

Councilor Lehning was concerned that hooking up “Old Howey” needed to be a priority.

Councilor Lehning stated that he wanted this agenda item (Wastewater Options) placed on a future agenda. It was decided that this item should be placed on the Town Council’s agenda in the 2nd meeting in January.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The Meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m. | **Attendees: 25**

Mayor Martha MacFarlane

ATTEST:

John Brock, Town Clerk