



Town Council Workshop

November 01, 2023 at 6:00 PM

Marianne Beck Memorial Library -
112 W. Central 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 Pro Tem Marie V. Gallelli | Mayor Martha MacFarlane

STAFF PRESENT:

Sean O'Keefe, Town Manager | John Brock, Town Clerk | Tom Wilkes, Town Attorney | Tom Harowski, Town Planner

NEW BUSINESS

1. Discussion: **Amending the Future Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan**

Mayor MacFarlane asked Tom Harowski, Town Planner, to introduce this item. Mr. Harowski explained the purpose of the meeting was to introduce the proposed Ordinance to amend the Town's Comprehensive Plan to accommodate for the changes requested by the Town Councilors.

Town Attorney, Tom Wilkes, explained some cautions and limitations with a municipality amending its Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Wilkes explained that, in Florida, the Legislature and the Courts are very protective of property owners' rights. Mr. Wilkes stated that approved projects will argue that they have vested development rights. Some of the approved projects include: The Reserve (Hillside Groves), Lake Hills, Watermark, and Whispering Heights.

Mr. Wilkes explained that amendments to Comprehensive Plans may create legal issues because they may disturb or interfere with the expectations that property owners have.

Mr. Harowski gave a development update for all known active development projects with the Town. Councilor Lehning stated that he would like to have a spreadsheet produced that had all development projects on it showing the status of all of the steps that are involved. Councilor Lehning wanted to know

if there was any case law on developments without a sunset date that have had to be permitted again due to the length of time since their last approval.

Mr. Harowski further explained the cautions and limitations portion of their presentation. Mr. Harowski explained that housing units first needed to fund the basics like roads and infrastructure and then would fund the amenities. Projects needed to be large enough to pay for both; if there is not enough density, the developers would not have feasible projects.

Councilor Miles explained that he would like to remove PUDs as an option in Howey-in-the-Hills.

Mr. Harowski and Mr. Wilkes explained the proposed amendments to the Town's Comprehensive Plan. The proposed amendments included:

- Reduce MDR and Village Mixed Use (VMU) density to 3 units/acre.
- Increase open space requirements in VMU to 50%.
- Reduce wetland contribution to open space to 25%.
- Set minimum VMU project size at 100 acres.
- Village Mixed Use offers a bonus to 4 units/acre (with substantial recreational facilities).

Mr. Wilkes reviewed the proposed Declaration of Town Council Intent for the Proposed Amendments to the Town Comprehensive Plan. This was:

In 2023 the Town Council and the Town's Planning and Zoning Board analyzed and reevaluated post-2010 residential development in the Town. Residential development under the Village Mixed Use designation resulted after 2010 in substantially increased housing densities and substantially smaller residential lots than were prevalent in the Town's historical development.

The evaluation and analysis was accompanied by robust public participation. Public sentiment agreed overwhelmingly with Town Council: the increased densities and downsized lots after 2010 were inconsistent with the character, appearance, and ambiance of the Town's historical neighborhoods. Contrary to FLUE Policy 1.1.2, development in Village Mixed Use had failed to "maintain the unique charm of the Town."

Consequently, the Town Council determined that amendments to this Future Land Use Element to redirect future residential densities and lot sizes were warranted and desirable.

Mr. Harowski compared the proposed Mission Rise development under the current rules and the proposed new rules.

Councilor Miles suggested that lot sizes should be set by square footage and not dimensions. Currently all lots have to be rectangular, by measuring them by square footage, irregular shaped lots could be approved to fit the space available.

Mr. Harowski reviewed his proposed changes to MDR-1 and MDR-2. The changes include:

- Cover nearly all of the existing Single-Family Neighborhoods.
- Proposed revisions will have little or no impact on the built environment.
- Changes to setbacks and other dimensional standards are more likely to create zoning non-conformities.
- Take out density reference.
- Take out the reference to the number of floors.

Mr. Harowski reviewed the High-Density proposal and had questions about how it would be used. Mr. Harowski asked whether the proposed High-Density zoning would be units owned by renters or owner-occupied. Councilor Miles stated that, when he suggested High-Density zoning, he was not looking to specifically create more rental space in town.

Mayor McFarlane reviewed the VMU and what the percentage should be for Single Family Residence (SFR) homes and higher density townhomes recommendations for the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment.

Mr. Harowski stated that it seemed that there was a consensus to change to square footage, rather than dimensional size for lot size requirements. Mr. Harowski stated that a portion of the development would be required to have a larger size and then the remainder of the development could be smaller lot sized homes or townhomes, with the larger units pushed to the perimeter of the development.

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.

Tom Ballou, 1005 Tangerine Ave. – Mr. Ballou thanked the Town Council and Planning and Zoning Board for working hard to try to get the Town’s Comprehensive Plan amended.

Peter Tuite, 300 E Croton Way – Mr. Tuite wants the Town to create a zone for aged 55+ residents with benefits for them.

Tim Everline, 1012 N. Lakeshore Blvd. – Mr. Everline suggested minimum lots with enough townhomes to get developers interested. Mr. Everline wants to see higher quality townhomes. Mr. Everline thinks the townhomes in Venezia are too small and not built well.

Councilor Lehning stated that he was disappointed in the way the meeting was carried out. Councilor Lehning wanted to have all of the comments that the Town Councilors had made laid out in a way that Councilors could debate all of their comments. Councilor Lehning was concerned that his biggest comment, which was to do away with MDR zoning, was not addressed.

Councilor Miles stated that he did not believe the meeting addressed the details, but it was a good start to get moving forward. Councilor Miles stated he wanted to be sent everyone’s comments that had been submitted.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The Meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m. | **Attendees: 23**

Mayor Martha MacFarlane

ATTEST:

John Brock, Town Clerk