



**TOWN OF LOXAHATCHEE GROVES**  
**TOWN COUNCIL COMMUNITY OPEN DISCUSSION WORKSHOP**  
**TOWN HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS – 155 F. Road, Loxahatchee Groves, FL**  
**33470**  
**Tuesday, December 03, 2024**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Mayor Kane called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**ROLL CALL:**

Mayor Anita Kane, Vice Mayor Margaret Herzog, Councilmember Laura Danowski, Councilmember Phillis Maniglia, Councilmember Robert Shorr, Town Manager Francine Ramaglia, Town Attorney Glen Torcivia, Public Works Director Gallant Richard Gallant, Project Coordinator Jeff Kurtz, Town's Planning Consultant Kaitlyn Forbes (of Complete Cities) and Town Clerk Valerie Oakes were present.

**OPEN DISCUSSION:**

Cassie Suchy to provide a public comment on behalf of Jane Cleveland, which was read into the record which expressed concerns regarding two notices she

**December 03, 2024**

---

received related to the Business Tax Receipt (BTR). Town Manager Ramaglia explained that the Business Tax Receipt (BTR) Ordinance was adopted by the Town in 2018, utilizing the same exemptions as those applied by the State of Florida, clarifying that individuals who receive a BTR notice have the option to file for an exemption at no cost. It was noted that bona fide agricultural businesses are eligible to apply for an exemption and that the Town of Loxahatchee Groves does not conduct audits of the exemptions filed.

Councilmember Danowski brought it to the council and staff's attention that a local realtor's client had been charged \$250 for a review after submitting an exemption. Town Manager Ramaglia stated that she was not fully aware of the specific circumstances and would review the matter, clarifying that the charge might have been related to a zoning confirmation, which typically costs \$100 rather than a Business Tax Receipt (BTR) review. Councilmember Danowski asked about the formal structure of the BTR process and its procedures. Town Manager Ramaglia explained that the process had been formalized and aligned with state law as outlined in the ordinance. Mayor Kane clarified Councilmember Danowski's request for information regarding the content of the BTR notice and whether a step-by-step guide was included. Town Manager Ramaglia explained that multiple forms had been created to accommodate different BTR categories, aiming to simplify the process for business owners. It was further explained that the backend process involving the GOV Easy system generated notices and emails containing helpful links

**December 03, 2024**

---

and information about updating or renewing a BTR, as well as details about exemptions. It was emphasized that the rules for exemptions had been defined by the State of Florida and not by the Town.

Katie Lakeman inquired about a grading schedule. Public Works Director Gallant stated that schedule is posted on the Town's website. Mayor Kane directed Public Works Director Gallant to ensure Lakeman's road is included in the schedule, resolve the issue, and ensure the schedule is advertised.

Doug Schaper referred to an event on Hyde Park and questioned why the Town did not require the organizers to apply for a permit. Mayor Kane explained that Special Event Permits are required for events meeting specific criteria and that the Town assesses public health and safety issues during the permitting process. She stated she was unaware of the event. Town Manager Ramaglia explained she first learned of the event on the day it occurred during a meeting with a council member. After inquiries, Town staff found no prior communication regarding the event. A neighbor had sent a flyer to staff, prompting concerns about potential attendance, parking, and noise. However, upon review, the event was determined to be a private gathering with about 30 attendees. It occurred from 4:30 P.M. to 9:30 P.M., with no music, street parking issues, or other disturbances. It did not meet the criteria for requiring a Special Event Permit. Mr. Schaper commented that Councilmember Danowski had taken precautions to protect her property and prevent parking

**December 03, 2024**

---

on the swale. Town Manager Ramaglia noted that neighbors in the area had also taken similar precautions, such as putting up "no parking" signs, which she appreciated, as street parking is prohibited in the Town. Mr. Schaper stated that the property in question had become a nuisance and a disruption to the neighborhood. Town Manager Ramaglia provided an update on the property, explaining that it was under Code Enforcement review and that the Town was in the initial stages of foreclosure proceedings in accordance with the Town's Foreclosure Policy. Mr. Schaper also mentioned that the property was a non-registered agricultural property.

Councilmember Robert Shorr asked for an overview of the special events permit process. Town Manager Ramaglia explained the three levels of special events permits, with Level C being the simplest and requiring approval from the Town Manager's office for one-day events. The Manager outlined requirements such as a 30-day notice, limitations for agritourism events, inspections by the Fire Marshal, proper bathroom facilities, parking guidelines, and road-use approvals by the Town and PBSO. A stop work order had been issued to the property on Hyde Park and that the Town was assessing any applicable fines. Project Coordinator Kurtz clarified that open Code Enforcement cases are typically not discussed during Town Council meetings. Councilmember Maniglia encouraged residents to proactively report events of significant size that may require a special event application and permit.

Paul Coleman inquired about the status of Business Tax Receipt (BTR) notices.

**December 03, 2024**

---

Town Manager Ramaglia explained the process and the requirements under state statute. Coleman followed up with questions about the Agricultural Business Exemption. Town Manager Ramaglia clarified that not all nurseries qualify for exemptions, explaining the definition of "bona fide agriculture" and the distinctions between qualifying and non-qualifying businesses. Mayor Kane supported the clarification, and Councilmember Danowski asked whether exemptions were automatic or required a formal request, raising concerns about the legality of the process. Town Manager Ramaglia elaborated on agritourism and agricultural business definitions under the law and noted that determining bona fide agriculture status cannot rely solely on property appraiser data. She detailed the exemption process and the use of BTR funds, which Councilmember Maniglia had inquired about. Councilmember Maniglia also referenced a letter read earlier by Cassie Suchy.

Brian McNeil raised concerns about life safety and traffic issues, citing challenges for pedestrians, including an elderly woman navigating "B" Road and proposed safety improvements, such as enhancements near Publix and distributing reflective vests. Public Works Director Gallant responded, highlighting efforts with Groves Towne Center to revise traffic patterns and a \$70,000 budget for pedestrian crossing projects. He noted that installations covering four of six roads were set to begin in January.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**December 03, 2024**

---

Mayor Kane adjourned the community meeting at 6:43 p.m.

**TOWN OF LOXAHATCHEE GROVES,  
FLORIDA**

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Mayor Anita Kane, Seat 3

\_\_\_\_\_

Town Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_

Vice Mayor Margaret Herzog, Seat 5

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Councilmember Phillis Maniglia, Seat 1

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Councilmember Laura Danowski, Seat 2

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Councilmember Robert Shorr, Seat 4