



**TOWN OF LOXAHATCHEE GROVES
TOWN COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TOWN HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS – 155 F. Road, Loxahatchee Groves, FL 33470
Tuesday, March 05, 2024**

TOWN COUNCIL AGENDA ITEMS

CALL TO ORDER:

Mayor Danowski called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

Mayor Laura Danowski, Vice Mayor Robert Shorr, Councilmember Margaret Herzog, Councilmember Phillis Maniglia, Councilmember Marianne Miles, Town Manager Francine Ramaglia, Town Attorney Glen Torcivia, Director of Public Works Richard Gallant, Project Coordinator Jeff Kurtz, Town's Financial Consultant Chris Wallace (of Munilytics) and Interim Town Clerk Valerie Oakes were present.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE FOLLOWED BY A MOMENT OF SILENCE:

Mayor Danowski led the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by a Moment of Silence.

AGENDA APPROVAL - ADDITIONS, DELETIONS AND MODIFICATIONS:

Mayor Danowski called for any additions, deletions, modifications, or approval of the agenda.

MOTION: VICE MAYOR SHORR/COUNCILMEMBER MANIGLIA MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0).

PUBLIC AUDIENCE:

Public comment received from Cassie Suchy and Todd McLendon. Town council discussion ensued.

ANNOUNCEMENTS, COMMUNITY/SPECIAL EVENTS AND PRESENTATIONS:

1. PRESENTATION OF ANNUAL REPORT: DISTRICT 28 – FIRE RESCUE BATTALION CHIEF

Battalion Chief not present for the presentation.

2. PRESENTATION OF QUARTERLY REPORTS

Town's Financial Consultant Chris Wallace (of Munilytics) presented the Quarterly Report.

CONSENT AGENDA:**3. PROPOSED RESOLUTION NO. 2024 – 09**

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF LOXAHATCHEE GROVES, FLORIDA RATIFYING THE CONTRACT FOR EMERGENCY CANAL BANK STABILIZATION WITH WBI CONTRACTING OF PALM BEACH, INC., AND PROVIDING EFFECTIVE DATE.

4. PROPOSED RESOLUTION NO. 2024 – 10

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF LOXAHATCHEE GROVES, FLORIDA, AUTHORIZING THE PURCHASE OF LARGE 9" to 24" RIP RAP RUBBLE ROCK FROM MURRAY LOGAN CONSTRUCTION, LLC; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

5. PROPOSED RESOLUTION NO. 2024 – 11

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF LOXAHATCHEE GROVES, FLORIDA, AUTHORIZING THE PURCHASE OF TREE REMOVAL SERVICES FROM KIEL TREE SERVICE INC.; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

MOTION: VICE MAYOR SHORR/COUNCILMEMBER MANIGLIA MOVED TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0).

PUBLIC HEARING:**6. PROPOSED ORDINANCE NO. 2024-02 – FIRST READING**

AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF LOXHATCHEE GROVES, FLORIDA, REPEALING ORDINANCE 2023-04; ADOPTING THE ANNUAL UPDATE TO THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS ELEMENT OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CONSISTENT WITH CHAPTER 163, FLORIDA STATUTES; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT, SEVERABILITY, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

MOTION: VICE MAYOR SHORR/COUNCILMEMBER MANIGLIA MOVED TO APPROVE ORDINANCE NO. 2024-02 ON FIRST READING REPEALING ORDINANCE 2023-04. (4-1 with MAYOR DANOWSKI DISSENTING).

REGULAR AGENDA:

7. PROPOSED RESOLUTION NO. 2024 – 12

Public comment received from Todd McLendon and Cassie Suchy. Town council discussion ensued.

MOTION: COUNCILMEMBER MANIGLIA/COUNCILMEMBER DANOWSKI MOVED TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 2024-12. (4-1 with VICE MAYOR SHORR DISSENTING).

8. DISCUSSION REGARDING ROADWAY AND DRAINAGE UPDATE

Director of Public Works Richard Gallant presented a discussion regarding Roadway and Drainage.

Public comment received from Todd McLendon. Town council discussion ensued.

9. UPDATES AND ITEMS OF INTEREST

Town Manager Ramaglia presented the Updates and Items of Interest.

REPORTS BY THE TOWN ADMINISTRATION:

- A. Town Manager Ramaglia** began by emphasizing what had been shared so far was only a fraction of the ongoing work, especially referencing efforts related to B Road and persistent issues with turn lanes at the shopping center. She mentioned that meetings were scheduled through the summer and had listed projected items likely to return before Council by July, including projects and ordinances. Ms. Ramaglia clarified that several items were not included in her list, such as piggyback renewals and efforts by Richard's team to secure better pricing for signs and turnkey canal slope restoration. The Sod Farm would also be returned once the arrangement was finalized. Additional smaller policies needed to be brought forward. She explained that the next Council meeting would include the swearing-in and selection of the Mayor and Vice Mayor, to be handled in the same two-step voting process used previously, adding that the first reading of the boards and committees' item would return on April 2nd, followed by a second reading and appointments, as is customary during this season. The intention was for Council appointments to stand, with full Council approval provided as a ministerial requirement and Rules of Order for both committees and Council would also return for review.

Town Manager Ramaglia stated the audit was also forthcoming and no management letters had been received, and the previous year's comments appeared to be resolved. The Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) second reading and the accompanying budget amendment,

reallocating spending for projects, also required follow-up. It was considered using The Gardens' piggyback contract for culvert condition assessments (not payment assessments), and some gas tax adjustments were also on the way. She reminded the Council that a draft gas tax map had been distributed, noting that drafts are useful for early review. Continuing by highlighting upcoming April activities, including the Loxahatchee Groves Elementary School carnival on April 19th and this year's event was a bounce house-style carnival. The school had requested sponsorship, and a check request had already been prepared, consistent with the town's annual support for special events. The school also invited the town to participate with a tent, if desired. Ms. Ramaglia mentioned a past \$500 donation limit set by Mayor Browning and acknowledged that the current request was for \$1,000 or \$1,500 although she was not aware of the previous limit but stated that the town had supported the carnival in the past.

By consensus, the Town Council will donate \$1,000.00 on behalf of the town for the scholarship.

Ms. Ramaglia confirmed that the town had a tent available and had staffed booths in previous years. Town Manager Ramaglia also addressed interlocal agreements, state funding approvals, and the timeline for committee reports and code revisions. Ramaglia concluded by asking the Council for directions on whether the agrotourism committee should request more time if they do not meet their deadline. She discussed the Wellington annexation, stating the County recently allowed its initiation. The public conversation centered on whether affected property owners preferred annexation to Wellington rather than the Town, with multiple letters read into the record supporting Wellington. Ms. Ramaglia reiterated that the Town's opposition was based on protecting rural land and argued that Wellington did not meet the legal criteria for involuntary annexation. She then brought up Mary McNicholas' earlier request about the scholarship program and confirmed it will be brought back for Council discussion at the April 2nd meeting. The Council gave consensus to revisit the policy and determine how to proceed—whether by partnering with or contributing to LGLA. Finally, Ms. Ramaglia summarized details from a notice regarding the County's proposed amendments to the Thoroughfare Identification Map (TIM), involving roadways such as Pimon Boulevard, 40th Street North, and 140th Avenue North. She confirmed the Town can draft a formal opposition letter based on jurisdictional boundaries and agreed to verify whether 140th South Road is part of the plan, though it did not appear so. She noted the Planning Commission meeting is this Friday, and the Board of County Commissioners will hear the item on March 28th.

Public comment received from Todd McLendon. Town council discussion ensued.

B. Town Attorney had no report.

C. Town Clerk reminded the voters that Election Day is March 19, 2024, from 7:00 A.M. – 7:00 P.M. Be sure to VOTE!

D. Public Works Director: Provided updates on the radio and SCADA System.

TOWN COUNCILMEMBER COMMENTS:

Councilmember Miles began by discussing a recent event held at the elementary school, where she and others engaged with the children in a gardening activity. She described how they provided cups, seeds, and dirt to the students. The children were allowed to fill the cups with soil, plant seeds, and then take them home. She noted that although she wasn't in every child's home to see the results, she was confident many of the seeds sprouted. She emphasized that the children had a good time and that it was an enjoyable experience for all involved.

She then shifted topics, stating she wanted to "jump back" to a previous discussion about the roadway and the intersection at Southern Boulevard. She inquired whether there was any update regarding changes to the north entrance, referencing the impending opening of a Wawa store. Ms. Miles explained that traffic currently exiting northbound from the Publix shopping center is already problematic due to it being only one lane, and the addition of traffic from the new shopping center to the west will exacerbate the situation. She stressed that improvements to the intersection are overdue, noting that this issue has been ongoing for over a year. She concluded by stating that they are currently looking at different options.

Director of Public Works Richard Gallant addressed ongoing traffic issues at a key intersection, particularly in relation to congestion caused by horse trailers and other vehicles. He mentioned that he has personally observed the area to try and understand the problem, stating he had to go and "sit there and figure out what these people are doing and why." Mr. Gallant explained that it has reached a point where it might be necessary to implement a traffic control solution similar to those used in other locations—specifically, painting a large white box on the ground labeled "DO NOT BLOCK INTERSECTION." He described the recurring issue: horse trailers, especially, come down B Road, stop at the traffic light, and then park directly in front of the entrance. As a result, vehicles attempting to exit the Publix shopping center to go south, those trying to exit to go north, or anyone attempting to turn into the plaza are all blocked for two minutes until the traffic light changes. He emphasized that this blockage causes a significant disruption.

Councilmember Herzog commented positively on the roadside vegetation clearing efforts, noting the noticeable progress in cutting back Brazilian pepper trees. She acknowledged how aggressively the work was being done and emphasized the need for regular maintenance, as the trees quickly regrow from trimmed branches. She also praised the maintenance of trails in the Solar Sport area, particularly highlighting improvements to the bank and visibility—stating that the berm is now clearly visible, and the area no longer appears blocked off. She likened the development of the site to a "little city," similar in scope to Big Dog Ranch. Herzog raised a concern regarding code enforcement, pointing out a large pile of building materials left roadside on 161st. She said it

appeared someone was remodeling and, instead of using a dumpster, had accumulated a pile that would require one. She concluded with a question about the calculation of 109 road miles in the town, seeking clarification on how that figure was reached.

Director of Public Works Richard Gallant explained that he has been researching the origin of the town's reported road mileage data, particularly as it relates to gas tax reporting. He stated that he is a data-oriented person and has been trying to determine where the historical figures came from mentioning that he found a chart beginning in 2012 and ending in 2017, after which the records become unclear. He has been attempting to reconstruct the data from the period during which Larry managed the information, noting the challenge due to Larry not using computers and instead keeping everything in a physical book. Gallant reviewed Larry's Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) reports and observed inconsistencies in reported road mileage between 2018 and 2023, with numbers fluctuating significantly. He said the map that was recently distributed to the Council was based on a report prepared by Keshavarz & Associates and populated using their GIS system, which is the source of the current mapping data.

Councilmember Maniglia stated it is more important to showcase the food and the residents in this town. She thanked Francine for hiring people that have the expertise and knowledge to address the long-neglected needs of this town.

Vice Mayor Shorr: Thanked Public Works Director Gallant.

Mayor Danowski asked whether the emergency approval that raised the Town Manager's spending limit to \$100,000—granted for the canal restoration bank project—needed to be rescinded now that the project was nearing completion.

Town Manager Ramaglia responded that the limit could be rescinded, noting that he had already reverted to putting all expenditure over \$25,000 on the agenda rather than approving it personally. She mentioned that the three consent items previously approved had all exceeded the regular threshold and were included on the agenda because the 60-day emergency period had passed.

Mayor Danowski confirmed they were back to the normal spending cap. She then shifted to discussing traffic visibility concern raised earlier, citing B Road and Okeechobee as an example. She explained that a food truck parks there in the mornings, making it difficult to see oncoming vehicles such as lawn trucks making U-turns. She noted that a resident calls her daily with concerns about this specific traffic hazard and expressed understanding of their ongoing frustration.

Town Manager Ramaglia continued by suggesting that the issue with U-turns (referred to as "UIs") near B Road and Okeechobee could potentially be addressed by involving the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office (PBSO), noting that the location is not appropriate for making U-turns. She mentioned that radar enforcement had already been present in that area and proposed that PBSO could increase traffic citations for illegal maneuvers. Regarding the food truck, she stated that whether action can be taken depends on its location. If the food truck is parked on private property—for example, a specific property like "at um"—then the town may be able to address it

through discussions with the property owner concerning offsite impacts. The goal would be to have the food truck relocated to reduce traffic visibility issues.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 10:01 P.M.

ATTEST:

**TOWN OF LOXAHATCHEE GROVES,
FLORIDA**

Valerie Oakes, Interim Town Clerk

Mayor Laura Danowski

Vice Mayor Robert Shorr

Council Member Margaret Herzog

Council Member Phillis Maniglia

Council Member Marianne Miles