



**TOWN OF LOXAHATCHEE GROVES
TOWN COUNCIL COMMUNITY OPEN DISCUSSION WORKSHOP
TOWN HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS – 155 F. Road, Loxahatchee Groves, FL 33470
Tuesday, October 1, 2024**

CALLED TO ORDER

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

ROLL CALL

Mayor Anita Kane, Vice Mayor Margaret Herzog, Councilmember Phillis Maniglia (arrived at 6:16 p.m.), Councilmember Laura Danowski, Councilmember Robert Shorr, Town Manager Francine Ramaglia, Town Attorney Glen Torcivia, Public Works Directors Richard Gallant, Project Coordinator Jeff Kurtz, and Town Clerk Valerie Oakes present.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Mayor Kane opened the floor for community discussion on non-agenda items.

Mary McNicholas began by expressing her gratitude to Public Works Director Gallant, the public works staff, and the Town Administration for their efforts in mowing, cleaning, and maintaining the banks of the Folsom Road canal. She remarked that it was the best it had ever looked, and as a result, residents can now enjoy the surrounding wildlife. She also requested that the cleanup efforts continue to address trash in the area. Regarding Costal and the vegetation cleanup, she expressed her appreciation for the timely and thorough removal of vegetative debris and other materials.

Cassie Suchy began by bringing several code enforcement cases to the Town Council's attention, referring to an email she had previously sent to town staff seeking clarification on specific cases. She expressed concern about the approach to code enforcement, noting that while there seems to be proactive enforcement for smaller issues, larger and more obvious violations often go unaddressed or await complaints before any action is taken. She questioned why Town Staff can submit some complaints proactively but not all and suggested that the town review

what code enforcement officers are allowed to report. Ms. Suchy also mentioned an email she sent to the Town Council and staff regarding a resident's code enforcement violation involving a fence. After reading the ordinance and noticing trees overhanging the fence, she took pictures and sent them to the town. However, she did not believe the situation constituted a violation based on the relevant code sections she reviewed. She requested that the Council and staff consider discussing the role and responsibilities of code enforcement officers in a future agenda item. While she commended the quality of the cases handled during special magistrate hearings, she maintained concerns about proactive enforcement efforts and reiterated her belief that the fence issue was a civil matter between two neighbors. Town Manager Ramaglia stated that it's important to note that the council is not supposed to intervene in code cases. While we can listen to comments and take them into consideration, issues like the civil dispute between two property owners remain between those owners. In this particular case, a complaint was made, and we clarified that it was a civil matter between the two parties. One of the property owners ultimately removed their trees. We try to avoid getting involved in such disputes, but as you know, many property owners bring these issues to us, and we do our best to remind them that they are civil matters. There are also some longstanding complaints in the system, many of which date back to when we had a code officer from an outside company. At that time, citations were issued for issues like overgrown grass. However, the approach to code enforcement has since evolved, focusing on more significant concerns. The Council has directed staff to be proactive about life, health, and safety issues, and we strive to prioritize those areas. Additionally, we are methodically reviewing site plan amendments and development order requirements to ensure compliance. For example, we're checking that newly planted trees remain intact for at least a year and verifying adherence to other conditions approved by the council. As for recreational vehicles (RVs), we are proactive by sending out a mailer to residents explaining RV regulations. We've also created a detailed FAQ for our website and redesigned the necessary forms. Later tonight, we'll discuss upcoming open houses where we hope to increase community engagement and provide clarity on these rules. One morning will be dedicated entirely to building and code-related questions to address residents' concerns directly. We recognize there's always room for improvement and are committed to continuous progress. For instance, tonight's agenda includes solutions that could reduce the number of code violations, particularly those related to FDAs and unpermitted activities. By refining how we process FDAs, we hope to resolve many issues more efficiently. Another item on tonight's agenda involves nuisance abatement assessments and voluntary assessments for urgent repairs. These initiatives are particularly relevant to smaller subdivision neighborhoods with properties under five acres. Many of these properties have drainage systems reliant on ditches, SWEs, and road slopes, which require significant attention. These measures will help us better support property owners while addressing these long-standing challenges.

Mayor Kane asked if there were any additional public comment cards received for the Community Discussion Workshop. Town Clerk Oakes advised that at that time, no further

public comments had been received, subsequently concluding the Commission Discussion Workshop meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Kane adjourned the community meeting at 6:12 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