



**Planning & Zoning Board  
Joint Workshop with  
Town Council**

**May 17, 2023 at 6:00 PM**

**Marianne Beck Memorial Library -  
112 W. Central Ave., Howey-in-the-  
Hills, FL 34737**

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**MINUTES**

**CALL TO ORDER  
ROLL CALL**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

Board Member Alan Hayes (via Zoom) | Board Member Richard Mulvany | Board Member Ellen Yarckin | Board Member Frances Wagler | Vice-Chair Ron Francis III | Chair Tina St. Clair

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT**

Board Member Shawn Johnson

**TOWN COUNCIL 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 Harowski, Town Planner

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. Discussion: **Howey-in-the-Hills Planning and Development**

Town Planner, Tom Harowski, introduced this item and gave a presentation. Mr. Harowski explained the current planning direction and the options available for changing portions of the Land Development Code (LDC) and Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Harowski explained some of the items that were mandated in the Comprehensive Plan.

**William Sullivan, 26336 State Road 19, Howey-in-the-Hills (unincorporated Lake County)** – Mr. Sullivan had questions about the proposed Thompson Grove development.

Councilor Miles stated that he was not happy with zoning choices. Councilor Miles wanted Mr. Harowski to send him highlighted Village Mixed Use (VMU) zoning requirements and send him requirements that were laid out in the LDC.

**Paula Abney, 411 E Orchid Way** – Ms. Abney was concerned about flooding issues and that flood insurance would be required for lots in a flood zone.

**Eric Gunesch, 448 Avila Pl.** – Mr. Gunesch had questions about PUD requirements.

Councilor Miles explained the history of the Town Council’s approval of the Watermark development.

**Catherine Cruz, 9437 San Miguel, Howey-in-the-Hills (unincorporated Lake County)** – Ms. Cruz wanted the meeting to get back on track and continue with the presentation.

Town Manager, Sean O’Keefe, gave a definition of who a stakeholder was. Mr. O’Keefe gave a portion of a presentation on the book Strong Towns, which he explained was a framework to talk about urban planning.

Councilor Miles stated that road paving was important, and that the Town needed to put more money into infrastructure and less into events.

Board Member Wagler wanted a 5-page letter to be read out loud, which had been sent from former Howey-in-the-Hills Mayor, Duane Gorgas, to the current Town Councilors (the letter had been included in the packet for the Workshop).

**Peter Tuite, 300 E Croton Way** – Mr. Tuite spoke about the importance of the character of Town and would like new sections of Town to look like the neighborhood around his property.

Board Member Wagler stated that the Town Council doesn’t seem to understand what the Planning and Zoning Board says or recommends, and that the Board doesn’t feel heard.

Councilor Lannaman and Councilor Miles got into a disagreement about the necessity to move on and let the public have time to speak about the issues.

Board Chair St. Clair moved on to the Public Comments portion of the meeting.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

*Any person wishing to address the Planning and Zoning Board and who is not on the agenda is asked to speak their name and address. Three (3) minutes is allocated per speaker.*

**Tim Everline, 1012 N Lakeshore Blvd.** – Mr. Everline was upset there has been no discussion on LDC or Comprehensive Plan yet in the meeting. Mr. Everline stated some of the things he would like to see in future PUDs (75’ by 130’ lots, 30’ setback in the front and rear, and at least 10’ setbacks on the sides). Mr. Everline did not like phase 2 of Talichet and wanted to see sunset clauses for every future agreement. Mr. Everline wanted to see a requirement for installing root barriers around new trees and proposed lot sizes be increased.

**Eric Gunesch, 448 Avila Pl.** – Mr. Gunesch stated that he had moved away from Lake Nona and did not want to see the Town to start looking like Lake Nona.

**Terri Blessing, 24913 Blue Sink Rd. Howey-in-the-Hills (unincorporated Lake County)** – Ms. Blessing recommended the Town look at the traffic study that was compiled for the Whispering Hills development in the City of Leesburg. Ms. Blessing wanted to personally pay for the person that did that traffic study to come do a forum of traffic impact on Number Two Rd.

**John Blodgett, 9350 Number Two Rd., Howey-in-the-Hills (unincorporated Lake County)** – Mr. Blodgett had questions about the Town’s future land use plan as it relates to lot sizes.

**William Sullivan, 26336 State Road 19, Howey-in-the-Hills (unincorporated Lake County)** – Mr. Sullivan wanted a joint planning area between the Town and County. Mr. Sullivan was also not in favor of wastewater package plants.

**Brittany Lerch, 25926 Bloomfield Ave., Howey-in-the-Hills (unincorporated Lake County)** – Ms. Lerch had questions for the Town Planner about state laws that deal with transportation rules and specific plans about Number Two Rd. Ms. Lerch wanted to know what the Town’s vision was for its ISBA and annexation.

**Brian Hobbs, 604 Mission Lane** – Mr. Hobbs spoke about the book Strong Towns being about new urbanism and he was not in favor of it or the book. He encouraged the group to research Luciferin lights and what they are being used for, and that UV lights are bad.

**William Scott, 9320 Orange Blossom Rd., Howey-in-the-Hills (unincorporated Lake County)** – Mr. Scott had questions about traffic.

**Wendy Zermeno, 25896 Bloomfield Ave., Howey-in-the-Hills (unincorporated Lake County)** – Ms. Zermeno wanted people to be more respectful, had concerns about roads, and also wanted to know when the next Workshop would be.

Mayor MacFarlane explained that Councilor Lehning had started this process and wanted to know what the goals for the next meeting would be.

**Eric Gunesch, 448 Avila Pl.** – Mr. Gunesch suggested that the public should send recommendations for changes to the Town Manager. It was decided that those recommendations should be sent to [office@howey.org](mailto:office@howey.org).

Councilor Lehning stated that he wanted to see the people responsible for the state of Number Two Road to be at the next meeting (the Lake County Commissions and members of the MPO).

**CJ Forward, 25248 Blue Sink Rd., Howey-in-the-Hills (unincorporated Lake County)** – Ms. Forward wants a plan for everyone to work together. She did not want any PUDs anywhere and did not want any areas to be annexed.

Board Member Yarckin encouraged the public to attend the next regular Planning and Zoning Board meeting so they could voice their concerns about a parcel of land that the owner is asking to be rezoned as commercial from residential.

Mayor MacFarlane asked what the goal for the next meeting would be. Mayor MacFarlane explained that the Town did need some development to help pay for services for the Town. Mayor MacFarlane stated that the Town needed to identify what its minimum requirements for a PUD would be.

Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli suggested that, for a future meeting, the Town should set up multiple tables with a Town Councilor or Planning and Zoning Board Member as a moderator at the table. There would be a different topic at each table for an hour and then discuss those topics.

**Tim Everline, 1012 N Lakeshore Blvd.** – Mr. Everline said that the reason for the current meeting was to set standards for the Town in relation to LDC and the Comprehensive Plan.

**Wendy Zermeno, 25896 Bloomfield Ave., Howey-in-the-Hills (unincorporated Lake County)** – Ms. Zermeno stated that she thought the Town should pay for CDD expansion instead of building their own wastewater plant.

**Peter Tuite, 300 E Croton Way** – Mr. Tuite was not in favor of the Town partnering further with the Central Lake CDD and thought the Town should do its own wastewater plant.

**Brittany Lerch, 25926 Bloomfield Ave., Howey-in-the-Hills (unincorporated Lake County)** – Ms. Lerch wanted to hear the letter that former Howey-in-the-Hills’ Mayor Duane Gorgas had written.

Mr. O’Keefe read out loud an additional email that he received from former Mayor Gorgas. It stated:

*Mr. O’Keefe,*

*Please pass along this additional comment about future development in Howey to all the attendees:*

*Today 05/17/2023 ~8:30AM I wanted to leave my driveway on S Palm Ave to go to Mt. Dora. The ENTIRE northbound lane of Palm Ave from Lakeview to CR 48 was “bumper to bumper” with stop and go traffic moving at 5-10 mph. The traffic was so heavy that NO ONE in Howey who wanted to access the northbound lane of Palm Ave could do so unless some considerate northbound driver would stop to allow the person to enter the lane ( which is what happened to me). It appears ~99% of this traffic appeared to be THROUGH TRAFFIC (not local). >80% of this traffic continued west on CR 48 towards Leesburg.*

*Obviously, some traffic incident had occurred south of Howey (possibly on the northbound Turnpike lanes and/or northbound Hwy 27 intersection area with SR 19. While this is a very rare event, the experience verified my “worst case” scenario of what could happen to this “physically constrained” roadway when there is NO alternate route available due to increased traffic from future development and increased through traffic. This event only confirms the necessity of consideration of a “Howey By Pass” alternate route when planning future development transportation impacts. Even a stop light at Central and Palm would not have made a noticeable difference in traffic flow because northbound lane was “solid”. While residents with cross street access would have been able to use such a stop light by driving an alternate direction to access Central Ave, NO resident living on Palm Ave who wished to go north on Palm would have been able to do so.*

*Duane Gorgas*

Mr. O’Keefe did not read out loud the 5-page letter that former Mayor Gorgas had written, but explained to the audience that it was in the packet for the meeting for any member of the public to read.

**Eric Gunesch, 448 Avila Pl.** – Mr. Gunesch wanted to know the Town’s plans for renewing its Consumptive Use Permit (CUP).

**John Blodgett, 9350 Number Two Rd., Howey-in-the-Hills (unincorporated Lake County)** – Mr. Blodgett reminded the Town officials and Town residents that County residents that lived down Number Two Road own both sides of the road and there was no available Right-of-Way access to widen the road. He did say that he would like to see a bike path added down Number Two Road.

Councilor Miles asked Mr. Blodgett if he was open to annexing into the Town of Howey-in-the-Hills. Mr. Blodgett stated that he would like to work with the Town but did not want to see new developments unless the lots were much larger.

**CJ Forward, 25248 Blue Sink Rd., Howey-in-the-Hills (unincorporated Lake County)** – Ms. Forward said that the reason the Town officials were hearing so much from the residents down Number Two Road was because the Town tried to annex land near them for a development and they were not in favor of that.

**Terri Blessing, 24913 Blue Sink Rd. Howey-in-the-Hills (unincorporated Lake County)** – Ms. Blessing stated that when she had recently attended a Lake County Board of County Commissioners meeting, Commissioner Leslie Campione had told her that she needed to get with the Town of Howey-in-the-Hills and work with them.



**Rodney Tate, 1003 Hamlin Ave.,** - Mr. Tate was upset with the way the Town Councilors were speaking to County residents that lived down Number Two Road.

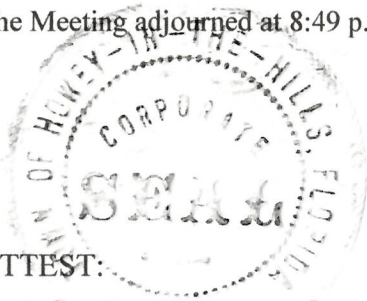
**Wendy Zermeno, 25896 Bloomfield Ave., Howey-in-the-Hills (unincorporated Lake County)** – Ms. Zermeno thought the back and forth between the people down Number Two Road and the Town is good and reminded the Town Officials that they started this discourse by trying to annex land near them.

**ADJOURNMENT**

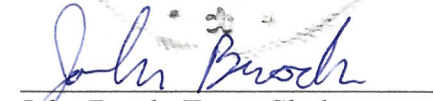
Councilor Lannamañ tried to make a motion to adjourn the meeting, but Board Member Wagler told her that it was not her place to do that; this was a Planning and Zoning Board meeting and only they could make a motion to adjourn the meeting.

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

The Meeting adjourned at 8:49 p.m. | Attendees: 54



ATTEST:

  
John Brock, Town Clerk

  
Tina St. Clair Chairperson