



Town Council Meeting
February 27, 2023 at 6:00 PM
Howey-in the-Hills Town Hall
101 N. Palm 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.
Lake County Poet Laureate, Mr. Jim Steele, read an untitled poem.

ROLL CALL

Acknowledgement of Quorum

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councilor Reneé Lannamañ (via Zoom) | Councilor David Miles | Councilor George Lehning | Mayor Pro Tem Marie V Gallelli | Mayor Martha MacFarlane

STAFF PRESENT:

Sean O'Keefe, Town Administrator | John Brock, Town Clerk | Morgan Cates, Public Works Director | Rick Thomas, Police Chief | Abigail Herrera, Finance Supervisor | Tom Wilkes, Town Attorney | Tom Harowski, Town Planner (via Zoom)

AGENDA APPROVAL/REVIEW

Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli to allow Councilor Lannamañ to participate and vote in this meeting by Zoom due to illness; seconded by Councilor Miles. Motion approved unanimously by voice vote.

Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli to approve the meeting's agenda; seconded by Councilor Miles. Motion approved unanimously by voice vote.

Voting

Yea: Councilor Lannamañ, Councilor Miles, Councilor Lehning, Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli, Mayor MacFarlane

Nay: None

CONSENT AGENDA

Routine items are placed on the Consent Agenda to expedite the meeting. If Town Council/Staff wish to discuss any item, the procedure is as follows: (1) Pull the item(s) from the Consent Agenda; (2) Vote on the remaining item(s); and (3) Discuss each pulled item and vote.

1. The approval of the minutes and ratification and confirmation of all Town Council actions at the February 13, 2023 Town Council Meeting.
2. The approval of the minutes and ratification and confirmation of all Town Council actions at the February 10, 2023 Town Council Workshop.
3. Consideration and Approval: **Storm Debris Removal Agreement Option Selection**

Motion made by Councilor Miles to approve the Consent Agenda with the revised minutes; seconded by Councilor Lehning. Motion approved unanimously by voice vote.

Voting

Yea: Councilor Lannamañ, Councilor Miles, Councilor Lehning, Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli, Mayor MacFarlane

Nay: None

PUBLIC HEARING

4. Consideration and Approval: (Second Reading) **Ordinance 2023-002 - Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)**

Martha MacFarlane, Mayor, read Ordinance 2023-002 by title only:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS, FLORIDA AMENDING THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS ELEMENT IN CHAPTER 8 OF THE TOWN'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN BY UPDATING THE FIVE-YEAR SCHEDULE OF CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS TO INCLUDE ESTIMATED CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2022-2023 THROUGH FISCAL YEAR 2026-2027 PURSUANT TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF CHAPTER 163 OF THE FLORIDA STATUTES; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT, CODIFICATION, SEVERABILITY AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Mayor MacFarlane asked Town Planner, Tom Harowski, to introduce and explain this item. Mr. Harowski stated that he believed that the Town Council had worked very thoroughly on the CIP plan.

Mayor MacFarlane opened Public Comment for this item only. Seeing no public comment, Mayor MacFarlane closed Public Comment.

Motion made by Councilor Miles to approve Ordinance 2023-002 with the amendment of reinstating the North Wastewater Project to the CIP which the Town Manager had deleted during a previous meeting; seconded by Councilor Lehning. Motion approved unanimously by roll-call vote.

Voting

Yea: Councilor Lannamañ, Councilor Miles, Councilor Lehning, Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli, Mayor MacFarlane

Nay: None

Councilor Miles asked to address the Council after the vote on this item. Councilor Miles stated that he thought that the Town needed a Town Councilor dedicated to pushing wastewater issues, much as Mayor MacFarlane had done for water issues, for the Town and he volunteered himself to fill that role. Councilor Miles stated that, if he was in the role, that he would work with the Town Manager and the Town Attorney. He asked for the support of the Town Council for this.

Mayor MacFarlane stated that she wanted to know what the scope of this would be and thought that the use of the Town Attorney should be controlled by to the Town Manager. Mayor MacFarlane stated that

she thought that he should work through the issues in partnership with the Town Manager. Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli agreed with Mayor MacFarlane.

Councilor Lehning agreed and suggested that a formal document be written up to show the Council the scope Councilor Miles' proposed role as the Town Council's Liaison on Wastewater issues would be.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

5. Consideration and Approval: Prioritization of Town Council 2023 SMART Goals

Mayor MacFarlane asked Town Manager, Sean O'Keefe, to introduce and explain this item. Mr. O'Keefe summarized the prioritization of these SMART goals.

Mayor MacFarlane read out loud and explained the Town Council 2023 SMART Goals.

Mayor MacFarlane opened Public Comment for this item only.

Tim Everline. 1012 N Lakeshore Blvd – Mr. Everline asked to have the Goals shown on the council display screen.

Peter Tuite, 300 E Croton Way – Mr. Tuite asked if the Town was still looking at purchasing the Central Lake CDD. Mr. Tuite suggested purchasing the land that the proposed Thompson Grove was going to be built on and using that land to build a town wastewater plant; if not, maybe Florida Forever could purchase the land.

Seeing no further public comment, Mayor MacFarlane closed Public Comment for this item.

Motion made by Councilor Miles to approve; seconded by Councilor Lehning. Motion passed unanimously by roll-call vote.

Voting

Yea: Councilor Lannamañi, Councilor Miles, Councilor Lehning, Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli, Mayor MacFarlane

Nay: None

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

6. Town Manager

Town Manager, Sean O'Keefe, stated that the town staff was looking at reinvesting some of the Town's assets into higher yielding accounts. Mr. O'Keefe asked the public for volunteers to work on the Events committee. Mr. O'Keefe announced the Town's Easter Egg Dash on April 8, 2023, and Howey Founder's Day on May 6, 2023. Mr. O'Keefe also stated that the Cedar Creek proposed development should come before the Town Council during the first meeting in March.

COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS

7. Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli

Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli asked the Town Attorney if he had researched if there was some way for the Town to regulate equity companies from buying land and using them for rental properties. Mr. Wilkes stated that he had not been able to complete that research yet.

Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli stated that she thought that Code Enforcement Officer Azure Botts was doing a great job. Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli stated that Officer Botts was fair in that she had even come to her house to address a code issue.

Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli suggested that there be a resident member on the Development Review Committee (DRC). Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli suggested that the Town Council could appoint someone to this position for a 6-month trial period. Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli suggested that the role of this resident member be a liaison to be part of the process, and that they could then go to the community and explain what was occurring in the DRC meeting. Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli suggested that residents feel they do not have a voice in the development process due to not having a member on the DRC.

Councilor Miles reminded Councilor Gallelli that the DRC meetings were already open to the public. Mayor MacFarlane stated the DRC ensures that developers are in line with the Town's Land Development Code (LDC) and that residents get a voice during the Planning & Zoning Board meetings.

Mayor MacFarlane suggested creating an agenda item for this to be discussed during the next meeting.

8. Councilor Lehning

Councilor Lehning thanked Councilor Miles for volunteering to be a liaison on wastewater issues but thought it would create a Sunshine issue keeping him from speaking to Councilor Miles directly about Wastewater issue. Councilor Lehning stated that he had discovered in his MPO meeting that there was relatively no money to work on improving SR 19 from Tavares to Groveland until Fiscal Year 2026.

Councilor Lehning suggested that the Town should look into researching Chapter 8 (Development Standards) of the LDC and perhaps be more specific about what the Town desires to see in PUD agreements. It was decided that the Planning & Zoning Board should review it and make recommendations before the Town Council does.

9. Councilor Miles

Councilor Miles stated that he thought the land use and zoning designation are not in agreement with each other in Chapter 8 of the LDC. Councilor Miles would also like the standards in Chapter 8 of the LDC to be reviewed.

Councilor Miles stated that he had still not received a copy of the GatorSketch plan for the Public Safety complex. Mr. O'Keefe stated that he would send it to them.

Councilor Miles had questions about the amount to be paid for drilling Wells #5 and #6 as previously approved. He then suggested that the next time the Town Council updates Table 20 of the CIP that they should review the amounts for that project for correctness.

Councilor Miles complimented the Public Works Director for getting the street lighting fixed on E. Central Ave.

Councilor Miles discussed prioritization of repaving projects in the town. Councilor Miles stated that he agreed with Public Works Director Cates that the two blocks on the northern end of the town of N. Dixie Drive are the worst streets in the town.

Councilor Miles stated that, to reconstruct the 1400 linear feet of N. Dixie Dr., that badly needed repair, with a 24-foot-wide road, sidewalks on both sides, and stormwater drainage, would cost the Town approximately \$350,000. Councilor Miles stated that the Town currently had \$220,000 to \$225,000 in the budget for streets overlay and sidewalk construction combined. Councilor Miles stated that, to make the repairs with a 16-foot-wide road, sidewalks on one side of the road, and stormwater drainage, would cost the Town \$238,000 and would fix the intersection at Pine and N. Dixie Dr.

Councilor Miles stated that he would like this project completed by September 30, 2023. To facilitate the speed of this project, Councilor Miles would like the town to piggyback off a county contract or any other publicly bid municipal contract to get the paving done quickly. Councilor Miles also said that he would like the entire length of Citrus Ave. to be repaved (with a 20-foot or 24-foot-wide road), to include the intersection of Citrus Ave. and Camellia Way, and move the Citrus Ave. road into its proper right of way. Councilor Miles stated that he would like this Citrus Ave. project to be completed in the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2024. Councilor Miles stated that he would like to make a motion for all the above to be completed.

Mayor MacFarlane stated that the Town Council represents the entire Town and there are residents of Gardenia Street and many other roads that have been waiting for their roads to be repaved. Mayor MacFarlane stated that she thought that the Town Council should wait for the Town's staff to finish prioritizing the repairs of the Town's roads before making a decision. Mayor MacFarlane stated that she did not think it was a good decision for the Town Council to rush to make a decision about these two road projects, especially since three of the Town Council's five members live off of Citrus Ave. or Camellia Way.

Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli stated that she did not think that the Council should decide what standards the Town should use for existing roads during that night's meeting.

Councilor Miles stated that Public Works Director Cates had informed him that these two streets were among the worst four streets in town.

It was decided that both proposed projects would be presented to the Town Council during the next Town Council meeting and that Public Works would make a presentation on both projects.

Councilor Lehning stated that he thought that, if the Council decided to have both of these projects completed, that the projects should be bid out, instead of piggybacking off of old projects (to ensure the Town got the best possible price.)

10. Councilor Lannamañ

Councilor Lannamañ stated that she thought the Council needed to allow Mr. Cates to do his job and come back to the Council in two weeks with proposals for both roadwork projects. Councilor Lannamañ also agreed that the Town should review Chapter 8 of the LDC.

11. Mayor MacFarlane

Mayor MacFarlane asked for an update on the Town audit. Mr. O'Keefe stated that the Town was sending the last few items to the auditor that he had requested.

Mayor MacFarlane stated that many of the Councilors had described annexation as a priority for the Town and that the Councilors should remember that when considering the proposed Cedar Creek development. Mayor MacFarlane also thanked all of the Town staff for all of their hard work.

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.

Tim Everline, 1012 N Lakeshore Blvd – Mr. Everline stated that Councilor Lehning had asked for development standards to be reviewed during the December Town Council meeting. At that time, the Town Manager had the responsibility of ensuring that this topic was reviewed by the Planning & Zoning Board. Mr. Everline thought that the Town Manager should be held accountable for not fulfilling his comments on this topic.

Mr. Everline also thought that the library had received too much attention on the CIP and there was too much money going to the library.

Peter Tuite, 300 E Croton Way – Mr. Tuite stated that he did not believe that Citrus Ave. was a problem, just the intersection of Citrus Ave. and Camelia Way. Mr. Tuite stated that the road projects should wait until after the Town decides on sewer issues. Mr. Tuite also wanted the Council and Public to be aware of potential state legislation that would take away the rights of local governments.


Banks Helfrich, 9100 Sam's Lake Rd, Clermont, FL – Mr. Helfrich stated that government employees and elected officials are in the service industry. Mr. Helfrich reminded the public that he does tours of his farm on the second Saturday of every month.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The Meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m. | **Attendees: 31**

ATTEST:


Mayor Martha MacFarlane
John Brock, Town Clerk