

# TOWN OF LOXAHATCHEE GROVES

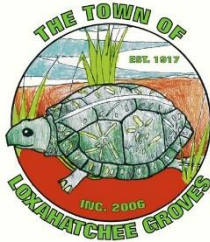
TOWN HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS

155 F. ROAD, LOXAHATCHEE GROVES, FL 33470

## TOWN COUNCIL WORKSHOP MINUTES

MINUTES

OCTOBER 21, 2025



### 1. Call to Order, Roll Call & Opening

The meeting began at **6:00 PM** with all council members present:

- Mayor Anita Kane
- Vice Mayor Marge Herzog
- Council Members Lisa El-Ramey, Todd McLendon, and Paul Coleman

The meeting format was a **workshop-style session**, designed for open communication, brainstorming, and priority-setting rather than formal voting. The Mayor emphasized keeping **action notes** throughout the session.

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### 2. Public Comment – Community Issues & Concerns

#### 2.1. RedSpeed School Zone Cameras & Enforcement Confusion

Multiple residents raised concerns about:

- Whether cameras were enforcing speed **before drivers reached the school zone sign**
- Confusion over **when the cameras activate**
- Differences between:
  - School zone flashing-light enforcement

- The town's 30 MPH year-round enforcement segment on Okeechobee Blvd

The council clarified:

- RedSpeed cameras activate **at the legally posted sign**, not before
- The **school zone enforcement period** is larger than the flashing-light window (30 minutes before/after school + all instructional hours)
- Residents reported the **county sign placement may be incorrect**, prompting the council to direct staff to:
  - Confirm exact location of official speed transitions
  - Request **new advance-warning signs** ("Prepare to Slow") or **road striping**

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## 2.2. RV Park Application – Transparency & Process

Residents expressed frustration that:

- A previously noticed RV park hearing was canceled
- No explanation had been provided
- The project "seems to be lurking" without updates

Council clarified:

- The applicant **canceled** the hearing, not the town
- The application **remains active** until the applicant withdraws
- Applicants may **reschedule as many times as they wish** as long as they pay required fees
- The council **cannot express opinions** or pre-judge the application due to **quasi-judicial rules**
- Residents were assured that **full public notice** will occur when a new hearing date is set

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## 2.3. Late Agendas & Inconsistent Public Notice

Residents raised concerns about consistently **late agenda posting**, especially for:

- Charter Review Committee
- ULDC Committee
- Finance Committee

Issues cited:

- Agendas arriving only **1–2 days before** meetings
- Incomplete backup packets
- Two different calendars on the town website showing **different meeting dates**

Council Discussion:

- Acknowledged the long-standing problem and staff turnover
- Proposed solutions:
  - Require **addendum pages** to upload late documents
  - Require agendas be posted **one week in advance**, even if backup follows later
  - Direct staff to consolidate or synchronize website calendars

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## 2.4. Spending Transparency, Backup Requirements & Check Signing

Residents and council members discussed:

- Instances where **reimbursement checks lacked proper receipts**
- Concerns that handwritten notes were submitted instead of documentation
- Requests to standardize what qualifies as “acceptable backup”

Council emphasized:

- Backup **must** be:
  - Receipts
  - Purchase orders
  - Credible documents

- Handwritten lists are **not acceptable** except under rare, documented circumstances
  - Council expressed frustration when they are asked to sign checks with insufficient documentation
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### **3. Workshop Discussion – Council Policies, Priorities & Procedures**

#### **3.1. Consent Agenda – What Belongs & What Doesn't**

The council analyzed how consent agendas should operate.

Consensus Points:

- Consent should contain:
  - Routine business
  - Second readings that have already been discussed
  - Appointments and items without spending impacts
- It **should NOT** contain:
  - New expenditures
  - Items lacking backup
  - Controversial or large contracts

Council noted confusion from residents when consent items were frequently **pulled and moved**.

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#### **3.2. Committees & Tasking – How Direction Should Flow**

Several council members argued that committees:

- Should be **tasked directly by council**
- Should not self-initiate major projects
- Must receive **clear guidance** to avoid drift or confusion

Example:

The council considered tasking the Finance Committee with reviewing staff's **5%**

**reduction exercise** for potential savings ideas.

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### **3.3. Sunshine Law – Sharing Information Between Council Members**

The council expressed continued frustration:

- They cannot discuss matters outside meetings
- They cannot forward information to each other without violating Sunshine

Proposal raised:

- Allow **one-way communication** from a council member → to the clerk → to the rest of council
- No replies allowed

Council agreed to request:

- The town attorney provide **case law or AG opinions** on the legality of one-way distribution
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### **3.4. Priority List & Strategic Plan**

Council agreed:

- The next workshop should focus on the **townwide priority list** of 100+ items
  - The list must inform the **strategic plan**, required under the manager’s contract by March
  - A “top 10” set of immediate priorities would help staff allocate workload
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## **4. Major Planning & Policy Topics**

### **4.1. Okeechobee Blvd – Proposal to Rename Back to “Middle Road”**

Council Member McClendon proposed:

- Renaming Okeechobee Blvd to **Middle Road**, its historical name

Rationale:

- Strengthen the town's legal position to maintain:
  - **Two-lane configuration**
  - **Speed control authority**
- Reinforce the argument that it is a **rural main street**, not an urban highway

Council consensus:

- Supportive
- To place the item on an upcoming agenda

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#### 4.2. Boundary of the Commercial Corridor (Tangerine → Southern Blvd)

Discussion centered on:

- Confusion in comp-plan language regarding the “Southern Blvd Commercial Corridor”
- Concern that past approvals (Publix center and State College area) created **precedent** up to Collecting Canal
- Need to clarify and **strengthen** language to prevent expansion northward
- Council may direct Charter Review and staff to strengthen boundary protections

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#### 4.3. Charter Review – Suggested Amendments

Several items emerged for referral to the Charter Review Committee:

1. Making the **Town Clerk** a charter officer
2. Possibly making the **Finance Director** a charter officer (council noted pros/cons)
3. Reviewing/removing the clause requiring **4 council votes to terminate the Town Manager**
  - Suggestion: remove clause from charter entirely and keep termination terms **negotiated by contract**
4. Improving separation of powers and responsibilities between council–manager–staff

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## **5. Staffing, Operations & Internal Issues**

### **5.1. Staff Turnover & Missing Roles**

Residents and council highlighted:

- Persistent turnover in front desk, permitting, support staff
- Temporary employees without name tags or introductions
- Difficulty knowing who performs which role

Council agreed:

- Need for better onboarding
- Name tags at public counters
- Clarifying workflows to prevent inconsistent answers

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### **5.2. Two Calendars Problem**

Issue:

- The homepage calendar and meeting-agenda calendar are completely out of sync

Council action:

- Direct staff to update calendars **weekly by Monday noon**
- Ensure consistency between MuniCode and CivicPlus systems

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## **6. Upcoming Events & Council Coordination**

### **6.1. Wellington Holiday Parade – December 14**

Theme: **“Celebrating the Season Through the Years”**

Council discussed:

- Decorating the town’s flatbed float
- Using a low-cost “DIY” approach (like last year)

- Considering themes such as:
  - *Home Alone*
  - *Christmas Vacation*
  - Generational Christmas scenes

Deadline:

- Council to finalize concept at the **Nov. 18 workshop**
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## **6.2. Founders & Veterans Day Parade – November 8**

Planned route:

- Start: Medical Center parking lot
- End: Samuel Friedland Park

Council tasks:

- Recruit veterans for recognition
  - Clean up and verify the veterans list
  - Encourage residents to submit names by **Oct. 31** via text to Councilwoman Herzog
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## **7. Tone, Communication & Public Trust**

The meeting repeatedly returned to themes of:

- Transparency
- Misinformation circulating on social media
- Unrealistic expectations of council authority
- Civility and respectful discourse

Residents praised the workshop format as:

- The most productive, informative meeting they had attended

- A model for improved communication

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## 8. Adjournment

The council closed the workshop after approximately two hours of open discussion, concluding with mutual agreement that:

- Workshops of this style should occur **regularly**
- The session strengthened understanding, collaboration, and trust between council and the community

**TOWN OF LOXAHATCHEE GROVES,  
FLORIDA**

**ATTEST:**

Signed by:  
*Valerie Oakes*  
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Town Clerk

Signed by:  
*Anita Kane*  
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Mayor Anita Kane, Seat 3

Signed by:  
*Margaret Herzog*  
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Vice Mayor Margaret Herzog, Seat 5

Signed by:  
*Todd McLendon*  
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Councilmember Todd McLendon, Seat 1

Signed by:  
*Lisa El-Ramey*  
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Councilmember Lisa El-Ramey, Seat 2

Signed by:  
*Paul T. Coleman II*  
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Councilmember Paul T. Coleman II, Seat 4