

TOWN OF LOXAHATCHEE GROVES

TOWN HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS

155 F ROAD, LOXAHATCHEE GROVES, FL 33470

LPA/PLANNING & ZONING BOARD MINUTES

THURSDAY, AUGUST 29, 2024 – 6:02 P.M. – 7:54 P.M.



Meeting Audio Available Upon Request in the Office of the Town Clerk

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson William Ford at **6:02 PM**, followed by the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance by the Planning and Zoning Board.

ROLL CALL

Committee Members Present:

- William Ford, Chair (Seat 1)
- Lisa El-Ramey, Vice Chair (Seat 5)
- Todd McLendon, Member (Seat 3)
- Brett Raflowitz, Member (Seat 2)
- Jacquelyn Clifton, Member (Seat 4)

Staff Present:

- Francine Ramaglia, Town Manager (arrived shortly after the start of the meeting)
- Tanya Earley, Town Attorney
- Sammie Brown, Town Clerk Assistant
- Jim Fleischmann, Town Planning Consultant
- Kaitlyn Forbes, Town Planning Consultant
- Teresa Buu, Town Traffic Consultant (virtual)
- Pong Leung, Traffic Consultant (virtual)
- Richard Gallant, Public Works Director (arrived later)

A quorum was confirmed for the meeting to proceed.

The hotel developer, Rahel Svi, later presented architectural renderings of the updated hotel design. He described adjustments made to comply with both brand requirements and local design codes. According to Svi, the hotel brand (Home2 Suites by Hilton) had allowed for full exterior customization to meet the Town's aesthetic standards, including pitched metal roofing and clapboard siding. He compared the revised design to less compatible designs used in similar branded hotels elsewhere and explained the importance of building height for mechanical concealment and appearance.

During discussion, several committee members raised concerns about the scale and visual impact of the hotel. While they acknowledged the developer's responsiveness to previous feedback, concerns remained about:

- Whether the design truly reflected the Town's vision of rural charm and low-intensity development.
- The long-term implications of waiving height restrictions.
- Potential future conflicts created by lighting, signage, and public safety response needs.

Public Comment (Specific to Item 1):

Ms. Cassie Suchy spoke in opposition to the proposed hotel revisions. She argued that the current plans represented a shift from a previously promised "boutique" hotel to a generic chain-style development. Ms. Suchy expressed concern over increased crime, lighting pollution, height waivers, and deviations from the Town's rules. She called on the board to hold developers accountable to the standards written in the Town code.

Committee and Staff Discussion:

Committee members debated the appropriate interpretation of the height code, questioning the permissibility of 52-foot structures in an area where 35 feet was intended to be a maximum. Planning Consultant Forbes clarified that the waiver request for 40 feet to the roof deck and 52 feet to the parapet was submitted as allowable under ULDC Section 15-010, which permits some flexibility in building heights if supported by architectural features.

Staff noted that wayfinding signage proposed by the applicant would require a standard sign permit but posed no issue for approval. The Town would retain authority to remove signs in the future if desired.

Traffic consultants from Transystems, including Teresa Buu and Pong Leung, confirmed they had reviewed the temporary traffic changes and shared the findings with staff. However, some committee members expressed dissatisfaction with not having access to final conclusions in writing during the meeting.

Committee consensus acknowledged that some traffic challenges may stem more from the adjacent Publix site than the proposed hotel itself, though members stressed the need for a coordinated solution.

COMMENTS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Committee members reiterated the importance of:

- Adhering to community character guidelines.
- Carefully evaluating waivers, especially regarding building height and scale.
- Holding developers to standards equal to or exceeding those in neighboring municipalities.

There was also appreciation expressed toward the applicant for attempting to address concerns and revise the hotel design.

CONFIRM NEXT REGULAR MEETING DATE:

No specific date was confirmed during the meeting. Staff advised the committee that the next meeting would be scheduled once traffic review comments were received, and new actions were ready for presentation.

ADJOURNMENT

The Planning and Zoning Meeting was adjourned at 7:54 P.M. with a Motion to adjourn by Committee Member Lisa El-Ramey. Committee Member Todd McLendon seconded that motion.

ATTEST:

**TOWN OF LOXAHATCHEE GROVES,
FLORIDA**



Sammie T. Brown, FRA-RP, MEDP
Town Clerk Assistant

Jacquelyn Clifton
Planning and Zoning Board Chairperson