



MINUTES OF THE HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS TOWN COUNCIL  
HELD OCTOBER 11, 2021

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.

**ROLL CALL**

**Members Present:**

Martha MacFarlane, Mayor  
Ed Conroy, Mayor Pro-Tem  
Rick Klein, Councilor  
Marie V. Gallelli, Councilor  
George Lehning, Councilor

**Staff Present:**

Sean O'Keefe, Town Administrator  
John Brock, Town Clerk  
James Southall, Public Works Supervisor (Virtual)  
George Brown, Police Lieutenant  
Tara Hall, Library Director  
Thomas Wilkes, Town Attorney (Virtual)

**AGENDA APPROVAL**

**Motion made by Councilor Gallelli to approve the agenda; Councilor Lehning seconded the motion. Motion was approved unanimously by voice vote.**

**CONSENT AGENDA**

1. The approval of the minutes and ratification and confirmation of all Town Council actions at the September 27, 2021, Town Council Budget Public Hearing Meeting.
2. The approval of the minutes and ratification and confirmation of all Town Council actions at the September 27, 2021, Town Council CDBG-CV Public Hearing Meeting.
3. The approval of the minutes and ratification and confirmation of all Town Council actions at the September 27, 2021, Town Council Meeting.

**Motion made by Mayor Pro-Tem Conroy to approve the minutes; Councilor Klein seconded the motion. Motion was approved unanimously by voice vote.**

**PUBLIC HEARING**

4. Consideration and Approval: **Variance petition for 205 E Croton Way detached garage/storage.**

Mayor MacFarlane asked Town Administrator, Sean O'Keefe, to explain the issues with this variance request. Mr. O'Keefe explained that this Variance petition was review by the Planning & Zoning Board at their last meeting and the staff recommendation along with the Planning & Zoning Board recommendation was to NOT approve the variance request. Town Clerk Brock elaborated that the variance was essentially asking for three things; the size of the garage (over

the Town's limit), the material the garage would be built out of (metal), and the setback from the adjoining property (only 7 feet).

Mayor opened the Public Hearing for Public Comment.

Public Comment:

Tina St. Clair, Planning & Zoning Board Chair – Mrs. St Clair explained that the proposed building would be a metal building, 16 feet high at the peak, 740 square feet, and the setback was under the allowed limit; all of these reasons are why Planning & Zoning Board declined to recommend approval for this variance.

Ernesto Elbo, 205 E Croton Way – Mr. Elbo said the height of the building is only 14 feet.

Ann Griffin, 215 E Laurel Ave – Griffin Village is a residential area and should not allow tall metal buildings.

Berniece Hower, 444 Bellissimo Place – Mrs. Hower stated that the variance is for the owner's enjoyment and the building would be that tall to allow the owner to park his RV in it. Mrs. Hower also said she remembers a time when a variance was allowed for someone to have a pool within 5 feet of the edge of their property. Mrs. Hower also said she is in favor of Mr. Elbo getting his requested variance.

Mayor MacFarlane closed the public comment portion of the public hearing and opened the meeting up for councilor comment.

Councilor Gallelli stated she had spoken to several residents and their sentiment was that a large metal building like that was not appropriate for the area.

**Motion made by Mayor Pro-Tem Conroy to follow the Planning & Zoning Board's recommendation and NOT approve the variance request; Councilor Lehning seconded the motion. Motion was approved by roll call vote.**

<b>Councilor Lehning</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>Mayor Pro-Tem Conroy</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>Mayor MacFarlane</b>	<b>YES</b>

<b>Councilor Klein</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>Councilor Gallelli</b>	<b>YES</b>

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **5. Consideration and Approval: County Library Advisory Board Candidates.**

Mayor MacFarlane explained that the Town has two representatives in the County Library Advisory Board. One of the proposed candidates for the Town to the County Library Board is Town Administrator Sean O'Keefe. Mr. O'Keefe had previously worked for the Lake County

Library System and is very knowledgeable in its processes and can represent the Town's interests effectively.

The second proposed candidate is Jaynie Wilkins-Earley. Mrs. Wilkins-Earley is a new resident to Town but is already a valuable volunteer for the Town and has an extensive background in education and been an advocate for libraries.

Mrs. Wilkins-Earley explained her background and her passion for education and libraries.

Mr. O'Keefe explained the purpose of this County Board and that the Town Council would make a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) and the BCC would make the final appointment to the County Library Advisory Board.

Town Clerk Brock stated that Mr. Steele, the President of the Town Library Board, had recommended both candidates to the Town Council, with the recommendation that Sean O'Keefe be the primary representative and Mrs. Wilkins-Earley be the secondary representative.

Public Comment:

None

**Motion made by Mayor Pro-Tem Conroy to recommend Sean O'Keefe and Jaynie Wilkins-Earley to the Lake County Library Advisory Board; Councilor Lehning seconded the motion. Motion was approved unanimously by voice vote.**

**6. Discussion: Irrigation Meter Requirement for New Construction with Irrigation Well.**

Mayor MacFarlane explained that the Town currently requires all new construction in the town to receive both a potable and irrigation water meter, even if there is no reclaimed water line running to the property. Also, the Town has a couple of citizens that have received county permits to dig a personal irrigation well on their property.

James Southall explained that the older sections of town do not have any irrigation lines and the two homes that the mayor was talking about have both gotten a permit through the county to dig irrigation wells. If the Town was to put the irrigation meter in the ground for both these residents, they would be paying an extra cost for a meter they would not be using. Furthermore, the irrigation meter in the ground would be a waste of a town resource (the water meter that could be used somewhere else).

Mayor Pro-Tem Conroy stated that he was on the P&Z Board when the Town's rules about new homes needing the two meters was created. He recommends the Town make the change about not requiring the two meters in situations where there is both (1) no reclaimed water line and (2) there is a permitted irrigation well.

Mayor MacFarlane stated that the Town will get the draft of the standards written and should be done by the end of the year. There should be standards for all new subdivisions, and the Town needs to include what the requirements are for multi-family homes. The Town Council directed the Town Planner, Tom Harowski, to write up these standards for their review.

Public Comment:

Sal Gallelli, 1104 N Tangerine Ave – Mr. Gallelli doesn't think that the Town should require a meter for older homes that dig irrigation wells.

#### 7. Discussion: **Strategy to Update Fees and Charges.**

Mayor MacFarlane explained that she had sent out information about rates and charges to all of the Town Councilors. Sean O'Keefe, Town Administrator, explained that he was still looking into the State rules and regulations about how the Town can change its water rates and what notifications are required. Mayor MacFarlane explained that some of the rates that needed to also be looked at include the boat ramp rates and cemetery rates.

Councilor Lehning suggested that the Town Council have a workshop to work on these rates. Councilor Gallelli suggested that the individual councilors take responsibility for certain categories of rates and research them prior to having the workshop.

Councilor Klein feels that the Town doesn't need to look into what other municipalities are charging for the boat ramp but needs to look at all the costs associated with the ramp and charge in a manner to ensure the town doesn't lose money on maintaining the ramp. Councilor Klein also stated that the cemetery also needs to be a self-sustaining enterprise.

Councilor Lehning also feels that there should be a representative from the Planning & Zoning Board and the Parks & Recreation Board in attendance at the workshop. Mayor MacFarlane suggest that Pat Miller would be a good person to have in attendance at the workshop, based off of the research she has done on cemeteries.

Mayor MacFarlane suggested that permitting fees and water rates should not be reviewed in the workshop.

Public Comment:

None

#### **Old Business:**

None

#### **Town Reports:**

##### **Town Hall**

Town Clerk Brock gave the September Town Hall report. Mr. Brock presented the number of permits that were issued in September and listed the top 10 bad debt accounts for the Town's utilities.

### **Police Department**

Police Lt. Brown presented the Police Department's monthly report for September.

### **Code Enforcement**

Azure Botts, Code Enforcement Officer, was not in attendance but her monthly report was included in the meeting packet.

### **Public Services**

Public Works Supervisor, Mr. James Southall, presented the monthly report for the Public Services Department. Mr. Southall stated that the pressure washing at the boardwalk at Sara Maude was completed and work would begin this week for the replacement of rotten boards. Mayor MacFarlane explained that the Town needs to make rules about what kind of things can be planted or done around the Town's water meters. Mr. Southall also stated that the Central Alley Sewer Project should be complete by the end of October. Councilor Klein stated that it was important to apply a sealant to the boardwalk, especially after new boards are put down.

### **Library**

Library Director, Tara Hall, presented the September Library report. Mayor MacFarlane explained that the Town is moving forward with CTI for the Town's electronic notification sign project.

### **Parks & Recreation Advisory Board / Special Events Committee**

Pat Miller, Parks & Recreation Board Chair, thanked Mayor MacFarlane and Mr. O'Keefe for working hard to get the fishing pier boards replaced and getting the Sara Maude Park boardwalk back up and functioning. Mr. O'Keefe stated that, since we are in a new fiscal year, the Town is moving forward with replacing the playground border at the Griffin Park playground and some of the border at the Central Park playground. The vendor that the Town will use is GameTime.

Councilor Gallelli gave a report from the Events Committee. There will be a Halloween Trick or Treat event at Central Park from 4 to 6 pm. on Saturday October 30<sup>th</sup>, and there will a prize for the best decorated table. There is also a house decoration contest that will occur on Friday October 29<sup>th</sup>.

### **Town Attorney**

Nothing to report.

## **Town Administrator/Financial Director**

Sean O’Keefe, the Town Administrator, presented his September Financial report. Public Service Director interviews have been being conducted and more are scheduled. Also, there is a proposed tentative update to the Board of County Commissioner map, which may affect the districting and representation of the Town.

## **Development Status**

Sean O’Keefe, the Town Administrator, shared the Development Status report for September. The changes from the previous status include the Simpson development and Bouis / Thompson Grove Development. The Town has also received a pre-application for what is tentatively called the Westminster Development (this is the Mission Inn marina area).

## **Council Member Reports:**

### **Mayor Pro-Tem Conroy**

Mayor Pro-Tem Conroy stated the Town used a free Water Rate Study in the past. Councilor Conroy stated the need for a five-year plan for water rates based on a paid Water Rate Study.

### **Councilor Lehning**

Councilor Lehning asked about a business development person or company. Mr. O’Keefe stated that he had spoken with the Florida Small Business Development Center (FSBDC) and they are willing to come in to do a presentation for the Town.

### **Councilor Gallelli**

Councilor Gallelli thanked Town Administrator, Sean O’Keefe, for doing the Development Status Report.

### **Councilor Klein**

Nothing to report.

### **Mayor MacFarlane**

Mayor MacFarlane thanked Councilor Klein for his work in soliciting contractors to submit bids for the Howey Fishing Pier Renovation RFP.

## **Public Comments**

Berniece Hower, 444 Bellissimo Place – Mrs. Hower asked who the developer was that was proposing to do the townhomes at Venezia South. Mayor MacFarlane answered D.R. Horton.

Frances O’Keefe Wagler, 409 W Central Ave. - There is a raffle to support Officer Hamelink. Mrs. Wagler stated that Mission Inn and the Citrus Plant are looking for workers. Also, Emma Fox is doing a blanket drive for Blankets for the Homeless. New or slightly used blankets can be dropped off at the Howey Market.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

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

The Meeting adjourned at 7:26 p.m. | **Attendees: 24**

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Mayor Martha MacFarlane

ATTEST:

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John Brock, Town Clerk