

MINUTES OF THE HOWEY IN THE HILLS TOWN COUNCIL
HELD JULY 13 , 2020

Mayor MacFarlane called the Town Council Meeting of July 13, 2020 to order at 6:00p.m.

Mayor MacFarlane led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

CONSENT AGENDA

The approval of the minutes and ratification and confirmation of all Town Council actions at the following Town Council Meeting(s) June 22, 2020.

Mayor Pro-Tem Conroy seconded by, Councilor Nebel moved to approve the minutes and ratification and confirmation of all Town Council actions at the following Town Council Meeting(s) June 22, 2020. Motion passed 3-1 with a roll call vote. (Councilor McGill voting no)

NEW BUSINESS

Mayor MacFarlane made an announcement that Councilor Scott resigned his position on the Town Council effective Friday July 10, 2020.

Discussion and Approval of Resolution No. 2020-003: Setting of the proposed maximum millage rate for ad valorem taxes.

Mayor MacFarlane read the resolution aloud

Councilor McGill said he was hoping to have the millage rate down into the sevens and inquired why we are not setting the cap in the sevens

Mayor MacFarlane said primarily because we know what we need to operate as a town and the unforeseen impact of COVID affecting the ad valorem, discretionary tax and gas taxes coming in lower what was budgeted, we are leaving the higher rate as is so we have flexibility to go somewhere in between what we are going to propose in the fall and the 8.8875 without having a cost of putting it on a ballot and going through a referendum.

Councilor McGill said it could definitely be lowered into the sevens and that we will still be going through COVID when the vote is done for this in September, he knows that it is one of the biggest concerns of the residents to lower the taxes and millage rate

Mayor Pro-Tem Conroy said he agrees with Council McGill but last year our budget was 46% driven by ad valorem taxes and 54% was driven by fees, the goal is to get the rate below eight but this gives wiggle room if COVID goes somewhere no one predicted. Mayor MacFarlane is a little bit concerned about property values

Council Nebel is in favor for many years of keeping taxes as high as possible because we never know what will happen the next year

Mayor Pro-Tem Conroy seconded by, **Councilor Nebel** moved to approve Resolution 2020-003

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Mr. Lewellen 508 Bellissimo Place said he disagrees with leaving the taxes as high as possible, as a homeowner that does not work for him. He thinks we need to look at getting the taxes into a reasonable level, when he looks at other cities around here, we are not even close to a reasonable level. If we could get into the sevens that would be a good start, suggest that we look at getting below seven. Has not seen any drops in property value. Wants to look at what actually happened and not what might happen when setting the taxes.

Mayor Pro-Tem Conroy seconded by, **Councilor Nebel** moved to approve Resolution 2020-003 to set the proposed maximum millage rate. Motion passed 3-1 with a roll call vote. (Councilor McGill voting no)

Discussion and Approval of Ordinance 2020-003 for the rezoning of a parcel off 19 from PUD to Light Industrial.

Mayor MacFarlane read the ordinance aloud

Mr. Harowski said the property that we are going to discuss is about a two-acre parcel located at the SW corner of the intersection of Revels Rd. and SR 19. Three actions to discuss, first is proposed comprehensive plan amendment from village mixed use to light industrial, second is an amendment to the official zoning map to change this parcel from PUD to light industrial and third is to consider a package of conditions that would relate to the use of what is being proposed.

Mayor Pro-Tem Conroy asked what the perimeter measurements are

Mr. Harowski said the survey states the frontage on SR 19 is 330 and parcel depth is 262 according to the surveyor's notes say the parcel is 1.987 acres

Councilor McGill asked if the 15-foot buffer was calculated to go around the entire property and he is also concerned that it has the potential to be an eyesore or a possible hazard

Mr. Harowski said he understands the concern about the appearance of the site which is why they recommended that six-foot opaque fence to enclose the equipment and provided a buffer requirement and a minimum landscaping requirement

Councilor McGill asked if the speed limit might get changed to a lower limit for safety

Mr. Harowski said that speed limit changes are done by the FDOT

Mayor Pro-Tem Conroy ask what the final recommendation from P&Z was

Mr. Harowski said the final recommendation from the planning board were related to three items, amend the future land use map, amend the official zoning map and he said they voted yes

Council Nebel said any kind of commercial development like this is what we have been waiting for, until we get some commercial taxes we will remain high taxes for residential areas

Nathaniel White with Contour Landscape Solutions said he put some serious thought into the property and he does not run an unsightly business and his intention is to come into the outskirts of town and create a green oasis. The landscape that is going onto the property far exceeds the minimum.

Mayor Pro-Tem Conroy asked what the target audience will be

Mr. White stated that they will be targeting both residential and commercial

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Beth Flack 607 S. Florida Avenue thinks a landscape company would want to make it look great because it helps advertise their services

Janice McLain 109 S. Lakeshore Blvd has no problem with it being a landscape as long as it is kept neat, concerned that the area for traffic control, questioned if the fence is going to be set back

Mr. Harowski does not expect that outcome, the fence will most likely be in the back of the property

Sal Galleli 1104 N. Tangerine questions where the entry would be? On SR 19 or Revels Rd.

Mr. Harowski said an entrance would be on Revels Rd., north bound traffic would enter from there, they have included the opportunity for the property to have a right in right out only access onto SR 19, south board traffic could enter on SR 19 and could only make a right turn exit onto SR 19

Sal Galleli asked if Revels Road will be widened or stay the same width

Mr. Harowski said we are not recommending that it be widened but we are recommending that it be paved

Discussion and Approval of Ordinance 2020-002 for adopting the new purchasing policy.

Mayor MacFarlane read the ordinance aloud

Mayor Pro-Tem Conroy seconded by, Councilor Nebel moved to approve Ordinance 2020-002. Motion passed 4-0 with a roll call vote.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

OLD BUSINESS

Consideration and Approval: Agreement with Lake County to provide addressing services

Councilor McGill seconded by, Councilor Nebel moved to approve the Interlocal agreement with Lake County to provide addressing services. Motion passed 4-0 with a roll call vote.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

REPORTS

Town Hall –. No comments.

Finance – just had a budget meeting so all information is up to date up to the first week of July

Councilor McGill was excused from the meeting early at approximately 6:43

Police Department – No comments.

Public Services – Mr. Ernest was not present, Mayor MacFarlane said we have been moving forward for the final plat review for Talichet and preliminary plat review for Whispering Hills as well as correspondence from Mission Rise

Code Enforcement – Mayor MacFarlane said that reaching out to citizens prior to sending code enforcement letters is working well.

Library: Mrs. O’Keefe Wagler gave the library report: said the expansion is continuing on or ahead of schedule, Boulevard Construction is expected to finish beginning to mid August. It looks amazing. As soon as COVID allows they are looking to have a grand opening. Total number of items 1473 items loaned out of the library. 33 children signed up for the summer reading program. There are seven more available bags for summer reading, the program ends the first week of August. All the libraries in Lake County are open with the exception of Montverde.

Boy Scouts: working with Town Hall and the Mayor for a list of things they can help the town with. They are participating in things as the pandemic allows.

Town Attorney – No comments.

Council Members:

Councilor Nebel wants to congratulate the Mayor of doing an excellent job of keeping us on track and the new town staff seems to be jumping in and getting things done which is nice to see, kudos to everyone

Mayor Pro-Tem Conroy wants everyone to know how many hours Mayor MacFarlane put in to keep the boat floating. Congratulations Martha. Thanks to Mr. Scott for the countless hours he put in above and beyond what a councilor needs to do, he worked hard from his perspective and I wish him great success in his future life.

Mayor MacFarlane wants to say thank you very much to Councilor Scott.

Venezia Sidewalk Update: thinks we should look at the utilization of impact fees to get this done. FDOT has moved the date out for a possible sidewalk from 2021 to 2024.

Mayor Pro-Tem Conroy suggested we reach out to Tim Sullivan and also mentioned there is a sidewalk provision in the MPO.

Mayor MacFarlane mentioned the CARES project, the program has some dollars to be used by small business during the COVID efforts. In addition to that we have a grant of 400,000 dollars that was allocated to us but we are not using it because the project from Lakeshore and Central all the way to our connection to the CDD is beyond our abilities at this time. She is reaching out to that group to see if there is any potential to reduce the scope of that project to allow us to use some of those dollars to connect the library.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Dan Powers 203 W. Holly St wants to make it perfectly clear to Mr. McGill that he does not work for the Mayor or the recall committee. He is a concerned private citizen of the town and he is tired of getting irresponsible and unprofessional emails from Mr. McGill and Mr. Scott trying to impugn his reputation and slander him through the town email system. All they need to do is give him the information he requested. Thanks to the person who put spoke about the library, they put out some information that he did not even know that we did.

Peter Tuite 300 E. Croton Way, wondering what the procedure is for replacing the missing counselor

Mayor MacFarlane said she and the council will accept applications to appoint a person, we will have the information about that and about the picking up the packets for people who want to be candidates for seats that are up for election in the November Presidential cycle. We love our Mayor!


Deanna Thomas 111 N. Palm wants to say thank you for the work Mayor MacFarlane has done in taking over in the situation, especially in the COVID pandemic. While meetings on ZOOM are not the most ideal situation you have really overcome that. With that being said we are having technology issues with people coming on and off and suggests adding public comment to the bringing of the meeting.

Charlotte Maffia 201 E. Laurel Ave said she is so impressed with the Mayors progress in all areas to improve Howey and she supports her 100 percent.

The Meeting adjourned at 7:18 p.m.

ATTEST:


Martha MacFarlane, Mayor


Chief H. R. Thomas