TOWN OF FLORIDA BOARD MEETING
December 18, 2023
7:00pm

The regular monthly meeting of the Town of Florida Town Board was called to order at 7:00 pm by Supervisor Eric Mead. Also present for the meeting were Councilman Mark Quiri, Councilman Matthew Gogis, Councilman Harold Alikonis, Councilman Steve Rackowski, Attorney Mike Crowe and Town Clerk Emily Staley.

Councilman Matthew Gogis led the salute to the flag.

Motion by Councilman Mark Quiri and seconded by Councilman Steve Rackowski to accept the Agenda; all in favor and passed.

Motion by Councilman Harold Alikonis and seconded by Councilman Matthew Gogis to approve and accept the minutes from the November 20, 2023, Board Meeting; all in favor and passed.

Committee Reports:

Communications & Announcements:

- The referral sent to Montgomery County for the Nadler/Francisco PUD was returned.
- Protest petition from 20% of the residents who border the proposed Nadler/Francisco PUD was received.

Assessor:

- Working on collecting agricultural exemption paperwork and field work.

Engineering:

- Barton and Loguidice notified Supervisor Mead that the Town did qualify for grant monies to extend water to Fort Hunter. No monetary award amount has been given. Could get up to 2 million dollars and a 25% match is possible.

Attorney:

- Attorney Mike Crowe explained the significance of the protest petition filed. This petition filed means that a super majority vote is needed for the approval of the proposed PUD application. This means that 4 out of 5 Board members must vote yes for approval.
- Correspondence with the Zoning Enforcement Officer regarding violations and trying to encourage homeowners to rectify the violations. How to do this without it escalating to court proceedings.

Planning and Zoning:

- Councilman Harold Alikonis spoke-up and said that he does not think the Town Board should be updating the sign ordinance because of a dispute between neighbors.
  MOTION by Councilman Harold Alikonis and seconded by Councilman Matthew Gogis to take no action to update the Town of Florida's Zoning Ordinance in reference to signs; all Board members present and in favor; and passed.
  Councilman Alikonis encouraged people to be kind and reach out to their neighbors and have a conversation. Councilman Matthew Gogis said that the possibly to look at the height of signs and fences is still open and that soon the Planning Board will be looking at the Zoning Ordinance to correct any inconsistencies and update some of the language. Councilman Mark Quiri thinks attempting to regulate the height of signs is going to create a different issue.
- Councilman Harold Alikonis spoke about the proposed Nadler/Francisco PUD. The following is a transcription of his notes.
  This has been a very controversial topic for the past year. We as a board have listened to the developer/real estate agent about how this would have a positive impact on the Town, but there are questions that cannot be answered. Such as, who will occupy these massive buildings?
  We have listened to the residents of the Town at public hearings and their concerns about the questionable merits of this project and why this should not be approved.
  Under this administration, we have been able to keep the Town in good financial shape. We have a healthy fund balance, no Town tax (thanks to Beech Nut, Target, Dollar General, Alpin Haus, Amazon and Hill & Markes), and we still have 150 acres of land on Route 5S that has water, sewer and natural gas on site that is waiting to be developed.

I stand with the unfavorable recommendation from our Planning Board, who got off to a rough start, but eventually got it right. I stand with the County Planning Board on their No Action taken referral and I stand with the many residents who signed the petitions and who spoke out against the PUD.
Considering this and carrying out the duties of the position I was elected to I ask for a straw vote to see what other Board members think.
Councilman Matthew Gogis does not believe the PUD will protect farmland, and it needs housing. An outside attorney who works for the developer does not need to give a legal opinion to overrule the Town's own Planning Board. He also stated that this is industrial development disguised as a PUD and he is not in favor of this project moving forward.
Councilman Mark Quiri is not happy telling a landowner what they can and cannot do with their land but they do have another option with solar so he will go with Councilman Alikonis and Councilman Gogis.
Supervisor Eric Mead agrees with Councilman Quiri's sentiments. He is not comfortable telling a farmer that he has to die tending his fields because they have another option taken away from them. This Board has worked together for 20 years and has been united as a Board and he will not vote against the majority of the Board even if he does not agree with the vote.

MOTION by Councilman Harold Alikonis and seconded by Councilman Matthew Gogis to deny approval for the proposed Nadler/Francisco PUD on Route 30 and Belldons Road in the Town of Florida for the reasons listed by Councilman Harold Alikonis and Councilman Matthew Gogis. All Board Members present and in favor; and passed. Councilman Steve Rackowski abstained; his family rents the land for hay.
Roll Call Vote:
Councilman Harold Alikonis – Aye
Councilman Matthew Gogis – Aye
Supervisor Eric Mead – Aye
Councilman Mark Quiri – Aye
Councilman Steve Rackowsk – Abstain

Building Maintenance:

- New furnaces are in at the Highway Garage. Were installed two weeks ago.

Highway:

- Received the letter of credit from Hodorowski Homes but there were some issues. Clerk Emily Staley sent an email outlining what corrections needed to be made and no response has been received.

Water and Sewer:

- Flow meter went bad at the pump station. Randy Gardinier is ordering a new one.

Youth:

- Veterans Committee and the Youth Commission hosted an evening event with Tony's Polka Band. Approximately 88 people attended.
- 120 youth signed up for gifts with Santa.
- Looking at scheduling movie nights over the upcoming school breaks.

Veterans:

- No meetings until March.

Old Business:

- Nothing currently.

New Business:

1. **RESOLUTION #74** was sponsored by Councilman Steve Rackowski and seconded by Councilman Harold Alikonis authorizing Elma's Tax Service to perform the Justice Court Audit for the year 2023 for Justices Stephen M Brown and David Nicosia, all Board members present in favor and passed; Councilman Matthew Gogis abstained, his aunt did the audit.
2. **RESOLUTION #79** sponsored by Councilman Matthew Gogis and seconded by Councilman Steve Rackowski authorizing the Supervisor to sign the Agreement for the Fire Protection District with the Florida Volunteer Fire Department, Inc; all Board members present and in favor; and passed.
3. **RESOLUTION #80** sponsored by Councilman Steve Rackowski and seconded by Supervisor Eric Mead accepting the Justice Court Audit done by Rebecca Countermine, for Elma's Tax Service, for

Justice Stephen M. Brown and Justice David Nicosia for the year 2023; all Board members present and in favor; and passed. Councilman Matthew Gogis abstained, his aunt did the audit.

4. **RESOLUTION #81** sponsored by Councilman Matthew Gogis and seconded by Councilman Mark Quiri to forward the proposed re-zone request for property on State Highway 5s, in the Town of Florida to the Town of Florida Planning Board, for their review and input; all Board members present and in favor; and passed. Councilman Gogis suggested that the Planning Board and the applicant consider a change to C-2 which would allow for uses that would fit better with the proposed business and use of the site.
5. **RESOLUTION #82** sponsored by Supervisor Eric Mead and seconded by Councilman Matthew Gogis to set the 2024 Organizational Meeting for the Town of Florida for Tuesday, January 2, 2024 at 6:00pm at 214 Fort Hunter Road; all Board members present and in favor; and passed.

Public Comment: Opened at 7:35pm

Mick Mullins, Real Estate Agent for the proposed PUD – was not aware that any discussion regarding the PUD would be on the Agenda and that it would be voted on.

Kris Berner, Hartley Road, thanked the Board for their siding with the Planning Board and the residents.

Vanessa Curry, 6244 State Highway 30, thanked the Board for listening to the residents.

Emily Marino, Belldons Road, thanked the Board and expressed her empathy for all involved.

Bill Bonner, Fuller Road, thanked the Board.

Kristeen Jaracz, Fuller Road, thanked the Board.

Karen Francisco, Thru-View Drive, very disappointed in the Board's decision. So many good possibilities could have happened at the site. The Town could have benefited from this development and the things that could have been put there to benefit the community. The opportunity is lost now.
Councilman Harold Alikonis expressed that the application as presented showed no benefit to the community as a whole. The presentation should have shown exactly what the plan was and what would be done. There was no solid plan.

Public Comment: Closed at 7:42pm.

Executive Session: Employee Discussion

MOTION by Councilman Matthew Gogis and seconded by Councilman Steve Rackowski to enter Executive Session at 7:43pm.

No action taken.

MOTION by Councilman Matthew Gogis and seconded by Councilman Harold Alikonis to come out of Executive Session at 8:09pm.

MOTION by Councilman Steve Rackowski to audit and pay the monthly bills was seconded by Councilman Mark Quiri; all present in favor and passed.

MOTION by Councilman Matthew Gogis and seconded by Councilman Steve Rackowski to accept the Supervisor's Report; all present in favor and passed.

MOTION by Councilman Matthew Gogis to adjourn was seconded by Supervisor Eric Mead; all in favor and passed. The meeting was adjourned at 8:23pm.

Respectfully Submitted
Emily Staley - Town Clerk