MINUTES OF THE COMMISSION MEETING
TOWN OF LADY LAKE, FLORIDA

April 1, 2024

The regular meeting of the Lady Lake Town Commission was held in the Commission Chambers at Lady Lake Town Hall, 409 Fennell Blvd., Lady Lake, Florida, with Mayor Freeman presiding. The meeting convened at 6:00 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

INVOCATION

Given by Reverend Jim Keough

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Led by Mayor Freeman

ROLL CALL

Commissioner (Ward)	Present
Regan (Four)	YES
Roberts (One)	YES
Gourlie (Two)	YES
Sage (Five)	NO
Freeman (Three)	YES

STAFF PRESENT

Bill Lawrence, Town Manager; Thad Carroll, Growth Management Director; C.T. Eagle, Public Works Director; John Pearl, I.T. Director; Police Chief Steve Hunt, Lady Lake Police Department; Deputy Chief Jason Brough, Lady Lake Police Department; Lt. Robert Tempesta, Lady Lake Police Department; Tamika DeLee, Human Resources Director; Thad Carroll, Growth Management Director; Rebecca Higgins, Senior Planner; Elisha Pappacoda, Communications Director; Aly Herman, Lady Lake Library Director; Jackie Schilling, Staff Assistant to the Town Clerk; Carol Osborne, Deputy Town Clerk; Nancy Wilson, Town Clerk

Town Attorney Derek Schroth was also in attendance.

A. PROCLAMATION

Proclaiming April as "Water Conservation Month" in Lady Lake

Mayor Freeman read the proclamation aloud declaring April as "Water Conservation Month" in the Town of Lady Lake.

B. CONSENT

1. March 4, 2024 — Town Commission Meeting Minutes

2. Consideration of Reappointments to the Parks & Recreation Board (Nancy Wilson)

3. Consideration of Continuation of Utilizing Option B of the Interlocal Agreement with Lake County for Collection of Storm Debris from Streets and Right of Ways.

4. Consideration of Changing the Town's HR Policy to Allow Paying Overtime to Exempt Employees During Natural Disasters and in Emergency Situations (Pam Winegardner)

5. Consideration of Advertisement of Bid for the Construction of the Lady Lake Library Renovations. (Thad Carroll)

6. 2024 annual Concurrency Report (Thad Carroll)

Commissioner Gourlie made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented; Commissioner Regan seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

C. NEW BUSINESS

1. Consideration of Approval to Invest in the Play Structure Voted on by the Children in Lady Lake and The Villages Elementary of Lady Lake for Pyramid Park (Mike Burske)

Parks and Recreation Director Mike Burske presented this agenda item stating that the custom playground structure that garnered the most votes will cost approximately $273,542.27. Parks and Recreation Impact Fees will be utilized to fund the project.

Commissioner Regan made a motion to approve the investment to construct the playground structure voted on by the children of Lady Lake and The Villages Elementary School; Commissioner Gourlie seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

2. Consideration of Town Manager Lawrence's Annual Merit Performance Adjustment (Bill Lawrence)

Town Manager Bill Lawrence presented this agenda item stating that he enjoys working with the commissioners and town staff.

Commissioner Roberts stated that she researched area municipalities in and around Lake County that are comparable in size to our Town in terms of population. She suggested giving Mr. Lawrence a 25% increase, which is comparable to neighboring municipalities. She stated that Fruitland Park's population is half of Lady Lake's population and pays their town manager more than what Mr. Lawrence earns now. She stated that as our population grows over the next few years, our population will be more in line with Tavares, Groveland, and Eustis, which will require additional employees. She stated it is beneficial to retain good employees. She stated that the Town of Lady Lake still maintains the second lowest millage rate in Lake County.

Commissioner Regan verified that this merit raise will increase Mr. Lawrence's salary.

Commissioner Roberts stated that this increase will bring Mr. Lawrence's salary to where it needs to be in regard to comparable municipalities in our area.

Commissioner Gourlie stated that the pay raise given to the police department was to acquire and maintain good employees. He stated that 25% merit increase for Mr. Lawrence is appropriate.

Mayor Freeman stated that Mr. Lawrence will receive incremental raises annually.

Mr. Lawrence clarified that he has three years remaining on his contract. He stated that his performance evaluation is due annually along with a raise in salary.

Mayor Freeman stated in reviewing the salaries of the town managers in neighboring municipalities, he suggested a 28% increase for Mr. Lawrence.

Commissioner Roberts stated that Mount Dora's population is similar, and they have more employees both full time and part time. She stated that Mount Dora has a larger budget.

Commissioner Roberts stated that not only does the town keep our millage rate low, but it is also important to pay our employees well as they are doing more with less staff. She stated that she obtained her information from the Florida League of Cities website, along with the individual budgets of the municipalities.

Commissioner Roberts made a motion to approve a 25% merit increase for Town Manager Lawrence.

The motion was died for lack of a second.

Town Attorney Derek Schroth advised this will increase the base salary from $134,000.00 to $167,500.00 base salary.

Commissioner Freeman made a motion to approve a 28% merit increase for Town Manager Lawrence. Commissioner Roberts seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

Town Attorney Schroth advised this will increase the base salary from $134,000.00 to $171,520.00 base salary.

3. Consideration of Raising Maximum Pay Grades for Department Heads and Salaried Supervisors (Pam Winegardner)

Town Manager Bill Lawrence presented this agenda item stating that in November 2023, the commission held a meeting with the Florida Police Benevolent Association and voted unanimously to increase the pay for sworn officers by 30% for union and non-union employees. He stated that as a result of the increase, several non-union employees met or exceeded their maximum pay grade, making them ineligible for compounded future pay increases.

Mr. Lawrence stated that this request also affects the salary grades of all the departments, not just the police department. He clarified that by raising the maximum salary cap for the department managers and the salaried supervisors, this affects future raises and the contributions to their retirement system.

Commissioner Roberts asked when the last time this type of maximum grade was addressed.

Mr. Lawrence stated that Public Works Director C. T. Eagle advised that it is adjusted approximately every two years.

Commissioner Regan confirmed that this increase will add to their current salary with 11% more.

Mr. Lawrence clarified that the salaried employees in the police department did not receive the full 30% increase because a portion of the increase brought them to the maximum level pay grade. With this request those staff members will receive the remainder of the increase in a bonus. He stated that because this is in the form of a bonus, it will affect their future raises because they had been maxed out and it also affects what is contributed to their retirement system. He stated that by raising the salary level these employees will now receive the full 30% increase as part of their salary, and they will be subject to pay raises in the future. He stated that when staff is at the top of their pay scale, they do not receive these benefits.

Mayor Freeman verified with Mr. Lawrence that this request affects only the department managers and the salaried supervisors, and not general staff.

Mr. Lawrence replied affirmatively.

Commissioner Roberts asked if this is a pay raise or a maximum salary cap and will not instantly receive pay raises if this request is approved.

Mr. Lawrence replied that it is a maximum salary cap and that only the employees in the police department who did not receive the full 30% increase will be receiving a bonus.

Commissioner Gourlie asked how long this cap will be in place.

Mr. Lawrence replied that it will be in effect for approximately two years.

Commissioner Gourlie made a motion to approve raising the Maximum Pay Grades for Department Heads and Salaried Supervisors; Commissioner Roberts seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

4. Consideration of Approval for the Hammock Oaks Amenity Center Major Site Plan MJSP 11/23-002 – Proposing a 2,999 Square Foot Bathroom Cabana, 6,913 Square Foot Pool Area, Playground, Dog Park, 985 Square Foot Shade Pavilion, 985 Square Foot Covered Mail Kiosk Area, and 45 Parking Spaces, on 2.76-acres zoned Planned Unit Development (PUD), owned by SK Hammock Oaks, LLC, within the town limits of the Town of Lady Lake, Florida (Thad Carroll)

Mr. Carroll presented this agenda item stating the applicant is Rob Walpole, Professional Engineer with CHW on behalf of property owner SK Hammock Oaks, LLC. He stated that the future land use designation is Mixed Development District/Traditional Neighborhood District (MDD-TND).

Mr. Carroll presented a map of the area advising that the amenity center is off of CR 466 and to the west of the proposed multi-family development and below the commercial portion of the development. He clarified that the bathroom is not factored in for parking improvements.

Mr. Carroll stated that Mr. Walpol is present if there are any questions.

Commissioner Roberts made a motion to approve the Hammock Oaks Amenity Center, proposing a Bathroom Cabana, Pool Area, Playground, Dog Park, Shade Pavilion, Covered Mail Kiosk Area, and 45 Parking Spaces; Commissioner Gourlie seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

5. Green Key Village Subdivision Phase 5 — Proposing 45 Non-Age-Restricted Single-Family Residential Lots on 8.89 Acres Zoned RS-6 within the Green Key Subdivision, locate on the North Side of Lake Ella Road Approximately ½ Mile East of Rolling Acres Road, addressed as 1635 lake Ella Road, owned by Green Key Village, LLC, within the town limits of the Town of Lady Lake, Florida (Thad Carroll)

Mr. Carroll presented this agenda item stating the applicant is Greg Thomas, on behalf of Green Key Village, LLC. He stated that this property is zoned RS-6, which allows for six dwelling units per acre. He advised that sitework is occurring, and they are in the position to present the final plat which allows the sale of property.

Mr. Carroll stated that the proposal is for 48 non-age restricted single-family residential lots the 15.96 acres. He stated that the application was received on January 25, 2024. He advised that this is the final phase in Green Key Village. He stated that the water and sewer agreement will need to be amended between the Town and the property owner/developer to provide capacity for the project.

Mr. Carroll stated that the final plat plan was reviewed to determine compliance with the Land Development Regulations and Florida Statute 177.

Mr. Carroll stated that the applicant is present if there are any questions.

Commissioner Regan made a motion to approve Green Key Village Subdivision Phase 6; Commissioner Gourlie seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

Mayor Freeman reminded the audience that if anyone wants to make a comment, please complete a comment card, and submit it to Town Clerk Wilson until such time as there is a motion on the table.

TOWN ATTORNEY'S REPORT

1. **Ordinance 2024-02 – First Reading Rezoning Tree Tops Golf, Inc, Modifying the Zoning Entitlements under the Lady Lake Planned Commercial (CP) Designation for Property Being Approximately 2.180 acres; Referenced by Alternate Key Number 3931491 within Lady County, Florida (Thad Carroll)**

Mr. Carroll presented this agenda item stating the applicant is Alex Girard with Tree Tops Golf, Inc. The future land use designation is RET-General Commercial – Retail Sales and Services and the zoning designation is Planned Commercial. He stated that the property is currently a miniature golf course and batting cages.

Mr. Carroll stated the property owner sold a portion of the property within the past two years. He stated that the applicant would like to now sell a limited number of golf carts on the property. Mr. Carroll advised Mr. Girard that although the property is zoned commercial and it is permitted under the future land use designation, the Planned Commercial designation does not permit golf cart sales. He stated that this ordinance will allow Mr. Girard the ability to sell no more than 30 golf carts from the property. He stated that the three golf carts will be permitted to be displayed in the parking area.

Mr. Carroll stated that the applicant is present if there are any questions.

Commissioner Roberts verified with Mr. Carroll that there is adequate parking remaining even though three spaces are utilized by golf carts.

Mr. Carroll replied affirmatively adding that it is based on the office spaces and the minimum ADA requirements.

Mayor Freeman stated that there are no public comment cards regarding this ordinance.

Commissioner Roberts made a motion to approve Ordinance 2024-02; Commissioner Gourlie seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

Commissioner (Ward)	Vote
Regan (Four)	YES
Roberts (One)	YES
Gourlie (Two)	YES
Freeman (Three)	YES

Motion passed by a 4-0 vote.

2. Ordinance 2024-03 – First Reading – Annexation; An Ordinance Voluntarily Annexing Property Being 24.02 Acres, Owned by David M. Caudill and David M. Caudill Life Estate, Located on the North Side of Lake Ella Road, Approximately 350 Linear Feet West of Micro Racetrack Road, within Lake County, Florida (Thad Carroll)

Mr. Carroll presented this agenda item stating that the applicant is Craig Brashier, CHW, LLC, the future land use designation is Lake County Rural, zoning designation is Lake County Agricultural, and that the present use of the property is Residential Home and Pastureland.

Mr. Carroll stated that this property is contiguous with the Hammock Oaks property north of this parcel that is already within town limits. He stated that this parcel will also provide connectivity to Lake Ella Road.

Mr. Carroll stated that should this annexation, land use change and the rezoning be denied, it does not remove the property rights that were previously granted. He stated that it simply removes this acreage for incorporation into the PUD.

Mr. Carroll stated that prior to tonight's meeting he had a conversation with Richard Masso who questioned why the town annexes property, continues to annex property and whose decision it is to annex property.

Mr. Carroll explained that it is the commission's decision to annex property. He stated that it is staff's responsibility to present the facts of the case such as the densities of the subject property and how the annexation will impact the town. He stated that a primary reason for annexation is the developer will utilize the town's centralized utilities, water and/or sewer. He stated for an applicant to develop in Lake County they must obtain their own package plant, or they must have individual septic tanks and individual wells on each property. He stated that has more environmental impact than utilizing a central utility service. He stated that annexing property does have the potential to create more traffic.

Mr. Carroll stated annexations are subjective and have been viewed as a gateway for economic development. He stated that he does not believe that is the case in Lady Lake as our millage rate is low.

Mr. Carroll stated that the applicant is present if there are any questions.

Commissioner Regan verified that this is the subject property discussed at the LPA meeting this evening. The members voted to limit the parcels to four dwelling units per acre.

Mr. Carroll replied affirmatively. He stated that the first step is to annex the property, amend the future land use and finalize the process by rezoning the property.

Commissioner Regan confirmed that this portion of the project is not an age-restricted adults' community.

Mr. Carroll stated that there are age-restricted components within the development and does not believe this component is age-restricted. He stated that the future land use amendment addresses the impacts on schools and traffic.

Commissioner Regan stated that his concerns are always the impact on our roads and the school. He stated that the addition being constructed to the school will not be completed until 2025 and students are currently attending classes in portable classrooms. He stated his concern is with the amount of growth impacting the school.

Mayor Freeman stated that he shares Commissioner Regan's concerns regarding traffic.

Richard Masso, 373 Carriage Lane, Lady Lake

Mr. Masso expressed his concern regarding the amount of annexations that have been granted recently. He stated that the commission needs to slow down and take a look at everything such as traffic and the school. He stated that his neighbor is a teacher and mentioned that the portable classrooms were supposed to be temporary but will be needed after the addition to the school is completed. He stated that currently there are an estimated 500-1,000 homes being built in Lady Lake. He stated that he moved here from Miami due to the amount of growth in that area. He stated that he is not against building; he would like to see controlled building without zero lot lines between houses. He asked what the advantages of annexations are for the current residents.

Commissioner Roberts stated that this piece of property is contiguous with an already existing development and will offer one more way to enter and exit, which seems would lessen traffic pressure in other places. She stated that the traffic studies show that these roads are not at capacity regardless of what others believe.

Commissioner Roberts stated that she is not insensitive to the school issue as it is still within what the Lake County school system determines are school capacities. The school board, which is under the State of Florida, determines what is capacity and what the schools can handle. She stated that it does not matter how others feel. She stated the issue regarding portable classrooms is different conversation.

Commissioner Roberts reiterated that this property is contiguous to a development that has been approved. She stated that she cannot deny a property owner his ability to sell his property because there have been too many annexations.

Commissioner Roberts stated that she listened to a presentation by a Sumter County commissioner who talked about this issue. She stated that Lady Lake's population is currently over 51% of age 65 and older. She stated that several stores and restaurants are short staffed because there are not enough working-aged people living here. In order to provide a viable workforce, we have to offer affordable housing.

Commissioner Roberts stated that for the past six months she has been asking workers how far they travel to work in Lady Lake. She stated that the average answer is 30-40 minutes because they cannot afford to live closer. She stated to annex property in a multi-age community makes sense.

Commissioner Regan confirmed with Mr. Carroll that students in the upper grades would be bused to Leesburg to attend middle school and high school. He stated that is a long time to be on a bus and bus drivers are in short supply. He stated this issue is a tough call and that he is not against development, yet these additional homes are adding to the traffic issues. If Lake County is responsible for the roads, they need to let us know their plans for the roads.

Commissioner Regan stated that perhaps the Town should be more considerate of how It goes about future development and at what rate.

Commissioner Gourlie stated that when he was in school years ago, he rode the bus for eight miles to school and also attended classes in portable classrooms. He stated this has not changed as he has gotten older.

John Curtis, representing Kolter Land Partners and SK Hammock Oaks

Mr. Curtis stated that with the 24 acres in question the goal was always to tie into Lake Ella Road. This will provide connectivity to multiple points of ingress and egress to the development and will alleviate road impacts. He stated that with the Hammock Oaks Reserve project, an agreement was negotiated with the Lake County school board in which each time a plat is recorded, the developer would pay the school board a set fee based on every lot that is in the plat. For this 24-acre property the school concurrency impact will be amended to reflect these additional parcels. He stated that the developer is currently paying the school board $3.5 million. He stated that the developer understands the impact and the need for schools and is contributing funds to the school.

Mr. Curtis advised that there is another project they are developing where the school board will have access to the property and consider developing the property for a future school building.

Mr. Curtis stated that a few years ago at a Town commission meeting there was a presentation for the need for work-force housing and people to work here. He stated at that time, the presenter stated that it took three people working to support one person retired in The Villages. He stated that the new houses for Hammock Oaks Reserve are entirely geared toward workforce housing for the people, some with families, who will be working in the community, supporting the community, and the goal is that they are not driving 30+miles to work.

Mr. Curtis stated that he attended a meeting to finalize the Project Development Agreement (PDA), which was initially from CR 466 to Griffin Avenue for the study of Rolling Acres Road. It was amended to include Sunshower Lane to Griffin Avenue, which will allow the Town and Lake County, and ultimately FDOT and the state, to know what needs to be done on that segment to make it viable. He stated that there may be future developments along that area to Lake Ella Road. He stated that ultimately that road will be a continuation to CR 466A.

Mr. Curtis stated that they will continue to work with the Town and with Lake County to aid in traffic impact. He reminded everyone that there are people outside of this community that are also impacting these roads.

Attorney Schroth stated that based on the comments this evening the commission vote could be a tie, which is a denial. He stated that it is the commission's discretion to postpone voting on this ordinance until there is a full board present.

Mayor Freeman confirmed with Attorney Schroth that if this ordinance is tabled tonight, the following ordinances associated with this property will also be tabled. He stated that in fairness to the applicant and to the Town, the commission should wait until Commissioner Sage is present to vote on these ordinances.

Mr. Curtis stated that he agrees with the continuance of these readings. He stated that the goal is that all members of the commission understand that the applicant is doing what is best for the project and for the Town.

Commissioner Regan made a motion to table Ordinance 2024-03 until all commissioners are present.

Mayor Freeman passed the gavel to Mayor Pro-Tempore Roberts.

Mayor/Commissioner Freeman seconded the motion.

Commissioner (Ward)	Vote
Regan (Four)	YES
Roberts (One)	NO
Gourlie (Two)	NO
Freeman (Three)	YES

Motion died by a 2-2 vote.

Mayor/Commissioner Freeman stated that he feels that annexations are too important and feels that Commissioner Sage should have a voice.

Commissioner Roberts stated that she would like to change her vote.

Mr. Carroll confirmed that the vote is to table Ordinance 2024-03, Ordinance 2024-04, and Ordinance 2024-05.

Commissioner Regan made a motion to table Ordinance 2024-03, Ordinance 2024-04, Ordinance 2024-05 until all commissioners are present. Commissioner Roberts seconded.

Commissioner (Ward)	Vote
Regan (Four)	YES
Roberts (One)	YES
Gourlie (Two)	YES
Freeman (Three)	YES

Motion passed by a 4-0 vote.

3. Ord. 2024-04 – SSFLUM

Tabled.

4. Ordinance 2024-05 – Rezoning

Tabled.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Town Manager Bill Lawrence acknowledged the Parks and Recreation staff, and Events Coordinator Amy, who organized a successful Easter Egg Hunt. He thanked Communications Director Elisha for promoting the event.

Mr. Lawrence stated that officials from the City of Eustis visited and spoke with our Parks and Recreation Director Mike Burske, and expressed how great our parks and ballfields are.

Mr. Lawrence stated that the Library Director Aly has written her first grant for the Lake County Library Impact Grant. If awarded, the funds will be for our youth library renovations and new furnishings. Lake County Library Director George Taylor will present our application on our behalf.

Mr. Lawrence reminded everyone that Blues Under the Oaks is Saturday, April 6 from 11am-3pm at Snooky Park. Also, on Saturday morning at 9am, the PGA Store will have a ribbon cutting.

Mayor Freeman stated to get there early as he was informed by the store staff that people will be arriving Thursday evening for the ribbon cutting. He stated that the store gives away approximately $30K in golf equipment at ribbon cutting events.

MAYOR AND COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Mayor Freeman thanked the commissioners for their thoughtful discussion this evening. He stated that a public meeting is the only time the commissioners can discuss Town issues.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ruth Kussard, 424 Loma Paseo Dr.

Ms. Kussard gave each commissioner a copy of an article from The Villages Daily Sun regarding the Lady Lake Chamber of Commerce Mac-&-Cheese event. She stated that she was surprised and dismayed that the Chamber had moved their annual Mac-&-Cheese Festival to Wildwood. She stated that this is a "slap in the face" to Lady Lake who for many years has helped the Chamber by giving them $10K annually, rented them the Log Cabin for $10 annually, and paid for their water and electricity. She stated that this move will affect the Lady Lake businesses, who are also members of the Chamber, and who may have profited from additional foot traffic when it was held in Lady Lake in past years. She stated that with budget time approaching, this should be taken into consideration.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:09 p.m.

Carol Osborne

Carol Osborne, Deputy Town Clerk

Ed Freeman, Mayor