MINUTES OF THE COMMISSION MEETING
TOWN OF LADY LAKE, FLORIDA

February 5, 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 Father Gregory Koon – St. Alban's Anglican Church

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Led by Mayor Freeman

ROLL CALL

Commissioner (Ward)	Present
Regan (Four)	YES
Roberts (One)	YES
Gourlie (Two)	YES
Sage (Five)	YES
Freeman (Three)	YES

STAFF PRESENT

Bill Lawrence, Town Manager; Thad Carroll, Growth Management Director; Mike Burske, Parks and Recreation Director, C.T. Eagle, Public Works Director; John Pearl, I.T. Director; Lt. Robert Tempesta, Lady Lake Police Department; Tamika DeLee, Human Resources Director; Rebecca Higgins, Senior Planner; Elisha Pappacoda, Communications Director; Susyn Stecchi, Multimedia Content Specialist; Carol Osborne, Deputy Town Clerk; Nancy Wilson, Town Clerk

Town Attorney Derek Schroth was also in attendance.

A. CONSENT

1. **January 17, 2024 — Town Commission Meeting Minutes**
2. **Consideration of Approval for the Parks and Recreation Department to Host Blues in the Park on April 6th at Snooky Park (Mike Burske)**

3. **Consideration of Approval for New Song Community Church of Lady Lake to Host Easter Sunday Sunrise Services at Veterans/Log Cabin Park on March 31st (Mike Burske)**
4. **Consideration of Approval for the Parks and Recreation Department to Host the Lady Lake Easter Egg Hunt on March 23, 2024, at Snooky Park (Mike Burske)**

Commissioner Gourlie made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented; Commissioner Sage seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

B. NEW BUSINESS

5. Consideration of the Appointment of a New Member to the Town of Lady Lake's Planning and Zoning Board (Nancy Wilson)

Town Clerk Wilson presented the background summary for this agenda item stating that the passing of Planning and Zoning Board member, Dan Vincent, has left a vacancy on the P & Z board. She stated that one application has been received from Ronald Auger, who lives in Water Oak. She stated that he has been treasurer and president of the HOA.

Commissioner Roberts stated that Mr. Auger looks well-qualified for this position.

Commissioner Gourlie made a motion to approve the appointment of Ronald Auger to the Planning and Zoning Board; Commissioner Sage seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

6. Consideration of Approval to Advertise a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Fiber Wide Area Network (FiberWAN) Construction (John Pearl)

I.T. Director Pearl presented the background summary for this agenda item stating that Lady Lake is experiencing growth and requires better, faster, and more secure connectivity between its physical facilities and utility resources. He stated that the Town has been engaged with the Florida Department of Transportation, Metric Engineering, and Southland Construction, Inc. since late 2019 to construct underground fiber communications conduit during the Hwy 27/441 road widening project. When completed later this year, this project will provide fiber conduit, associated pull boxes and handholds along the length of the construction project, from Lake Ella Road to Avenida Central.

Mr. Pearl stated that the Town has also been engaged in with Danella Construction since late 2019 to construct underground fiber conduit at various locations throughout the town. In December 2021, the Town engaged with Entrust solutions Group, formally Magellan Advisors, to produce a FiberWAN Master Plan that was presented and approved by the Commission in August 2022. He stated that in January 2023, the Town began a FiberWAN Design, Engineering and Permitting project with Entrust Solutions Group that has also produced the RFP for your consideration this evening.

Mr. Pearl stated that he is requesting approval to advertise a Request for Proposal (RFP) for FiberWAN construction services, generally consistent with the previously approved FiberWAN Master Plan. He stated that this plan calls for the construction of 19 miles of high-capacity fiber optic backbone and 4.4 miles of low-capacity fiber optic laterals to connect seven town facilities, six town parks, three well sites, 21 lift stations, and five communications towers. This is a nine-year, phased, “pay-as-you-go” construction plan.

Mr. Pearl presented a map of the areas where the fiber will be placed and explained how the project will mature year after year. He explained that the first year of the project will begin by the addition of the conduit coming online along the Hwy 27/441 corridor and will connect the parks and recreation administration building along CR 466 to the site of the Well #1 tower, the concession stand at Pyramid Park, the library, Lift Station #1, and fiber will continue from CR 441 to the Public Works facility.

Mr. Pearl stated that the second year of the project begins pulling the fiber for the Hwy 441 project. He stated within 2025 there will be fiber connectivity at town hall directly to most of town facilities. As the plan progresses through the years, redundant loops will be added. He cautioned that in the initial years of the project the fiber is vulnerable to being cut, which will disrupt services. He stated that as the years progress, fiber loops will be included for full redundancy so if there is a single cut, all services will continue to operate without any disruption.

Commissioner Roberts asked Mr. Pearl, for the benefit of the Lady Lake community, to comment on Wells 4 & 5 that will be coming online and how that connectivity will work with the current plan.

Mr. Pearl explained that Wells 4 & 5 are co-located on properties with existing facilities. Therefore, the fiber that is proposed for the existing locations will satisfy these well sites.

Commissioner Sage asked if there is current connectivity running from the telephone company.

Mr. Pearl replied affirmatively and added that all our facilities that are connected to each other are using the common internet. He explained that town hall, the police department, and public works connect over an Internet Service Provider (ISP) connection to the internet, and then an encrypted tunnel is run from that location to the other locations. He stated that by having our own infrastructure the complexity of the network will be reduced and improve security by having a direct connection and eventually a redundant direct connection resulting in a more reliable network.

Commissioner Sage verified with Mr. Pearl that when the project is completed, if a fiber is cut, another fiber will take another route. In other words, it is self-healing.

Mr. Pearl replied affirmatively.

Commissioner Gourlie confirmed with Mr. Pearl that he is requesting to advertise for a contractor for this project.

Mr. Pearl replied affirmatively.

Mayor Freeman asked what the advertising cost is.

Mr. Pearl stated that the total estimated project cost is $3,103,852, that will be distributed over a nine-year period. The budgeted cost for the first year is $323,268, which includes advertising.

Commissioner Sage asked Mr. Pearl if he had considered renting point-to-point facilities from the telephone company.

Mr. Pearl replied that the town has some of those circuits currently in place. He explained there is a point–to-point circuit from town hall to public works for telephone services.

Commissioner Sage asked if it is a fiber circuit.

Mr. Pearl replied that it is not a fiber circuit. He explained further that the town currently rents fiber services for internet service. He stated that when this project was implemented in 2016, he received a quote from one of the providers for a point-to-point fiber circuit from town hall to public works and the cost of two fibers was approximately $300K annually. He stated that was the catalyst for the concept of this project that is before the commissioners this evening.

Mr. Pearl stated that as the town grows, the fiber itself will go as fast as the internal equipment on either end will allow and it may be necessary to upgrade the equipment periodically. He stated that the town will have the ability to transmit at whatever speed necessary across the entire town for many years. He stated that fiber does not age out. It does, however, get dug up or broken.

Mr. Pearl stated that two conduits were installed in conjunction with the road widening project, in anticipation of utilizing one conduit for municipal services and one for a spare. The spare conduit affords the Town many potential future opportunities, one of which may generate revenue for the Town.

Commissioner Gourlie confirmed with Mr. Pearl that having our own fiberoptic network rather than renting or leasing it from another party improves our security.

Mr. Pearl replied affirmatively. He stated that it is a huge advantage as it allows staff to reduce the complexity of our network. He stated that instead of having firewalls at several different locations and managing all the security policies on all of them, there will be two locations throughout town that are connected to the internet. He stated that the majority of risk comes from connecting to the internet. Another advantage of having this network is it offers a lot of capacity. From a connectivity perspective the fiber capacity is available as new services come online, for new well sites, for new lift stations, for installing cameras around town.

Commissioner Regan asked if the Town is responsible for the maintenance cost.

Mr. Pearl replied affirmatively. He explained that the town will have insurance to ensure the repair is made quickly. The town would then pursue repayment from the vendor who damaged the fiber.

Commissioner Regan confirmed with Mr. Pearl that the Town is responsible for maintenance and repairs if there is simply a malfunction, rather than the fiber being damaged. He asked if these malfunctions often occur with the current system.

Mr. Pearl stated that maintenance costs have been high in the past few years due to the road construction project. There is an outage currently affecting our police department because a vendor dug into the fiber. He stated that there are maintenance costs with anything. He stated that if a fully redundant system is built it will be a more reliable system, which is why he is seeking ways to avoid those outages.

Commissioner Regan asked Mr. Pearl how the speed will differ from the current speed.

Mr. Pearl clarified that with the fiber network, we will be able to go as fast as we want. He stated that the Town currently utilizes a 1G connection, which is a cost-effective speed for the Town. However, with a site-to-site connection, the potential is 10G or 100G, as fast as the terminal equipment will allow that connection. He stated that the Growth Management department is located in town hall and connects to infrastructure at Public Works, and when that 1G connection is lost, everything is slowed dramatically because our backup connection is much slower, which impacts Growth Management staff. He clarified further that staff will not experience that type of outage with the fiber network in place.

Commissioner Regan asked how losing power would affect the service.

Mr. Pearl stated that it would affect the locations that do not have UPS or generator power. He stated that the risk to our facilities will be mitigated due to all our main hub sites having UPS and generator power.

Mr. Pearl stated that he cannot speak for the entire system. He stated that he is confident that all of the main hub sites will have these environmental systems in place. He stated that our lift stations have generator power.

Commissioner Sage stated that he retired from AT&T and has responded to bids such as this for the state of Connecticut. He stated that he would like to help with this as he is somewhat familiar with this technology.

Mayor Freeman asked for public comment.

William Dozier, 40230 Morning Mist Dr.

Mr. Dozier asked how many fibers are in a bundle.

Mr. Pearl stated that there are two different fiber bundles. One is described as backbone, which is 288 count fiber bundle. The other bundles are described as lateral bundles which are 24-count or 12-count, depending on the need.

Commissioner Roberts made a motion to approve the Request for Proposals for Advertising for the Fiber Wide Area Network Services. Commissioner Gourlie seconded. The motion passed by a 5-0 roll call vote.

C. TOWN ATTORNEY'S REPORT

7. **Ordinance 2024-01 — First Reading — An Ordinance of the Town of Lady Lake, Lake County, Florida; Providing for a Text Amendment to the Town of Lady Lake Land Development Regulations (Ordinance No. 94-08) Chapter 7, Section 7-9, "Site Development Plan Approval"; Amending the Requirements for Site Plan Approval; also, Amending Chapter 7, Section 7-10, "Time Limitations on Site Plan Approval." (Thad Carroll)**

Growth Management Director Carroll presented the background summary for this agenda item stating this is a staff-initiated proposal to amend the site plan approval process. He explained that upon review of the current procedures as well as reflection of events that have occurred at previous public hearings, staff is of the opinion that the current site plan process is inefficient, unnecessary, and is a process that may be misleading to the public. He stated that this ordinance was presented to the Planning and Zoning board, at their January 8th meeting. He acknowledged that many in attendance tonight attended that P&Z meeting.

Mr. Carroll explained that when a site plan application is received the site plans are distributed to our consultants who are off-site engineers, our public works department and, at times, Town Attorney Schroth. He stated that when all the comments are received from the consultants and compared to our code, if the site plan meets our code, it then comes before the commission for your consideration for approval.

Mr. Carroll stated the issue that arises is the applicant meets the requirements of our code, but the project may not be popular with the public. He stated that public comment has been permitted in the past on the site plans. He stated that if the land development requirements are met, the commission is obligated to approve the site plan. However, if the commission denies the site plan, the applicant has recourse to sue the Town. He stated this has happened in the past with the denial of the proposed apartments in Spanish Springs Town Square.

Mr. Carroll explained that the goal of this ordinance is to streamline the site plan process, still affording the commission the opportunity for comment regarding the items within their purview such as variances. He stated that recently Walmart presented four variances to the commission. He explained that under the scenario of this ordinance, if Walmart had met all the requirements of our code, a development order would have been prepared and submitted it to the Town Manager for approval. However, because these variances are presented to the commission at a public hearing, they consider what the public has to say.

Mr. Carroll stated that nothing has been removed from the public other than the formality of presenting the plan to the commission for their vote. He reiterated that the commission does not have a choice when voting, even though it appears that way.

Mr. Carroll stated that he does not want to put the commission in a position where they could render a vote that should not be made. He stated further that he does not want to give the public the impression that they have influence on issues that meet our code. He stated that the commission could listen to the public comment, but there is no benefit in that process.

Mr. Carroll stated that this ordinance does not affect Chapter 8, Subdivisions. He stated that may come to the commission in the future. He stated that it is in our code that a 200-300-unit subdivision comes to commission for their consideration.

Mr. Carroll stated that he is requesting that Chapter 7's process be amended to an administrative process and if there is any deviation from our code where a variance is required, it will come before the commission for their consideration and public input.

Mr. Carroll stated that this ordinance will come before the commission for second reading at the February 21 commission meeting.

Commissioner Regan asked Mr. Carroll if the LDRs have been amended by former commissions and, if so, he suggested that the current board review the LDRs and recommend amendments.

Mr. Carroll stated that if the commission feels that certain portions of individual LDR chapters need amending, they should be brought to the staff’s attention. He stated that upon the commission’s direction, a draft amendment would be prepared and presented to the commission.

Commissioner Regan stressed that when he votes on an issue, it is never a vote based on comments. He stated that his vote is based on the information in front of him and his knowledge of the issue. He stated that public opinion is important, yet if staff is advising the commission that an applicant meets the requirements of our LDRs and that it is a “done deal”, perhaps the commission should review the LDRs to see which direction the town is going. He stated that he is not familiar with every LDR yet is familiar with many of them. He reiterated that he would like the commission to review the LDRs and make suggestions for changes. He stated that variances at times are difficult to vote on because it seems as though they are a “done deal” as well.

Mr. Carroll clarified that the commission’s input comes at the stage when the commission grants the zoning entitlements. He explained that once the zoning entitlements are granted to the property and, if the applicant adheres to that set of zoning regulations, there is no decision to be made regarding that property. He explained further that when an applicant applies for annexation, comprehensive plan amendment, or rezoning, that is the time when the commission could approve or deny the project. He clarified that the commission could grant the project with stipulations that they want associated with the project.

Commissioner Roberts stated that she understands the process and has no issues with this ordinance.

Commissioner Gourlie stated that he does not have any issues with the ordinance. He stated if it appears that the commission has a vote when in reality they do not, then the commission needs to approve this ordinance. He stated that if the LDRs need amending, those could be brought to the commission individually.

Commissioner Sage asked Mr. Carroll if the developers present their plan to the Planning and Zoning Board so the public is aware of the project or does the applicant present the plan solely to him. Does he then send it to the various departments? He asked if the public has an opportunity to view the project prior to approval.

Mr. Carroll stated that the point at which the public views the project is during the rezoning portion of the project. He stated that if an applicant wishes to construct a restaurant on a property, he reviews the zoning and, they are zoned appropriately, the applicant can proceed to the site plan phase. If the zoning requirements are not met, the applicant must rezone the property which comes before the Planning and Zoning board at a public meeting, and subsequently comes before the commission. He stated that if a site plan is submitted and the applicant is requesting a variance for parking spaces or removing trees, it is presented at a public meeting.

Mr. Carroll explained that the administrative approval occurs when the application has fulfilled all the requirements successfully. He stated at that point the commission does not have the legal authority to deny it.

Commissioner Sage stated with this scenario, if a project such as Hammock Oaks meets all zoning and code requirements, it would be approved, and the public would begin to see construction. He asked Mr. Carroll if there would be an announcement informing the public of the project.

Mr. Carroll stated project information is posted on our website through our Communications Department and is also included in the weekly report on the Town Manager's web page.

Town Attorney Schroth stated that the Town has been in situations in the past where there was a lot of public interest in a project and pressure to deny a plan, such as Tire Kingdom and Spanish Springs Apartments. These projects were consistent with the Town's LDRs and because they had the zoning entitlements and were not seeking a variance, if the commission denied their application, they would be depriving them of their vested right. He stated this ordinance is an effort to resolve that, particularly when the public in under the impression that because it is before the commission for a vote, the commission has discretion to deny it. This creates an environment where commissions are questioning why they are voting on a project when in reality their vote does not matter.

Attorney Schroth stated that this is a positive move and will save a lot of staff time.

Commissioner Roberts asked Attorney Schroth to define, "vested right".

Attorney Schroth explained that a developer is vested when they receive an entitlement such as annexation, comprehensive plan amendment, or rezoning. He explained further that when a developer submits a plan that is consistent with our code, the Town must approve it. He stated that this is similar to a building permit. If a building permit application is submitted and it complies with the building code, the building official cannot deny the application as it meets all the regulations.

Attorney Schroth explained that with an annexation, the parcel is included in the Town boundaries. With a comprehensive plan amendment, the parcel is vested regarding the specific densities and what the property use will be. With rezoning, it defines what the specific use is going to be, the densities, etc.

Mayor Freeman stated that he was involved in the Spanish Springs Apartments project. He stated that after the meeting he realized that his vote to deny the project was going to cost the Town a great deal of money because the Town would lose in court. He explained that the zoning for that project was in place and there was nothing in the LDRs to stop the applicant from building the apartments. He stated that he changed his vote and that it was the right thing to do. He stated that if the public feels that they are uninformed about Town issues, he suggested reading thevillagesnews.com. He stated that the journalist, Meta Minton, is up to date on Town issues.

Tom Nash, 3546 Griffin Avenue

Mr. Nash read a prepared statement: Good evening, Mayor Freeman and Commission, my name is Tom Nash and I reside at 3546 Griffin Ave., Lady Lake.

I find it odd that this ordinance, which has been in place for many years even after a prior litigation, hasn't been a concern until we the citizens have been questioning the future of our community. Why would our level of concern and our first amendment rights of speaking to our vested interest in the Town of Lady Lake warrant the need to make sudden changes to an ordinance that has been effective for all of these years. The language in the summary applies that the staff does not entrust the zoning board or the commissioners in understanding what's being presented to them thus taking away not only your authority but shielding the public as well. It's my opinion that the ordinance should stay as written and the staff can state on their agenda items when presented that the specific proposals have met all the conditions and must be approved but still allowing it to follow current procedures with the town commissioners as further assurance of transparency and protection for the town and the citizens of the town. Based on the events that I'm aware of over the last few months, I'm to assume that the public being engaged in their community is becoming an area of concern. If there are high moral standards, proper ethics, and a clear transparency path then there shouldn't be any concern for the staff regarding the public being engaged. We the citizens have had enough of our legal rights taken away already by ordinances and zoning changes. Don't allow these ordinance changes to start taking away your rights as well. The most recent Walmart situation should have been enough of an example as to why this change should not occur. Thank you.

Mayor Freeman, speaking to Mr. Nash, stated that his first amendment rights have been upheld here.

Mr. Nash agreed.

Mayor Freeman stated that we all could annex property or change zoning. He stated that if a property is annexed and the zoning comes before the commission, the commission has the authority to deny a project. He stated that is the time when the public can get involved in stopping a project.

Mayor Freeman reiterated that the public has every opportunity to speak against these things before they happen. However, for example if there is an empty lot on your street where kids have played for a long time, and the owner decides to construct a house on his property zoned residential, he has every right to construct it. He stated that no one has the authority to stop him and that is what Mr. Carroll is saying. He stated that there is nothing anyone can do to stop a project unless a variance is required.

Mr. Nash stated that he understands this yet what he is trying to bring the Commission's attention is that with all the past ordinance changes and now this ordinance, decisions are left to the sole discretion of the building and zoning departments, and the town manager. He stated that regardless if the commission must vote on it, there would be one more level of transparency.

Mayor Freeman stated that the commission has nothing to say about site plan approval.

Commissioner Gourlie stated that if the commission says the wrong thing it could lead to a legal issue.

Mr. Nash stated that is what the Town's legal representation is for.

Mayor Freeman stated that the same question can be asked repeatedly, and the answer is still the same.

Andre Nana – 2202 Marion County Road

Mr. Nana stated that he has spent more than one third of his life in countries that have totalitarian regimes. He stated that he has lived in several different countries in eastern Europe under severe communism and he lived in the middle east under different Islamic totalitarian systems. He stated that he worked for the Department of the Army and in part of the army, he was a civilian.

Mr. Nana stated that in no part in his experience has he seen a community, when the right of the public to speak was restricted, that it ended up in better results. He stated that in every case those countries, those systems, and businesses ended up paying the price later. He stated that he became an attorney in America and is licensed in Florida. He stated that Mr. Carroll's argument did not make sense when he stated that if the commission has the ability to hear a presentation and has to vote on it, then there is no point in voting. The idea that the commission should not listen to the public is a way to close the door. He stated that the public could present another idea that would prevent litigation. He stated that what Mr. Carroll is asking the commission to do is to trust him, his staff and his engineers to know exactly when the code applies or not. Mr. Nana stated that the attorney gave two examples where in the past the commission voted on projects that led to litigation. For future matters, the attorney will not be able to weigh in because nothing will come before the Commission. Also, the public will be shut out of any discussion. He stated that by removing that step it is his contention that the commission will increase the chance for ligation.

Richard Bryce, 308 Del Mar Dr., Lady Lake

Mr. Bryce stated that he has 30 years' experience in council, planning commission, construction, and believes it is not a good move to take away this step. He stated that he understands what Mr. Carroll is talking about yet this issue has been bothering him for a long time. He stated that he has questioned much of the development that is occurring. He stated that he lives in The Villages, has read the The Villages zoning regulations and he understands their development. He stated that he was asked by a former mayor to review it and questions the reason for having two downtown areas. He asked the commission to be cautious on this issue. He stated that it could be debated that this is not a Sunshine Law violation, yet people get "funny" about that and he stated that he believes it is in the best interest for everyone to keep this practice before everyone. He asked the commission to not circumvent their vote by staff, as he cannot see the advantage. He thanked the commission for listening to his personal and professional opinions.

John Spang, 39653 Grove Hts.

Mr. Spang stated that he is fairly new to the community and has been on boards in the past and understands the non-voting methodology of this ordinance. He stated that this is basically front-loading the system because by the time it gets to the commission, it is a done deal. Mr. Spang stated that nothing is a done deal. He stated that at some point along the way there has been a mistake in zoning. He stated that is where the people with expertise are the last chance to catch some of those things. He stated that he agrees with another speaker tonight that it is simply the public's last chance to give their input. He stated that giving people who are also experts in their field the opportunity to look at what is being presented and offer other evidence could also result in somebody in the office making decisions that could affect everybody's property values. He stated that currently he does not trust anybody in government.

Commissioner Gourlie made a motion to approve Ordinance 2024-01; Commissioner Roberts seconded.

Commissioner (Ward)	Vote
Regan (Four)	**NO**

Commissioner (Ward)	Vote
Roberts (One)	YES
Gourlie (Two)	YES
Sage (Five)	NO
Freeman (Three)	YES

Motion passed by a 3-2 vote (Regan, Sage)

8. **Resolution 2024-101 — First and Final Reading — A Resolution Granting a Variance from the Provisions of Chapter 5). Chart 5-2, of the Town of Lady Lake Land Development Regulations Which Requires the Rear Yard Setback to be a Minimum of 20 Feet Within the MX-5 "Mixed Low Density Residential" Zoning District. The Variance Request is to Allow a Minimum of a 11.08 Foot Rear Yard Setback on Property Owned by Robert Klapperich and Tiffany Henderson, Located at 37911 Ridgecrest Lane, Within the Town Limits of Lady Lake, Florida (Thad Carroll)**

Growth Management Director Carroll presented the background summary for this agenda item stating that this is the first and final variance request. He presented a map of the subject parcel stating that it is on a small road. He stated that this piece of property was sectioned out from a larger piece of property that surrounds it. He stated that the prior owner had constructed an addition on the rear of the home without a permit. He stated when the current property owner purchased the property and began making repairs, they were informed that they needed a permit. Upon applying for the permit, staff realized that the structure is within 20 feet of the rear property line.

Mr. Carroll stated that the encroachment was already in the setback when the new owners purchased the home. Mr. Carroll presented an aerial view of the property showing that there is no structure behind the current structure. He reiterated that this addition was done by the prior occupant of the lot and was not discovered at the time of purchase by the current owners.

Mayor Freeman asked if the footprint would change.

Mr. Carroll stated that it is just the enclosure that was added to the home that they are repairing.

Commissioner Gourlie clarified with Mr. Carroll that if the commission denies their request, they will need to remove that portion of the home.

Mr. Carroll stated affirmatively. He stated an alternative would be for the property owners to purchase additional land and amend their lot line so they could get an additional nine feet to make the 20-foot setback.

Commissioner Sage asked how many feet the property owners have currently.

Mr. Carroll stated that the structure is 11 feet off the property line.

Commissioner Roberts stated that one of the neighbors who attended the planning and zoning meeting stated that they do not oppose the variance.

Commissioner Gourlie made a motion to approve Resolution 2024-101; Commissioner Sage seconded.

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

Motion passed by a 5-0 vote.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Lawrence asked our Communications Director, Elisha Pappacoda, to introduce the new Multimedia Content Specialist.

Ms. Pappacoda introduced Multimedia Content Specialist, Susyn Stecchi, who began working for the Town today.

Mr. Lawrence acknowledged Town Clerk, Nancy Wilson, who facilitated the Mock Commission meeting last week with The Villages Charter School 7th Grade Civics Class. Mr. Lawrence read the following email from one of the teachers, Rob Trifu:

> The Charter School students really had a good learning experience at the Mock Town Hall meeting this past Thursday. Thank you again for all your work in helping to put this together, for feeding them and providing them with many gifts and honors. We will miss you, Marie! But hopefully, we'll do it again next year.

Mr. Lawrence stated that this is the ninth year holding the Mock Commission meeting in conjunction with the American Legion. He stated that it is important to get our youth involved in civics and public service. He stated that this is our chance to provide context for them to learn about town government and the roles and duties of department managers.

Mr. Lawrence also recognized Elisha Pappacoda, Communications Director, Mike Burske, Parks and Recreation Director, and Patrick Kaupper, GIS Technician, who made the League of Cities magazine with their Lights of Lady Lake GIS project.

MAYOR AND COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Roberts stated that she attended the Florida League of Cities training for the Institute for Elected Municipal Officers. She stated this was a two-day training where she met other mayors, vice mayors, and commissioners from around the state. She stated that it was intensive training, and highly recommends the other commissioners attend. She stated that the training covered several things such as procedure of meetings and budgeting.

Commissioner Roberts commented to the public who are concerned about making their statements and public comments, to email or call the commissioners on their Town cell phones. She stated that they listen, read, and will respond as will the Town Manager. She stated that the public has an opportunity to speak when a property is being zoned and similarly if you want to add a patio to your property, your neighbor does not have the ability to stop it unless it is out of zoning requirements. She stated that by asking the commission to vote against something where they do not have the ability to deny it is asking to put them in trouble. And while they are public servants and try to serve the community, Commissioner Roberts asked them to please not ask her to go to jail for them as she will not violate the law.

Mayor Freeman stated that due to a family emergency, he could not attend the Legislative Action Days in Tallahassee. He stated that he spoke with Michael Holland, the mayor of Eustis, Fl., who did attend the conference. He stated that Mayor Holland gave him hopeful news that he garnered from attending the Action Days in Tallahassee.

Mayor Freeman stated that The Villages civics class that came this year was outstanding. He stated that the young man who portrayed the mayor is planning on going to West Point and he wants to be an infantry officer in the Army. He stated that the students asked great questions and conducted themselves in an amazing manner. Mayor Freeman thanked Ms. Wilson for her involvement with the event.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Carroll stated that he has had the new ward boundaries drawn and because of this year's election, he wants to ensure that the Supervisor of Elections has accurate boundaries. He stated that he would like to hold a workshop soon to explain the process as to how the ward boundaries are derived.

Commissioner Regan suggested holding the workshop prior to the next commission meeting, Wednesday February 21.

Mr. Carroll stated that he will contact the Supervisor of Elections to discuss when he needs the new ward map. He stated that he wants the commissioners to be informed prior to its release to the public.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:56 p.m.

s/Carol Osborne, Deputy Town Clerk

s/Ed Freeman, Mayor