

MINUTES OF THE COMMISSION MEETING TOWN OF LADY LAKE, FLORIDA

June 3, 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 Pro-Tem Roberts presiding. The meeting convened at 6:00 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

INVOCATION

Jim Knight – Retired Cowboy Church Pastor

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Led by Mayor Pro-Tem Roberts

ROLL CALL

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

STAFF PRESENT

Bill Lawrence, Town Manager; Thad Carroll, Growth Management Director; C.T. Eagle, Public Works Director; Mike Burske, Parks & Recreation; Police Chief Steve Hunt, Lady Lake Police Department; Rebecca Higgins, Senior Planner; Elisha Pappacoda, Communications Director; Aly Herman, Library Director; and Nancy Wilson, Town Clerk.

Town Attorney Derek Schroth was also in attendance.

PROCLAMATION

Proclamation Recognizing June 2024 as Pride Month was read and signed by Mayor Pro-Tem Roberts.

A. CONSENT

1. May 20, 2024 – Town Commission Meeting Minutes

2. Consideration of Approval to Advertise a Request for Proposal (RFP) for Fire Inspection and Fire Plan Review Services

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

B. NEW BUSINESS

1. Discussion of Allowing For-Profit Recreation and Event Businesses the Use of the Town's Park Facilities for Events and Activities.

Parks & Recreation Director Burske stated that the Town has a history of having partnerships with commercial ventures utilizing our park facilities. Over the years, we have had an outside organization utilize the Log Cabin to host the Farmers Market. This relationship ended when the construction of 27/441 began. The Town took over the event and has turned it around significantly. When we partnered with the Chamber of Commerce for Art in the Park, we had two companies that programmed and staffed the event. A donation was made to the Chamber and no rent or fees were paid to the Town. Both companies did a good job of staffing the event and they did most of the work.

One of the companies recently approached us through the Chamber of Commerce and asked to utilize Snooky Park to host Art in the Park in very early 2025. The company did a very good job staffing the last event. What I am asking this Commission is if the Town wants to pursue relationships with outside ventures such as this one and what type of fee we should be looking at. When it was discussed with the Commission about a year ago, there was not much of an appetite to charge for the use of the park and to keep the deposit low. Does the Town want to open our park areas to large events and charge a fee? Whatever is decided is what the Parks and Recreation Director will pursue.

Commissioner Regan asked Mr. Burske his opinion on the topic and whether outside people would still be able to use the parks when they are rented. Mr. Burske suggested that the Town develop its events and activities, adding that in the last six months, several people have asked to use Snooky Park for concerts and art shows. He suggested that they approach this on a case-by-case basis.

Commissioner Sage asked what kind of events he is thinking about, to which Mr. Burske answered that it could be anything, but he is worried about larger events.

Commissioner Gourlie thinks it is a good idea if it does not cause undue expense or trouble to the Town. It may encourage people to come to Lady Lake where they will support local businesses.

Commissioner Regan asked if there would be food vendors. Mr. Burske responded that there most likely would be but if we charge the person putting on the event, they will collect fees from the vendors that would not go to the Town.

Mayor Pro-Tem Roberts asked about pre-and post-event work required of Town employees. Mr. Burske responded that professional groups do their own setup and breakdown. However, services required from the Town would be an added expense for them.

Commissioner Sage likes the idea but says it should be approached with caution. We could have a couple events to see how it goes.

Town Manager Lawrence thinks we should charge for-profit entities to use our public parks. He recommends a set fee plus a security deposit.

Mayor Pro-Tem Roberts is in favor of having Mr. Burske bring back to the commission a fee schedule, one that could be scalable.

Commissioner Gourlie asked about a percentage of the take. Mr. Burske responded that reputable entities usually pay a 10% fee.

Mr. Burske will bring back before the Commission a draft fee schedule.

C. TOWN ATTORNEY'S REPORT

1. Ordinance 2024-13 - Second and Final Reading - Amending Ordinance No. 2011-11, Redefining the Boundaries of the Voting Wards of the Town of Lady Lake, Florida.

Growth Management Director Carroll said the ordinance breaks down the population (distributed as equally as possible) of each ward and shows the new boundaries. This information has been given to the Lake County Supervisor of Elections and they will make the voter rolls based on the new boundaries. On May 20th, the Commission voted 5-0 to approve this ordinance on first reading.

Commissioner Sage asked if a new list of voters per ward will be made available by the Supervisor of Elections. The Town Clerk answered in the affirmative.

Commissioner Gourlie made a motion to approve Ordinance 2024-13 on second and final reading; Commissioner Sage seconded.

Commissioner (Ward)	Vote
Regan (Four)	YES
Gourlie (Two)	YES
Sage (Five)	YES

Commissioner (Ward)	Vote
Roberts (One)	YES

Motion carried 4-0.

2. Resolution 2024-103 - First and Final Reading - A Resolution of The Town Commission of The Town of Lady Lake, Florida, Granting A Variance to Allow a Freestanding Sign to be Within 100 Feet of Another Freestanding Sign In Accordance With the Provisions of Chapter 17, Section 17-3. E). 1). A)., of the Town of Lady Lake Land Development Regulations, on Property Owned By Benchmark Lady Lake 25 Associates, LLC, a Property Being Approximately 1.69 Acres of Land, Located North of the Intersection of Country Road 25/Teague and North Highway 27/441, Within the Town Limits of the Town of Lady Lake, Florida.

Growth Management Director Carroll stated that the applicant is Marty DelleBovi on behalf of Benchmark Lady Lake 25 Associates and the property is zoned Heavy Commercial. The present use of the property where the sign will be placed is TD Bank and Eyeglass World which is near where CR 25 was just tied-in to 441/27.

The variance request is pursuant to Chapter 17, Section 17-3. e). 1). A)., of the Land Development Regulations and states that no freestanding sign shall be erected closer than 100 feet from any other freestanding sign. The applicant is requesting to place a 20-foot sign 82' from an existing freestanding sign. Because of the way the road is situated to the adjacent property, there is not adequate spacing, so a variance is required.

On January 23, 2019, the Town Commission approved the site plan for Lady Lake Commons and a Development Order was issued on January 28, 2019. The Development Order for the final outparcel was issued on May 19, 2021. This 1.69 acre outparcel is currently occupied by TD Bank and Eyeglass World. The applicant opted to delay installing the monument sign until the road work was completed on County Road 25/Teague Trail.

The applicant's justification statement expresses that the location of the proposed monument sign will need to be modified based on the location of utility easements and the existing sanitary line. The applicant believes that the proposed sign located at the corner of the new intersection of County Road 25/Teague Trail and North Highway 27/441 will help to direct traffic to the south entrance of the development, helping to alleviate some congestion on Fennell Boulevard.

Mayor Pro-Tem Roberts asked how far back from the road the sign will be placed. Mr. Carroll replied that the sign will be more than six feet from the road, and it will be on the property line.

Commissioner Regan made a motion to approve Resolution 2024-103 granting a variance to allow a freestanding sign to be within 100 feet of another freestanding sign; Commissioner Gourlie seconded.

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

Motion carried 4-0.

3. Resolution 2024-104 - First and Final Reading - A Resolution of the Town Commission of the Town of Lady Lake, Florida, Granting a Variance to Allow a Freestanding Sign Taller Than Eight Feet to be Erected Less Than Ten Feet From the Property Line in Accordance with the Provisions of Chapter 17, Section 17-4. B). 2). A)., of the Town of Lady Lake Land Development Regulations, on Property Owned by Benchmark Lady Lake 25 Associates, LLC, A Property Being Approximately 1.69 Acres Of Land, Located North Of The Intersection of Country Road 25/Teague Trail and North Highway 27/441, Within the Town Limits of the Town of Lady Lake, Florida.

Growth Management Director Carroll stated that the applicant is Marty DelleBovi on behalf of Benchmark Lady Lake 25 Associates and the property is zoned Heavy Commercial. The present use where the sign will be placed is TD Bank and Eyeglass World. This is near where CR 25 was just tied-in to 441/27.

If approved, this variance would allow a sign taller than eight feet to be placed within ten feet of the property line. The sign is on the property line, but the variance would meet the intent of the code because it does not block the right-of-way or hinder line-of-sight. The property is 1.69 acres and is located at the intersection of CR 25/Teague Trail and Hwy 27/441.

The applicant's justification statement expresses that the location of the proposed monument sign will need to be modified based on the location of utility easements and the existing sanitary line. The applicant believes that the proposed sign located at the corner of the new intersection at County Road 25/Teague Trail and North Highway 27/441 will help to direct traffic to the south entrance of the development helping to alleviate some congestion on Fennell Boulevard. Though the applicant proposes placing the sign at their property line, the right-of-way for Hwy 27/441 is significant. The proposed location of the sign would still be over 75 feet from the sidewalk. Because of the substantial elevation differences from the road

to the site, the base of the sign will be above the sight triangle. The location of the utilities along the highway, as well as the relocation of the intersection, create unique challenges.

Mayor Pro-Tem Roberts said that with the reopening of CR 25 and more traffic flow on that road, what is the likelihood that it will need to be widened in the future. If it is, would the sign interfere with the widening. Mr. Carroll answered that he believes there is enough remaining right-of-way to widen CR 25, but that is not likely to happen anytime soon or at all. Right-of-way projects take a long time to evolve.

Commissioner Gourlie made a motion to approve Resolution 2024-104 on first and final reading; Commissioner Sage seconded.

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

Motion carried 4-0.

4. Resolution No. 2024-105 – First and Final Reading - Variance – Paradise Recreation Center - Historic Tree Removal – Pursuant to Chapter 10, Section 10-5). c).3).A., of the Land Development Regulations (LDRs) which requires a variance for the removal of historic trees. (Historic trees are classified as a tree with a diameter at breast height (DBH) of 36” or greater). The variance request is to allow for the removal of two viable historic trees located at 1403 Paradise Drive, owned by Village Center Community Development District, within the Town Limits of the Town of Lady Lake, Florida.

Growth Management Director Carroll stated that this is a variance request by The Villages for the removal of historic trees. The applicant is Kenny Blocker from VCCDD, and the location is 1403 Paradise Drive. The proposal is to allow the removal of one historic 52” laurel oak tree and one historic 36” live oak tree located at the Paradis Recreation Center. A certified arborist evaluated all 119 trees on the site. The 5.25-acre property contains nine historic trees of which seven are proposed to be saved and two removed.

The applicant states that the removal of the historic trees is necessary because the trees are located within areas that will cause building foundation and structural column issues during the construction process, potentially hindering the longevity of the structural integrity of the new building. One of the trees is located in the area of the proposed pool and the other is very close to the proposed building foundation. Per the submitted tree removal plan, the historic

trees account for 379 tree caliper inches. Of the 379 tree caliper inches, the applicant proposes to remove 88 tree caliper inches, or 23.22% of the total historic tree inches.

The landscape architect provided a report on the trees. The 36" live oak is where the proposed pool deck will be located; it is in good condition. The 52" laurel oak is rated 3 out of 5 and is in declining condition. Trees are measured at 4.5 feet high so split trees that grew together will be counted as one big tree. Saving every tree is not always possible. The building is over 40 years old and needs improvements. There is not proper ADA access, and the sewer system does not always perform as it should along with other shortcomings. A much needed, nice amenity is being proposed for the residents and staff recommends approval. Reengineering the proposed building to save the two trees is not feasible nor would it be fair to the applicant.

Commissioner Regan said that it is unfortunate that the new location of the pool necessitates the removal of a tree. The people he talked to said they wanted the pool to stay in its current location.

Commissioner Sage stated that he is the commissioner in Ward 5 and that he posted this variance request on Facebook and Nextdoor plus he talked to a lot of people. Nobody is in favor of cutting down trees but after looking at the laurel oak, it has some extreme blemishes along with mistletoe. It looks magnificent from afar but close-up it is very sickly. The Villages is saving seven of the nine historic trees. They are also going to pay a fine of \$8,800 for taking down the trees which will be added to the town's tree fund. A few residents are not in favor of a resort style pool, they would rather have a deeper, smaller pool. The live oak is where the new pool is going. Laurel Oaks do not have a long lifespan and this one appears to be coming to the end of its. Live oaks can live hundreds of years so it is a shame that the live oak must be removed. He asked if there is any way it can be saved.

Suzanne Stancil – Project Landscape Architect with Michael Pape and Associates

Ms. Stancil stated that from the time the building design began about two years ago, the intent was to keep the best trees. The final layout was designed based on resident feedback and they evaluated every tree on site. To achieve the layout based on the feedback, the 36" live oak had to be sacrificed to preserve all the other historic trees. They will be adding more trees to the site after the building is completed. The overwhelming majority of the residents want a resort style pool which necessitates removal of the live oak.

Commissioner Sage noted that 36" just barely qualifies as an historic tree.

Bruce Brown – Assistant District Manager, Villages Community Development District

Mr. Brown stated that they have been working on the design of the new Paradise Recreation Center with the goal of saving as many trees as possible. This is a \$20 million project, so it is a significant investment. Surveys were distributed to all the residents; the project was also presented to the Amenity Authority Committee as well as the Village Center CDD who both unanimously supported every aspect of the project. 10,000 square feet are being added to the existing facility and it will be ADA compliant. They want to enhance the lifestyle of those who live there. He understands that some would like to keep the existing pool, but it is not possible on that property.

Commissioner Regan confirmed that the depth of the pool would be between 3.5 to 5 feet. Mr. Brown said that is standard for resort pools. Commissioner Regan asked what makes the pools so popular to which Mr. Brown responded that there is more paver deck space, easier access to the water and there is more water surface area.

Commissioner Gourlie said The Villages is growing and the new recreation centers have all the amenities so this new proposal is a good thing and will most likely increase property values. This is a large expenditure, and it is nice that The Villages is looking after those in the historic section.

Commissioner Sage said he has lived in the historic part of The Villages since 1986 and he took his children to the current pool. Through the years, the recreation center has been updated at least four times; it is now time for a real overhaul. Residents are overwhelmingly thrilled about the new facility. He is against taking down trees but in this case, he feels it is warranted.

Mayor Pro-Tem Roberts went to the recreation center and asked the workers on site how they liked the current building and if they are in favor of the new development. One of them responded that they like the current building, but it leaks, and the plumbing often fails. She added that the building may be over 50 years old. In conclusion, she stated that residents are overwhelmingly in favor of the project.

Commissioner Regan asked if the depth of the pool can be increased? Mr. Brown responded that it is the standard depth that is used.

Liz Brophy - 1733 W. Schwartz Blvd.

Ms. Brophy stated that trees are important, and we need all the shade we can get. She commented that she would take an historic tree over a shallow pool any day.

Karl Arps – 9340 S.E. 170th Humphreys Loop

Mr. Arps is the Assistant Vice-President of the North Area Villages Homeowner Advocates. His group has been involved in gathering information for 1.5 years from residents and visitors

from other areas of The Villages. They have had to quash some rumors along the way but their goal is to preserve all they can, including trees. He has heard very little feedback regarding trees but has received a lot of feedback in favor of the resort pool due to the ease of getting in and out.

Margaret Wetzel – 1749 W. Schwartz Blvd.

Ms. Wetzel would like the one live oak tree to be saved, after all, Lady Lake is a tree city. The laurel oak may have some problems, but the live oak is a 5 out of 5. Trees are valuable for shade, oxygen and beauty. She said a lot of people regretted their support of the resort pool once they found out what it is. She asked if the pool shape can be changed to save the tree; it would be nice to have it there to provide shade while sitting by the pool.

James Wronka – 1034 Aloha Way

Mr. Wronka goes to the pool twice a day and attended three meetings on the topic of the new pool where they said everything possible was done to save the trees. The people he has talked to are not happy about the pool or the removal of trees. They did save trees, but they are around the lake. There is not one single tree saved by where the buildings are proposed. The whole park setting is going to be disturbed.

Don Deakin – 7220 S.E. 172nd Hazelwood Loop

Mr. Deakin is a member of the Amenity Board. He stated that Mr. Wronka started complaining about the plans for a new recreation center 1.5 years ago. His concerns were noted, and Mr. Deakin personally did an inventory of the trees and noted that it was amazing how few trees were going to be cut down for a project of this magnitude. The resort pool is very popular for both younger and older people because they are shallow, which is good because this is a family pool.

Commissioner Gourlie made a motion to approve Resolution 2024-105 on first and final reading; Commissioner Sage seconded.

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

Motion carried 4-0.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Town Manager Lawrence said a meeting for PBA negotiations will take place at 5pm prior to the June 17th Regular Commission Meeting. Mr. Carroll added that there may be a school board meeting prior to 5pm on the same date.

Mr. Lawrence also reported on the 2024 Florida City and County Manager's Meeting he attended the previous week. In the past the meetings have been uneventful and dull, but this one was just the opposite. While attending the sessions, he realized how far ahead of the curve we are in Lady Lake. A lot of challenges that were discussed were challenges we have already conquered here such as law enforcement issues as they relate to recruiting and equipment. Also, public/private partnerships were discussed as ways to improve our towns and counties. The partnership we have with Benchmark has helped us improve our infrastructure and I do not see our relationship ending.

MAYOR AND COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

No reports

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Tricia Nicholson – 1606 Lindale Avenue, Eustis

Ms. Nicholson is the Director of Operations for Lake County Pride. Lake County Pride is the only 501c3 dedicated to the LGBTQIA community in Lake County. She thanked the commission for supporting the organization and adopting the proclamation and designating June as Pride Month for the first time in Lady Lake. Ms. Nicholson said Lady Lake was one of the few towns that supported them and followed through on their request to adopt the proclamation.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:07 p.m.



Nancy Wilson, Town Clerk



Treva Roberts, Mayor Pro-Tem