TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 7, 2024 – 4:00 PM
TAVARES CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
201 EAST MAIN STREET, TAVARES

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Bob Grenier, Mayor
Sandy Gamble, Vice Mayor
Lori Pfister, Council Member
Walter Price, Council Member
Troy Singer, Council Member - *absent*

STAFF PRESENT

John Drury, City Administrator
Lindsay Holt, City Attorney
Susie Novack, City Clerk
Antonio Fabre, Interim Community Development Director
Scott Aldrich, Community Services Director
Bob Tweedie, Economic Development Director
Lori Houghton, Finance Director
Richard Keith, Fire Chief
Crissy Bublitz, Human Resources Director
James Dillon, Public Works Director
Mark O'Keefe, Public Communications Director
Sarah Coursey, Police Chief
Phil Clark, Utilities Director

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Grenier called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. He asked those who wished to speak on an agenda item to complete and submit a Request to Speak form.

II. INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Tab 1. Pastor Ian Lamont, GraceWay Church

Pastor Ian Lamont, GraceWay Church, provided the invocation and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Grenier wished Council Member Singer a speedy recovery. He expressed his thoughts and prayers to the Lake County Deputies for the loss and injury to their officers during an incident over the past weekend.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Grenier asked if there were any changes to the Agenda. Mr. Drury said he would like to make the following changes:

- Add item 2a, Proclamation from Lake County Board of County Commissioners Chairman Kirby Smith for the City's emergency assistance during Hurricane Debby.
- Table Tab 9 [Accept and Award Recommended Architect Firm for the Golden Triangle Regional Park Design] to the next meeting.

MOTION

Sandy Gamble moved to approve the Agenda with the discussed changes, seconded by Lori Pfister. The motion carried unanimously 4-0.

IV. PROCLAMATIONS/PRESENTATIONS

Tab 2. Elks Donation Presentation to the Tavares Police Department

Mr. Drury made the following presentation:

> *Glen Waterman, Eustis Elks Lodge No. 1578, will present a $500.00 donation to the Tavares Police Charities 'Back to School drive. The 'Back to School' drive provides school supplies, clothes, and other items to children in need.*

Council Member Pfister said she had been a member of the Eustis Elks Lodge for many years and was proud of how much the organization would give to the community.

Glen Waterman, a Trustee, asked Chief Coursey to accept a donation from the Elks Lodge No. 1578. He noted his appreciation for the Tavares Police Department's involvement in the community and said the donation was part of $3,500.00 donated for school resources in Lake County.

Vice Mayor Gamble discussed various back-to-school drives in Lake County and thanked Chief Coursey for her efforts.

Tab 2a. Proclamation from Lake County

Mayor Grenier said he was proud of the City's assistance during Hurricane Debby and invited Lake County Board of County Commissioner Chairman Kirby Smith to the podium.

Commissioner Smith said he was a member of Elks Lodge No. 1578. He said he was proud to be a member of the organization as it does a fantastic job helping across the community and encouraged those present to become a member.

Commissioner Smith said Hurricane Debby affected power in the downtown area, including the Lake County Emergency Operations Center and 911 Dispatch. He said Tavares immediately came to call and opened its Emergency Operations Center for Lake County. He thanked the City for its unwavering commitment to the Citizens of Lake County. Commissioner Smith read a proclamation, in its entirety, expressing Lake County's gratitude and appreciation to the City of Tavares for its emergency management assistance during Hurricane Debby. He said everyone came together during a trying time and thanked the City Council.

Commissioner Smith presented the Proclamation to Mayor Grenier and Mr. O'Keefe.

Vice Mayor Gamble thanked Mr. O'Keefe and his staff for their efforts and preparedness.

V. SWEARING IN BY CITY ATTORNEY AND DISCLOSURE OF EXPARTE COMMUNICATIONS

Attorney Holt said there were no quasi-judicial matters before the Council for consideration.

VI. READING OF ALL ORDINANCES/RESOLUTIONS INTO THE RECORD

Ms. Novack read the following ordinances by title only:

RESOLUTION 2024-15

A RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TAVARES, FLORIDA, AUTHORIZING ISSUANCE OF A “LETTER OF INTENT TO WITHDRAW” FROM THE PUBLIC RISK MANAGEMENT OF FLORIDA INSURANCE POOL; PROVIDING SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

RESOLUTION 2024-16

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF TAVARES, FLORIDA, AUTHORIZING THE ACCEPTANCE OF LAKE COUNTY WATER AUTHORITY GRANT AMENDMENT FROM LAKE COUNTY, FLORIDA TO AMEND THE EXISTING GRANT AGREEMENT TO DESIGN AND CONSTRUCT

STORMWATER IMPROVEMENTS AT AESOP'S POND.

ORDINANCE 2024-07

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF TAVARES, FLORIDA, AMENDING THE CITY OF TAVARES "TAKING FLIGHT" 2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FUTURE LAND USE ELEMENT, AMENDING THE DENSITY FOR THE COMMERCIAL DOWNTOWN (CD) CATEGORY, PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY AND CONFLICTS; PROVIDING FOR TRANSMITTAL, PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Grenier asked if anyone wished to pull an item from the Consent Agenda for discussion. There were no requests.

MOTION

Lori Pfister moved to approve the Consent Agenda [Tab 3. Approval of the June 19 and July 17, 2024, City Council Meeting Minutes], seconded by Walter Price. The motion carried unanimously 4-0.

Tab 3. Approval of the June 19 and July 17, 2024, City Council Meeting Minutes

Approved on the Consent Agenda.

VIII. RESOLUTIONS

Tab 4. Resolution 2024-15 – Authorizing Issuance or a "Letter of Intent to Withdraw" from the Public Risk Management of Florida Insurance Pool

Ms. Bublitz made the following presentation:

> *Resolution authorizing the issuance of a "letter of intent to withdraw" from Public Risk Management of Florida insurance pool. The City is researching insurance opportunities through the RFP process and has retained the services of Siver Insurance Consultants to assist and guide the City in this process. Sections 4.2 and 4.3 of the Agreement provided that Pool members must serve the Executive Director with written notice of its intent to withdraw at least forty-five (45) days prior to the beginning of the policy year for which the notice to withdraw is applicable. Issuance of said notice will facilitate staff analyses of insurance options for the fiscal year commencing on October 1, 2024.*
>
> *Staff recommended approval of Option 1, for the Council to approve Resolution 2024-15.*

Council Member Price asked why the City wished to withdraw from the Public Risk Management of Florida Insurance Pool (PRM). Ms. Bublitz said the City was not withdrawing, and the letter and resolution reflected an 'intent' per contract requirements should PRM ultimately not be selected at the end of the RFP process. Mr. Drury said seeing what the market offers every five to ten years was prudent.

MOTION

Walter Price moved to approve Resolution 2024-15, seconded by Lori Pfister. The motion carried unanimously 4-0.

Tab 5. Resolution 2024-16 – Updated LCWA Grant Agreement for Aesonp's Park Stormwater Improvements and Request for Additional Funding

Ms. Houghton made the following presentation:

> *At the 8/3/2022 City Council meeting, the Council accepted a Lake County Water Authority (LCWA) grant to fund improvements to the stormwater pond system at Aesop's Park. The original grant agreement provided $162,500 in funding, with a matching amount of $162,500 from Stormwater reserves, totaling $325,000.*
>
> *The project cost has since increased to $548,970. The LCWA amended the grant to cover the increase, raising the grant funding to $280,000 and the matching amount to $268,970. Staff recommends using Infrastructure Sales Tax Reserves to cover the additional $106,470 needed.*
>
> *Salient details of the grant include the following:*
> - *Project Title: CRA Basin EE Phase I Stormwater Enhancement (Aesop's Park).The grant is a direct local grant awarded by Lake County Water Authority (LCWA), Lake County, Florida.*
> - *Original award amount: $162,500.*
> - *Original match amount: $162,500.*
> - *Amended award amount: $280,000.*
> - *Amended total match amount: $268,970.*
> - *Funding from LCWA shall only be applied towards the portion of the project that treats the existing impervious areas and not future development, nor shall the LCWA Grant fund the redistribution of flows from existing retention areas that are proposed to be eliminated or reduced.*
>
> *Staff recommended approval of Option 1, for the Council to move to approve Resolution 2024-16 and authorize staff to utilize $106,470 from Infrastructure Sales Tax reserves to fund the increased cost of the grant match.*

Vice Mayor Gamble asked for the balance of Infrastructure Sales Tax reserves. Ms. Houghton said $1.8 million dollars. She said the funds could be used for capital items.

MOTION

Sandy Gamble moved to approve Resolution 2024-16, seconded by Walter Price. The motion carried unanimously 4-0.

IX. ORDINANCES – PUBLIC HEARING

First Reading

Second Reading

Tab 6. Ordinance 2024-07 – Amending the City of Tavares "Taking Flight" 2040 Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Element, Amending the Density for the Commercial Downtown (CD) Category

Mr. Fabre provided PowerPoint slides and made the following presentation:

> *The Future Land Use Commercial Downtown (CD) category is intended to support a wide range of uses with increased densities and intensities to complement the downtown's roles as a focus for tourism, professional offices, retail, dining, civic, and cultural activities. This category is also intended to accommodate townhomes and multifamily dwellings. Furthermore, the City encourages compact mixed-use developments with increased density and intensity that promotes pedestrian and economic activity per the Land Use Element, Objective 1-3 Downtown Tavares, Policy 1-3.4 of the "Taking Flight" 2024 Comprehensive Plan.*
>
> *The City of Tavares is experiencing an influx of growth, as many communities in Florida are experiencing. However, there is limited investment interest within the Commercial Downtown (CD) category. Investment in an infill project can present some challenges for investors, including assembly of fragmented property, potential environmental cleanup, limited financing options, demolition cost, higher construction costs for commercial and multi-story buildings, and density requirements.*
>
> *As a result, other compatible cities have demonstrated higher densities in their downtown core areas (see attached table). The City of Tavares has the opportunity to consider an increased bonus density within the Commercial Downtown category. Ordinance 2024-07 proposes an increase in density for the Commercial Downtown category from the adopted 25 dwelling units per acre to a more progressive 40 dwelling units per acre. Please note, the proposed 40 dwelling units per acre density is considered a density bonus. Any CD category outside the downtown Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) shall have a density of not to exceed 25 dwelling units per acre.*
>
> *On June 19, 2024, at a public hearing, City Council unanimously approved the*

transmittal of Ordinance 2024-07 to the Florida Department of Commerce and other pertinent state review agencies. Since, the Florida Department of Commerce in a letter dated July 26, 2024 (see attached), has authorized the City to adopt the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment at a public hearing.

On June 16, 2024, the Planning & Zoning Board met and voted unanimously (4-0) to recommend approval of the transmittal to the State for review of Ordinance 2024-07 - Amending the City of Tavares "Taking Flight" 2040 - Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Element, by amending the density for the Commercial Downtown (CD) category as presented.

Staff recommends that the City Council moves to approve Ordinance 2024-07 (Option 1) - Amending the City of Tavares "Taking Flight" 2040 - Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Element, by amending the density for the Commercial Downtown (CD) category.

Mr. Fabre said once the Council adopted the Ordinance, it would return to the state for a final review.

Council Member Pfister inquired about green space. Mr. Fabre said open space and height requirements would not be changed. He said the only change was to density. He said the density requirements would be limited to two to three stories.

Mr. Drury said density would be added to increase height in the downtown area to help investors build residential components. He said it took a lot of work for investors to make the numbers work with two-story buildings and lower density. Mr. Tweedie said some parcels were 1.5 acres, and if an investor could not increase height, there would not be an adequate return on their investment. He said the changes would apply to a few properties in the downtown CRA area, and the City would like to see those in-fill parcels developed. Mr. Drury said staff was working on the Land Development Regulations (LDRs) to increase lot size. He said green space was important throughout the community.

Council Member Pfister said most of the people she represented would rather pay higher taxes than have additional rooftops in the City. She noted a concern for increased traffic in the downtown.

Mayor Grenier said he loved the Tavares Square concept and hoped the changes would positively impact the west end of Main Street at SR 19. At the same time, he noted a concern that Tavares would turn into a high-rise apartment downtown.

Council Member Pfister said she was agreeable with four to six-story buildings if there was green space downtown.

Council Member Price asked for confirmation that an increased density meant going up with more units. Mr. Drury said yes. Council Member Price said a balance would have to be made for onsite parking. Mr. Drury confirmed.

Vice Mayor Gamble said the Tavares Square presentation reflected green space and on-site parking for residents that would not infringe on City parking. He asked if the old proposed Lake Region property with 15-story buildings would be allowed with this change. Mr. Tweedie said the building height was capped at 80+- feet. He discussed past visioning sessions and said the amendment fits the citizens' vision for the downtown area, which included six-story buildings. Mr. Tweedie said green space was a separate issue.

Mr. Drury said the City's Councils had done a lot of work to maintain green space in the downtown area by acquiring the packing house, waterfront, and railroad beds. The Council and voters opted to purchase the properties, which were left open for recreation and tripled green space in the downtown. Mr. Drury said behind the green space were commercial businesses asking for more density and residents to patronize their shops and restaurants. One investor was creating a mixed-use at Tavares Square and needed density to make his investment work. Mr. Drury noted green space was created at Aesop's Park downtown. He said the amendment would only be applied downtown, and the outside urban areas would remain with larger lot sizes and estate zoning. The downtown would be compact with high densities, and areas outside downtown would maintain green space.

Council Member Pfister said if more units were added, she wanted to ensure they were going up and not impacting the footprint. Mr. Drury and Mr. Tweedie said the amendment allows that in the small downtown lots.

Vice Mayor Gamble said the amendment would provide the owner of the corner lot on Main Street additional opportunities to develop his property. Any requests for zoning and green space requirements would go before the Planning and Zoning Board, and the ordinance would allow for more height to get a return on investment.

MOTION

Lori Pfister moved to approve Ordinance 2024-07, seconded by Sandy Gamble.

Council Member Price said it also comes down to a project's feasibility. Otherwise, some projects would not come to fruition.

The motion carried unanimously 4-0.

X. GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Tab 7. Board Appointment – Library Board

Mayor Grenier made the following presentation:

There are two vacant seats on the Tavares Library Board. One vacant seat is for the term June 2024 to June 2026, and the other vacant seat is for the term June 2023 to June 2025. The City has received an application from Clayton Yuen (see attachment).

The City advertised open positions in the Daily Commercial and the City website in June and will continue to advertise any open positions periodically.

Staff recommended approval of Option 1, for the Mayor to make the appointment of Clayton Yuen to the Tavares Library Board for the term June 2024 to June 2026, and the Council to approve the appointment.

Mayor Grenier said he would like to appoint Clayton Yuen to the Tavares Library Board for the term June 2024 to June 2026.

MOTION

Lori Pfister moved to approve Clayton Yuen's appointment to the Tavares Library Board for the term June 2024 to June 2026, seconded by Walter Price.

Vice Mayor Gamble inquired about residency requirements. Mr. Aldrich said there was a provision for two members to reside outside the City limits.

The motion carried unanimously 4-0.

Tab 8. Extension to the Interlocal Agreement with Lake County for the Provision of Library Services

Mr. Aldrich made the following presentation:

On September 10, 2019, the City of Tavares entered into an Interlocal Agreement with Lake County, FL for the provision of library services to join other communities in providing equal access to public library services, without charge, for all residents of Lake County. Tavares is one of sixteen libraries in the Lake County Library System that provides coordinated library services throughout the county, and offers consistent plans, programs, policies, and procedures in the operation, maintenance, and development of library services throughout the area.

The agreement signed in 2019 with the county was a three-year term, expiring on September 30, 2022. The City and County then entered into two subsequent 12-month extensions, on September 13, 2022 and September 12, 2023 to extend the agreement. County officials are requesting to extend the agreement for an additional 12-month period while they continue to review the funding metrics of *their annual appropriations. Staff is seeking approval to extend this agreement for another year. A copy of the agreement is included in your agenda packet.*

Staff recommended approval of Option 1: Move to approve and extend the Interlocal Agreement with Lake County, FL for the provision of library services.

Mayor Grenier asked for comments from the Council.

Vice Mayor Gamble asked if the City received funding from Lake County. Mr. Aldrich said Lake County makes annual appropriations to the City based on library performance and circulation numbers. Appropriations were included in the annual budgets.

MOTION

Lori Pfister moved to approve [Opton 1], seconded by Sandy Gamble. The motion carried unanimously 4-0.

Tab 9. Accept and Award Recommended Architect Firm for the GoldenTriangle Regional Park Design

Item tabled during Approval of the Agenda.

Tab 10. Request for Code Enforcement Fine & Lien Forgiveness for 107 Ruby Street

Mr. Drury said the item before the Council was a reconsideration request for fine and lien forgiveness for 107 Ruby Street. He recommended that the property owner be allowed to discuss his request.

Mr. Shahid said he purchased two properties at the location that were eyesores and remodeled and cleaned the homes, adding curb appeal. He noted the properties were turned into Air B&B and served over 100 families who have enjoyed the downtown over the past year. He said he recently discovered a lien on 107 East Ruby Street and asked for consideration of his efforts and the value he brought to the downtown.

Ms. Houghton said the amount available for reduction and forgiveness was $42,750, leaving a $125 fine and $82.04 for administrative costs that could not be reduced or removed.

Attorney Holt said a Special Magistrate can reduce a fine. However, when a fine is converted to a lien, requests must come before the Council for consideration.

Mr. Drury said before the Council was s a consideration to reduce a portion or all of the $42,750 fine a prior owner incurred. He noted the new investor purchased the property, cleaned the property, repaired the property, and removed the eyesore in the downtown. He said the property was an economic feeder for the City’s businesses.

Mayor Grenier asked for comments from the Council.

Council Member Pfister asked how the liens were not paid at closing and noted it would be unusual for the Council to forgive a lien. Mr. Shahid said the title did not pick up on the liens, and he found out about the liens when he met the former homeowner.

A discussion was held regarding the title company's responsibility for incurring the costs by failing to disclose the liens.

Mayor Grenier asked what other investments, now and in the future, Mr. Shahid had in Tavares. Mr. Shahid said he had a small interest in the Nautilus Coffee shop and would be acquiring the Key West resort. Mayor Grenier said he wanted to keep Mr. Shahid as a downtown investor.

Council Member Price said he appraised properties with liens and easements for forty years, and title companies were always held responsible for not providing information.

Council Member Pfister said the property remained an eyesore for years after the City invested in the downtown. She noted Mr. Shahid was making strong investments in the City.

MOTION

Lori Pfister moved to approve the Code Enforcement Fine and Lien Forgiveness Request, seconded by Sandy Gamble.

Council Member Price asked Mr. Shahid when he found out about the liens. Mr. Shahid said five to six months prior and confirmed he had owned the property for the past two years.

Council Member Price asked if Mr. Shahid would file suit with the title company if the liens were forgiven. Mr. Shahid said no, noting that he needed time to focus on the Key West Resort project and that he did not wish to incur costs for attorney fees.

The motion carried unanimously 4-0.

Mr. Shahid thanked the Council.

Tab 11. Facility Management and Operational Agreement Between City of Tavares & Lake Technical College

Mr. Dillon made the following presentation:

> *On May 4th, 2022, Council approved the interlocal agreement for Lake Technical College to co-locate their student educational, instructional, and certification*

transportation programs at the City of Tavares' new Public Works Operations Center. Over the past year, Lake Technical College and the City developed a Facility Management and Operational Agreement (FMOA) to ensure stakeholder continuity. Therefore, City Staff is seeking Council approval of the Facility Management and Operational Agreement. The attached FOA agreement has been developed by the City and Lake Technical College Administration and reviewed, edited, and finalized by the two respective City and Lake Technical College attorneys.

Staff recommended Option #1. For the Council to move to approve the Facility Management and Operational Agreement and authorize the City's Administrator to execute same, as well as give the City Administrator full authority to promulgate reasonable policy changes and amendments as depicted in the agreement.

Mayor Grenier asked for comments from the Council. There were none.

MOTION

Lori Pfister moved to approve Option 1, seconded by Walter Price.

Vice Mayor Gamble said he would like to ensure the public understands the location is a City facility where Lake Technical College coexists. Vice Mayor Gamble said it was a great investment, and Mr. Dillon said it was a great partnership.

The motion carried unanimously 4-0.

Tab 12. Slim Haywood Infrastructure Improvements

Mr. Dillon made the following presentation:

The streetlights and pedestrian sidewalks along Slim Haywood were approved as a Council budget priority for this fiscal year. However, we have encountered cost increases for the Contribution in Aid of Construction (CIAC) for lighting improvements in this area, creating a fiscal deficit.

A budget of $125,000 was earmarked for the Slim Haywood Design and Construction of Sidewalks and Streetlights. Presently, none of the funds have been utilized due to a budget shortfall. Additionally, City Council allocated $88,456 from ARPA funds for a streetlight study, which was effectively conducted by the public utility provider at no cost to the City. This leaves a balance of $68,578.24 for infrastructure improvements. We respectfully seek Council's approval to reallocate the remaining funds to support the streetlight improvements.

Furthermore, the Paving and Micro-resurfacing Adopted Budget included $342,862 in the Infrastructure Sales Tax fund. Presently, $239,103.48 has been expended on paving and micro-resurfacing. We kindly request Council's approval to reallocate $16,421.76 of the remaining funds to sustain this project. With these adjustments, we can ensure total funding for this project and continue to retain a significant amount of $87,336.76 for paving and micro-resurfacing repairs for the remaining portion of FY 24, thereby highlighting our ongoing commitment to infrastructure improvements.

Staff recommended Option 1: For the Council to approve the transfer of $68,578.24 from the ARPA streetlight study and $16,421.76 from the Infrastructure Sales Tax fund to the Slim Haywood Project. This crucial transfer request will offset the Contribution in Aid of Construction and ensure the successful completion of the infrastructure improvements.

Council Member Pfister inquired about the need for a streetlight study. Mr. Dillon said the utility provider helped facilitate a streetlight project throughout the City, and providing a streetlight study at no cost to the City helped reallocate the funds for the project.

Mr. Drury noted that new lights were installed at the Freedom Flag roundabout. Mr. Dillon said the City received many great comments on the lighting improvements.

A discussion was held regarding the extension of Captain Haynes Road and lighting. Mr. Dillon said one phase was handled by developers and noted that a second phase from Lane Park Ridge at the end of Slim Haywood to SR 19 would have sidewalks and lighting.

MOTION

Lori Pfister moved to approve [Option 1], seconded by Sandy Gamble. The motion carried unanimously 4-0.

XI. BUDGET WORKSHOP

Tab 13. Present Enterprise and Special Revenue Fund Budgets, and Discuss the General Fund Budget

Mr. Drury made the following presentation:

Previously, at the July 17th City Council meeting, Council was presented the General Fund budget, and staff will now deliver the Utility Fund and Special Revenue Fund Proposed Budgets for FY 2025 after which an opportunity will be provided to discuss the previously delivered General Fund budget as well as the Utilities and Special Fund budgets.

The Utility Funds include: Water, Wastewater, Stormwater, Solid Waste, and the Seaplane Base/Marina. Special Funds include Community Redevelopment (TIF), Infrastructure Sales Tax, Grants, Debt Service, and the Pavilion Fund.

The maximum tentative millage was discussed and set at the July 17th City Council meeting. The Five-Year Capital Plan will be delivered, presented and discussed at the August 21, 2024, budget workshop, followed by two Public Hearings on the budget on September 4, 2024, and September 18, 2024.

Mayor Grenier closed the meeting for a 5-minute recess at 5:22 p.m.

Mayor Grenier reconvened the meeting at 5:27 p.m.

Ms. Houghton provided a PowerPoint presentation on the Enterprise and Special Funds.

Mr. Drury said there would be three additional budget meetings, and the next meeting on August 21, 2024, would be the final component of the budget deliverables: the Capital Improvement Program. He asked the Council if they would like to discuss the General Fund and Enterprise and Special Revenue Funds.

Parking Discussion

Vice Mayor Gamble inquired about a parking area behind the hotel. Mr. Drury said there would be changes in activity with a new owner at the hotel, as well as more marketing and promotions. The City Council was considering future parking issues and funded design and engineering for additional parking locations behind the hotel to support the activity in the area, including the hotel, volleyball courts, marina, and restaurants. Parking had been designed, engineered, permitted, and was ready to go. Funding was needed for $700,000. Mr. Drury said an opportunity was presented to move forward with Phase I and II of the project in the General Fund. He said parking was always an issue for cities, and it is best to be in front of it as it takes years to address.

Vice Mayor Gamble noted his support in moving forward with Phase III and funding the entire project as prices were increasing and the equipment would already be staged. Mr. Drury said there was an economy scale package to complete the entire project.

Council Member Pfister asked how Phase III would be funded. Vice Mayor Gamble said an additional .38 months of General Fund Reserves could be utilized to complete a non-recurring expenditure. Mr. Drury said instead of having 3.38 months reserves, if you go to 3 months reserves, the .38 would cover the entire project and not affect the millage rate. Mr. Tweedie said the additional cost for phase 3 would be a little over $300,000. Mr. Drury said the cost estimator provided solid cost estimates.

A discussion was held regarding the location of the phases and potential parking areas, including angled parking. Mr. Drury said a design was provided to the Council, and he could forward another copy if needed.

Vice Mayor Gamble noted Phase I included 25 parking spaces, Phase II was located at the retention pond, and Phase III had an additional 75 parking spaces. Council Member Pfister asked if the costs included lighting. Mr. Tweedie said the price was for asphalt, brick pavers, and stormwater. He said lighting was not included in the design.

Vice Mayor Gamble asked if there was any savings between asphalt and brick pavers. Mr. Tweedie said any savings would be de minimus, and the more significant portion of the project was asphalt. He said a bid alternate could be obtained for asphalt versus bricks. Council Member Pfister said she did not wish to cut corners for aesthetics. Vice Mayor Gamble said stamped concrete may offer the same effect as brick pavers at a lower cost.

Council Member Price asked about the future parking garage at the Public Works facility on the east end of downtown. He asked how much parking would be needed. Mr. Drury said every City experiences inadequate parking. Council Member Price said he would like to take the .38 from Reserves to lower the millage rate. Mr. Drury said it would be a one-time revenue source to complete an ongoing recurring millage rate and would caution the Board to avoid creating a structural deficit the following year. He said one-time revenues should be spent on one-time expenses. He said the parking project was a one-time expense on one capital item, with a one-time revenue of reserves. Recurring revenues would be needed to lower the millage rate.

<u>Tavares Nature Park Discussion</u>

Council Member Pfister inquired about Tavares Nature Park Rebuild Demolition and Removal at $75,300. Mr. Drury said there were two projects: a pier that needed to be rebuilt at $900,000 and old, disconnected fishing docks that needed to be removed at $75,300. Both items were cut from the budget.

Vice Mayor Gamble said funds needed to be placed in the budget to remove what is there and have a shoreline. Council Member Pfister said the pier and dock needed to be addressed. Vice Mayor Gamble suggested floating docks in the future rather than permanent docks. Mr. Drury said floating docks were expensive. Mr. Dillon noted that the staff recently applied for a CDBG grant, which was denied. He said staff would continue to pursue grant funding.

<u>Aesop’s Dog Park</u>

Council Member Pfister said Aesop’s Dog Park needs new picnic tables. She inquired about the pricing of picnic tables. Mr. Dillon said the price was based on the standard picnic tables used in Wooton Wonderland and Wooton Park. He said they were lifetime park benches. Council Member Pfister said the dog park was built for families to enjoy and needed to be maintained. She discussed the history of the dog park and said she was able to secure a CDBG grant. Mr. Dillon said the dog park was heavily visited. He said he would provide the cost of the picnic tables to the Council.

Staffing/Sidewalks/Cross Walk

Vice Mayor Gamble said he hoped to receive the grant funding for three firefighters. Vice Mayor Gamble noted his support for purchasing a fire department truck that could be utilized rather than using a fire engine for specific calls. He said there would be available staffing with the additional firefighters to cover truck staffing and the fire engines.

Vice Mayor Gamble said he wanted to ensure law enforcement staffing was adequate. He said one police officer position was cut and noted the position could be put back into the budget at $108,000. Vice Mayor Gamble said $226,000 was budgeted for over time. He asked if overtime and General funds could be used to fund the cut position.

Vice Mayor Gamble noted his support for sidewalk replacement.

Vice Mayor Gamble said he was advised a library assistant was needed.

Vice Mayor Gamble said the YMCA renovation and Woodlea Sports Complex may need additional staffing. He noted a concern about expanding too much for the City's recreation department and said privatizing some services may be more cost-effective.

Council Member Price said he would like to look at areas where savings could be made to lower the millage rate.

Council Member Pfister said the roads and sidewalks in Tavares were nice compared to other cities. She said the City had done a good job and did not support spending funds for sidewalks. Mr. Drury said each year funds are added to grind and repair sidewalks and repave and resurface roads. He said the budget included monies for some repair and paving.

Council Member Pfister noted a safety concern at a crosswalk off Dora Avenue at Lake Point Senior Apartments. Mr. Drury said a crosswalk was recently installed, and staff would look to see if another was needed. A discussion was held regarding upgrades and lighting to David Walker Road.

XII. NEW BUSINESS

XIII. OLD BUSINESS

Council Member Pfister commended Mr. Aldrich on the summer basketball program.

XIV. AUDIENCE TO BE HEARD

XV. REPORTS

Tab 7. City Administrator Report

Mr. Drury said another budget would be presented to the Council during the next meeting on August 21, 2024, and the budget process would be wrapped up and finalized with two Public Hearings in September.

Mayor Grenier inquired about Chief Coursey's recent professional appointment. Chief Coursey said she was appointed to the Florida Chief's Association as District 14 Director and would work on legislation and attend roundtables with Police Chiefs throughout the State.

Mr. Dillon said the Wooton Wonderland Storyboard and Chris Daniels Memorial Sign were installed. He said a grand opening for the new Public Works facility would be held in early September.

Chief Keith noted that the new ladder truck was received and thanked those who attended the push-in ceremony at the fire station. He said the truck would provide a safe platform for the firefighters to work and serve the City, residents, and visitors for twenty-plus years.

Ms. Houghton thanked the Council for their support.

Tab 8. City Council Member Reports

Council Member Pfister inquired about the Splash Park. Mr. Drury said cost estimates for a new chlorination system were being obtained.

Council Member Price said he was honored to attend the fire truck push-in ceremony and enjoyed its historical significance.

Council Member Gamble said he attended a recent ceremony for fallen and injured Lake County Sheriff Deputies. He commended Chief Coursey and the Tavares Police Department for assisting the Sheriff's Office.

Council Member Gamble commended Mr. O'Keefe and his staff for assisting Lake County Emergency Management during Hurricane Debby. He noted the City streets were not flooded due to the efforts of the current and past Councils by providing funding for stormwater projects.

Mayor Grenier said that on August 7, 1782, General George Washington, the Commander in Chief of the Continental Army, created the Badge for Military Merit, known as the Purple Heart. He suggested remembering Purple Heart recipients when creating additional parking downtown. He thanked those who have served, including police, fire, and veterans.

Those present congratulated Chief Coursey on her appointment.

XVI. ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business, and Mayor Grenier adjourned the meeting at 6:47 p.m.

Respectfully,

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Susie Novack, MMC, FCRM
City Clerk