

Town of Loxahatchee Groves

Local Planning Agency Meeting

Tuesday, June 19, 2018 at 7:00 p.m.

MINUTES

1. OPENING

a. Call to Order & Roll Call

Mayor Browning called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. Present were Mayor Browning, Vice Mayor McLendon, Council Members DeMarois, and Maniglia. Also present were Town Manager Underwood, Town Attorney Cirullo and Town Clerk Walton. Council Member Batcheler was absent.

- b. Approval of Minutes: None
- c. Approval of Agenda

Motion: a motion to approve the agenda as presented was made by Council Member DeMarois and seconded by Vice Mayor McLendon. Motion passed 4 – 0.

d. Public Comments - none

2. CONVENE LOCAL PLANNING AGENCY

- a. Review of Public Hearing Procedures
- b. Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA) 2017-04.1: Community of Hope
 - 1. Open Public Hearing
 - 2. Close Public Hearing
 - 3. LPA Member Discussion
 - 4. Consideration of Motion: Comprehensive Plan Amendment CPA 2017-04.1.

Present for the Applicant were Jennifer Morton, Founding Pastor Dale Locke and Attorney Nat Nason. They were requesting a land use change from RR5 to Institutional, and a Special Policy Text Amendment for the 35 acres on the northwest corner of Okeechobee and E Road. The Comp Plan had an established FAR for Institutional, but Town Staff was recommended a lower FAR of .075.

- In 2002, the Church purchased the first 3 parcels, totaling 25 acres, for their first congregation.
- Between 2002 and 2006 they partially developed the initial vision Master Plan with Palm Beach County.
- In 2006, the Town incorporated and the plans were transferred to the Town.
- In 2008, the initial plan for the first lot was approved through Palm Beach County.
- In 2009 the Town adopted the Unified Land Development Code (ULDC), which modified the existing uses to only allow churches in Institutional districts.
- In November 2020, there was a new zoning code that limited churches to 5 acres, but vest current approvals. The question now was how much of the original 3 parcels was vested.

- In 2016, the Church acquired two other parcels.
- In 2017, Palm Beach County amended their zoning code to allow churches in all zoning districts and churches could change without coming back to the Commission; however, the Town did not make this change to their zoning code.

The parcels surrounding the Church have residential, a nursery, another church and a fire station. The master plan Phase 1 is 25 acres, with a sanctuary, meeting hall, gym, school classes and a Preserve area, along with a second access point on Okeechobee Boulevard. Phase 2 is 10 acres, which is proposed for more recreational uses, such as ballfields, picnic areas and possibly relocation of the gym. There was an equestrian trail system committed to on the master plan on the north and west sides. The Applicant stated they would submit the equestrian trail plans to the RETGAC Committee. The architecture of the first building met the rural guidelines and they will continue to do so with the new proposed buildings. The Applicant felt the Institutional designation was compatible and the proposed FAR was consistent with surrounding parcels. They had complied with the long range traffic requirements.

Attorney Nat Nason stated several legal points for the record. The Federal Religious Land Use Regulations state that what you allow for one you allow for all. Treat the church the same as any non-religious parcel in the Institutional district. This project was not going to be a Christ Fellowship type church.

Planning Consultant Fleischmann reviewed a summary of the Comp Plan Amendment and Special Policy from Staff perspective. This was initially submitted in 2017 to the P&Z Board acting as the Local Planning Agency. Their recommendation was denial as submitted. They were okay with the 0.0684 FAR with a max of 93,000 square feet. It was re-submitted at 0.0785 with a max of 114,000 square feet. Parcel 1 had 82,000 square feet of church and meeting halls; and Parcel 2 had 32,000 square feet of recreation and picnic areas. Staff recommended approval of the new plan with conditions of a traffic study done during peak weekend times and a site plan for each phase. Before the site plan for Parcel 2, they would meet with the RETGAC Committee. The recreation sites proposed might be for public participation.

Vice Mayor McLendon asked if there were one or two access points from E Road. Also there was an existing culvert, but it was closed off.

Pastor Dale commented that they had started the church in 1996. He grew up in this area. The first building was designed to fit into the Town and they had no desire to be a megachurch.

Vance and Christine Carpenter stated they owned property in Loxahatchee Groves and Mrs. Carpenter was a ministry leader at the church for self-help recovery programs. Also active in church functions and here to support the Church was Christie O'Grady, Robert Austin and Bonnie & Ellis Goldberg.

Council Member Maniglia asked if the self-help recovery programs had court ordered participants and were the programs bilingual. Ms. Carpenter responded very few and none currently were bilingual. Council Member Maniglia stated the Hispanic Community here needed help.

William Bell, 22nd Road N., stated he was on the P&Z/LPA Board and this was basically the same project they had seen, even if there was a lower FAR. Parcel 2 was acquired in 2016. The ULDC published in 2010 had a clear understanding of the use. It should stay AR and don't include Parcel 1. The existing use was 40,000 square foot range. The biggest church in use now was 20,000 square

feet. An 114,000 impact use emptying onto E Road and Okeechobee would be too much for it to handle. Stay consistent.

Council Member DeMarois commented that the equestrian trail seemed like something thrown in as a carrot for the Town.

Simon Fernandez stated they might be a great neighbor, but 114,000 square feet was too much. The plan showed the property to the west as vacant; but it was his nursery. Like Big Dog, a lot of t-shirts showed up, but this much traffic would contribute to impact the traffic, noise and neighbors.

Dennis Lipp, stated he was Chair of the P&Z/LPA Board and had voted this proposal down as too intense. The neighbors should be at this meeting. The traffic was already too heavy. The equestrian trail proposed doesn't go anywhere. There would need to be a horse stop sign at Okeechobee.

Nina Corning, E Road, stated she had nothing against what the church does, but it was too much intensity and the use was not consistent. The FAR of .075 was greater than Solarsports. E Road cannot sustain the traffic impact and the culvert can't sustain the water flow. Diane Lidiu, 145th Avenue N, was not in favor of this expansion.

Vice Mayor McLendon stated the square footage was too much, the traffic was already bad and parcel 2 was out of the question.

Council Member DeMarois agreed the E Road can't bear the traffic there now.

Motion: a motion to recommend to Town Council not to proceed with this proposal as it is presented was made by Vice Mayor McLendon and seconded by Council Member Maniglia. Motion passed 3 – 1, with Mayor Browning dissenting.

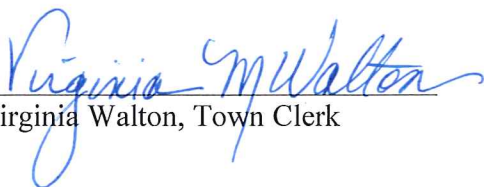
c. Planned Unit Development Amendment: REZ 2018-01: Groves Town Center

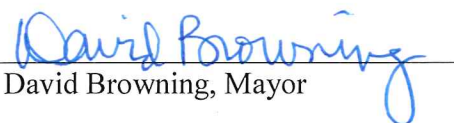
1. Open Public Hearing
2. Close Public Hearing
3. LPA Member Discussion
4. Consideration of Motion: REZ 2018-01.

Motion: a motion to continue this item to the next LPA meeting and to schedule that meeting for July 17, 2018 was made by Vice Mayor McLendon and seconded by Council Member DeMarois. Motion passed 4 – 0.

3. ADJOURN LOCAL PLANNING AGENCY

Hearing no further business, the Local Planning Agency adjourned at 8:22 PM.


Virginia Walton, Town Clerk


David Browning, Mayor

These minutes were approved by the Town Council on ~~Tuesday~~ Friday Sept. 7 2018.