

City of Marathon
City Council Workshop Action Minutes
February 27, 2024 5:30 pm City Council Workshop Minutes

CALL TO ORDER - A Workshop of the City Council of Marathon, Florida was held on February 27, 2024 in the Marathon Council Chambers, 9805 Overseas Hwy., Marathon, Florida, Mayor Still called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

ROLL CALL - There were present:

Councilmember Gonzalez

Councilmember Matlock

Councilmember Smith

Mayor Still, comprising a quorum

Also, in attendance were:

City Manager, George Garrett

Deputy City Clerk, Hillary Palmer

City Attorney, Steve Williams

Planning Director, Brian Shea

Code Director, Ted Lozier

Building Official, Gerard Roussin

Call to Order

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Still provided an introduction into the workshop and explained the rules of order for public comment, highlighting the speakers must only speak on the topic of the workshop, Hotel/Motel Ordinance Discussion.

Shea explained the ordinance changes which included the general provisions under section 104.25 Hotel or Motel of the City Code.

Mayor called for public comment.

Dustin Huff spoke against the proposed ordinance changes. He referenced concerns regarding possible overloads to the sewer system and increased traffic. He suggested Council obtain a current traffic study of the area before forming a decision to the ordinance changes.

City of Marathon
City Council Workshop Action Minutes
February 27, 2024 5:30 pm City Council Workshop Minutes

Mike Leonard expressed concerns regarding the development of the golf course property as it relates to the ordinance amendments. The Mayor asked the speaker to stay on the topic of the ordinance and explained the workshop is not to discuss the golf course development plans.

Betty and Peter Walker spoke against the proposed ordinance changes. Mr. Walker provided a personal history of his and his mother's life as long-term residents of Marathon and members of the Florida Keys Country Club and made reference to the changes in development throughout the years.

Phil Des Fusses spoke against the proposed ordinance amendments and expressed confusion as to why the other two hotels (Isla Bella and Valhalla) are included in the Ordinance amendments. He also expressed concerns regarding future overload to the infrastructure at the golf course property.

Curtis Behrent spoke against the ordinance changes and disagreed with including the other two hotels (Isla Bella and Valhalla) into the changes. He also expressed his concerns regarding flooding, drainage and sanitation issues that could create a problem at the hotel sites as a result of the increased allowable development.

Bruce Irwin expressed his disappointment with the inability to speak on the golf course property topic and asked when it could be discussed. He expressed his concerns and discontent with over development and the ramifications on the community.

Still explained the workshop was to discuss hotel development not the golf course property development and asked Mr. Williams to explain to Mr. Irwin the process of requesting an agenda item to appear on the agenda.

Williams addressed the procedures for requesting an agenda item to appear on the City Council agenda. He explained the requestor could speak with any Councilmember individually and make the request or during public comment at a regular scheduled City Council meeting.

Council Discussion.

Smith spoke on the original 2014 development agreement associated with the golf course development and noted that the public had the opportunity to comment when it was brought forward to City Council in 2014 and further explained that any modifications would be required to come back to City Council as an amendment with City Council approval.

Williams confirmed the proposed ordinance changes are not to change the golf course property development plans.

Matlock stated his support for allowing the public to comment on the golf course property at the workshop.

Gonzalez acknowledged the public's concern regarding the golf course property development agreement and thanked Williams for the clarification provided.

City of Marathon
City Council Workshop Action Minutes
February 27, 2024 5:30 pm City Council Workshop Minutes

Shea announced he will distribute his business cards to those that would like to request a copy of the golf course development agreement.

Mayor Still reminded the public that a meeting platform which includes the golf course property development as an agenda item is the appropriate place to discuss the item further.

Smith reiterated the procedure to discuss the golf course property development agreement and indicated he would like to discuss the infrastructure impacts and how it relates to the sewer and water services and reminded the public that any amendments would need Council approval.

Matlock expressed concerns regarding potential impacts on residential units, such as employee housing.

Smith and Matlock discussed concerns regarding potential infrastructure and sewer system impacts.

Matlock stated he supports getting a current traffic study for the area and did not support increased development.

Williams reminded Council that there were still members of the public waiting to speak.

Capt. Ed Davidson provided his professional background and spoke against the proposed ordinance amendments. He expressed concerns regarding overload to the sewer system, water service and pipeline capacity. He stated overdevelopment would lead to deterioration of quality of life for residents. He commented that more tourism would ultimately lead to the need for more services, including housing, schools and higher taxes in Monroe County.

Dave Perry, long time resident of Marathon spoke against the proposed ordinance amendments and stated he felt if the hotel at the Florida Keys Country Club is developed there will not be enough land for the eighteen-hole championship golf course as planned.

Stan Haines was signed up to speak but declined when called upon and requested his public comment time be transferred to Mr. Mike Leonard to comment again.

Still agreed to allow Mr. Leonard to comment again.

Mike Leonard expressed concerns that if the proposed ordinance changes are passed it will negatively impact the development of the eighteen-hole golf course.

Smith addressed concerns regarding the land area not meeting the requirements for the eighteen-hole golf course and also expressed concerns regarding the potential infrastructure impacts on future development.

Shea made assurances that there are guidelines and criteria in place to address the infrastructure impacts on future development.

City of Marathon
City Council Workshop Action Minutes
February 27, 2024 5:30 pm City Council Workshop Minutes

Smith asked if there was a transient unit transfer fee and Shea confirmed there is no such fee.

Matlock stated again that he does not support making hotel units larger and asked what the City has to gain by doing so. He stated that he has not met a single local that supports more development and commented that many locals are leaving the Keys due to the rapid growth and vacation rental increase. He also stated he would like to see a reduction in square footage in the proposed ordinance.

Gonzalez thanked the community for participating in the workshop and provided confirmation that the existing development for the Country Club includes plans for an eighteen-hole golf course. He announced that if any member of the public would like to get an item on a future agenda to contact him.

Matlock asked if there is any support from Council to reduce the square footage in the proposed ordinance. Smith commented no but suggested looking at ways to limit vacation rentals.

Still asked for Council to provide direction to staff and Council agreed to the following changes:

Under the "Redevelopment Criteria" section (1) Council agreed to leave the original language as is. "An existing hotel or motel room may be redeveloped to a unit not exceeding 1,500 square feet consisting of no more than two and one half (2 ½) bathrooms, three (3) bedrooms and one (1) other living area, subject to the following rates of redevelopment".

Under the "Redevelopment Criteria" section Council agreed to change paragraph 1C to read "A one (1) bedroom unit may redevelop as a three (3) bedroom unit at the rate of ~~85~~ 80 percent of the one (1) bedroom units being redeveloped as three (3) bedroom units".

Under the "Redevelopment Criteria" strike paragraph 1D "A one (1) bedroom unit may redevelop as a four (4) bedroom unit at the rate of 70 percent of the one (1) bedroom units being redeveloped as four (4) bedroom units".

Still stated the information will be brought back to the March City Council meeting and reminded the public about the public comment procedures.

Council Comments

Matlock thanked the public for their attendance.

Smith stated he is thankful the Council is focusing on issues that matter.

Gonzalez thanked the public for their participation and thanked the locals for expressing their opinions.

Still thanked the public for their patience and understanding regarding the public comment section of the meeting.

City of Marathon
City Council Workshop Action Minutes
February 27, 2024 5:30 pm City Council Workshop Minutes

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Council, Mayor Still adjourned the meeting at 6:36pm by unanimous consent.

I certify the above represents an accurate summary of the City Council Workshop of February 27, 2024.


Hillary Palmer, Deputy City Clerk


Date