

TOWN OF WINDERMERE

Town Council Meeting Minutes

December 12, 2023

CALL TO ORDER:

Present were Mayor Jim O'Brien, Town Council Members Tom Stroup, Andy Williams, Mandy David, Tony Davit, and Brandi Haines. Town Manager Robert Smith, Attorney Heather Ramos, Deputy Chief Jayson Bonk, and Town Clerk Dorothy Burkhalter were also present. Public Works Director Elliott-Moore was absent.

Mayor O'Brien called the meeting to order at 6:00pm and stated that a quorum was present. He then led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. OPEN FORUM/PUBLIC COMMENT (3 Minute Limit)

Mayor O'Brien opened the floor to the public. The first to speak was Ms. Thellie Roper of 610 W 2nd Avenue. Ms. Roper spoke in opposition to the pavilion. She stated that the funds needed to be paid back to Rotary. Mayor O'Brien stated that there have been positive and negative comments regarding the pavilion. He then explained that the pavilion is no longer being discussed. Mayor O'Brien then commented on the proposed Town Hall renovations that will be discussed later in the meeting. Ms. Roper then commented that repairs are needed, not more people or events. Next to speak was Mr. Bob McKinley of 536 Magnolia Street. Mr. McKinley stated that the Town Hall is in need of repairs, used for residents, and there is no need for extras to the building. He then gave a brief history of the past pavilion discussions and stated that the monies needed to be paid back. Mr. McKinley commented on changes to the gazebo. Next to speak was Ms. Nora Brophy of 426 Magnolia Street. Ms. Brophy stated that the shade covers had been installed at Palmer Park. She then commented on the past pavilion discussion, proposed town hall enhancements, the gazebo, no more events and noise, and the need for another workshop regarding the proposed changes. Ms. Renee Cingolani of 412 Forest Street introduced herself. She commented that she does not want the changes to town hall and any annexations. Ms. Cingolani then commented on signatures that were received from residents in town that are opposed to the pavilion. She stated her concerns with annexations and stacking the Board. Ms. Sara Lopez 110 Forest Street introduced herself. She then commented on concerns with pushing growth in the downtown area. Ms. Lopez stated that residents do not want this and asked that the Town Council listen to the residents. Mrs. Theresa Schretzmann-Myers of 2713 Tryon Place introduced herself. She questioned if the proposed plans had been sent to the Federal Secretary of Interior, not the State for approval. Mrs. Schretzmann-Myers stated that she is in favor of the metal roof, not the pavilion or bride's room. She also stated that the funding needed to be used for replacing the ~~hard~~ heart pine wood. Mayor O'Brien thanked all for their comments.

2. OLD BUSINESS:

a. **Town Hall Rehabilitation Update, Presentation, and Approval of Additional Funds**

Mayor O'Brien turned the floor over to Manager Smith. Manager Smith commented on the history of past meetings and workshops that have taken place since 2019. He further commented on two existing agreements between The Town of Windermere, Rotary Inc, and Healthy West Orange. Manager Smith stated that staff has worked on this project at the direction of the Town Council. He then stated that direction to use the funds or not is needed, as the construction costs are not in the Towns budget. Manager Smith commented on the ADA accessibility, gazebo bump-out, and changing of the name from "Bridal Room" to "Multi-Purpose Room", kitchen, and event and time restrictions. Mayor O'Brien commented on past discussions regarding events, what to move forward with, best way to utilize the funds, discussion with stakeholders, Town Hall concerns, 90-day deadline delay, and the need to be solution minded. Some discussion followed regarding what was first presented as a Pavilion to the current Town Hall renovations. Mayor O'Brien then turned the floor over to Mr. Brad Cornelius. Mr. Cornelius gave

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a presentation regarding the proposed Town Hall renovations, Peer Review, Florida SHPO comments and recommendations. Mr. Fitzgibbon commented on past committee discussions regarding the needs for the downtown area, which included bathrooms and the multi-purpose room. Mayor O'Brien turned the floor over to the Council members. Member Davit commented on inadequate feedback from the public on the newly proposed. He stated that he likes the new design, however the Historical Preservation Board has not reviewed the proposed, and at the Public Workshop only staff and elected officials were present – no public. Member Davit then stated that there are members of the public against the proposed, but he has received many emails in support. He would like to hear from the public prior to making a decision. Member Williams recognized staff for following the direction from the Council. He then commented on overwhelming support, the need for public input, involvement with SHPO, and saving of the building, which is his first concern. Mayor O'Brien commented that specific feedback is needed. Member David stated she agreed with Member Williams comments. She also stated that she agrees with more public input. Member Haines questioned if the newly revised plans had been reviewed by SHPO. She then stated that the more public input is needed. Member Haines then commented on the size of the existing Town Hall compared to the proposed additions. She stated that advertising of the next meeting needed to state “revised” plans. Member Haines also stated that a Certificate of Appropriateness is needed from the Historical Board prior to moving forward. Member Stroup commented on past workshops/meetings. He then stated that when he speaks, he speaks for the Town and his neighborhood. Member Stroup explained that the most affected in their neighborhoods are most likely the ones to speak out. He further explained that he wouldn't have much to comment on if a project is on Bessie Street as it doesn't directly impact him as resident in the downtown area. Member Stroup stated that everyone agrees that the Town Hall needs renovation. He commented that his problem is “a grant is controlling the project, not the Town controlling the grant.” Member Stroup further commented that the Town needs to have more control over the project. He then stated that other grant funding needed to be looked into. Mayor O'Brien stated that if it's the events causing the issues for noise, he'd prefer to forgo renting out the town hall which is approximately \$40,000.00 per year income than losing \$1,000,000.00 to renovate the town hall. Discussion followed regarding events, event impacts, funding, timing, likes/dislikes, change of porch/stage to a gazebo, Historical Preservation Board meeting, and additional public input. Mayor O'Brien stated that through the discussion, an in-person Town Council workshop and a Public Workshop needed to be scheduled. After some discussion, Member Davit made a motion to hold two public workshops, one in person and one via zoom, followed by a Town Council workshop, plan a presentation to the Historical Preservation Board, and defer item 2(a) until all meetings can occur. Member Williams seconded the motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Haines – aye, Davit – aye, David – aye, Williams – aye, and Stroup – aye. Motion carried 5-0.

3. NEW BUSINESS:

a. Minutes

- i. **November 14, 2023 - Town Council Meeting Minutes**
- ii. **November 28, 2023 – Town Council Meeting Minutes**

Member Davit made a motion to approve all minutes as submitted. Member David seconded the motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Stroup – aye, Williams – aye, David – aye, Davit – aye, and Haines - aye. Motion carried 5-0.

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b. Approve Additional Funding for Contractor Aquatic Weed Control for Shoreline and Pond Maintenance, \$23,412.

Mayor O'Brien introduced this item. He then turned the floor over to Manager Smith. Manager Smith explained the need for additional work that is over his spending threshold. Mayor O'Brien asked a few residents to take their conversation outside as it was affecting the meeting. Ms. Sara Lopez spoke from the podium and thanked the Town Council and staff for their work with the Town Hall renovation. She then questioned if the performance gazebo is mandatory. Mayor O'Brien commented that once the meeting is handled with the stakeholders, the town will have better direction of which way it might be able to proceed. Mayor O'Brien reiterated that everyone is available to speak their three minutes in the open forum. Manager Smith explained that the additional funds are for the maintenance of the new areas required by Orange County EPD. Member Haines questioned if there are any planting plans. Manager Smith stated he could get those for her. Member Davit made a motion to approve Aquatic Weed Control not to exceed \$23,412.00. Member Williams seconded the motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Haines – aye, Davit – aye, David – aye, Williams - aye, and Stroup – aye. Motion carried 5-0.

6. MAYOR & COUNCIL LIAISON REPORTS:

Mayor O'Brien thanked all for the Elder Luncheon and the Holiday Hoopla. Member Williams reported on the Holiday Hoopla and its success. Member Haines questioned the sand that was dumped on the road on 9th Avenue and Oakdale Street. She then questioned the maintenance plan for the roads. Mr. Fitzgibbon explained the work that is being done with the elevations of the road.

7. STAFF REPORTS:


- a. **TOWN MANAGER ROBERT SMITH** – Manager Smith wished all Happy Holidays.
- b. **TOWN ATTORNEY HEATHER RAMOS** – Attorney Ramos wished everyone Happy Holidays
- c. **DEPUTY CHIEF JAYSON BONK** – Deputy Chief Bonk commented on recent crimes in the area and asked all to take valuables in their house and lock their car doors.
- d. **PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR TONYA ELLIOTT-MOORE** – Director Elliott-Moore was absent.
- e. **TOWN CLERK DOROTHY BURKHALTER** – Clerk Burkhalter reported that all open seats were qualified for and are unopposed, therefore there will not be a Municipal in March. She then stated that she attended the Florida League of Cities Form 6 webinar.


Mr. Cornelius gave an update on 603 Main Street and the 500-block project. Some discussion followed.

Mr. McKinley stated that the staff is doing a great job. He then commented on the tabling of the pavilion for 90 days.

8. ADJOURN:

Mayor O'Brien adjourned the meeting at 8:07pm.


Dorothy Burkhalter, MMC, FCRM
Town Clerk


Jim O'Brien, Mayor