

**PUBLIC HEARING
SPECIAL JOINT MEETING
LAKE HELEN CITY COMMISSION
LOCAL PLANNING AGENCY (PLDRC)
CITY HALL CONFERENCE ROOM**

**June 23, 2008
7:00 P.M.**

MINUTES

Any individual wishing to speak before the Commission regarding any item on the agenda must be recognized by the Chair, approach the podium and identify himself/herself and limit his/her remarks to three minutes.

CALL TO ORDER: Chairperson Woods

PLDRC Chairman Woods called the June 23, 2008 Public Meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. Members present were Mayor Joan Duffy, Vice Mayor Buddy Snowden, City Commissioner Lou Benton, City Commissioner Alan "Cookie" Cooke, City Commissioner Ann Robbins, PLDRC Chairman Michael Woods, PLDRC Vice-Chair Ed Blackman, PLDRC Secretary Tony Troy, PLDRC Commissioner Tura Schnebly, PLDRC Commissioner Gary Adams, PLDRC Commissioner Mike O'Laughlin and PLDRC Commissioner Vernon Burton. Also present was City Administrator Don Findell.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

Public Hearing to solicit input regarding the Lake Helen Evaluation Appraisal Report

1. Staff Presentation

Admin. Findell started with background information regarding the preparation of the Evaluation Appraisal Report (EAR). The EAR is a document that analyses the Comprehensive Plan. The City of Lake Helen did not prepare an EAR previously, as most other communities have, because Lake Helen was, prior to the 2000 Census, below the population threshold that necessitated the EAR's preparation. The way the EAR is typically prepared is to prepare a list of the City's Goal, Objectives and Policies (GOPs) found in the Comprehensive Plan and evaluate them to determine whether the individual GOPs have been implemented, not implemented, partially implemented; to determine whether the GOP's are valid or current; whether to keep them, eliminate GOP's or modify them, and, finally to make recommendations regarding necessary changes that would be implemented in Future Comprehensive Plan amendments. Tonight we are identifying issues that the PLDRC, City Commission and Public feel are specific issues of concern for future planning that important to address in the EAR.

Chairman Woods inquired about the Public Schools Element.

Admin. Findell answered the Public Schools Facility Element had been completed and recently recommended by the PLDRC for City Commission approval. It would be presented to the City Commission for transmittal hearing at a subsequent date.

Admin. Findell continued saying one important thing to note is that Lake Helen had a wholesale amendment to the Future Land Use Comprehensive Plan in 2005 with many visioning meetings regarding growth management and the direction that the City wished to take in the next 20 years. That amendment touched on almost all of the other elements of the Comprehensive Plan. So much of what we did in 2005 is directly applicable to what we will be doing for the EAR.

Comm. Robbins inquired if the 2005 Land Use Element incorporated the recent annexations.

Admin. Findell replied all but Mr. Crow's property on Kicklighter Rd.

Comm. Burton asked what the population threshold was at the time the initial report was not required.

Admin. Findell replied that he thought it was about 2800 and the City was slightly under at that time.

Mayor Duffy indicated she thought Lake Helen's population at that time was 2750.

Comm. Burton asked, as the population changed, if the report requirements would also change.

Admin. Findell answered DCA's growth management regulations change with each legislative session.

Comm. Schnebly reflected the PLDRC had reviewed Lake Helen's consumptive use permit and population analysis to formulate where the residents wanted to be. The population build out would have been 13000 versus what it is under the current plan.

Comm. Schnebly inquired about capital improvements.

Admin. Findell answered one of the basic tenants of the future land use element was to minimize the necessity of significant new infrastructure. The idea was to plan for a reasonably sustainable population build out that would not place a greater demand on the City's infrastructure or resources. This is opposite of most communities in that we are trying to maintain quality of life, but providing for measured growth.

Comm. Troy asked how the City would handle the west side of I-4.

Admin. Findell answered, as it relates to sanitary sewer the FLUE has a policy that says there will be no package treatment plants in the City of Lake Helen, with the exception of the approximate

90-acre Arvida area west of I-4, which is the commercial area of that DRI for office space and support uses. The provision made was that the City Of Deland will provide those urban services.

Comm. Cooke remarked the Lake Helen Villas had plans to expand and inquired if the existing sewer plant would be sufficient for that expansion.

Admin Findell indicated the owners had stated the plant was running, at present, under capacity and was expected to meet the needs for the expansion. If the plant cannot meet the needs of the expansion it would be an issue for the City to decide to amend the Comprehensive Plan.

Comm. Cooke inquired about drainage and/or stormwater issues in the Comprehensive Plan.

Admin. Findell indicated there was not much in the FLUE that speaks to stormwater management. The '92 plan addresses it to some degree, but it needs to be looked at. There may be a recommendation to update the City's stormwater management. Presently the City does a good job on an individual basis but the problem is that much of the City was originally built without much stormwater management, which is one reason why the City had drainage issues during the past hurricanes.

Comm. Benton commented about the past problems in the Triple S Subdivision.

Admin. Findell indicated there had been problems with the Triple S subdivision, Lake Clough, Church St. and Pennsylvania but much of the City had been able to absorb most of the rainfall.

Comm. Burton introduced another factor regarding Church Street stating DOT had elevated the I-4 highway exit at Church Street about two feet and the residents on Church and Pennsylvania subsequently noticed their septic tanks filling up. He inquired if there had been an environmental assessment of the damaged.

Admin. Findell answered if property in that area was experiencing a higher water table an engineer would need to assess why that was occurring.

Comm. Schnebly commented the homeowners might have a cause for action against DOT if that was the case.

Comm. Burton continued the residents complaining after the I-4 project was completed had absorbed the sewage backup costs and were concerned if a large storm system came through the area the situation would get worse. We have a drought now but need to consider this in the City's Future Land Use planning.

Comm. Benton questioned how water running off of Main Street could all go down Church Street when there was existing stormwater piping and retention areas on Main Street. That water is not going to travel that far down.

Location of properties on Church Street and the 'ground water table' was discussed.

Admin. Findell continued with a discussion of Recreation and Open Space Element issues indicating that one of the tenets for the Future Land Use Element is to provide for and increase the open space and recreational opportunities available to the Citizens of Lake Helen. We actually put some of that in place when we required the Woods of Lake Helen to provide a recreation space as part of its development.

Admin. Findell continued that the purpose of Intergovernmental Coordination Element is to primarily provide mechanisms for local government and state agencies to coordinate on a wide range of issues. The Public Schools Element requires the city to cooperate with the school district and staff.

Comm. Burton inquired if there was an ongoing discussion with FEMA regarding potential hurricanes as 'part of the package'.

Admin. Findell answered FEMA and the County had emergency planning workshops.

Mayor Duffy commented the City needed another emergency management volunteer.

Comm. Burton queried if the City could still expect the citizens of Lake Helen to help with storm cleanup given the current economical situation.

Comm. Benton said most small cities did what they had to do during a storm crisis.

There was a discussion regarding the cooperation of citizens in a small city vs. a large city and past hurricane clean ups.

Chairman Woods indicated the EAR Transportation Element may require strengthening language to encourage rail service and future mass transit. Lake Helen is a good candidate for mass transit, as it is not sprawled out like other cities.

Mayor Duffy commented bus transportation would be an asset to the city.

Chairman Woods inquired if the City's Transportation Element included language for Lake Helen's scenic highways related to designation and protection. Chairman Woods indicated the inclusion of language could allow for funding to help maintain those roads.

Comm. Schnebly was concerned about the Lakeview Avenue without a stop sign at New York, the lack of sidewalks and the pedestrian conflict at that intersection, which is the start of the scenic route around Lake Helen.

Chairman Woods queried how strong the pedestrian and bike language was in the EAR Transportation Element.

Admin. Findell noted the Comprehensive Plan covered many concerns, but that a sidewalk plan would be desirable.

Comm. Burton asked what the weak points may be regarding the Evaluation Appraisal Report.

Admin. Findell answered some of the Comprehensive Plan elements were just dated. Tonight's discussion allows us to focus in on some issues for today and the future. The result of the evaluation process is to lead you to a point where you make recommendations for change to occur in the future and those recommendations then become the basis for new Comprehensive Plan goals objectives and policies.

Comm. Cooke discussed the state trails program and commented the trail may be coming through Lake Helen in a few years and would need the support of the Commission.

Comm. Benton inquired if the trail system was part of the Colby Park expansion.

Comm. Cooke explained he was discussing the Heritage Highway-CR 4139 through Cassadaga.

Chairman Woods asked what the current level of service was on Lake Helen's roads.

Admin. Findell answered C was the adoptive level of service in the 1992 plan, but the way it is worded in the Future Land Use Element is that whatever exists today cannot be degraded.

Admin Findell reflected the purpose of the meeting was to listen to the concerns of the board and public in order to get a consensus, at the end of the meeting, as to what specific issues to address in the preparation of the Evaluation Appraisal Report.

Comm. Troy asked if the city could look into constructing a sidewalk around Lake Helen Lake and whether it would fall under capital improvements.

Admin. Findell answered it would fall under Capital Improvements and Recreation Elements.

The use of the roads around Lake Helen Lake was discussed.

Comm. Adams expressed concern regarding addressing a formal plan for tree replacement in the City. His concern was to keep Lake Helen's designation as Tree City USA and indicated the need for tree replacement to begin as soon as possible.

Mayor Duffy remarked that over \$10,000 had been spent on replacing trees.

Comm. Adams continued that there was, also, a concern regarding the location of the tree planting, as the trees would need constant water and care until the roots were established.

Comm. Benton acknowledged the large amount of trees that had fallen in the past years.

Comm. Burton remarked he had brought the problem of tree infestation to the Commission's attention and indicated the need to look into a Department of Forestry solution.

Preservation of trees in Lake Helen was discussed.

Comm. Adams related another concern regarding the lighting of the path from Ohio Avenue to the Elementary school and if it were possible to add light along the wooded path.

Comm. Snowden indicated he walked that area 3-4 times a week and there was sufficient daylight along the path by 6:00 a.m.

Comm. Troy inquired as to addressing municipal parking.

Admin. Findell responded that the issue needed to be looked at as part of the growth management issues related to downtown development.

Comm. Blackman indicated he would like to address smaller lots and homes sizes. We need to keep a pedestrian friendly community and one way is to address mass transit. Narrower streets make slower traffic. I agree with identifying trails and creating a walkable downtown. Basically we are moving in the right direction

Sidewalk plans were discussed.

Comm. Schnebly reflected the Commission had discussed underground utilities in the past and queried addressing the possibilities of an underground utility assessment and plan.

Admin. Findell responded that a few communities were dealing with that issue (S. Daytona) and have found that the implementation of such plans were extraordinarily expensive.

Comm. Benton stated the south Florida water table was at four feet and underground utilities with little problem.

Comm. Burton recommended future bus transportation for the City; had concern with the level of lake waters; and possibly dredging lakes.

Mayor Duffy related the information regarding the cleaning of Lake Macy. Comm. Cooke explained the expense that would be involved in cleaning lakes.

Comm. Burton queried the proposed Lake Helen produce farm and the ordinance that addressed selling produce on certain properties.

Admin. Findell explained the Comprehensive Plan provided what were permitted uses and what were not permitted uses in individual land use districts. It provides, in residential land use districts, that agricultural, equestrian and/or silvacultural uses may be engaged in; however, you cannot sell product on that property, because once you do you cross the threshold from residential to commercial use of the property.

Comm. Burton considered the proposed farm to be a benefit to the community.

Admin. Findell asked if anyone had further ideas or concerns regarding the individual elements.

Admin Findell continued we have talked about parking but not what goes with it, which is the Downtown Development Plan. I am thinking that for future planning purposes that the Downtown Development Plan, from a broad perspective, is something that that should be a significant economic issue in land use planning.

Comm. Blackman responded the Commission had had many sessions in the past with a lot of material that could make a nice presentation. I agree if you cannot look into the future and say this is where we want to be, you will never get there.

Chairman Woods stated the Commission needed to look at all the aspects as an overall plan.

There was a discussion regarding parking setbacks.

Comm. Schnebly recapped the suggestions regarding studying the elements and suggestions about the Downtown Development Plan under the Future Land Use Elements and to focus on the implementation or modification of that which has already been discussed and to develop a commercial plan approach. Then you get to the problem of actually developing and that is where we run into the problem of how Lake Helen has developed over time and what people would like to see saved and that may be the struggle. We need to achieve some of the aspects we have been concerned about such as getting back to the narrow streets, the pedestrian community and the traffic calming.

Admin. Findell acknowledged getting back to visioning on a smaller scale as a micro area of Lake Helen. I think we have a good set of minds with a lot of experience, and if we can work together we can, at least, identify the options can be and get people to react and move forward.

Mayor Duffy was opposed to any home demolition in order to construct a parking lot.

Admin. Findell summarized the consensus issues for inclusion in the EAR: 1) Underground utility planning, 2) Mass transit options, 3) Scenic Road preservation, 4) Stormwater management planning, 5) Tree replacement and planting guide, 6) Recreational trail planning, 7) Sidewalk planning 8) Level of service standards for roads, 9) Focus on a pedestrian friendly city, 10) Housing (i.e. infill lots), 11) Potential for expansion of sewage treatment plant at the villas, (12) Downtown Development Plan.

Comm. Troy inquired about the City of Lake Helen land to the west of I-4 and how many land owners were involved if something was to be developed.

Admin. Findell answered Mr. Tom Stewart owned most of the property. The County had been in the process of acquiring the right of way for facilitating future development in the area. They ran into the issue of property owners wanting the County to pay for the right of way, rather than donating the right of way to the County, and they came to an impasse, effectively bringing r-o-w acquisition to a standstill.

There was a brief discussion regarding the proposed development of the 90 acres west of I-4.

ADJOURNMENT

PLDRC Chairman Woods adjourned the June 23, 2008 Public Hearing at 9:24 p.m.

The PLDRC may discuss other issues related to this matter or any other issues relating to city business or take action on any matters relating to city government at the aforementioned meeting. If any person decides to appeal any decision by the Planning and Land Development Regulation Commission (PLDRC) with respect to any matter considered at the above meeting, he/she will need a record of the proceedings, including all testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is based. To that end, such person will need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made. The City of Lake Helen does not provide this record. Individuals with disabilities needing to participate in any of these proceedings should contact the City Administrator at least three (3) working days in advance of the meeting date and time at (386) 228-2121.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendie Levings, Recording Secretary