

Director Kropacek encouraged people to contact him if they had problems with contractors or builders, but the town would not recommend contractors or businesses. Town Attorney Stuparich stated that licensed contractors were required to have their license numbers on their trucks. Director Kropacek added that the town's website was being updated and streamlined with concise information.

Vice Mayor Atterholt questioned whether they could create a dashboard of permitting data on the website. Director Kropacek replied that he would add that information. Mayor Allers requested that residential and commercial be separate on the dashboard.

Permitting Supervisor Andrew Garry introduced himself and noted he was hired in permitting about five years ago. He stated the most significant improvement in the process was having plan reviews in-house.

Owner/builders asked the most questions and took more time to review the process. Supervisor Garry advised them to email or visit his office if they had a lot of questions. Town Manager Hyatt stated that emails were preferable to create a paper trail for FEMA. Supervisor Garry indicated that incomplete applications were the most common mistakes. He added that commercial property owner/builders were restricted to \$75,000.00 of repair. He suggested that people read the permit application documents before starting and call his office with questions.

B. Impact Fees

Proposal for Impact Fee study

Director Kropacek noted that planners Jason Green and Sarah Propst provided a report on impact fees. He explained that impact fees allowed the town to ensure work was correctly done and provided an example of the difference between existing commercial and new developments. Town Manager Hyatt stated that an impact fee study had to be updated every five years to prevent challenges in court. Town Attorney Stuparich added that the study was critical to establishing a good impact program. Vice Mayor Atterholt requested a breakdown of the impact fees for Lee County, the fire department and other entities. Director Kropacek will provide the information, which will be included in the next agenda. Mayor Allers clarified that the building fund would fund the study.

C. FMB Priorities

Per Council's request, a discussion about setting priorities for the Town over the next year.

Town Manager Hyatt suggested they schedule a follow-up to the strategic planning to establish goals by the end of the month or the beginning of June. He indicated they had to compare the town to other beach communities and needed to be more goal-oriented than task-oriented to get there faster.

D. Bicycle / Pedestrian Plan

Per Council's request, a discussion regarding the Town's bicycle ordinance and a discussion regarding an island bike/walk path.

Mayor Allers noted the 2017 MPO (Metropolitan Planning Organization) study was in the packet and included some good information. He indicated that he received emails regarding people who needed e-bikes for various reasons and they rode on the sidewalks because they did not feel safe in the bike lane or on the road. Now, they fear getting ticketed for riding on the sidewalk because of the ordinance. He thought they should not create a policy based on bad actors because most people would do the right thing. He questioned why one could not ride a bike on the beach and was open to changing the policy. Council Member Safford stated that people had to go with the traffic flow, and when they did not feel safe riding bikes, they would drive or go somewhere else. Mayor Allers added that some walkers felt unsafe on the sidewalks.

Council Member King questioned whether they could gather data for a year and revisit the policy. According to the LCSO (Lee County Sheriff's Office), setting speed limits was not feasible. Vice Mayor Atterholt questioned whether they could require bikers to get off their bikes when they pass walkers on the sidewalk. Town Attorney Stuparich stated that some of the requirements in the town's ordinance were in Florida statutes and could not be changed. Mayor Allers supported Vice Mayor Atterholt's suggestion.

Council Member Safford noted that he had not heard anyone complain about incidents with e-bikes on the beach. Town Attorney Stuparich will research whether they can mandate a forced stop on sidewalks. Vice Mayor Atterholt felt they needed to be very careful on the beach because of the relaxed vibe. Mayor Allers stated that education was essential and the enforcement had to have some teeth to help the LCSO.

Vice Mayor Atterholt thought they needed a strategy for next season to be more engaged in monitoring and enforcing the ordinance. Mayor Allers questioned whether they wanted to task the Public Safety Committee (PSC) to research programs. Town Attorney Stuparich noted that volunteers could provide education and advice, not enforcement. Town Manager Hyatt stated that he wanted to revive the CERT (Citizen Emergency Response Team) training through the state.

Vice Mayor Atterholt questioned whether bike rental businesses could be required to include additional information in their waivers. Town Attorney Stuparich will research the topic. Mayor Allers described markings on the sidewalks that directed bikers and pedestrians and mentioned discussing implementation with the county. Council Member Woodson pointed out that some people had challenges stopping their bikes before passing people on the sidewalk. Vice Mayor Atterholt described two different ways to stop.

Council Member Woodson described creating additional paths on the bay side to avoid Estero Blvd. Mayor Allers referred to the map on page 41 and stated that now was the time to create a new path. Director Kropacek indicated that a discussion was held earlier with a group through the R2P2 program and they were working on a plan to present to the town in June.

Mayor Allers referred to page 167 and felt they could quickly implement secured bike storage. He referred to page 63 and TDC (Tourist Development Council) funding to create advertising videos for education. He indicated that other grants were also available. He felt that financial incentives to encourage employers to provide bike parking for employees was a good idea.

E. CRA

Per Council's request, a discussion regarding CRA.

Mayor Allers felt that having three CRAs (Community Redevelopment Agency) made sense. He explained that it took blighted areas that allowed the town to increase the taxes, so when a CRA is set up, whatever increase in that tax base is, comes back to the town to work in areas within the CRA. It would allow them to take the funding from the tax increase and put it in three sections of the island to enable them to help improve the island for specific items within that section.

Town Attorney Stuparich explained that the CRA was designated as a dependent special district and was a local governmental entity. There were requirements to satisfy and the first was to determine whether the area was viewed as a blighted or slum area. The statutory definition of blighted contained several conditions and she felt that the current state of the beach and lack of affordable housing would qualify. She noted the county would have to concur and the town would have to have a discussion with them before moving forward. If they agree, a resolution or interlocal with the county would have to be drafted. The next stop would be to conduct a study from a planning and data perspective to confirm that information and conditions supported the definition of a blighted area. Town Attorney Stuparich noted that the study would cost money, so they should talk to the county first. A CRA board would have to be created with town council members and two additional members could be added. The board would develop a plan and the county would have to approve it. Then, a trust fund would be created to hold the money to be spent annually or build it up for a larger project.

Town Attorney Stuparich indicated that Lee County had a CRA in 1990 for Estero and San Carlos Islands but rescinded it in 2006 due to lack of money. She suggested that the previous CRA be reviewed and built on. She explained that a TIF (Tax Income and Financing) district was part of the CRA. When the boundary lines of the CRA are established, a baseline of the ad valorem revenue from that particular area is determined. As properties are redeveloped, it begins to increase, and that increment is what goes into the trust fund to be spent specifically in that area. She stated there was a lot of flexibility that they could do in the CRA. Council Member Safford noted that Lee Ford and Teresa Brown could provide valuable information about Fort Myers' CRAs. Consensus was reached to begin talks with Lee County and Mayor Allers will initiate contact. Town Attorney Stuparich will continue to research and work on documents.

F. Estero Blvd Landscaping**Per Council's request, a discussion regarding Estero Boulevard Landscaping and the Estero Island Garden Club**

A discussion was held regarding the landscape on Estero Blvd. before the hurricane. Perennial peanuts were planted up to Publix, but they required a lot of maintenance and did not look nice. Director Kropacek stated that Projects Manager Chustz submitted paperwork for grants through Tree City USA to replace the Royal Palms on North Estero Blvd. Public Works & Utility Director Mark Ashton suggested that the Garden Club be involved and agreed with promoting homeowners to take care of the area in front of their homes. He noted that a water truck could take care of watering once a week. Town Manager Hyatt will work on a plan.

IV. AGENDA MANAGEMENT

A. May 2024

Add a discussion regarding monthly versus weekly rentals.

Add a discussion concerning the requirements of being a voter or property owner to participate in committees.

Add a discussion and presentation regarding building a structure for workforce housing and businesses on the town hall property.

Add a discussion about coastal protection systems.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Council Member King moved to adjourn, seconded by Council Member Safford. The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

Minutes adopted as presented, May 20, 2024. Motion by Council Member King and seconded by Council Member Safford. Passed 4-0, Woodson excused.



Amy Baker, Town Clerk