

City of Marathon
June 25, 2024 5:30 pm
City Council Workshop Minutes

CALL TO ORDER - A Workshop of the City Council of Marathon, Florida was held on June 25, 2024 in the Marathon Council Chambers, 9805 Overseas Hwy., Marathon, Florida, Mayor Still called the workshop to order at 5:30 pm.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

ROLL CALL - There were present:

Councilmember Gonzalez

Councilmember Matlock

Councilmember Smith

Vice Mayor Landry

Mayor Still, comprising a quorum.

Also, in attendance were:

City Manager, George Garrett

City Clerk, Diane Clavier

City Attorney, Steve Williams

Paralegal Alexandra Heller

Planning Director, Brian Shea

Code Director, Ted Lozier

Grants Coordinator, Maria Covelli

MCSO Officer

Garrett asked to add a discussion item regarding July 4th boat ramps. Mattlock asked to add a discussion regarding parking at Sombrero Beach.

Discussion regarding Updating Land Development Regulations (Chapter 105 of the Land Development Regulations)

Introduction and Overview: Shea gave a brief introduction to the goals of the workshop and the importance of updating the Design District Guidelines.

AI Tools Demonstration: Participants will learn how to use ChatGPT and Bing image creation to visualize district designs. Shea explained concerns using AI and explained staff uses grants for funding, for example the solar Grassy Key boardwalk trail. Shea informed everyone that AI using a lot of space on servers and

Group Activities: Attendees broke up into groups and worked with city staff to design their vision for different districts using the generative AI tools. For old town, midtown, airport district, uptown, gateway and Grassy Key districts.

Mayor Still called for a ten-minute break at 6:36 pm. Mayor Still called the workshop back to order at 6:48 pm.

Boat Ramp Discussion – Garrett explained his plan was to staff the ramps on July 14th, however, Islamorada will most likely be closing their ramps. Garrett explained the traffic pattern behind the airport to keep traffic flowing would be shared on social media and signage would be out. The Council discussed closing the ramps.

Bettye Chaplin – suggested putting the extra day on the November ballot. Chaplin also commented that the people who come here use our resources and water.

Mark Senmartin suggested closing the boat ramp but keeping it open for locals only.

Matlock questioned if closing the ramps to everyone, but locals would be legal. Williams responded that we cannot do this because of the terms in the State or Federal grants we received.

Still summed up the conversation and direction to keep the ramps open and look at a plan for the future, having uniform officers and try having an officer at each ramp, looking outside MCSO the day before as well. Landry suggested Key Colony Beach police could help as well.

Matlock commented he would move parking at Sombrero to another meeting.

Discussion/Presentation regarding Sombrero Blvd. Drainage Planning

Garrett gave a brief overview of the issue and explained we have had twice the rainfall this year as we did last year; this year 30 to 31 inches before the last few days, typically we have half of that. The May 19th event, which was an abnormal 100-year storm event, we had over eleven inches of rain and we got started a little late because of lightning and then we were pumping 450 gallons a minute.

Steeve Suggs, PE with Weiler Engineering provided a PowerPoint and informed everyone the May 19th even exceeded the 100-year storm event by ten times. We cannot make that amount of water go away quickly, no matter what we do. Suggs explained the proposed improvements of raising and regrading the existing roadway, pump assisted stormwater injection well, curb and gutter system, stormwater management structures (piping, inlets and catch basins), cleaning out the existing stormwater structures and installing a sidewalk with lighting. Suggs also commented on the 39th Street conditions of May 19th. Suggs provided a project timeline and informed everyone they were a little ahead of schedule, starting

construction in October at the latest and were trying to do an emergency permit with SFWMD (South Florida Water Management District).

Mayor Still called for speakers.

Diane Scott – commented that everyone was focused on Sombrero Blvd and not her church, water goes over the bean bags, and asked the staff to put cones up and not let people pass and push water into the church.

Matlock explained there are already pumps by the church, now they are getting pumps is the simple answer.

Samuel Spencer – commented that when the berm went in the water became more of an issue and the elevation of the golf course, his neighbor redid their driveway and fencing and what is being allowed to happen on a large acreage, you are constantly fighting issues you have created.

Simone Mullis – complained that she is loosing money and her staff loosing tips and wages when she has to close because of the flooding as it is too dangerous to keep open, that also means no deliveries, she knew it floods when she purchased the business, but there have been seven different rain events, she didn't want a band aid on the problem.

Robin Rivera – commented she lived near the deepest part of the flooding, and questioned how much the road would be sloped, and the lift station had so much water, they workers were ready to turn it off, who will be responsible for the losses, and you are going to funnel the water to where we live. Rivera commented that the injection well has not been serviced or maintained.

Suggs explained the wells are fine, they have been maintained, there is not enough head pressure, it is an elevation issue.

Mike Aranda Jr. questioned if Suggs was an engineer for the golf course and the City. Suggs responded yes and Weiler also does work for the Arandas. Aranda questioned how this development (golf course) has been able to move forward with no silk fence or NPDS plan. Still commented that this engineer does not have this information. Garrett commented that the berm is for the silk fence, it is on three lowest sides, they don't need a silk fence and they operate with a private provider. Aranda commented that the development agreement lists enforcement in section 1.36.

Dave Perry – commented that a lady with the State of Florida said the berm should go down Manor Lane to SkipJack. Suggs commented that the topography does not agree, everyone is entitled to their opinion. Perry commented that he wants the golf course to be held responsible.

Carl Carlson – commented that the issue is the berm, there used to be a ditch and a culvert with a t-box and a pipe, and the water ran to the lakes. Carlson asked Suggs to put the pipe back and let the water run back into the lakes. Suggs commented that he would have a discussion with the owner about doing that.

Matlock asked if when pulling a permit, you had to prove building on the lot would not affect those around you. Williams commented in other areas, lidar would be submitted with your application which shows elevation. We do not do this in Monroe County, we didn't have the technology then, what now are low lying lots, we are dealing with it on a grander scale. Suggs suggested swales, the City has been pro-active, but king tides also compound the problem. Suggs commented he would speak with the golf course owners to possibly take some of the water on their property.

Shea commented that the City and County are doing long range planning, each road will be added to the plan and resident reporting will help us and we can mark specific spots to elevate roads for sea level rise and low-lying areas. Suggs commented with the sea level rise fund resiliency grant funding of \$270 million, we plan to submit for funding, there is a fifty percent match.

Senmartin suggested in the short term someone could speak with the golf course to take some of the water. Williams explained that question was already asked, and Suggs stated he would ask the owners.

Bettye Chaplin – commented that eighty-five percent of Marathon is filled, Irma was so strong it moved ten-foot boulders. In the past, you could dig a trench, now the state says you cannot do this. Chaplin suggested digging a trench, though in the past we were fined \$10,000 by the state.

Council Comments:

All the Councilmembers thanked the participants, the staff and wished everyone a happy Fourth of July.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Council, Mayor Still adjourned the workshop at 8:35pm by unanimous consent.

I certify the above represents an accurate summary of the Council workshop of June 25, 2024


Diane Clavier, City Clerk


Date