



**ISLAMORADA, VILLAGE OF ISLANDS
VILLAGE COUNCIL WORKSHOP**

**Founders Park Community Center
87000 Overseas Hwy
Islamorada, FL 33036**

**September 18, 2013
at 3:00 PM**

I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Mayor Ken Philipson called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. The following Council members were present on roll call: Mayor Philipson, Vice Mayor Ted Blackburn; Councilman Mike Forster, Councilwoman Deb Gillis and Councilman Dave Purdo. Also in attendance were Village Attorney James E. White, Village Manager Edward Koconis and Recording Secretary Synthia Lankford, Assistant Director of Planning Cheryl Cioffari and Rebecca Jetton from the State of Florida Department of Economic Opportunity.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Ed Koconis led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. VILLAGE MANAGER REPORTS AND UPDATES

A. Discussion Regarding Hotel Redevelopment for the Provision of Additional Bathrooms

Ed Koconis opened the Discussion on Hotel Redevelopment. Mr. Koconis explained hotel owners are restricted from adding a second full bath to hotel rooms.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Ken Philipson opened Public Comment.

Steve Kurutz, Vice-Chair of the Florida Keys/Key West Lodging Association of the Upper Keys and owner of the Drop Anchor Motel, spoke in support of allowing hotels to add a second full bath to hotel units. He stated owners are not interested in adding more units, but redeveloping the existing units

Donald Zinner, Lookout Lodge, stated second bathrooms accommodate families traveling with children.

Todd Chandler, Harbor Lights, indicated small hotels are losing business to vacation rentals and stated he does not believe additional bathrooms would affect hurricane evacuation times.

Kara Lundgren, Hampton Inns and Suites, confirmed their larger hotel units are very popular with guests.

V. COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Councilman Forster stated hotels are in a very competitive market and should be able to keep their business viable. Vice Mayor Ted Blackburn stated he believes hotels are at a competitive disadvantage with vacation rental properties. Councilwoman Deb Gillis stated owners should have the right to redevelop their properties. Councilman Purdo stated he does not believe adding bathrooms to hotel units would negatively affect hurricane evacuation times. Mayor Ken Philipson stated he believes hotel proprietors should be able to do what is in the best interest of their businesses.

Rebecca Jetton, State of Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO), advised the DEO must consider a domino effect in the rest of Monroe County when making decisions in Islamorada. Ms. Jetton stated that additional hurricane modeling may be necessary before any determination can be made. Ms. Jetton said she will work with Village Manager Ed Koconis to put together a punch list of options available to hoteliers to redevelop their properties with the focus permitting hotels to add a second full bath as the first priority.

Council supported Ms. Jetton addressing additions of second full bath in hotels first, and then looking at other redevelopment in a phased approach. Steve Kurutz, Vice-Chair of the Florida Keys/Key West Lodging Association of the Upper Keys said he will survey hotel proprietors and bring back a consensus of what their top priorities are.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Councilman Purdo offered a motion to adjourn; Vice Mayor Blackburn seconded the motion. Council voted all in favor. The meeting adjourned at 3:51 pm.



Ariana S. Lawson
Village Clerk

Approved by the Village Council this 23rd day of October, 2013.