



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

**Founders Park Community Center  
87000 Overseas Hwy  
Islamorada, FL 33036  
Thursday, February 11, 2016  
5:30 PM**

**I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL**

Mayor Deb Gillis called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M. The following Councilmembers were present on roll call: Mayor Deb Gillis, Vice Mayor Jim Mooney, Councilman Mike Forster, Councilman Chris Sante and Councilman Dennis Ward. Also in attendance were Village Manager Maria Aguilar, Village Attorney Roget Bryan, Village Clerk Kelly Toth, and all other appropriate personnel.

**II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mark Gregg led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**III. WORKSHOP PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION**

**A.** Discussion Regarding Ideas to Make Islamorada a Better Place to Live, Work and Play

**IV. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mayor Deb Gillis explained she would organize the meeting by requesting comment on the topics for which public comment had been submitted via email and then would request public comment on additional topics. Mayor Gillis opened public comment.

The Fills:

Sheri Mather expressed concern regarding the quality of life in Islamorada being compromised due to heavy traffic and overcrowding. She expressed concern regarding the Fills, specifically: the lack of restroom facilities, hordes of people, trash and recreational water vehicles tied to the Mangroves.

Large Events:

Larry Zettwoch suggested an elevated walkway be placed in front of Founders Park and in downtown Islamorada. He expressed concern regarding heavy traffic and drivers using the center lane as a passing lane. Mr. Zettwoch suggested signs warning drivers they would be put in jail if caught using the center lane for passing.

Promoting Fishing/Guiding & Other Types of Businesses:

Cheryl Culberson suggested expanding other business opportunities other than tourism citing e-commerce as an example. She stated the Village needed to move away from being a one industry

community. Ms. Culberson stated the Village needed to protect the working waterfront; and suggested the Village work toward having more than two internet service providers in the Village.

Parking Issues:

Steve Kurtz suggested the Village work with the FDOT to develop more parking at Anne's Beach.

Millie Noury suggested limiting the parking time at Anne's Beach.

Community Character –Density/Environment:

Martin Moe expressed concern regarding too many people, too many vehicles in Islamorada and the problems associated with "party beaches".

Scholarships:

Sheri Mather suggested the Village create two scholarship funds to award to two children each year with the stipulation that upon graduation the students return to the Village to work.

Charley Mather stated he had noticed in his position with the Monroe County Fire Department that the fire department served as a stepping stone for fire fighters. He suggested the Village develop programs that would continue to replace local workers as they retire or otherwise vacate their positions.

Miscellaneous topics:

Joe Zimek suggested the Village hire a professional planner to develop a vision for the Village.

Millie Noury expressed concern about residents that were not familiar with the Village's ordinances. She suggested providing packets of information to new property owners.

Martin Moe, Marine Biologist, expressed concern regarding the chemicals in the nearshore waters that affect hormone development in marine life. He suggested the Village conduct a study to determine what is going into the nearshore waters and consider the types of controls that could be implemented to control chemicals that enter the nearshore waters.

Mark Gregg suggested the Village consider utilizing accessory dwelling units, as defined in Florida Statute 163.31771, as an option for affordable housing. Mr. Gregg suggested the Council consider increasing the threshold requirement for a building permit from \$2,500 to \$5,000. Mr. Gregg requested the Council create places for people to fish from the shoreline such as the jetty at Founders Park.

David Guardino expressed concern regarding blighted properties and unfinished construction. He expressed concern regarding construction staging areas in residential areas.

Larry Zettwoch spoke in support of the scholarship idea mentioned by Sheri Mather. He expressed concern regarding the affordability of living in Islamorada. He suggested tying in affordable housing to new development.

Mayor Deb Gillis announced the Monroe County Affordable Housing Committee was hosting a roundtable discussion with other municipalities on February 19, 2016 at 9 AM at the Marathon Government Center.

Ed Carvotta suggested apartment complexes to address affordable housing needs.

Bob Norris expressed concern regarding pedestrian safety especially in downtown Islamorada.

Shirley Wilson suggested the Village use social media to communicate to the public.

Martin Moe expressed concern about the Sea Oats beach area and the damage the road and beach would sustain if a severe storm occurred. He suggested the Council consider ways to protect this area.

Jim Bellizzi spoke in support of more hotels in Islamorada to support tourism and stated homes were being turned into vacation rental units whereby creating a shortage in affordable housing rental units. Mr. Bellizzi suggested conservation lots that are used for ROGO purposes should be lots within the Village, not outside the Village. He spoke in support of affordable housing on infill lots and removing the perpetuity requirement from affordable housing to encourage development.

Cheryl Culberson suggested reassessing the planning maps, the commercial corridor, and parking. Ms. Culberson spoke in support of greater code enforcement and the Village recreating its vision for Islamorada.

Bruce Horn expressed concern regarding what he thought was the prohibition of live aboard vessels in the Planation Yacht Harbor Marina. Director of Parks & Recreation and Marine Resources John Sutter explained that 50 percent of the marina was designated for long term live aboard vessels. Mr. Sutter stated he did not think the dockage rates would be viewed as affordable housing. Mr. Horn asked why the 10 percent discount was no longer offered to annual rentals. Mr. Sutter explained the discount was offered in 2008 after the marina renovation had occurred. He stated the discount was given in an effort to generate business for the marina. Mr. Sutter explained that the marina had been experiencing full occupancy for some time and no longer had a need to offer discounts.

Scott Baste expressed concern for water quality and the need to attract business other than those that were tourism related. He offered to volunteer for a committee that would address this endeavor.

Steve Kurtz expressed concern regarding pedestrian safety on Windley Key and suggested the roadway striping was incorrect in some areas on Windley Key. He stated he thought Founders Park was underutilized and suggested more events.

Margie Smith spoke in support of establishing an economic development office. She expressed concern regarding affordable childcare options in the Keys. Ms. Smith stated the summer camp offered at Founders Park was invaluable and stated she would like to see more shaded areas especially at the pool.

Clyde Upchurch expressed concern regarding the water being released from Lake Okeechobee and the impact it had on nearshore waters. He spoke in support of saving local reefs and the Florida Bay.

Robert Jandersit expressed concern regarding the bike path from MM 74 to Fire Station 19 having significant amounts of mud on it for various reasons and requested the Council consider addressing this issue.

Bill Bosley expressed concern regarding the trash in the Mangroves on Windley Key. Mr. Bosley inquired as to how many people were looking for affordable housing. Mayor Deb Gillis stated Monroe County had identified a need for 6,000 affordable units. Mr. Bosley expressed concern regarding the limited availability of hotel and motel rooms; and spoke in support of a notification system that would notify tourists when there were no hotel or motel vacancies.

Larry Zettwoch suggested that by providing elevated walkways it would save the Village money as they would not have to provide a law enforcement officer at the Treasure Village Montessori location two times a day on school days. Councilman Dennis Ward stated three council members were soon going to Tallahassee meet with FDOT to discuss transportation issues such as pedestrian crossings.

Jim Bellizzi expressed concern regarding walk-thru Wednesday in the Building Department. He stated the Florida Building Code allowed for specific exemptions under the code and suggested the Village increase the threshold requirement for building permits to \$5,000.

Millie Noury stated she did not understand why some individuals received permits while others did not for the same type work.

Joe Zimek suggested the Village create an industrial development board to encourage software development in the Keys.

Vice Mayor Mooney thanked the public for their attendance and input. He suggested the following ideas be considered: improvement to public transportation, cleaning up the derelict boats offshore, vehicles parking in the right-of-ways, opening the entrance to Founders Park at the south end during events to alleviate traffic back-ups; increasing the number of for-profit events at Founders Park, drawing new businesses to Islamorada, sponsoring more events for the elderly, improving bike path maintenance, more tree trimming on public roads, adding pedestrian catwalks to the bridges, upgrading the Village website, creating a dead-end at the north end of Upper Matecumbe on the Old Highway to alleviate traffic issues, add artificial turf to the putting green at Founders Park, installing pedestrian safe zones on the highway, adding speed humps to the Old Highway to slow traffic down, and parking issues throughout Islamorada.

Councilman Dennis Ward thanked the public for their attendance and input. He explained the Council was awaiting the completion of FDOT's current roadway project at the Fills before proceeding with any Village plans. He stated property and blight issues were being addressed by the Code Enforcement department. Councilman Ward stated the idea of apartments was a good idea, but that property was needed as well as developers. He stated many of the items suggested were being addressed by Council and encouraged the public to contact staff or a Councilmember when they had a concern or idea.

Councilman Mike Forster thanked the public for their attendance and encouraged future participation. He stated some of the items mentioned had been discussed by the Council. He stated the Council had many meetings regarding the Fills. Councilman Forster explained that once the FDOT asphaltting project at the Fills was complete, Council would evaluate the amount of land available and the carrying capacity to determine the number of parking spaces that were needed. Councilman Forster provided ideas that had been discussed at past meetings regarding improvements to the Fills. Councilman Forster stated the Council had recently discussed accessory structures. Councilman Forster acknowledged that the Sea Oats Beach road was an issue for the Village, Monroe County and the State of Florida. Councilman Forster provided an update regarding meetings that had been held to discuss the DEO proposed rule for vacant lot swaps for hotel units. He expressed concern about the timing of FDOT projects on Snake Creek Bridge and concern regarding overall traffic in the Keys.

Mayor Deb Gillis expressed thanks to those in attendance and encouraged the public to reach out to the Council with ideas or concerns.

Councilman Dennis Ward requested a discussion item to be added to the February 25, 2016 Regular Village Council Meeting agenda regarding a resolution opposing DEO's proposed rule.

Councilman Mike Forster stated the public could call the Monroe County Sheriff's Office at 305-853-3211 to report vehicles passing in the center lane.

**V. ADJOURNMENT**

Councilman Mike Forster made a motion to adjourn. Vice Mayor Jim Mooney seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 7:23 PM.

  
Kelly S. Toth  
Village Clerk

Approved by the Village Council this 17<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2016.