

City of Marco Island Florida

*51 Bald Eagle Drive
Marco Island, Florida
cityofmarcoisland.com*



Meeting Minutes - Final

Monday, September 20, 2021

9:30 AM

Special-Called Meeting

Community Meeting Room

City Council

*Chair: Jared Grifoni
Vice-Chair: Greg Folley*

*City Council: Claire Babrowski,
Rich Blonna, Erik Brechnitz,
Becky Irwin, Joe Rola*

*City Manager: Mike McNees
City Attorney: Alan L. Gabriel
City Clerk: Laura Litzan*

1. Call to Order

Chair Grifoni called the meeting to order at 9:30 A.M.

Also Present

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CONSULTANT TEAM:

Dr. Margaret Banyan, Professor & Project Leader, Florida Gulf Coast University (via Zoom teleconference)
Alexis Crespo, Vice President of Planning, Waldrop Engineering

CITY STAFF:

Michael McNees, City Manager
Casey Lucius, Assistant to the City Manager
Alan L. Gabriel, City Attorney
Chris Byrne, Fire Chief
Daniel J. Smith, Community Affairs Director
Mary Holden, Senior Planner
Martin Luna, Video/Broadcast Technician
Jim Kornas, Recording Specialist
Citizens and Visitors

2. Roll Call

Present: 7 - Councilor Blonna, Councilor Irwin, Councilor Brechnitz, Vice-Chair Folley, Councilor Rola, Councilor Babrowski and Chair Grifoni

3. Business

[ID 21-1782](#) Detailed Review of the Draft Comprehensive Plan - Continued from the September 7, 2021 City Council Special-Called Meeting

Chair Grifoni briefly outlined the discussion plan and approach for the meeting. Dr. Margaret Banyan, at the request of Chair Grifoni, provided her summary of notable changes that were included in the current draft of the Comprehensive Plan, and City Senior Planner Mary Holden highlighted certain elements that were unchanged from the 2009 Plan.

The Council reviewed the Comprehensive Plan's 'Council Transmittal - Comparison Terminology Track Changes' document on an Element-by-Element basis, discussing the most recent updates, offering additional inputs, and reaching consensus on a number of changes to be included in the next draft of the Plan.

The Plan Development Team (Holden, Banyan & Crespo) captured the inputs provided by the Council and pledged to incorporate those inputs into the next draft of the document.

4. Citizens' Comments

Mr. Phil Kostelnik (Channel Ct.) questioned the necessity of rushing to complete the Comprehensive Plan in time for review and potential approval at the Council's next meeting on October 4. Noting specific instances in the national news where adhering to arbitrary deadlines have resulted in disastrous outcomes, he urged the Council to take the time to "do this right".

Dr. William Trotter (N. Collier Blvd.) thanked the Council for the opportunity for the public to participate in

this detailed review of the Comprehensive Plan. He, also, cautioned the Council on proceeding too quickly, and he highlighted a number of topic areas in the Plan where additional detail, discussion and clarity is needed to ensure that residents and Councilors alike fully understand and embrace the direction for the City over its next 20 years.

Ed Issler (S. Joy Circle) reminded the Council that it has 180 days from the receipt of the State's recently-received comments to further refine and finalize the Comprehensive Plan before resubmitting it to the State. He reminded the Council of the overriding importance of the Island's deed restrictions in relation to several of the Plan's Elements, and he urged the Council to delay its final review and approval of the Plan until more residents can return to the Island and participate in the process.

Dr. Rick Granneman (Seminole Ct.) initially came forward to discuss waterway health, but recognized that his comments would be most effective if withheld and delivered at the Council's Regular Meeting beginning at 5:30 P.M.

Dwight Goslee (Treasure Ct.) referenced his attendance at the April 29, 2021 Comprehensive Plan Workshop. At that Workshop, he proposed three specific areas of need for this Plan to address: 1) better management of short-term vacation rental situation on the Island; 2) anticipation of, and planning for, the impact of the nearby urban development along S.R. 951 and S.R. 41, and; 3) actions to reverse the continuing decline in the quality of the waters in and around Marco Island. Noting that nothing in the Plan addresses his first concern, and that several aspects of the Plan actually encourage more visitors and congestion from off the Island, he urged the Council to slow down its process and thoughtfully craft provisions that will protect and ensure the quality of life for residents of the Island over the next 20 years.

Mr. Damien Landeiro (Peach Ct.) expressed his belief that the current iteration of the Comprehensive Plan is too vague and open to conflicting interpretations by future City Councils. Citing negative examples from other cities which he personally observed during his career, he urged the Council to "keep it simple" and to recognize that "less is more".

Ms. Katya Landeiro (Peach Ct.) asked the Council to slow down the process. She reminded the Council that many residents are away and unable to offer their input at this time of the year. She also shared an example of the negative effects of density increases around her former Miami neighborhood, and she implored the Council to be very precise and specific in its drafting of the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Howard Reed (Bald Eagle Dr.) thanked the Council for its discussion on eliminating 'bonus density' from Marco Island's Comprehensive Plan. Recognizing that Marco Island is in a very different situation today as compared to 15 years ago, he believes that the City no longer needs 'bonus density' credits in its Plan to spur development. In his opinion, further application of the 'bonus density' tool can only negatively impact neighborhoods and the quality of life for all of Marco Island's residents.

Mr. Steve Thanos (Copperfield Ct.) shared prepared remarks regarding Marco Island's demographics and his concerns in inviting outside problems (reduced safety, overcrowding and crime) given certain provisions that he sees in the current draft of the Comprehensive Plan.

Ms. Ann Thanos (Copperfield Ct.) was pleased to advise the Council that the Wildlife Conservancy of Southwest Florida has confirmed that a Wetlands Scientist and Senior Ecologist will be open to reviewing and providing input on the recently-made-public Environmental Research & Design report on water quality for the Council's consideration and action. Seeing the preservation of the Island's environment as the Council's most pressing issue, Ms. Thanos expressed her hope that the Council will take advantage of this opportunity.

Mr. Daniel McCausland (Yellowbird Rd., via telephone) thanked all who have been active in providing input to the Comprehensive Plan, and he urged continued effort in refining it. He expressed his belief that: 1) the Plan should be focused on the Island's residents, not visitors; 2) that 'density bonuses' enrich

developers to the detriment of residents; 3) that the Plan's Glossary should strive to achieve a level of precision that is commonly achieved in legal documents, and; 4) that the best efforts of the highly-skilled City Staff and Council should be directed toward completing a document that is of high quality and not rushed to completion.

Ms. Nanette Rivera (Solana Ct.) believes that the Comprehensive Plan should be a tool with goals and results that focus on an aspirational end result ... that is, a plan that sustains the quality of life on the Island. If approached in this way, it would feature fewer, more visible goals that all can visualize and embrace. In her role as a member of the Marco Island Planning Board, she noting that much of the Planning Board effort on the document felt like "an editing exercise" rather than an effort to craft a document that can help the City to achieve its desired future.

Mr. James Fox (Partridge Ct.) shared his experiences as a former Police Chief in cities that failed to consider the unintended consequences of a poorly constructed Plan. In his opinion, something as simple as a trolley can change the character of the Island and the demographics of those who are attracted to it. This Council and City Staff's work in crafting its Comprehensive Plan is critically important, and he implored the Council to listen to its residents and not rush the process.

Following the conclusion of the public comments, Chair Grifoni announced that the City Council's regular meeting will convene later in the day at 5:30 P.M.

5. Adjournment

There being no further business before the Council, the meeting adjourned at 11:59 A.M.

Jared Grifoni, Council Chair

ATTEST:

Laura Litzan, City Clerk

PREPARED BY:

Jim Kornas, Recording Specialist