

WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL
Southwest Ranches, Florida

Thursday 6:00 PM

March 12, 2015

13400 Griffin Road

Present:

Mayor Jeff Nelson

Vice Mayor Freddy Fisikelli

Council Member Steve Breitzkreuz

Council Member Gary Jablonski

Council Member Doug McKay

Andrew Berns, Town Administrator

Keith Poliakoff, Town Attorney

Russell Muñiz, Assistant Town Administrator

Workshop Meeting of the Town Council of Southwest Ranches was held at 13400 Griffin Road in the Southwest Ranches Council Chambers. The meeting, having been properly noticed, was called to order by Mayor Nelson at 6:05 PM. Attendance was noted by roll call and was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Town Administrator Berns explained the workshop was scheduled at Council's request in response to resident complaints regarding commercial use on residential properties. He advised that since current policy is for Code Enforcement to be reactive, Council direction would need to be provided if that were to change. He summarized the contents of the package that had been created for Council by Community Development Director Robert Solera.

Mr. Solera summarized the most common complaints fielded by Code Enforcement such as commercial vehicles being staged, cars in disrepair in backyards, and farm/nurseries which display their wares beyond their property. He also provided Council Members with a list of Certificates of Use issued by the Town and indicated that there was no way to accurately determine which entities are still in business.

Mayor Nelson asked how many complaints were received in the last month related to landscaping vehicles. Mr. Solera indicated 20. Mayor Nelson opined that it might be best to leave Code Enforcement as reactive.

Council Member Breitzkreuz felt that many issues were not being recorded because residents were in fear of making enemies with businesses in their neighborhoods.

Council Member McKay asked where the bulk of the complaints about landscaping trucks was occurring. Mr. Solera indicated it was occurring mostly west of SW 186th Avenue. He explained what the process was when a complaint was received.

Mayor Nelson, asked if Code Enforcement responds to anonymous complaints. Mr. Solera indicated in the affirmative, but clarified that if the alleged violation cannot be verified from the roadway then Code Enforcement cannot proceed with enforcement action unless someone comes forward.

Council Member Breitzkreuz wondered if it would be possible for Code Enforcement to be more proactive in matters that were so egregious that were discovered during their normal operations.

Council Member Jablonski felt it would be more effective to enforce what we have in the current town code, as opposed to adding anything new. He felt that changing the courtesy notice policy which would require the property owner to respond might be a good first step. He felt that most residents moved out to Southwest Ranches to be left alone and that should be maintained. Those who are abusing the code should be held accountable.

Public Comments ensued. The following members of the public addressed the Town Council: Aster Knight, Jo Ann Hollingsworth, Debbie Green, Vince Falletta, and Jim Laskey.

Vice Mayor Fisikelli asked if the Town issued a license. Mr. Solera indicated that the Town issued a Certificate of Use which must be issued prior to the business receiving a Business Tax Receipt from Broward County. Vice Mayor Fisikelli thought the Town should issue a license.

Council Member Breitzkreuz again spoke on behalf of residents who were afraid to report violations, and asked if there could be a mechanism to have the Town address the worst violators proactively.

Mayor Nelson asked Town Attorney Poliakoff if there was a mechanism that can be utilized to require the property owners to respond to Code Enforcement. Town Attorney Poliakoff clarified that Mr. Solera already provides the property owner with a courtesy notice. If they don't respond to the courtesy notice Mr. Solera issues a Notice of Violation. If they still don't respond they are required to attend the Special Magistrate Hearing. If they still don't respond, or are found in violation, a fine begins to accrue on the property. If the property owner does not bring the property into compliance or ignores the steps in the process, a lien is placed on the property which could result in a foreclosure action. He felt that the current process provides many opportunities to compel property owners to respond.

The consensus of Council was to let Mr. Solera use his discretion, and the current process, to address the issues that have arisen. No change in current policy was proposed.

Adjournment – Meeting was adjourned at 6:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Russell Muñiz, MMC, Assistant Town Administrator/Town Clerk

*Adopted by the Town Council on
this 9th day of April, 2015.*

Jeff Nelson, Mayor

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