

**CITY OF LABELLE**  
**SPECIAL MEETING/WORKSHOP MEETING**  
**APRIL 8, 2022**

Mayor Wilkins opened the Special Meeting at 11:36 a.m. A roll call was taken, members present were Mayor Julie Wilkins, Commissioner Bobbie Spratt, Commissioner Daniel Akin, and Commissioner Jackie Ratica.

Ms. Alexis Crespo, Planner for the City of LaBelle, began her presentation by explaining the Outlying Mixed Use Future Land Use Category. She stated that it covered a significant amount of land, and that it was necessary that the Future Land Use Category be evaluated to ensure that it is meeting the needs of the City, and that it still aligns with the desired vision and character for future build out. She noted that members of her planning team that excelled at GIS mapping were instrumental in providing the information provided in the staff report. Ms. Crespo presented to the Commission a Future Land Use Map reflecting the location of the subject category and surrounding areas. She noted that the several large parcels that were included in the category amount to 625 acres of the City.

Ms. Crespo explained that currently, the Outlying Mixed Use density varied on the size of the parcel. She noted the larger parcels of greater than 16 acres, were allowed six units per acre. While in contrast, the smaller the parcel, the higher the density would be. She also stated that when the criteria was adopted, the idea was to promote small infill development. She noted that residential areas currently only allow three units per acre. She informed the Commission that the majority of the parcels located within the Outlying Future Land Use category were in the 16 units per acre range.

Discussion was had on the parcels located on the river, and how their density needed to be amended.

Ms. Crespo then presented a summary of the parcel locations within the subject category by size. Discussion was had on why the Outlying Mixed Use Future Land Use had significant changes made in 2011. She stated that possibly revisiting the criteria from prior to 2011 may be the best course of action. She then expressed that her opinion was that the changes in 2011 were to spur economic development in the area.

She then went through the current Future Land Use map and gave brief descriptions of the projects that have submitted applications. Discussion was had on when the projects would move forward, versus when the proposed changes to the Future Land Use Map would be final.

Ms. Crespo summarized her proposed changes for the category. She stated that one option would be to revisit the code pre-2011 which provided a blanket of six units per acre, or be creative and set a standard base density for all parcel sizes, but allow for a density above six units per acre, as long as certain criteria is met.

Discussion was had on parcel sizes and density, as well as what the mixed-use component would be.

There was also discussion on future meetings to research and make decision on future criteria. Discussion was also had on the advantages of the flexibility of the proposed changes, and the allowed uses within the category.

Mayor Wilkins expressed her opinion that the commercial aspects of the mixed-use category should be along the main roadways and the residential uses would be located away from the major roadways.

Commissioner Akin noted his agreement with the proposal from Ms. Crespo.

More discussion was had on the proposed changes in density for smaller parcels.

Commissioner Spratt requested that approval of building elevations by the Commissioners be included in the criteria changes. Ms. Crespo suggested a binding elevation, or photo submitted with the PUD application could be an option. Discussion was had on the desired design standards for residential and commercial areas, and the desire for new development to be compatible with the existing vernacular.

It was the consensus of the Commission that Ms. Crespo move forward with the proposed changes.

More discussion was had on density, and compatibility.

Ms. Crespo suggested reviewing the Downtown District density in the future as well. The future growth of the Downtown District was discussed.

Discussion was had on PUDs and their allotted time frame to develop before expiration.

Gary Hull, Superintendent of Public Works, stated that many developers are looking to establish entitlements on the properties in order to raise the land value and sell it. Ms. Crespo further explained Mr. Hull's point.

Commissioner Spratt asked Diane Fidanza, the LaBelle Chamber of Commerce Executive Director, if the Chamber had any concerns. Mrs. Fidanza expressed that current businesses are concerned about the density and location of new developments.

### **AMNESTY WEEK**

Mayor Wilkins presented to the Commission the option of participating with Hendry County Waste Management in conjunction with The City of Clewiston, in a week-long Amnesty for Hendry County residents. It was the consensus of the Commission to participate.

### **FORD & SUNSET CLEAN UP**

Mayor Wilkins then brought up a community clean up day in Ford and Sunset Parks. She explained that students from FSW College would like to clean up the signs at Selma Daniels and pick up trash in the area. Discussion was had on the desired day of participation.

Commissioner Spratt asked Zane Mungillo, Code Enforcement Officer, for an update on the City's efforts to clean up that area. He stated that about one-third of the City owned lots had been mowed and cleared of debris.

Commissioner Spratt then suggested that signage be placed on the City owned lots to advertise that they were for sale.

Commissioner Akin pointed out that some of the lots may be suitable for future stormwater projects.

Discussion was had on the developing a policy for selling the City owned lots.

Gary Hull suggested exploring the density of the City owned lots.

Commissioner Spratt noted that a resident had complained about the location of the City donated dumpster. Discussion was had on the location of the dumpster, and a second dumpster possibly being placed in the neighborhood as well.

Mayor Wilkins returned to the conversation about the clean-up day. She suggested April 23, 2022. Discussion was had on the time frame of the clean-up. Mayor Wilkins asked for direction from the Commission in order to utilize City staff on a Saturday to aid in the efforts.

Commissioner Spratt asked if there were any residents donating their time to the efforts as well. Discussion was had on the resident's involvement in the clean-up. Then possible programs that would want to volunteer their time was discussed. Amanda Nelson, gave some suggestions on possible clubs that could be contacted.

Commissioner Akin asked Mr. Mungillo, if the amount of clean-up left to be done on the City owned properties would justify the work being done on a Saturday.

More discussion was had on possible programs that would want to volunteer, and ways to reach out to the community to involve residents.

Gary Hull, Superintendent of Public Works, shared with the Commission that the Hendry County Sheriff, Steve Whidden, had approached him to request for his assistance to reduce large trucks using Main Street as a bypass road from SR 29 by adding weight limit signage. Discussion was had on large truck travel patterns, where the signage would go, and the current condition of the roads. Mr. Hull suggested that the Commissioners contact FDOT to voice their concerns. Discussion was had on whom to contact. He also mentioned that the tree canopy requirement had to be maintained at 16 feet in order to meet compliance.

Commissioner Akin noted that a list should be compiled of the topics discussed, and a letter should be drafted with the mentioned topics of concern and for it to be sent to FDOT from the entire City of LaBelle Commission.

Mayor Wilkins mentioned asking the FDOT district secretary to attend a meeting in the future to discuss traffic issues.

Commissioner Spratt noted her observance of the poor maneuvering of large trucks on roundabouts in Fort Myers.

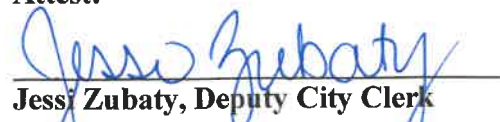
Mayor Wilkins informed the Commission of a grant application the LaBelle Downtown Revitalization Corporation was going to submit to the Dept. of Economic Opportunity, as well as a grant that the City of LaBelle was going to submit in order to update the Comprehensive Plan.

Mayor Wilkins adjourned the meeting at 12:48 p.m.

**APPROVED:**

  
Julie C. Wilkins, Mayor

**Attest:**

  
Jessi Zubaty, Deputy City Clerk