

**MINUTES OF THE HOWEY IN THE HILLS TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL SESSION
HELD ON APRIL 13, 2017**

Mayor Sears called the Town Council Special Session of April 13, 2017 to order at 6:01 p.m.

Present: Mayor Sears, Mayor Pro-Tem David Nebel, Councilor Scott, Councilor Conroy and Councilor Mabry.

Also Present: Lieutenant Roman and Administrative Assistant II Burke.

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion and Approval of Offer for the Howey Mansion

Mayor Sears said the Howey Mansion was listed at \$440,000 and the bank was making a final decision on April 14, 2017 as to which offer to accept. The bank was very interested in talking to the Town and wanted to know if the Town would offer more than \$400,000. Mayor Sears asked hypothetically how would the Town pay for the Howey Mansion. He then stated that as of April 13, 2017 \$517,714 was in the General Reserve. After speaking to Seaside Bank, a ten (10) year note at 4.7 percent would result in a monthly payment of \$5,246.

Councilor Conroy asked if there was a pre-payment penalty. **Mayor Sears** replied no.

Mayor Sears said that the first step after the purchase would be to weather proof the mansion at an estimated cost of \$220,000. He added that future uses for the Howey Mansion could be an event hall, Town Hall, Library or both departments combined.

Councilor Mabry asked if the bidding would be competitive or Town preference. **Mayor Sears** said it would be competitive bidding.

Councilor Mabry said that the ownership of the mansion by the Town is a good thing and that the pros outweigh the cons. He said that he doesn't want to have to deal with the unknown that comes with purchasing the Howey Mansion.

Mayor Pro-Tem David Nebel said that the Town should put in a low offer.

Councilor Conroy said that purchasing the Howey Mansion is a once in a lifetime opportunity. He said he doesn't want to go through years of another individual trying to rezone the estate. He added that Peggy Clark (Chairman of the Historic Board) has already identified three (3) grants that the Howey Mansion would qualify for. He then said that the Howey Mansion could have multiple uses for the Town such as, a Town Hall, Library, museum or event center.

Councilor Scott said that the \$220,000 estimated cost covers just the roof and windows this does not include any termites, asbestos or other factors that could need immediate attention. **Mayor Sears** said that the Town Council needs to look at the bigger picture.

Councilor Scott said he believes it shouldn't be used by the Town for any department but rather as an event hall.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Don Kehr, Investor, gave background on his prior restorations. He believes the Howey Mansion should be used for public and private events. He said that he would be receptive to the idea that he and the Town submit an offer together.

Sal Gallelli, 1104 N Tangerine Ave, said that the Residents of Howey in the Hills do not want the Town to purchase the Howey Mansion.

Paula Perry, 508 N Palm Ave, asked if the Town Council could request more time to conduct some inspections prior to making a decision on purchasing the Howey Mansion.

Charlotte Maffia, 201 E Laurel Ave, said the Town should at least put in an offer for the Howey Mansion.

Trey Purser, 1104 N Lakeshore Blvd, said he stood for the character of the Town and that the Howey Mansion was a huge part of the Town's character. He then said that the Town should at least try and purchase the Howey Mansion.

Marie Gallelli, 1104 N Tangerine Ave, voiced that possibly being able to purchase the Howey Mansion was a great opportunity. She then asked if someone could purchase the Howey Mansion and tear it down. **Mayor Pro-Tem David Nebel** replied yes.

Jacklyn Cheatem, said that the bank was actually just a note holder. She went on to explain that many people are interested in the Howey Mansion and helping to restore its beauty.

Don Ellis, 135 W Magnolia Ave, said he doesn't want the Town to commit to buying the Howey Mansion because of unknown factors.

Ed Smith, 308 N Palm Ave, said that the Howey Mansion was just a money pit and that if someone else wanted to purchase the Howey Mansion let them.

Peter Tuite, 300 E Croton Way, asked why Mission Inn wasn't present at the meeting. He said that the Town could possibly talk to Lake County and see if they were interested in helping restore the Howey Mansion. He said that there are too many unknown factors for him to agree with the purchase of the Howey Mansion.

Cynthia Smith, 308 N Palm Ave, asked if the title was clear. **Mayor Sears** responded yes. She then asked what was the purpose for buying the Howey Mansion. **Mayor Sears** said that the opportunity arose for the Town to possibly purchase the Howey Mansion and that's why it's being discussed at tonight's meeting.

Simon Ambrose, 307 W Dupont Circle, said that there wasn't enough time to discuss and evaluate all the unknowns by April 14, 2017.

Councilor Conroy said that the Howey Mansion was an asset to the Town. He added that the Town could sell the current Police Department and Town Hall properties to put towards the purchase of the Howey Mansion.

Councilor Mabry said that he was still hesitant due to all the unknown factors associated with purchasing the Howey Mansion.

Councilor Conroy invited Don Kehr back to the podium.

Don Kehr, Investor, said he had submitted multiple offers. One offer was low and another was high.

Mayor Pro-Tem David Nebel, seconded by **Councilor Scott**, made a motion to make no offer on the Howey Mansion but to show support for Don Kehr' s offer. Motion failed 2-3 with a roll call vote. (Mayor Sears, Councilor Mabry and Councilor Conroy voting no)

Councilor Conroy made a motion to authorize Mayor Sears to negotiate an offer no greater than \$450,000 with a clear title and forty-five (45) days to conduct inspections. The motion failed for lack of a second.

Councilor Mabry said he could see both sides equally.

Mayor Sears said that the Howey Mansion wouldn't be fixed overnight. Instead would be a five (5) to six (6) year plan. But a once in a lifetime opportunity.

Don Kehr, Investor, said that if the town supported his offers that he would give the Town ninety (90) days to review options and conduct inspections. In that ninety (90) days if the Town decided to buy the Howey Mansion he would sell his option for a dollar.

Charlotte Maffia, 201 E Laurel Ave, said the Town had to at least try.

Councilor Scott asked Don Kehr what were his two offers for the Howey Mansion. **Don Kehr** replied that his low offer was \$300,000 cash and his higher offer was \$405,000 cash.

Mayor Pro-Tem David Nebel, seconded by **Councilor Conroy**, made a motion to make no offer on the Howey Mansion but to show support for Don Kehr' s offer. Motion passed 4-1 with a roll call vote. (Mayor Sears, voting no).

The meeting adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

Chris Sears, Mayor

ATTEST:

Dairian Burke
Administrative Assistant II