

KEEP US RURAL WORKSHOP MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL
Southwest Ranches, Florida

Thursday 7:00 PM

January 12, 2023

13400 Griffin Road

Present:

Mayor Steve Breitzkreuz

Andrew Berns, Town Administrator

Vice Mayor Jim Allbritton

Russell Muniz, Assistant Town Administrator/Town Clerk

Council Member Bob Hartmann

Emil C. Lopez, Town Financial Administrator

Council Member Gary Jablonski

Keith Poliakoff, Town Attorney

Council Member David S. Kuczenski

The Keep Us Rural Workshop 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 Breitzkreuz at 7:01 PM.

3. Discussion – Keep Us Rural

Council Member Hartmann spoke about the residents and what they have in common which is keeping the Town of Southwest Ranches rural such as lifestyle, open spaces, large lots, animals and the rural environment. However, when a resident asked him what his plan was to keep the Town rural, he was inspired to hold a workshop to discuss and share ideas between the Town Council and the residents. He wanted to know what the residents think rural means to them. Once all ideas have been collected, the Town Council will hold a meeting/workshop to discuss the top 5 in the current year, the next top 5 the following year and so on. Council Member Hartmann then shared what rural means to him. He has a chicken farm and residents down the street that have a horseback riding business, other residents have a variety of animals such as emus, goats, sheep, zebu. After speaking with residents, he found out that rural means something different everyone. Next he provided ideas he received via feedback in talking with the residents such as:

- Financial incentives given to residents to keep their properties rural, owning livestock, etc.
- Mayor Breitzkreuz' idea to offer rebates/grants to non-agricultural properties after the taxes have been paid and the properties have been inspected to confirm they are being used for agricultural purposes. (Livestock, Barns, Farming)
- Putting up more horse trail signs and hitching posts especially around Town parks and rights-of ways. Wherever horses are being ridden.
- "Rural" sign standards for new developments. Signage should match the Town's sign requirements.
- Re-address the dark skies ordinance, increase the limits and include LED signs for home addresses.
- Changing road designs for undeveloped properties such as deeper setbacks. Houses further away from the road which will make the neighborhood look larger.
- Re-examine lot sizes and zoning code. Ex: RR+

Council Member Hartmann then outlined what the Town Council has done to maintain the Town's rural lifestyle:

- Changed the zoning in Town to require minimum 2.5-acre zoning per new property.
- Changed the fee structures on barn fire fees
- Changed the HOA requirements on new developments, the developer must comply with Town Code and rural lifestyle.
- Developers must make sure there is enough room on the property for a barn.
- Dark Skies ordinance is now proactive instead of reactive.

He then opened the floor to the public for their ideas:

Ron Martinez

- Evaluate commercial vehicles being used and stored on properties.

Newell Hollingsworth

- Prioritize the equestrian community and the Town will stay rural.
- Equestrian trails need to be added ("Center of Town trail", more signage to identify trails, Griffin Road Trail, bridge over C-11 canal, crossings for 205th and 210th).
- Pinpoint the specific areas of properties that are designated as agricultural classification by BCPA and ensure those properties only use that allotted area for AG, not the entire property.
- Investigate the renting of properties for businesses.
- Find a way to enforce the Town rules, neighbors can report incidents, without starting feuds with each other.
- Look into commercial vehicles in residential areas.

Lil Sayre

- Spoke against property setbacks because it would result in smaller backyards and less area for the animals.

Kay Taylor

- Inform the Town residents more about the harmful effects of the light pollution, through Town newsletter and such.

Joseph Altschul

- Investigate and stop large scale businesses being run from residences.
- Have the Code department become more proactive in certain cases?

Michael (Akai)

- Include "being a good neighbor" as part of the rural definition. Neighbors should treat each other with respect and not judge their neighbors if they are following the rules of the Town/HOA. They should be allowed to do what they want with their property without fear of being reported just because their neighbor doesn't like it.

Kirk Hobson-Garcia

- Rural is smaller government, the Town needs to be less hands on with daily living.
- The Town should deescalate incidents between residents and Code, and Code should educate residents on incidents more than punish them.

John Garate

- Code should not be used as a policing unit and members of the council have been doing that.
- Neighbors need to communicate with each other more.
- Town needs to communicate to residents more about what is or is not allowed for businesses being run in the Town.
- Create a SWR Small Business Advisory Board to clarify rules for businesses in the Town and to inform residents.

Richard Rojo

- Need smaller government from Town.
- Make sure there are no restrictions on residents from having animals .
- Keep population density low.
- Reduce speed in Town, especially along Griffin Road.

Debbie Green

- Town needs to address properties having animals on them without anyone residing at the home.

Boy Scouts of America Troop 224 Leader

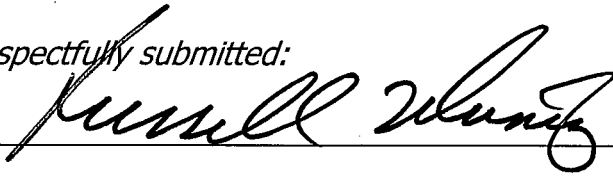
- Thanked Town Council for all they do for the troop.

Mayor Breitzkreuz thanked everyone and he liked hearing about all the challenges and ideas the residents had. He felt having a reactive Code Enforcement does help keep a balance in the Town. He stated that landscape businesses are illegal in the Town. He agrees there should be more communication and Town Council and Administration are working on a letter to send out to the residents.

4. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:



Russell Muñoz, Assistant Town Administrator/Town Clerk

Adopted by the Town Council on this 26th day of January, 2023.



Steve Breitzkreuz, Mayor

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