



# Town of Orchid

Wednesday, March 6, 2024

Orchid Island Beach Club, 1 Beachside Drive, Orchid, FL 32963

## Town Council Meeting Minutes Regular Meeting

### 1. Call to Order

Mayor Gibbons called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

### 2. Roll Call

#### Present:

#### Town Council

Mayor Robert Gibbons  
Vice Mayor Paul Knapp  
Councilmember John Heanue  
Councilmember James Raphalian

#### Town Staff

Cherry Stowe, Town Manager & Interim Town Clerk  
D. Johnathan Rhodeback, Town Attorney

#### Absent:

#### Town Council

Councilmember Mary Jane Benedetto

### 3. Preliminary matters; Agenda additions, deletions or modifications

There were none.

### 4. Public Participation

There was none.

### 5. Consent Agenda

Approval of the Minutes:

- Regular meeting of February 7, 2024
- Special meeting of February 22, 2024

***Vice-Mayor Knapp moved to approve the meeting minutes of both Town Council meetings held in February 2024. Councilmember Heanue seconded the motion.  
All Councilmembers were in favor.***

### 6. Town Council Business

- A. Resolution No. 2024-01; expresses support for Alternative 2 of the Florida Department of Transportation's CR 510 Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study from 58th Avenue to East of US-1 regarding the intersection of CR 510 and US-1



The Town Manager read the title of the resolution. She provided a timeline of the discussions, correspondence, workshops, and presentations that had taken place regarding the Florida Department of Transportation's (FDOT) Project Development and Environment Study for Route 510 from 58<sup>th</sup> Avenue to U.S. 1. She noted that the Town's main interest had been in the busy crossing of Route 510 with U.S. 1. She reported that the Town received a letter from FDOT in response to the Mayor's letter, sent on behalf of the Town Council in early February expressing support for "Alternative 2" featuring a flyover of Route 510 over U.S. 1 and the railroad. She said that response noted the importance of stakeholder and public input.

Mayor Gibbons relayed his experience at the public information workshop held by FDOT last week, where he had the opportunity to present the Town Council's point of view and had publicly listed the benefits of the Town's preferred alternative, including the elimination of lengthy tailbacks on Route 510 stretching from U.S. 1 all the way to, and impacting, Highway A1a. He had predicted an enormous reduction in traffic at the intersection, due to the alternative's proposed flyover for eastbound and westbound traffic, significantly reducing the danger of accidents. He had pointed out that Route 510 is a vital evacuation route, as well as being the main route for access to popular local beaches for the fast-growing north County population.

He applauded that residents from Old Orchid and The Seasons were very energized for Alternative 2 at the workshop as well. And that he'd also had contact with the communities of Marbrisa and Sea Oaks on the subject. He acknowledged that at least one attendee had indicated a preference for Alternative 1, an at-grade enlarging of the intersection, which would take less time and be less complicated to construct. However, Mayor Gibbons countered that the long-term benefits of Alternative 2 outweighed the short-term inconvenience associated with construction.

He mentioned that the workshop had been addressed in a recent piece by Laurence Reisman for the TC Palm Newspaper in which he had seemed to agree with the Town's view.

Councilmember Raphalian spoke to the many accidents he had personally seen at the intersection and emphasized that safety was a major concern. Vice-Mayor Knapp agreed that accident statistics for the intersection shared by FDOT were startling. There was a brief discussion about the project not extending east of U.S. 1 with the addition of lanes to Route 510 to further alleviate congestion. Mayor Gibbons underscored that specifically for that reason the flyover was needed, as it would allow for the most efficient movement of the tremendous, and growing, volume of traffic.

**Councilmember Raphalian moved to adopt Resolution No. 2024-01. Councilmember Heanue seconded the motion.**

**The Interim Town Clerk took a roll-call vote as follows:**

**Vice-Mayor Knapp..... aye**  
**Councilmember Raphalian..... aye**  
**Mayor Gibbons..... aye**  
**Councilmember Heanue..... aye**

- B. Approval of irrigation plan for previously approved site plan for expansion of the fitness/sporting facilities of the Orchid Island Golf & Beach Club at 2 Orchid Island Drive



The Town Manager stated that at the Town Council's August 11 meeting, Resolution No. 2023-05 was adopted to approve the Orchid Island Golf & Beach Club's site plan application pertaining to expansion of the fitness/sporting facilities at 2 Orchid Island Drive – including the "510 commercial property". She commented that this approval was subject to several conditions, one of which required the submittal of a final landscape plan, irrigation plan, and sound attenuation plan. She advised that out of those items only the irrigation plan had not yet been available for approval by the Town Council, but that it had recently been received for review.

**Mayor Gibbons moved to approve the irrigation plan for the Orchid Island Golf & Beach Club's site plan for the expansion of the sports and fitness facilities along Route 510. Councilmember Heanue seconded the motion.  
All Councilmembers were in favor.**

## **7. Councilmember Matters of Interest and Committee Reports**

Vice-Mayor Knapp requested that the Town Council consider a proclamation at the last regular meeting of the season to recognize The Learning Alliance and its Moonshot Community Action Network. He explained that this local organization, whose mission is to achieve grade-level reading by 90% of children by the time they reach third grade in Indian River County, is of importance to Orchid community members, himself included. He pointed out that a prominent Orchid couple had been among the first involved in The Learning Alliance and that recently a committee of twelve Orchid residents had formed to raise the profile of the organization locally. He provided compelling statistics underscoring the success of the group and the work yet to be accomplished. He suggested that the proclamation be accompanied by a presentation by The Learning Alliance's representatives. There was a consensus of the Council that the proposed proclamation be pursued, due to the special local interest therein and the request for it originating from within the Town.

## **8. Town Staff Reports**

The Town Manager provided an update on progress at the new Town Hall, for which she had recently accepted the keys and at which moving-in activities had already started. She received guidance regarding the moving companies that had submitted quotes for transporting and installing the Town's existing furniture and equipment. She also provided information about the imminent listing of the sale of the current Town Hall.

She mentioned she had received a suggestion from a resident that a letter be sent to the neighboring Homeowner Association to the south, from which it appeared several dog owners often visited Orchid's beach, to inform them of the Town's local dog licensing program. The Town Council affirmed that a letter of this nature would be appropriate.

Orchid resident, Mr. Breadner, asked to be recognized, as he wished to receive clarification regarding recent letters to Orchid residents that had noted a dog biting incident. He said that in his view the letters gave a false impression that the beach in Orchid is frequented by many more dogs than it is, and that the letters unfairly magnified any associated problems. He pointed out that no formal reports had been filed with the Town or any County entities that included the date and time of any incidents, identifying information, etc. Vice-Mayor Knapp, who was the victim of the aforementioned biting incident, acknowledged he had not filed any formal reports because he had been unsure how to formally respond. He added that this



realization, and the anecdotal sharing of similar experiences of other residents since then, had been the impetus for the Town Council's recent letters to the community on the subject. Mayor Gibbons disagreed with Mr. Breadner's assertion that the beach frequently only has three dogs on it throughout an entire day. He shared that he often observes many more dogs on the beach and that regularly he notices violations of local laws pertaining to them. Mr. Breadner thanked the Town Council for the opportunity to be heard.

## **9. Confirmation of the Next Meeting Date and Adjournment**

The Mayor reminded everyone that the next regular Town Council meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, April 3, 2024, at 9 a.m. at the Orchid Island Beach Club.

***Mayor Gibbons moved to adjourn the meeting.  
Vice-Mayor Knapp seconded the motion.  
All Councilmembers were in favor.***

The meeting was adjourned at 10:25 a.m.

*These minutes were approved by the Town Council at the regular meeting of April 3, 2024 as certified by Jane Garcia, Town Clerk.*

