

**Official Minutes of  
MARION COUNTY  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

May 1, 2025

**CALL TO ORDER:**

The Marion County Board of County Commissioners met in a workshop session in Commission Chambers at 2:31 p.m. on Thursday, May 1, 2025 at the Marion County Governmental Complex located in Ocala, Florida.

**INTRODUCTION OF WORKSHOP BY CHAIRMAN KATHY BRYANT**

Chairman Bryant advised that the workshop was scheduled this afternoon to discuss updates to the Comprehensive Plan and the Level of Service (LOS) for parks.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of our Country.

**ROLL CALL**

Upon roll call the following members were present: Chairman Kathy Bryant, District 2; Vice-Chairman Carl Zalak, III, District 4; Commissioner Matthew McClain, District 3. Commissioners Craig Curry, District 1 and Michelle Stone, District 5 were absent due to prior commitments. Also present were County Attorney Matthew G. Minter, Assistant County Administrator (ACA) Tracy Straub, Growth Services Director Chuck Varadin, and Deputy Growth Services Director Ken Weyrauch.

The Deputy Clerk was in receipt of a 7 page handout entitled, "Redlines Recreation and Open Space Element"; a 5 page handout entitled, "Marion Comprehensive Plan: Terms & Definitions"; a 7 page handout entitled, "Redlines Conservation Element"; and 26 page Agenda packet to follow along with the PowerPoint presentation.

**WORKSHOP PRESENTATION**

1. Workshop to Discuss Updates to the Comprehensive Plan and Density.

Growth Services Director Chuck Varadin presented the following recommendation:

Description/Background: Florida Statute Section 163.3191 requires an evaluation of the Comprehensive Plan every seven years to ensure consistency with statutory requirements and community engagement. This Evaluation Appraisal Report (EAR) identified changes to the Comprehensive Plan that need to be completed over the next year (by February 2026).

The workshop today is the seventh of ten workshops scheduled over a five (5) month period. During this series of workshops, the Board will focus on gaining consensus for proposed changes to the Comprehensive Plan and discuss broader topics that will help set the vision for guiding future growth and development in Marion County. At today's workshop, the Board plans to discuss bring-back items for the Economic Element, the Parks Level of Service (LOS), as well as redline changes to the open space requirement (Policy 2.1.4 in the Future Land Use Element), the Recreation and Open Space Element, and the Conservation Element.

Recommended Action: Staff is seeking Board discussion and consensus on the proposed edits.

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Blair Knighting, Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. (KHA), provided an overview of today's Agenda including a bring back Item relating to the Economic Element, Parks LOS, Redlines and the next workshop. She advised that during the previous workshop Commissioner McClain requested some language be adjusted in one of the Policies, and there was a good discussion relating to annual review of the partnerships and the economic initiatives. She stated Objective 1.4 was beefed up to say the County may partner with economic development agencies to encourage and grant economic development incentives, noting it is her belief the language addresses concerns relating to ensuring that those agencies are involved. Ms. Knighting commented on Policy 1.4, which states, "The County shall annually review the effectiveness of economic development partnerships and initiatives to evaluate the economic health of the community."

Commissioner McClain stated he is happy with the language.

Chairman Bryant commented on the amount of language that has been redlined.

Ms. Knighting advised that KHA kept bringing the Economic Element back and it just was not quite what the Board was looking for; however, it was cleaned up this last time and made more succinct.

Ms. Knighting stated today's workshop focuses on the LOS relating to parks. She commented on a previous discussion in regard to the importance of parks to the community, as well as possibly updating the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Ms. Knighting referred to a slide, as seen on the overhead screens, which shows there is a total of 928.2 acres of County managed parks. She advised that the Ocala National Forest is not included, noting for the LOS only parks/lands controlled by the County are being considered. Ms. Knighting stated the Parks and Recreation Master Plan does not include greenways or regional parks that are mostly just open space.

In response to Chairman Bryant, Ms. Knighting advised that it is her understanding that for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, it applies to the greenways that are just open space and not activated.

Parks and Recreation Director Jim Couillard stated LOS standard research was conducted during the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, noting the Department performed an exercise based on some requests from the Board at that time to exclude some retirement communities to determine the impact to the LOS. He advised that data came back as de minimis. Mr. Couillard commented on discussion relating to excluding bigger tracts of land, as it was taking a look at how the County is serving the public for active recreation. He stated Carney Island and Horseshoe Lake take up roughly 800 acres, noting when you look at that much acreage in the northeast and southeast it does not give enough flexibility to look at what is happening in the high growth areas. Mr. Couillard advised that the decision to exclude those bigger tracts of land was not about them providing any type of passive recreation, but it took a look at how those big acre parks can skew the distribution of park land to the areas where there are residents, community, and neighborhood parks if you just focus on 2 acres per 1,000 residents.

Chairman Bryant stated when she thinks of something like the On Top of the World (OTOW) Development of Regional Impact (DRI), they plan a lot of recreational spaces within their communities where there is a lot of population. She advised that while it is not open and available to the public, when discussing the LOS is the County doing itself a disservice by not counting some of that recreational space that is available to the residents in those communities.

Mr. Couillard clarified that it is giving credit, not accounting for what they are currently

offering in the community. He stated that is how the Department looks at it, noting certain developments do provide something and it is being requested more often. Mr. Couillard advised that when staff did this exercise back in 2016, that was not the case and there was not the explosive growth the County is dealing with now. He stated he sees logic and the idea of accounting for those amenities based on the population in those developments.

Chairman Bryant opined that a lot of what happens at the greenway is not passive and questioned if there is a certain type of recreational activity being targeted.

Mr. Couillard advised that today's discussion will address LOS based on 2 acres per 1,000 residents and begin discussing another way of looking at LOS.

Chairman Bryant questioned if any City Parks are included due to using Countywide numbers. Mr. Couillard stated only parks the County owns or manages were included, which does not include City Parks.

Commissioner Zalak opined that the City's population should be removed.

Chairman Bryant advised that it skews the numbers a little bit.

Mr. Couillard stated all of these calculations were run back in 2016.

Chairman Bryant advised of the importance of ensuring the whole picture is available when providing information to the public.

Mr. Couillard stated back in 1988 when Parks and Recreation did their bond, that money was equally distributed within the municipalities as well, noting it paid for things in Reddick and Dunnellon.

Chairman Bryant commented on a slide as seen on the overhead screens that shows deficiencies in LOS, which does not include the other recreational activities and skews the results.

Ms. Knighting stated the Board can include those things relating to the LOS if they choose. In response to Chairman Bryant, Mr. Couillard advised that the numbers for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan are based on 2016.

Commissioner Zalak opined that he does not think LOS relating to neighborhoods is the County's business, noting developers should have to do that when they bring in a community, especially for kids 12 and under. He stated that should happen in the neighborhood. Commissioner Zalak advised that cities are in the neighborhood business, and the County is in the business of regional and larger community sized parks. He opined that the County should not be in the pocket park business unless there is a specific, isolated issue it wants to address.

Mr. Couillard concurred.

Ms. Knighting stated the population projections are based on the whole County including the City of Ocala and all of the municipalities. She advised that by 2030, if just considering acreage based, the County will be slightly deficient and the same is true for 2035. Ms. Knighting stated the LOS is determined by the County and not dictated by another entity, noting the LOS is not set in stone.

Commissioner Zalak opined that the LOS is misleading due to not including the 4 hour ride down the Rainbow River or the portions of the Ocala National Forest that are recreational. He commented on the recreational activities associated with both, noting the LOS should be looked at differently and not just include County managed parks. Commissioner Zalak commented on the Belleview Sports Complex, which the County manages and the Santos trailhead and campground that offers horseback riding, mountain biking, etc. He advised that parts of Santos are included in the State system, but it still benefits the County.

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Ms. Knighting addressed different ways to look at LOS.

Chairman Bryant passed the gavel to Commissioner Zalak who assumed the Chair.

Commissioner Bryant out at 2:47 p.m.

Ms. Knighting commented on a combined acreage and amenity based approach. She referred to a slide on the screen that represents amenity based LOS for common amenities. The slide shows the existing count for each of the amenities, as well as the demand and surplus/deficit levels for 2030, 2040 and 2050. Ms. Knighting advised that the County has never approached the LOS from an amenity base and has always used an acreage based review. She stated perhaps the County can start looking at amenity based and do a quarter of the LOS as the County gets started and really evaluates whether this is right for the community.

Ms. Knighting advised that from the online/in-person survey the County implemented, people were very interested in large passive parks and neighborhood playground parks, noting those were the 2 most popular wanted items.

Commissioner Bryant returned at 2:50 p.m.

Chairman Zalak returned the gavel to Commissioner Bryant, who resumed the Chair.

Ms. Knighting referred to the slide showing the amenities breakdown, noting the County is super deficient in certain things (basketball courts, equipped playgrounds, football, soccer, and multi-use fields). She stated the County could start small and work towards the amenity based option or stay with the acreage. Ms. Knighting commented on having the acreage and amenity blended option, noting the County can add some courts to large acreage parks. She addressed private recreation, noting the current Comprehensive Plan requires new development to provide 350 square feet (sf) of open space per unit. Ms. Knighting advised that it needs to be enforced and will help with neighborhood parks.

Commissioner Zalak commented on the neighborhood park standards and the ability to allow developers to flex the open space depending on the amenities included in their product. He stated it is better to have the developer build the swing sets and a couple pickle ball courts and then allow the homeowner's association (HOA) to manage that and the cost. Commissioner Zalak expressed concern relating to funding the Capital costs in addition to determining how to raise millage rates to implement an operations team that continues to expand with the population.

Chairman Bryant stated it is better for an HOA within each residential community to manage that facility, the County just needs to ensure it is forcing that to happen. She commented on the importance of open space, especially in developments with children. Commissioner Zalak advised that there are not as many swimming pools requesting approval today; however, many were put in, but are not being counted because the County is not managing them.

Mr. Couillard stated the pools could be private; therefore, individuals that do not have access to them still need a pool elsewhere.

Commissioner Bryant stated there is no need for another pool because the need is being fulfilled within each community.

Mr. Couillard advised that there is still no pool for the community as a whole.

In response to Chairman Bryant, Mr. Couillard stated outside of the HOA community there is no public pool.

Chairman Bryant advised that there are public swimming spaces in Marion County such as KP Hole Park.

Mr. Couillard stated there are public swimming beaches. He advised that some individuals like to swim in ponds or the ocean, and some do not. Mr. Couillard opined that

conversation about amenity centers within developments is good, but more specificity is needed relating to how things are built and designed. He commented on touring some developments with recreational amenities, noting there are courts and playgrounds he would not play on due to them not being built to the public safety standard the County provides. Mr. Couillard stated the County is held to a different standard, which is why many things are expensive.

Chairman Bryant commented on the convenience of having an amenity within a community versus (vs.) loading up in a vehicle and driving to another location.

Mr. Couillard advised that not everyone moving to the area is living in one of those communities with the onsite amenities, noting that growth has to be addressed.

Chairman Bryant commented on open space requirements being adhered to and ensuring amenities are included within these communities to help prevent the need for individuals to travel to get to things (shopping, swimming, park, etc.).

Commissioner Zalak addressed access to amenities, noting in Silver Springs Shores (SSS) there is a Municipal Service Taxing Units (MSTU) community center that allows individuals who are not part of it to buy access. He stated most individuals in SSS have access to the possibility of swimming at the community center. Commissioner Zalak advised that in Marion Oaks there is access to the splash pad, workout room, etc. He stated there are locations that do not have all of those pieces, but he is unsure the County can provide those things. Commissioner Zalak commented on opportunities relating to new development. He commented on the level of flexibility the Code allows for, noting there is not a lot of creativity being seen. Commissioner Zalak opined that facilities should have a number attached relating to the number of individuals it serves.

Mr. Couillard stated it should be per unit. He advised that the Department's Master Plan (2006/2007) was written in-house and there was a lot of research conducted relating to LOS and the previous Master Plan written 10 years prior. Mr. Couillard commented on Park Planning Districts utilized on the previous Master Plan, noting they caused infighting between the Districts. He stated the Department began looking at coverage buffers based on park standards that are adopted nationally and in the State of Florida. He provided a brief overview of park classifications (pocket parks found in urban cities like New York, neighborhood parks that serve 5,000 individuals and have a coverage buffer of a half mile from the park outward, community parks serving up to 25,000 individuals with a 3 mile coverage buffer and an operating cost of roughly \$30,000.00 per year). Mr. Couillard advised that back in 2006 and 2007 it was decided the Department would focus on community parks.

In response to Chairman Bryant, Mr. Couillard stated Brick City Adventure Park, Coehadjoe Park, Norm Westbrook Park and Ocklawaha Recreational Area are examples of community parks based on the updated inventory in the 2016 Master Plan. He advised that the Department changed classifications, noting District Parks did not make sense so they were moved into the community or regional classifications. Mr. Couillard stated Liberty Park is considered a neighborhood park and has a half-mile coverage buffer, noting it does not tap into Oak Run.

Commissioner Zalak questioned the size of Liberty Park. Mr. Couillard advised that Liberty Park is 11 acres. He stated Independence Park is the 40 acre piece of land the County is considering a lease-to-lease swap with the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for land on SW 49<sup>th</sup> Avenue to develop as a real park and tie the Heart of Florida (HOF) Loop plus the SW 49<sup>th</sup> Avenue trail together making it much more accessible trailhead from the Interstate. Mr. Couillard stated that park is very marketable

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for tourism relating to bringing individuals off of the highway to the trails, noting it is easier to access than Santos.

Chairman Bryant questioned why the County would give up Independence Park when there is a gap in that area. Mr. Couillard commented on accessibility concerns relating to Independence Park, noting the County wants to develop it with ballfields and lights (needed in the area); however, there would be a tremendous amount of through traffic relating to the little, neighborhood streets that provide access to the facility. He stated the vision has been modified and staff envision a park right along 49<sup>th</sup> Avenue with a proposed ballfield, dog park, and a major playground in that area, noting those elements were identified as being needed at community meetings.

Chairman Bryant stated there have been significant changes to the area since 2018. Mr. Couillard concurred.

Chairman Bryant commented on the needs relating to the Liberty Triangle area and questioned where else the County can find the 40 acres to do what the Department is proposing and whether this is the best plan moving forward. She advised that the matter should be reviewed and if the plan is to move to the location, there needs to be a conversation relating to what the expectation will be of the land swap with DEP. Chairman Bryant addressed the possibility of acquiring additional land to finish the entire plan and have a regional park in that area. She commented on the tremendous growth in that portion of the County.

Chairman Bryant requested information relating to what could be identified for the original intended use of the Independence Park space. She stated if the County does the swap and creates something more greenway and trail centric, then another location has to be identified for a regional sportsplex on that side of town.

Mr. Couillard advised that the vision for the land swap was to make it a good, viable trailhead park (similar to Baseline Trailhead), noting there were already talks about a "game changer" park 2 years ago for the explosive growth in that area. He stated it is hard to find land in the area and Commercial land is not an option due to the cost and impact to the tax rolls.

In response to Chairman Bryant, Mr. Couillard advised that DEP's vision for the 40 acres is to incorporate it into the greenway. He stated funding is the only reason this has not already occurred, noting the State of Florida wants to see a 5 year plan relating to the construction.

Ms. Knighting commented on the language relating to the minimum open space per unit requirement.

Commissioner Zalak advised that that open space is part of the overall requirement; however, there needs to be LDC language or supported Comprehensive Plan language that if the County does not charge for those things then it is the developer's responsibility to build a neighborhood park. He stated it would be better to have a Code that requires amenity minimums based on units. Commissioner Zalak proposed the possibility of reducing the open space requirement to allow for enhancement of a specific amenity (additional sf of pickle ball courts). He commented on the Impact Fee Belleview collects per unit.

In response to Commissioner Zalak, ACA Tracy Straub advised that the land value must be determined so when the open space is taken from 20% to 15% the dollar amount relating to that acreage can be compared to the cost to build a pickle ball court or other amenity.

Commissioner Zalak stated from a developer's perspective the issue is whether they can

add another unit, which is considerably more than the cost of the land alone.

Ms. Knighting provided an overview of Park LOS in various other Counties, noting some include amenities, amenity based with unincorporated areas being exempt, amenity and acreage based. Some of the Counties also have LOS relating to beach access and boat facilities.

Mr. Couillard advised that the amenity LOS can be viewed as proactive rather than reactive, noting currently the Department reacts and gets things when there are complaints about the lack of a particular amenity. He stated the Department has a very extensive inventory of every park in the County including city and federal parks. Mr. Couillard advised that by taking the inventory figures and dividing them by the population staff can see if boxes are being checked off or if there are locations that need to be addressed.

Ms. Knighting continued her overview relating to Park LOS in other Counties, noting some are acreage based and other use park type.

Commissioner Zalak questioned what the Impact Fees are for the acreage based parks identified by a star on the slide. Ms. Knighting stated she can bring that information back for the Board. She commented on communities that are experiencing high residential growth. Ms. Knighting advised that Clay County just put in an entire Impact Fee process in 2022, which includes regional parks and libraries. She commented on St. Johns County's longtime Impact Fees, noting they are still experiencing heavy growth. Ms. Knighting advised that St. Johns County just has a park category.

Commissioner Zalak requested additional information relating to Clay County's Impact Fees.

Ms. Knighting stated Clay County has a mobility fee, then the Impact Fees. She advised that they have a school concurrency process, and many areas of that County are deficient. Ms. Knighting clarified that parties in Clay County pay whichever is higher between the school concurrency and Impact Fees and the Mobility Fee is additional.

In response to Commissioner Zalak, Ms. Knighting stated mobility is the same thing as transportation.

Ms. Straub clarified that the County's Transportation Impact Fees include the roadway network and supporting roadway network; however, the Mobility Fees include bicycle, SunTran buses and all the things that can be done to move people including pedestrian networks.

In response to Commissioner Zalak, Ms. Straub confirmed the Mobility Fee could be utilized to add another bus to the roads if needed.

Commissioner Zalak commented on concurrency and questioned whether it also incorporates mobility. Ms. Knighting referred to Clay County, which has a Mobility Fee based on a mobility plan for the entire County. She clarified that the fee is determined by where one is located within the County, noting it is based on need. Ms. Knighting stated each "district" within Clay County has its own calculation, so if it is known there is no infrastructure in the northwest portion of the County, the fee will be higher there to pay for that deficiency. She advised that locations inside the downtown area would pay less due to the road network already being built out.

Commissioner Zalak stated based on what has been presented today, one would pay the School Impact Fee, a Mobility Fee and then the additional Impact Fees for completed permit packages submitted. He advised that the Impact Fees for completed permit packages submitted relates to all the other things (government, jails and Constitutional facilities, fire, law enforcement, etc.).

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Ms. Knighting concurred, noting it is her understanding that Impact Fees cannot pay for people, but are used for Capital expenses.

Ms. Knighting stated most developers expect to pay Impact Fees based on inquiries she receives.

Ms. Knighting advised that she believes there are benefits to an acreage and amenity based LOS (tourism, quality of life, etc.). She commented on the benefit of adding amenities to some of the massive parks to create more use or a better used facility.

Ms. Knighting requested feedback relating to the Board preference for either acreage and amenity based or just keeping it average based, noting it is currently 2 acres of park per 1,000 residents.

Chairman Bryant commented on only including what is managed by the County, but due to the inclusion of the population from the City of Ocala, more information is needed.

Ms. Knighting stated the figures relating to capacity are current.

Chairman Bryant advised that no City parks were included.

Mr. Couillard stated the main regional facilities in the Greenway were also omitted.

Chairman Bryant advised that the Board knows where the needs are located.

Ms. Straub addressed the lack of a standard in the LDC that states the County shall provide 2 acres per 1,000 residents and relates that back to a dwelling unit (du). She stated the Department is trying to fulfill it from a County business practice and not placing that responsibility on a developer. Ms. Straub advised that there is an open space requirement but not an amenity recreational component. The recreational component only comes from negotiation.

Chairman Bryant advised that the County needs to define what is expected when it comes to open space and amenities within a development.

Commissioner McClain questioned how the amenities are maintained and utilized, noting HOAs are sometimes mismanaged and do not do well.

In response to Chairman Bryant, Commissioner Zalak stated he used to receive calls relating to HOA issues during the recession.

Commissioner McClain advised that open space and amenity requirements in developments is not the answer to the puzzle.

Chairman Bryant stated she does not disagree; however, some neighborhood park type activities can be provided inside a community.

Commissioner Zalak advised that a swing set can fit in the backyard of a 40 or 50 foot lot in most subdivisions. He stated the issue he has with putting a lot of funds into community and neighborhood parks is the lack of affordability without doing something radically different relating to millage rates. Commissioner Zalak opined that the County will likely struggle with building the other sports complex over the next few years, noting it will cost tens of millions of dollars to keep up with Rotary Sportsplex, Wrigley Fields, Belleview Sports Complex, etc.

Chairman Bryant questioned whether Park Impact Fees have to be used within a certain area. Mr. Couillard advised that the County can describe the area (e.g., everything west of Interstate 75 (I-75)). He stated it can be broken down into 2 Districts or be as granular as the Board chooses.

Commissioner McClain questioned whether the Impact Fees can be utilized for an improvement or replacement relating to existing parks, or if it has to be an expansion of a service. Mr. Couillard advised that the fees can be used to add capacity.

In response to Commissioner McClain, Mr. Couillard clarified that as the County adds capacity, any increases to operational costs will depend on the specific expansion. He



provided an overview of the current costs relating to operating the various types of parks, noting the Department cannot identify a cost for the greenways and boat ramps.

Commissioner Zalak questioned if Clay County's Park Impact Fee is on top of the amenities included in a subdivision. Ms. Knighting concurred.

Commissioner Zalak opined that developers should be required to provide a certain number of amenities based on the number of units.

Ms. Knighting stated there was a recent situation in St. Johns where a small neighborhood of approximately 99 homes had a park with playground equipment that required insurance. She advised that the HOA could not collect enough funds to pay the insurance and also had difficulty finding a company willing to provide the insurance due to the size. Ms. Knighting stated she will provide the Board with additional information relating to the matter, noting HOAs may not be able to afford the insurance so allowing them to have the open space in smaller neighborhoods.

Commissioner Zalak commented on utilizing MSTUs, noting they exist in Silver Springs Shores (SSS) due to general development going bankrupt and was unable to provide certain things.

Mr. Couillard stated only certain things can be done within those communities, so they should focus on what they can do and let staff focus on the amenities and offer what they cannot.

Commissioner Zalak opined that the County should be phenomenal in the sports arena forum, noting team sports enhance a child's development way more than a passive park in a neighborhood.

Ms. Knighting advised that the Recreation and Open Space Element Redline handout can be revamped and brought back to the Board.

In response to Commissioner Zalak, Ms. Knighting stated the Comprehensive Plan already contains the requirement relating to open space. She advised that it refers back to the LDC for the requirement. That is where the specifics relating to what must be provided will be documented.

Commissioner Zalak advised that there has to be improved open space.

Mr. Couillard stated staff is very conscience of how these things work together and is working closely with Growth Services staff and KHA to review the amenity centers, open space and improved open space.

Commissioner Zalak stated the improved open space can be defined in the LDC, but from a Comprehensive Plan perspective, there has to be both or there needs to be negotiation relating to the terms.

Ms. Straub stated the requirements should be written out or developers will not know what to expect and what to bring to the Board.

Chairman Bryant clarified that the Board is saying a minimum of 350 sf of open space for each residential unit shall be required in either single or linked multiple tracks within residential development, and the open space shall be accessible to all residents within the development as further defined in the LDC. She questioned if this will be included in the amenities or separate in the LDC.

Ms. Straub stated the Board will need to decide, noting a 200 unit development will provide 1.6 acres of open space. She questioned whether the Board wants to take a percentage of that and make it an improved space or keep that open space and make something else improved.

Chairman Bryant stated the developers need to be held to this and have the amenities on top of that.

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Ms. Straub commented on past projects that allowed a water retention area to be used as a play field.

Commissioner Zalak advised that the Board will not make that mistake. He advised that current amenities like a pool and club house are not included in the open space requirement, noting the Board needs assistance relating to putting together an active improved space requirement. Commissioner Zalak stated it will cement in the process of saying neighborhood parks are the job of the developer.

In response to Commissioner McClain, Chairman Bryant advised that the current requirement for open space will remain.

Commissioner Zalak stated the Board will solidify the things the Board has been doing with PUDs and codify those requirements. He advised that he does not want to spend funds from the General Fund to create neighborhood parks.

Chairman Bryant commented on the difficulty relating to finding property, noting it is becoming harder to create new neighborhood parks.

Commissioner McClain requested the requirement be reasonable, so it does not drive up the cost of housing.

Chairman Bryant advised that by codifying the requirements, the Board will not be negotiated from the dais.

General discussion ensued relating to open space requirements.

Chairman Bryant commented on projects with specimen trees and the possibility of negotiating that open space, noting the Board is including other avenues developers can utilize.

Commissioner Zalak stated that typically the Board is allowing the requested units.

Deputy Growth Services Director Ken Weyrauch clarified that when a development has 5 acres of open space with a pool, clubhouse or tennis courts, staff counts the whole thing as 5 acres of open space.

In response to Ms. Straub, Mr. Weyrauch advised that relating to a PUD, staff calculates 100% of the buffer as open space.

Chairman Bryant stated the buffer should not be calculated as open space.

Mr. Couillard advised that he has seen the nuisance strip come through as open space on plans.

In response to Commissioner Zalak, Mr. Weyrauch stated staff allows the following to be included relating to the open space requirement: open space with amenities, buffers (walking trails encouraged), and 25% of the drainage retention area (DRA) unless granted approval to allow more. He advised that these workshops have provided a framework to restructure the open space between passive open space and improved and recreational open space.

Commissioner Zalak opined that open space requirement needs to be brought back to the Board.

Mr. Weyrauch stated staff, and the consultants have what they need to restructure and bring back a better option.

Commissioner McClain advised that he does not like the term open space.

Ms. Knighting referred to the Conservation Element Redline handout, noting Senior Planner Chris Rison, Growth Services, requested Item d. on page 2 not be stricken. She stated he wants to keep the language relating to soils, primarily prime farmland. It was the general consensus of the Board to leave the language.

Ms. Knighting commented on Policy 1.3.5 on page 6 stating, "The County may utilize funds from the open space fee-in-lieu of program (Recreation and Open Space Policy

1.3.4) to acquire environmentally sensitive and/or locally important resources.” She advised that the fee-in-lieu of program is already in the Comprehensive Plan, noting the funds can be utilized for these acquisitions if the Board so chooses.

Ms. Knighting advised of the addition of Policy 1.4.2.

In response to Commissioner Zalak, Ms. Knighting stated Policy 1.2.2 relating to specimen trees will be defined in the LDC.

Commissioner Zalak questioned if Policy 1.2.4 will help with Silver Glen relating to putting a future Ordinance in place. Mr. Couillard advised that staff look at the word navigable as being related to commerce or moving things back and forth.

Commissioner McClain questioned how the Board will do what this Policy states. Ms. Knighting stated through enforcement.

In response to Commissioner Zalak, Mr. Couillard stated this relates to Lake Weir and the Rainbow River, noting the County establishes water regulatory areas. He advised that any time one sees a “no vessel” or “no wake” sign the Department comes to the Board to get those approved. The signs are permitted, and then the matter gets turned over to the proper authority for enforcement (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), Marion County Sheriff’s Office (MCSO), or the local police department).

Chairman Bryant advised that the word “shall” should be changed to “may” to avoid giving individuals an expectation of something that cannot be done by the Board.

Ms. Knighting referred to the handout entitled, “Marion Comprehensive Plan: Terms & Definitions”, noting the purpose is to link the Comprehensive Plan definitions with the LDC and Statutory compliance.

Chairman Bryant opined that she would like to review this document at her convenience and make inquiries if she has any questions.

Ms. Knighting expressed appreciation to the Board for the conversation today.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting thereupon adjourned at 4:52 p.m.

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Kathy Bryant, Chairman

Attest:

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Gregory C. Harrell, Clerk

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