



**TOWN OF LAKE PARK  
PLANNING & ZONING BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES  
JUNE 1, 2015**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The Planning & Zoning Board Meeting was called to order by Chair Judith Thomas at 7:52 p.m., upon the conclusion of the Historic Preservation Board Meeting.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**ROLL CALL**

Judith Thomas, Chair	Present
Martin Schneider	Present
Erich Von Unruh	Present
Michele Dubois	Excused
Ludie Francois	Not Present
Anne Lynch, Alternate	Not Present

Also in attendance were Nadia DiTommaso, Community Development Director, and Kimberly Rowley, Recording Secretary.

Chair Thomas requested a motion for approval of the Agenda as submitted. Board Member Schneider made the motion, and it was seconded by Board Member Von Unruh. The vote was as follows:

	<b>Aye</b>	<b>Nay</b>
Judith Thomas	X	
Erich Von Unruh	X	
Martin Schneider	X	

**The Motion carried 3-0 and the Agenda was approved as submitted.**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Chair Thomas requested a motion for the approval of the March 2, 2015, Planning & Zoning Board Meeting Minutes as submitted. Board Member Schneider made the motion for approval, and it was seconded by Board Member Von Unruh. The vote was as follows:

	Aye	Nay
Judith Thomas	X	
Erich Von Unruh	X	
Martin Schneider	X	

**The Motion carried 3-0, and the Minutes of the March 2, 2015, Planning & Zoning Board Meeting were approved as submitted.**

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Chair Thomas reviewed the Public Comments procedure.

**ORDER OF BUSINESS**

Chair Thomas outlined the Order of Business.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Chair Thomas read into the record:

- A. **(THIS ITEM TO BE CONTINUED TO THE JUNE 29, 2015, PLANNING & ZONING BOARD MEETING) A VARIANCE APPLICATION FOR 900 10<sup>TH</sup> STREET: LANDSCAPING (MINIMUM BUFFER AND PLANTING REQUIREMENTS) AND ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN GUIDELINES (MINIMUM RECESSES/PROJECTIONS AND ROOF OFFSETS).**

Chair Thomas read into the record:

- B. **(THIS ITEM TO BE CONTINUED TO THE JUNE 29, 2015, PLANNING & ZONING BOARD MEETING) 900 10<sup>TH</sup> STREET: AN AMENDMENT TO THE SITE PLAN FOR A SPECIAL EXCEPTION USE PREVIOUSLY APPROVED TO ESTABLISH A “BUILDING SUPPLIES, OFFICE AND RETAIL SPACE WITH A STORAGE WAREHOUSE”.**
- C. **THE BENEFITS OF DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT IN THE TOWN OF LAKE PARK. (PRESENTED BY JOHN D’AGOSTINO, TOWN MANAGER, AND BLAKE RANE, FINANCE DIRECTOR)**

**TOWN MANAGER PRESENTATION**

John D’Agostino, Town Manager, addressed and thanked the Planning & Zoning Board Members, and welcomed Mayor Dubois and Town Commissioner Rapoza, who were present as members of the audience.

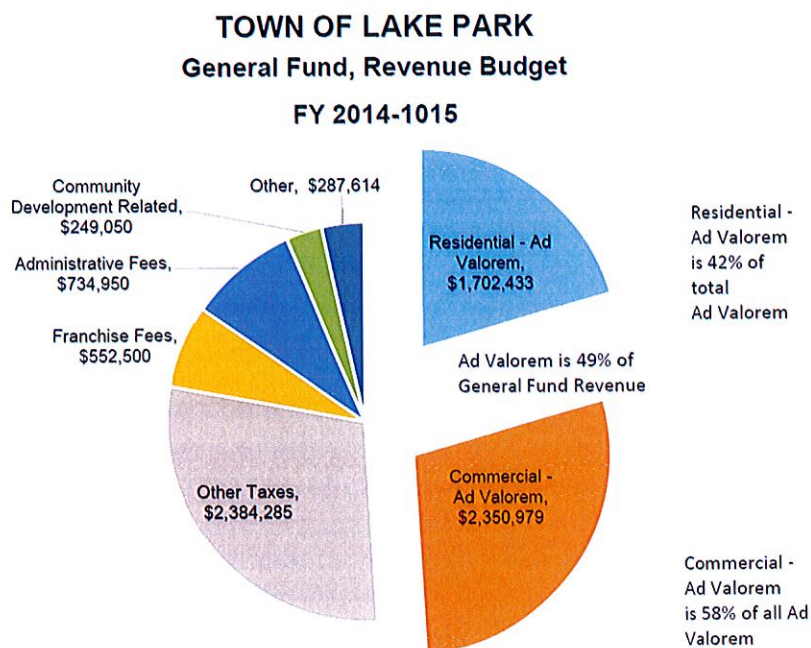
Mr. D’Agostino explained the intent of tonight’s discussion is to provide the Board with a financial perspective of the Town of Lake Park, and where the Town is financially at the present time. He

stated his hope is that this financial information will shed some light regarding the Town's General Revenue Budget, the number of residential properties and the recessed values, Town expenditures, and the General Fund Unassigned and Undesignated Fund Balances. Mr. D'Agostino stated this financial information is important as we look forward to future development, as we need to begin to look at ways in which we can reestablish investment in the Town of Lake Park, while maintaining the characteristics of the community. Mr. D'Agostino called upon the Town Finance Director, Blake Rane, to present a slide show, and upon the conclusion he hopes for good dialogue with the Board regarding where we need to go in the future from a financial perspective and how development will help us get there.

Chair Thomas thanked Mr. D'Agostino for being present and providing this information to the Board. She inquired if the Board will continue to receive financial information in the future. Mr. D'Agostino responded his intent is to be involved with all Town Boards and Committees in order to provide this type of information. He feels it is important, from a planning perspective and a management perspective, that everyone is on the same page, understanding the needs of the Town, and moving in the same direction.

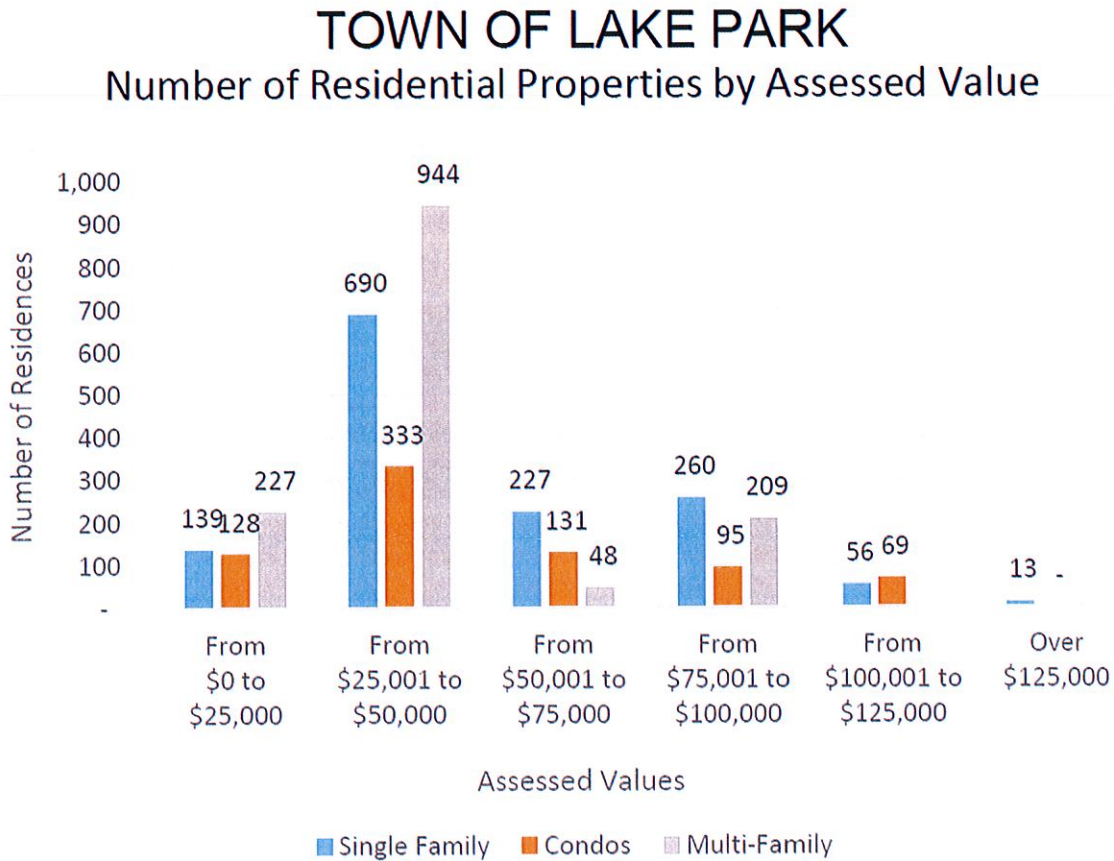
Blake Rane, Finance Director, addressed the Board. He stated the presentation is intended for information to the Board, and that he and Mr. D'Agostino are committed to a great deal of communication with all the aspects of the Town in order to increase understanding. Mr. Rane stated now is an exciting and very challenging time for the Town of Lake Park, as we are experiencing increased activity throughout all Departments, as well as an increased interest in development and redevelopment within the Town.

Mr. Rane presented a pie chart entitled *General Fund, Revenue Budget FY 2014-2015*, as follows:



Mr. Rane explained the pie chart illustrates General Fund revenue sources and their magnitudes. Mr. Rane pointed out the importance of ad valorem (property taxes) in funding the Town, and stated in FY 14/15 ad valorem taxes accounted for 49% of the Town's General Fund Revenue. Additionally, 42% of the budgeted property tax revenue comes from residential properties in the Town.

Mr. Rane presented a graph entitled *Town of Lake Park, Number of Residential Properties by Assessed Value*, as follows:



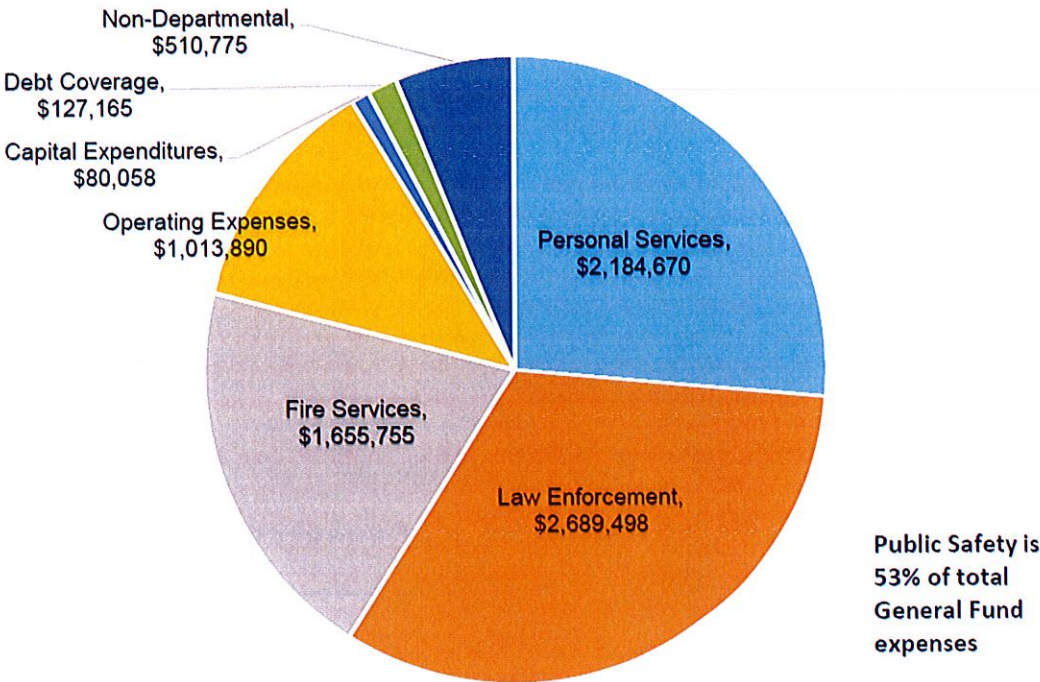
Values include applicable Homestead exemption

Data from the fy 2013 Palm Beach County Tax Appraiser's Office

Mr. Rane gave statistics on residential properties in the Town. He explained the graph indicates the total number of housing units divided into single-family homes, condominiums, and multi-family units. He stated there are a total of 3,569 residences in Town, 494 or 14% of which have a taxable value of \$25,000 or less (including, where applicable, homestead and all other types of exemptions). Another 55% of the Town's residences have a taxable value of between \$25,001 and \$50,000 - which provides for a total of 69% of Town residences with a value of \$50,000 or less. Mr. Rane explained a home with a taxable value of \$25,000 would pay \$220 of ad valorem taxes to the Town in FY 2014, and a home with a taxable value of \$50,000 would have paid \$440 in ad valorem taxes. Mr. Rane stated the General Fund revenue sources are the funds which provide Town services to residents.

Mr. Rane presented a pie chart entitled *General Fund, Expense Budget FY 2014-2015*, as follows:

**TOWN OF LAKE PARK  
General Fund, Expense Budget  
FY 2014-1015**



Mr. Rane explained the Expense Budget for FY 2014 and pointed out that Public Safety consumes 53% of the expenses of the General Fund, and recognized the important role of public safety to the residents. Another large portion is the cost of Town Staff. Town Staff currently consists of 50 full-time and part-time employees, which is down from 65 employees at this time in 2007, which is roughly a 25% reduction in total staffing. Mr. Rane pointed out the very tiny slice on the chart is for capital expenditures - a category that frequently gets pushed out of the budget, but which is a very important element to improve effectiveness and efficiency in the Town.

Mr. Rane presented a slide entitled *Schedule of Undesignated and Unassigned Fund Balance*, as follows:

**TOWN OF LAKE PARK**  
**General Fund**  
Schedule of Undesignated and Unassigned Fund Balance

Schedule of Undesignated Fund Balance		
September 30, 2009	\$	1,176,019
September 30, 2010	\$	510,773

Schedule of Unassigned Fund Balance		
September 30, 2011	\$	277,015
September 30, 2012	\$	20,643
September 30, 2013	\$	198,722

Mr. Rane stated this final slide shows the changes in the availability of funds over the past five (5) years. He explained this pool of funds is what the general government has available to draw upon in the case of an emergency, or for the Town Commission to go to with an unbudgeted project. Mr. Rane stated he is available for questions from the Board.

Mr. D'Agostino again addressed the Board and expressed the graphic entitled *Town of Lake Park, Number of Residential Properties by Assessed Value* is very important when you look at Town's ability as a community to be able to weather the ups and downs of economic cycles. He pointed out that currently most of the Town's residential property values, after exemptions, have taxable values in the range of \$25,000 - \$50,000, which is an uneven distribution of value in a community of this size. What this means is that Town Staff and the Board are challenged to help diversify the residential tax value base, in order to increase values. He explained that when property values are increased, it will produce a ripple affect across other property values. Mr. D'Agostino stated as we begin to look at creative ways in which to encourage investment, increase investment, and increase value, it will help the Town to be able to afford the capital projects this community so desperately needs – for example, road resurfacing, striping of roadways, and purchasing capital items which have not been purchased in several years. He explained that from a financial perspective it is very unhealthy for any community to have a high amount of property value at the lower end of the spectrum. Communities which border the Town of Lake Park, including the City of Riviera Beach, have a wider distribution of residential value, some of which are in the million dollar + range. The Town of Lake Park has only one residential property valued at \$200,000+. The problem with this is as we move forward and try to provide services we will not be able to do it on a continual basis without increasing property values or increasing and broadening the value spectrum for residential properties. Mr. D'Agostino pointed out that most of the ad valorem tax revenue is coming from commercial properties. He stated when the Town was designed by Frederick Olmstead, the perimeters were designed for commercial, industrial and retail, and the inner portion of Town was clearly designed for residential. The Town has a unique planned development type design, which was well ahead of its time in 1929. However, unless we begin to

once again pay attention to the perimeters of the Town and begin looking at ordinances and projects which will increase residential and commercial values, we will not grow revenue wise, and if we do not grow revenue wise, as a community we will continue to struggle financially.

Mr. D'Agostino pointed out the slide entitled *Schedule of Undesignated and Unassigned Fund Balance* and stated if the Town were to experience a hurricane this year, there would only be \$198,722 available, which would probably buy us 20 days. As an example, surrounding communities have million dollar + undesignated and unassigned fund balances on hand. This is a very dangerous situation for the Town. Where would the Town go to get funds to operate after Day 20 in the event of hurricane? The Town would have to go to the State legislature and ask to borrow money and then pay it back over time. The Town would be in a situation where it would have to borrow to pay everyday expenses. The Town cannot afford to be in this situation in the future. If the community is going to be successful, it has to be able to diversify the property tax base and increase residential and commercial values, which will increase when projects come into our community in the industrial or commercial component. Currently, the Town is land-locked with respect to residential property values. When we look at ways to increase residential values, we need to look at the U.S. One corridor as it was originally designed back in 1929. We need to develop more condominium type development projects, particularly along the Federal Highway area, as well as the potential for mixed-use development. Mr. D'Agostino stated his style of management is to go into the communities which would be affected by the proposed changes in order to show them how the developments will look and to get them involved in the design and approval process. He understands not everyone will like the proposals, however, the reason the proposals are going to be made is because we have no other choice since we do not have a diversified tax base like many of the surrounding communities. Mr. D'Agostino further stated that when the next economic downturn occurs, the Town will lose more employees and more services and the ad valorem will suffer as a result unless we diversify the tax base and introduce new value to our commercial, residential and retail establishments. Mr. D'Agostino stated that he and Staff will be very active in the community when the proposals are made, and will bring the proposals not only to the Planning & Zoning Board, but will meet with the residents in the affected communities to develop a partnership for the future growth of this community. Mr. D'Agostino expressed the Town cannot continue to operate in this vain and expect to advance financially, socially or economically without a broader diversification of its tax base.

## **BOARD DISCUSSION**

Chair Thomas asked if an approach might be to sit down with the Palm Beach County Property Appraiser and look at the valuations of Town properties to see how they could be restructured in order to allow for additional taxes on properties. Mr. D'Agostino responded the only way to restructure value is to create additional value at a higher level. For the Town's inner residential areas, we should consider community development initiatives such as Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) money for the low income areas in order to bring them up to code. Mr. D'Agostino stated that some of the monies which the Town is eligible for and can apply for in the future he would like to see go toward housing development and redevelopment. He would like to begin to invest in the lower valued properties in order to increase the value and move it into a higher value level. He explained the County's valuation system is looking at what the market will demand, and as a result, this is where our values are falling in the majority. The Town needs to

look at projects in the future which will distribute that value higher. If we look at mixed-use projects in the future, we need to ensure some of the property will come on line for mixed-use retail and residential along the U.S. One corridor. Mr. D'Agostino stated we need to increase waterfront condominium values which would produce revenue and stabilize the revenue base without relying on the lower valued properties to pay more. This could bring anywhere from \$300,000-\$500,000 to \$5 million dollars, depending on market conditions today. Mr. D'Agostino expressed he would like to be in the position of lowering the ad valorem, increasing the Town's ability to provide more programs and services, and to look at redesigning the Park Avenue area so as to create another mixed-use, residential and commercial development. He would like to create a village concept that would bring art & entertainment and condominium living to the downtown area - which would have its own vitality and bring in people who live, work, shop and recreate in the Park Avenue to the waterfront area. Mr. D'Agostino stated this is a unique opportunity for the Town and we need the P&Z Board to partner with Staff to build a balanced project which will meet the needs and interests of the community and residents, which will provide the revenue needed to provide the services they desire.

Chair Thomas stated she agrees we need diversification of industry in the Town, since one industry cannot carry the weight of the whole Town. She concurs with the need for better housing and higher valuations of residential properties in Town. Mr. D'Agostino responded that diversification of the residential tax base is extremely important to the future growth and development of this community. He stated Staff will put a plan together and be back in front of the P&Z Board – what we do and how we intend to do it is going to determine the future success of this community. Mr. D'Agostino stated grant money needs to be invested in the residential housing stock to make improvements. He stated the Town needs to attract permanent residents with homeownership investment in a mixed retail/commercial environment, and the U.S. One corridor is our best hope to achieve that objective. Mr. D'Agostino stated if the U.S. One corridor mixed-use development goes, it will forever change the financial face of this community.

Board Member Von Unruh mentioned meetings have been held regarding the possibility of mixed-use development in the future, which he thinks it is a great idea and everyone was on-board with the concept. He stated one of his biggest concerns is the school district, which he noticed has never been mentioned. One of the biggest attractions to a Town is the school and if you would like to attract young people to the Town of Lake Park, we need to make sure the school system is desirable. Board Member Von Unruh further expressed that in order to bring young people to the Town you need to think beyond redevelopment and consider the schools. He stated that Lake Park Elementary has been going through some difficulties and he has not heard of anyone trying to make the needed improvements. He expressed that the school issue is not just a problem of the County, but also for the Town. Board Member Von Unruh expressed that attracting younger people would bring additional tax revenue to the Town, as they typically have less exemptions. He stated that bringing people to Town is a much broader issue than simply redeveloping U.S. One - if you really want Lake Park to be sustainable in the future it will involve other things such as education, transportation, the possibility of a train station - all of these things need to be looked at to make the Town better, including possibly marketing. Mr. D'Agostino agreed and stated Board Member Von Unruh's comments are extremely valid and we need to look at this as a multifaceted approach. He stated when looking at a school system you look at the value of real estate and how the value correlates with a better education and presently the Town's values are not significant



enough to make that correlation. Mr. D'Agostino explained he is looking at this from a value perspective because we have some control over how to increase property values, however, we have less control over improving the school system unless as a community we commit to putting local dollars into the school system. At this time, we cannot commit because we do not have the revenue coming in. In the future, we want to be in a position where we can make that commitment so we can improve our schools and services. Mr. D'Agostino expressed that he would love to see multi-surface synthetic fields in the parks for the youth in the community to play soccer. He stated that when the kids get involved the parents will become involved. We need to reach out to the minority population of this community from a governmental perspective to get them engaged and involved and working in this community. Mr. D'Agostino stated his support of a rail station in Lake Park is primary and he wants to see it happen. We have to make sure that we have the ability to leverage the Lake Park location to the Department of Transportation, which will not come cheap and will cost money. The Town needs additional revenue in order to do these types of things and we cannot do it with the current distribution of property values. Mr. D'Agostino expressed that property valuation is the foundation on which you build the ability to have a train station, park & recreation programs, state-of-the art synthetic soccer fields, athletic programs and facilities and the Town is currently not in the financial condition to do these things. The Town of Lake Park's undesignated fund balance is lower than any other community in Palm Beach County and we are unable to do these things without the financial ability.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

*There were no public comments.*

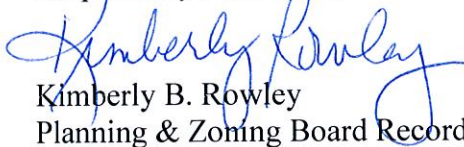
#### **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR COMMENTS**

Ms. DiTommaso announced the next Planning & Zoning Board Meeting will be held on June 29, 2015, at 7:00 p.m.

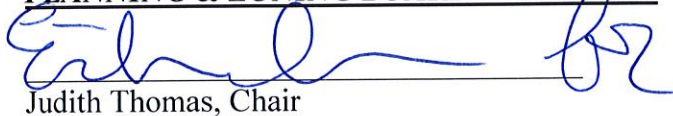
#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the Board, the Meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
Kimberly B. Rowley  
Planning & Zoning Board Recording Secretary

#### **PLANNING & ZONING BOARD APPROVAL:**

  
Judith Thomas, Chair

Town of Lake Park Planning & Zoning Board

DATE:

6/29/15