



Regular City Commission Meeting Minutes
June 23, 2025 at 6:00 PM

Mayor Walter Welch
Vice Mayor Shirley Green Brown
Commissioner Jacob Fletcher
Commissioner Jennifer Ringersen
Commissioner Dayna Williams

City Manager Rodolfo
Valladares
City Attorney Marian Rush

Meeting Location: James A. Lewis City Commission Chambers
15100 NW 142 Terrace
Alachua, FL 32615

CITIZENS PRESENT: Rev. Debra Sermons, Rev. Eddie Sermons, Merrilee Molwitz-Jipson, Stacie Greco, Mark Brown, Sarah Younger, Teretha Carter, Holly Deloman, Busy Shires, Antonio Hall, Teddy Sanchez, Diana Carlson, Soorya Lindberg.

STAFF ATTENDING: Robert Bonetti, Michael Carrillo, Carson Crockett, Bernadette Fisher, Lisa Freeman, Lynn Hayes, Carlos Hunt, Brent Lanier, Tara Malone, Damon Messina, Jason Moses, Jesse Sandusky, Donna Smith, Bryan Thomas, LeAnne Williams, Tyler Williams, Cap Wilson, David Wisener.

City Commission Meeting

Notice given pursuant to Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes. In order to appeal any decision made at this meeting, you will need a verbatim record of the proceedings. It will be your responsibility to ensure such a record is made.

CALL TO ORDER

Led by Mayor Walter Welch.

INVOCATION

Led by Minister Eddie Sermons, Paradise Community Outreach Ministry.

PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

Led by Mayor Welch.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Commissioner Jennifer Ringersen moved to approve the agenda; seconded by Commissioner Dayna Williams.

Mayor Welch opened the floor for public comments.

Tamara Robbins addressed the Commission, requesting that public comment be allowed for items listed under Special Presentations. She also expressed her opinion that Commissioner Williams should recuse herself from the upcoming public hearings.

Following the comment, Mayor Welch passed the gavel to Vice Mayor Shirley Green Brown.

Passed 5/0 by unanimous consent.

APPROVE READING OF PROPOSED ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS BY TITLE ONLY

Commissioner Williams moved to approve the reading of proposed ordinances and resolutions by title only; seconded by Commissioner Ringersen.

Mayor Welch opened the floor for public comments.

There were no comments.

Passed 5/0 by unanimous consent.

Vice Mayor Brown called for a five-minute recess.

I. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

A) FISCAL ANALYSIS REPORT FOR FY 2024-2025 THROUGH MAY 31, 2025

Senior Accountant Tyler Williams presented the Fiscal Analysis Report.

Commissioner Jacob Fletcher asked clarifying questions.

Senior Accountant Williams provided the information.

II. COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS ON SUBJECTS NOT ON THE AGENDA

(Please Limit to 3 Minutes. Any citizen who is unable to speak at this time will have an opportunity to speak at the end of the meeting)

Mayor Welch opened the floor for public comments.

Merrillee Jipson presented LiDAR maps from the Suwannee River Water Management District (SRWMD) and discussed regional water and soil conditions.

Mitch Glaeser, representing San Felasco Tech City, highlighted the grand opening of Siemens and introduced Abdu Bejjaj of Ignition Packaging.

Mr. Bejjaj provided remarks about his company and shared how he came to live in the City of Alachua.

III. COMMITTEE REPORTS/COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS/CITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

A) APPOINTMENT TO THE CITIZEN ADVISORY TASK FORCE

Deputy City Clerk LeAnne Williams presented the item regarding appointments to the Citizen Advisory Task Force.

Applicants Diana Carlson, Stanley Richardson, and Julie Smith addressed the Commission and shared their interest in serving on the board.

Deputy City Clerk Williams conducted the ballot process and announced the vote. Diana Carlson and Stanley Richardson received a majority of the votes.

A discussion ensued regarding the remaining unfilled seat.

Commissioner Fletcher moved to appoint two applicants to the Citizen Advisory Task Force, with Diana Carlson with a three-year term expiring September 30, 2028, and Stanley Richardson with a two-year term expiring September 30, 2027; seconded by Commissioner Ringersen.

Mayor Welch opened the floor for public comments.

There were no comments.

Passed 5-0 by roll call.

B) OPTIONS REGARDING THE CITY'S ORDINANCE ON ALCOHOL SALES IN PROXIMITY TO CHURCHES

Economic Development Manager David Wisener introduced the item and presented the staff report.

Mayor Welch invited the commissioners to ask questions or offer comments.

Commissioner Jacob Fletcher inquired about the response from local churches.

Economic Development Manager Wisener stated that no responses had been received from the churches contacted.

Commissioner Dayna Williams expressed that she would like to hear input from the churches and other stakeholders before any decision is made.

Vice Mayor Shirley Green Brown agreed, stating that the Commission should receive feedback from the churches and offered to provide additional contact information to Economic Development Manager David Wisener.

C) DISCUSSION ON STRATEGIES TO INCREASE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND TRANSPARENCY

Commissioner Fletcher introduced the item and presented the staff report.

Commissioner Fletcher moved to have public comment; seconded by Commissioner Ringersen.

Vice Mayor Shirley Green Brown requested that comments be limited to three minutes per person, with each individual permitted to speak only once.

Mayor Welch invited the commissioners to ask questions or offer comments.

There were no comments.

Passed 5-0 by roll call.

Soorya Lindberg noted that the County livestreams its meetings through Granicus at a cost of \$15,000 per year, with an option to add closed captioning for an additional \$25,000 annually, bringing the total to \$40,000 per year.

Julie Smith cautioned against allowing public comments on social media platforms due to requirements under public records laws.

Sarah Younger suggested the City explore alternative communication methods with the public instead of relying solely on live television broadcasts.

Mr. Richardson spoke about the Alachua County Citizen Academy and encouraged the City to consider implementing a similar program.

Ms. Robbins supported livestreaming meetings and recommended using the County's website for public notices, which is free, as well as including notices in City utility bills.

Annie Welch agreed with Mr. Richardson on the importance of better informing citizens about events.

Teretha Carter stated that livestreaming would benefit her since she is unable to attend meetings in person regularly.

Antonio Hall spoke about the need for consistent alcohol regulations among businesses.

John Brown, Chair of the Senior Resources Advisory Board (SRAB), requested that any platform selected for livestreaming be "senior-friendly."

Carol Richardson noted that many of the concerns raised were common in other cities and suggested holding quarterly town halls to gather community input.

Commissioner Fletcher requested that City Manager Rodolfo Valladares investigate options for implementing livestreaming of City meetings.

Commissioner Fletcher moved to direct the City Manager to explore and present options to the Commission on how the City can provide livestreaming to its residents, which is also user-friendly for senior citizens, and to examine the legal considerations that should be taken into account; seconded by Commissioner Ringersen.

Mayor Welch opened the floor for public comments.

Ms. Robbins requested that the recommendations be presented to the Senior Resources Advisory Board (SRAB) prior to being brought before the Commission.

Commissioner Williams stated that the recommendations should be presented to the Commission and then to the SRAB.

Following discussion, Commissioner Fletcher amended his motion.

Commissioner Fletcher moved to amend his motion to direct the City Manager to explore and present options to the Commission on how the City can provide livestreaming to its residents, which is also user-friendly for senior citizens, and to examine the legal considerations that should be taken into account. The recommendations will be presented to the Senior Resources Advisory Board before it is presented to the Commission; seconded by Commissioner Ringersen.

Passed 5-0 by roll call.

Vice Mayor Brown moved to have the City Manager explore conducting a survey of the Citizens for the Good Life Community to determine their priorities and a viable means of doing so; seconded by Commissioner Fletcher.

City Manager Rodolfo Valladares requested clarification on the motion.

Vice Mayor Shirley Green Brown provided the requested clarification.

Mayor Welch opened the floor for public comments.

There were no comments.

Passed 5-0 by roll call.

IV. PUBLIC HEARINGS AND ORDINANCES

(Presentations, other than the applicant, please limit to 3 Minutes)

- A) ORDINANCE 25-09: AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF ALACHUA, FLORIDA, RELATING TO THE LARGE SCALE AMENDMENT OF THE CITY OF ALACHUA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FUTURE LAND USE MAP; AMENDING THE FUTURE LAND USE MAP CLASSIFICATION FROM AGRICULTURE (± 258.56-ACRES), MODERATE DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (± 13.78-ACRES), MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (± 9.7-ACRES), COMMUNITY COMMERCIAL (± 45.29-ACRES), AND COMMERCIAL (± 18.25-ACRES) TO LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (± 196.68-ACRES), MODERATE DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (± 46.74-ACRES), HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (± 23.48-ACRES), AND COMMUNITY COMMERCIAL (± 78.68-ACRES) ON A ± 345.48-ACRE SUBJECT PROPERTY LOCATED 15601 NW 167TH BOULEVARD; TAX PARCELS 03054-001-002, 03055-001-001, 03055-001-003, 03055-010-001, 03055-010-003, 03871-000-000, 03873-000-000, 03873-001-000, AND 03873-001-001; REPEALING ALL ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT; PROVIDING SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE (FIRST READING; LEGISLATIVE HEARING).**

Planner Carson Crockett introduced the item and presented the staff report.

City Attorney Rush inquired whether an additional neighborhood meeting would be held.

Planner Crockett confirmed that another meeting was required.

Mayor Welch invited the commissioners to ask questions or offer comments.

Commissioner Fletcher asked about the changes that had been made.

Planner Crockett indicated that the applicant could answer this question.

Bryan Flagg from Grey Robinson Law Firm provided further details, followed by Craig Braiser of MP-5, who elaborated on the changes.

A discussion ensued.

Commissioner Ringersen moved that, in accordance with Section 2.2.11 of the City's LDRs, this Commission refer the application for a large-scale Comprehensive Plan amendment for Tomoka Hills Farms, Inc. and Tower Hill Insurance Group, LLC back to City Staff for review of the major changes to the application by the applicant: seconded by Commissioner Williams.

Mayor Welch opened the floor for public comments.

Ms. Robbins spoke against the motion, presenting her arguments.

Ms. Younger requested that the Commission deny the motion.

Ms. Smith commented on the Planning and Zoning Board meeting, noting community confusion regarding the presentations.

Busy Shires agreed with Ms. Robbins and shared her reasons for opposing the project.

Ms. Lindberg presented a portion of the Land Development Regulations (LDRs) to the Commission and stated that the applicant should restart the process from the beginning.

Planner Crockett provided clarifying information to the Commission in response to the citizens' comments.

Passed 4-1 by roll call, with Commissioner Fletcher dissenting.

- B) ORDINANCE 25-10: AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF ALACHUA, FLORIDA, RELATING TO THE AMENDMENT OF THE OFFICIAL ZONING ATLAS; AMENDING THE OFFICIAL ZONING ATLAS FROM AGRICULTURAL (A)(± 258.56-ACRES), RESIDENTIAL SINGLE-FAMILY – 4 (RSF-4)(± 13.78-ACRES), RESIDENTIAL MULTIPLE FAMILY – 8 (RMF-8)(± 9.70-ACRES), COMMUNITY COMMERCIAL (CC)(± 45.29-ACRES), AND COMMERCIAL INTENSIVE (CI)(± 18.25-ACRES) TO PLANNED DEVELOPMENT - RESIDENTIAL (PD-R)(± 266.90-ACRES) AND PLANNED DEVELOPMENT - COMMERCIAL (PD-COMM)(± 76.68-ACRES) ON A ± 345.58-ACRE SUBJECT PROPERTY LOCATED 15601 NW 167TH BOULEVARD; TAX PARCELS 03054-001-002, 03055-001-001, 03055-001-003, 03055-010-001, 03055-010-003, 03871-000-000, 03873-000-000, 03873-001-000, AND 03873-001-001; REPEALING ALL ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT; PROVIDING SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE (FIRST READING; QUASI-JUDICIAL HEARING).

Deputy City Clerk Williams swore in all individuals who intended to speak regarding Ordinance 25-10.

Planner Crockett introduced the item and presented the staff report.

Mr. Flagg provided additional information.

City Attorney Rush opened the floor for comments from affected parties.

Stacy Greco, Alachua County Water Resources Program Manager, , gave a presentation on the Mill Creek Sink watershed and referenced an email sent by County Commissioner Chuck Chestnut.

City Attorney Rush conducted a voir dire of the Commission.

Ms. Younger of High Springs stated that she was an affected party due to her reliance on well water and was so recognized. She expressed concerns about the quality of drinking water in relation to growth.

Ms. Shires indicated she was an affected party because she shares a property line with the project and was deemed as such. She provided reasons for opposing the project.

Ms. Lingberg also identified herself as an affected party and was recognized accordingly. She stated that the project was too dense for the location and presented additional reasons why she believed the project should not proceed.

Commissioner Williams moved that, in accordance with Section 2.2.11 of the City's LDRs, the City Commission refer the application for a site-specific amendment to the Official Zoning Atlas for Tomoka Hills Farms, Inc. and Tower Hill Insurance Group, LLC back to City Staff for review of the major changes to the application proposed by the applicant; seconded by Commissioner Ringersen.

Mr. Flagg expressed his support for the motion, reminding the Commission that both the County's stormwater regulations and the Suwannee River Water Management District (SRWMD) stormwater regulations apply within the City. He welcomed further communication from Stacy Greco regarding the stormwater requirements and assured the citizens that he had taken careful note of the concerns raised by the affected parties.

Ms. Robbins inquired about details related to the golf course approval.

Planner Crockett provided clarification addressing the citizens' concerns.

Commissioner Flecher asked follow-up questions regarding the concerns raised by the citizens.

Planner Crockett and City Manager Valladares provided information.

Passed 5-0 by roll call.

- C) RESOLUTION 25-11: A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF ALACHUA, FLORIDA; DESIGNATING THE PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT AS THE ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY TO RECEIVE, REVIEW, AND PROCESS FINAL PLAT AND REPLAT SUBMITTALS; DESIGNATING THE LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS ADMINISTRATOR AS THE RESPONSIBLE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICIAL FOR APPROVING, APPROVING WITH CONDITIONS, OR DENYING THE PROPOSED FINAL PLAT OR REPLAT.

City Attorney Rush read Resolution 25-11 by title only.

Planner Crockett introduced the item and presented the staff report.

Vice Mayor Brown invited the commissioners to ask questions or offer comments.

Commissioner Fletcher asked about the potential impact on future reviews and whether City Attorney Rush was overseeing proper implementation of the policy.

City Attorney Rush provided a response addressing these concerns.

Commissioner Williams moved to adopt Resolution 25-11; seconded by Commissioner Fletcher.

Vice Mayor Brown opened the floor for public comments.

Bryan Buescher urged staff to consider the implications of the new state regulation and to implement appropriate safeguards.

Ms. Robbins expressed concerns regarding public engagement and the notification process related to the new state regulation.

Passed 5-0 by roll call.

V. AGENDA ITEMS

- A) FLORIDA POLICE BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION, INC. PETITIONER V. CITY OF ALACHUA, RESPONDENT CASE NUMBER RC – 2025-112

City Attorney Rush introduced the item and made recommendations.

Commissioner Fletcher moved to authorize City Attorney, Marian Rush, to represent the City of Alachua in CASE NUMBER RC – 2025-112 and issue a PO for it; seconded by Commissioner Ringersen.

Vice Mayor Brown opened the floor for public comments.

There were no comments.

Passed 5-0 by roll call.

B) INTERIM CITY MANAGER CONTRACT

City Attorney Rush introduced the item and made recommendations. She asked City Manager Valladares if he agreed to the contract terms.

City Manager Valladares responded that he was honored to serve the City of Alachua and agreed to the terms.

Commissioner Williams moved to approve the Contract and authorize the Mayor to sign; seconded by Commissioner Ringersen.

Vice Mayor Brown opened the floor for public comments.

Ms. Robbins congratulated City Manager Valladares and requested that the contract terms include membership in the International City Managers Association.

Passed 5-0 by roll call.

VI. COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS ON SUBJECTS NOT ON THE AGENDA

(Please Limit to 3 Minutes. Any citizen who did not speak during the Citizen Comments period at the beginning of the meeting may do so at this time.)

Ms. Lindberg stated that she had met the new planners and requested the City consider adding Juneteenth as a paid employee holiday.

Ms. Robbins referenced a letter to the Commission from County Commissioner Chestnut and inquired whether emails sent to the Mayor were also distributed to the other commissioners. She noted her unawareness that the Senior Resources Advisory Board (SRAB) meets only quarterly and requested that the SRAB hold a special meeting to review the recommendation regarding livestreaming. Ms. Robbins also expressed concerns about City Hall staffing during emergencies.

Mr. Buescher asked about interviews conducted with planners who had resigned.

Michele Lee expressed her concerns regarding the City's alcohol ordinance.

Mandy Bucci also raised concerns about the ordinance, noting the presence of other businesses currently selling alcohol.

VII. COMMENTS FROM CITY MANAGER AND CITY ATTORNEY

City Manager Valladares thanked all participants of the recent strategic planning retreat. He reported attending the grand opening of Siemens Tech City as well as the

Juneteenth Celebration. He introduced Planning Director Bryan Thomas and Principal Planner Bernadette Fisher. City Manager Valladares also expressed appreciation for Planner Carson Crockett and Planning Assistant Brenda Fleiger for their dedicated efforts in maintaining the Planning Department's operations over the past few months. He announced the upcoming July 4th Celebration.

City Attorney Rush noted that the past few weeks had been hectic and that she was continuing work on interviews related to the planners who had resigned. She added that she was investigating how to incorporate the new regulations into the Land Development Regulations (LDRs).

VIII. COMMISSION COMMENTS/DISCUSSION

Commissioner Fletcher reported attending the strategic planning retreat and the Juneteenth Celebration. He expressed confidence in the City Attorney and staff as they work to implement the new state regulations but also voiced concerns regarding City Hall staffing during emergencies.

Commissioner Williams announced the passing of former Commissioner Robert Wilford.

Commissioner Ringersen recalled that staff had stayed overnight during a previous state of emergency and noted that she also attended the Juneteenth Celebration.

City Manager Valladares clarified that the staffing concerns arose post-emergency, specifically related to the permit process. He noted that the City operates a call center and is committed to ensuring it has sufficient activation overlap following emergencies.

Vice Mayor Brown thanked Pastor Sermons for the invocation, the citizens who provided comments, and recognized the Juneteenth Celebration. She stated she attended the strategic planning retreat and the ribbon-cutting for Siemens Tech City. Vice Mayor Brown welcomed Planning Director Bryan Thomas and Principal Planner Bernadette Fisher.

Mayor Welch thanked the citizens for their comments and noted his attendance at the Juneteenth Celebration.

ADJOURN

Commissioner Ringersen moved to adjourn; seconded by Commissioner Williams.

Passed by unanimous consent.

CONSENT AGENDA

Consent Agenda items represent routine City operations and business. These items are approved at the beginning of the Regular City Commission meeting upon approval of the meeting agenda.

- A) APPROVE THE MAY 19, 2025, CITY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES.
- B) APPROVE THE MAY 19, 2025, JOINT COUNTY CITY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES.
- C) APPROVE THE JUNE 09, 2025, CITY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES.

ATTEST:

**CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF
ALACHUA, FLORIDA:**



Rodolfo Valadares, City
Manager/Clerk



Walter Welch, Mayor