



## Minutes

### City Commission

May 14, 2026, 6:30 p.m.

A **Regular Meeting** of the City of Winter Garden City Commission was called to order by Mayor Rees at 6:37 pm. at City Hall, 300 West Plant Street, Winter Garden, Florida. An opening invocation and pledge of allegiance were given.

#### **Present:**

Mayor John Rees  
Commissioner District 1 - Lisa L. Bennett  
Commissioner District 2 - Iliana R. Jones  
Commissioner District 3 - Chloe Johnson  
Commissioner District 4 - Colin Sharman

#### **Also Present:**

City Manager - Jon C. Williams  
City Attorney - A. Kurt Ardaman  
Interim City Clerk - Ronisha Martin

### 1. **Approval of Minutes**

A. Regular Meeting Minutes – April 23, 2026

**Motion by Commissioner Bennett to approve the regular meeting minutes of April 23, 2026. Seconded by Commissioner Jones and carried unanimously 5-0.**

### 2. **PRESENTATION**

A. **Proclamation 26:08**: Proclaiming May 7, 2026, as a National Day of Prayer was read by Mayor John Rees.

B. **Proclamation 26:09**: Proclaiming Emergency Services Week was read and presented by Mayor Rees and the City Commission. The proclamation was accepted by Fire Chief Jose P. Gainza, Jr. and some firefighters. Chief Gainza thanked the City Commission for the recognition. Mayor Rees thanked the team for their hard work, dedication, and positive attitude and shared that the citizens of Winter Garden truly appreciate all they do for the community.

### 3. **First Reading and Public Hearing of Proposed Ordinances**

A. **ORDINANCE 26-12**: AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF WINTER GARDEN, FLORIDA REZONING APPROXIMATELY 337.25 ± ACRES OF CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY GENERALLY LOCATED EAST OF FLYNN COURT, WEST OF AVALON ROAD, NORTH OF MARSH ROAD, AND SOUTH OF JOHNS LAKE, AT 17729 MARSH ROAD AND 1400, 1401, AND 1756 WILLIAMS ROAD, FROM NO ZONING (NZ) TO URBAN VILLAGE PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT (UVPUD); PROVIDING FOR CERTAIN UVPUD REQUIREMENTS AND DESCRIBING THE DEVELOPMENT AS THE JOHNS LAKE URBAN VILLAGE PUD; PROVIDING FOR NON-SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE

City Attorney Kurt Ardaman read Ordinance 26-12 by title only. Planning Director Kelly Carson stated the request was to rezone approximately 337.25 acres, known as the McKinnon property, from No Zoning (NZ) to Urban Village Planned Unit Development (PUD). She explained the property currently has an Urban Village Future Land Use designation and is presently used for agricultural and timberland purposes. Ms. Carson provided background regarding the Joint Planning Area (JPA) agreement with Orange County and noted the property was annexed into the City in 2007 through JPA 6 and Ordinance 07-34, which allowed lower-density development standards while maintaining certain Horizons West requirements.

Ms. Carson explained the proposed development would allow a maximum of 613 dwelling units, including single-family homes and townhomes, at a density of approximately 1.82 dwelling units per acre, which is below the maximum density permitted under the future land use designation. She further explained the development would utilize a transect-style plan to provide flexibility in lot layouts while preserving wetlands, mature trees, and environmentally sensitive areas. She stated the project would be developed in phases of no more than 50 units at a time and would include a mix of custom and national builders to provide varied architectural styles. She noted the proposal includes approximately 85.26 acres of open space, including active recreation areas and approximately 13.65 acres dedicated to a future City park. Ms. Carson stated the park site replaced a previously proposed elementary school site following community concerns regarding school traffic impacts. She also discussed the proposed Special District 1 area, which is intended to preserve heavily wooded portions of the property while allowing limited uses including a bed and breakfast, cottages, agritourism activities, reservation-only restaurant uses, and event space.

Ms. Carson also presented an overview of the proposed transportation network and explained the Traffic Impact Analysis identified approximately 5,401 daily trips generated by the development. She noted the removal of the proposed school site significantly reduced projected traffic volumes. She further explained the developer would be required to construct a roundabout at Marsh Road and Williams Road, improve Williams Road and Amber Sweet Lane to City standards, dedicate right-of-way, and provide fair-share contributions toward additional roadway improvements.

Ms. Carson also provided an overview of community outreach efforts and comments received regarding traffic, stormwater, school concurrency, open space, environmental studies, and roadway improvements. She further addressed comments related to Amber Sweet Lane right-of-way dedication and stated staff believes the proposed roadway dedication and cost-sharing arrangement is fair and equitable between adjacent developments.

Ms. Carson concluded by stating staff recommends approval of Ordinance 26-12, noting the project is significantly below the maximum allowable residential density,

preserves natural areas, incorporates pedestrian-friendly design features, and is consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan, Future Land Use Map, Land Development Regulations, and JPA6.

Mayor Rees inquired about the projected traffic calculations associated with the development. Ms. Carson explained the Traffic Impact Analysis included residential, restaurant, and bed and breakfast traffic, as well as multiple daily trips generated per household.

Mayor Rees opened the public hearing.

Noreen Dworkin, Editor-in-Chief of Vox Populi, expressed concerns regarding the region's affordable housing and homelessness crisis, stating the proposed development would not provide attainable housing options needed within the community.

Eric Clifton, 215 North Eola Drive, Orlando, Florida 32801, representing the Farm Sound PD development located south of the subject property, stated support for the proposed development overall but expressed concerns regarding the proposed Amber Sweet Lane right-of-way dedication. He requested the northern development provide the full 25-foot dedication and expressed concerns regarding the Traffic Impact Analysis following removal of the proposed school site.

Chuck Piper, property owner of 1735 and 1925 Marsh Road, expressed concerns regarding the proposed Amber Sweet Lane right-of-way dedication and roadway cost-sharing arrangement. Mr. Piper questioned the remaining roadway construction costs and potential future right-of-way dedication from his property. Ms. Carson explained roadway contribution percentages would be determined through future Traffic Impact Analyses. Mr. Piper stated he supports the proposed development overall.

Rick Stuebing, 54 Live Oak Road, Winter Garden, Florida 34787, Johns Lake Association President expressed support for the proposed development. Mr. Stuebing stated the Johns Lake Association Board reviewed the proposal and believes the lower-density development, preservation of green space, and reduced number of lakefront homes would help protect Johns Lake by limiting boat traffic and runoff impacts. He also noted the developer and his family have longstanding ties to the area and would reside within the community.

Alex Lloret, 1437 Williams Road Winter Graden Florida 34787, expressed concerns regarding increased traffic impacts along Marsh Road and stated he did not believe nearby approved developments and future growth in the area were fully reflected in the Traffic Impact Analysis. He also expressed concerns regarding continued growth and overdevelopment within the area and stated opposition to the proposed development.

Mayor Rees, hearing and seeing no other requests for public comment, closed the public hearing.

There were discussions regarding traffic impacts along Marsh Road, associated with continued growth in Lake County and the increasing number of commuters traveling into Winter Garden. **Mayor Rees** inquired about possibility of tolling or implementing other transportation measures to help offset impacts to the City's roadway infrastructure. **City Attorney Kurt Aradaman** noted that discussions have begun with transportation agencies, including Central Florida Expressway Authority (CFX) to explore potential opportunities, while City **Manager Jon C. Williams** stated that traffic counters would be deployed near the Lake County Line to gather updated data prior to second reading. Comments were made noting the developer's long-term presence in the area, plans to reside on-site, lower density approach, dedication of park space and proposed roadway improvements.

**Commissioner Sharman** inquired about potential future Comprehensive Plan considerations related to lower-density development standards within the area, a potential sound-absorbing fence adjacent to Marsh Road, and limiting the number of homes receiving Certificates of Occupancy prior to completion of the Independence Parkway extension. He stated he would like the discussed items reviewed by staff prior to the second reading.

**Motion by Commissioner Sharman to approve Ordinance 26-12 with second reading and public hearing May 28, 2026, with request for staff to evaluate the items discussed prior to second reading. Seconded by Commissioner Jones and carried unanimously 5-0.**

- B. **ORDINANCE 26-13**: AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF WINTER GARDEN, FLORIDA PROVIDING FOR THE ANNEXATION OF CERTAIN ADDITIONAL LANDS GENERALLY DESCRIBED AS APPROXIMATELY 0.44 ± ACRES LOCATED AT WEST COLONIAL DRIVE, WEST OF BEULAH ROAD, EAST OF 9TH STREET, SOUTH OF WEST COLONIAL DRIVE, AND NORTH OF MAGNOLIA STREET INTO THE CITY OF WINTER GARDEN, FLORIDA; REDEFINING THE CITY BOUNDARIES TO GIVE THE CITY JURISDICTION OVER SAID PROPERTY; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE
- C. **ORDINANCE 26-14**: AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF WINTER GARDEN, FLORIDA AMENDING THE FUTURE LAND USE MAP OF THE WINTER GARDEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN BY CHANGING THE LAND USE DESIGNATION OF REAL PROPERTY GENERALLY DESCRIBED AS APPROXIMATELY 0.44 ± ACRES LOCATED AT WEST COLONIAL DRIVE, WEST OF BEULAH ROAD, EAST OF 9TH STREET, SOUTH OF WEST COLONIAL DRIVE, AND NORTH OF MAGNOLIA STREET FROM ORANGE COUNTY COMMERCIAL TO CITY COMMERCIAL; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE
- D. **ORDINANCE 26-15**: AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF WINTER GARDEN, FLORIDA

REZONING APPROXIMATELY 0.44 ± ACRES LOCATED AT WEST COLONIAL DRIVE, WEST OF BEULAH ROAD, EAST OF 9TH STREET, SOUTH OF WEST COLONIAL DRIVE, AND NORTH OF MAGNOLIA STREET FROM ORANGE COUNTY C-3 WHOLESAL COMMERCIAL DISTRICT TO CITY C-2 ARTERIAL COMMERCIAL DISTRICT; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE

City Attorney Kurt Aradaman read ordinances 26-13, 26-14 and 26-15 by title only. Planning Director Kelly Carson stated the applicant is requesting annexation of property located on West Colonial Drive into the City, assignment of a Commercial Future Land Use designation, and rezoning to C-2. She explained that, following annexation, the applicant intends to request approval to construct a digital billboard on the property in exchange for the removal of two existing billboards located at 1101 East Plant Street and 14899 West Colonial Drive. She noted the billboard request would require a Special Exception Permit and a separate billboard agreement subject to City Commission approval at a later date. Ms. Carson stated that the annexation, future land use amendment, and rezoning were consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan and Code of Ordinances. Staff recommended approval.

Mayor Rees opened the public hearing; hearing and seeing none, he closed the public hearing.

**Motion by Commissioner Johnson to approve Ordinances 26-13, 26-14 and 26-15 with second reading and public hearing May 28, 2026. Seconded by Commissioner Bennett and carried unanimously 5-0.**

- E. **ORDINANCE 26-16:** AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WINTER GARDEN, FLORIDA, AMENDING CHAPTER 118 OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES, AMENDING SECTIONS 118-729, 118-731, 118-773, 118-774 AND 118-775 RELATING TO SPECIAL EXCEPTION USES AND PROHIBITED USES IN THE I-1 (LIGHT INDUSTRIAL AND WAREHOUSING) AND I-2 (GENERAL INDUSTRIAL) DISTRICTS; PROVIDING FOR ADDITIONAL USES DETERMINED TO BE SIMILAR IN TYPE AND INTENSITY AND COMPATIBLE WITH PERMITTED USES AND CLARIFYING PROHIBITED USES; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE

City Attorney Kurt Aradaman read ordinance 26-16 by title only. Planning Director Kelly Carson stated the Ordinance proposed amendments to Chapter 118, specifically Sections 118-729, 118-731, 118-733, 118-774, and 118-775, related to special exception uses and prohibited uses within the I-1 and I-2 zoning districts. She noted the amendments would allow additional special exception uses similar in type and intensity to permitted uses while clarifying prohibited uses within the industrial districts. Ms. Carson further stated the intent of the ordinance was to provide greater flexibility for the Planning and Zoning Board to consider compatible industrial uses while ensuring uses that could negatively impact the health, safety, and welfare of the community remained prohibited. Staff recommended approval.

Mayor Rees opened the public hearing; hearing and seeing none, he closed the public

hearing.

**Motion by Commissioner Bennett to approve Ordinance 26-16 with second reading and public hearing May 28, 2026. Seconded by Commissioner Sharman and carried unanimously 5-0.**

4. **Second Reading and Public Hearing of Proposed Ordinance**

- A. **ORDINANCE 26-11**: AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WINTER GARDEN, FLORIDA, VACATING AND ABANDONING A PORTION OF THE PLAT DEDICATED UTILITY AND DRAINAGE EASEMENT UPON LOT 478 AND TRACT P, OAKLAND PARK UNIT 5, ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF RECORDED AT PLAT BOOK 101, PAGE 73, PUBLIC RECORDS OF ORANGE COUNTY, FLORIDA; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE AND RECORDING

City Attorney Kurt Aradaman read ordinance 26-11 by title only. Planning Director Kelly Carson stated the applicant is requesting to vacate drainage and utility easements at 841 Tilden Oaks Trail and 15411 East Oakland Avenue to combine the lots for a mixed-use building approved as part of the McKinnon Square Planned Commercial Development (PCD) at the March 26, 2026, City Commission meeting. She noted approval is contingent upon the easement vacation. Staff recommended approval.

Mayor Rees opened the public hearing; hearing and seeing none, he closed the public hearing.

**Motion by Commissioner Jones to adopt Ordinance 26-11. Seconded by Commissioners Bennett and Sharman simultaneously and carried unanimously 5-0.**

5. **Regular Business**

- A. **RESOLUTION 26-06**: A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WINTER GARDEN, FLORIDA, ADOPTING A POLICY GOVERNING THE ISSUANCE OF TEMPORARY USE PERMITS FOR THE TEMPORARY OUTDOOR SALE OF FIREWORKS WITHIN THE CITY; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE

Mayor Rees stated that this item will be postponed to next meeting date.

- B. **Recommendation to approve BINDING LOT COMBINATION AGREEMENT for 841 Tilden Oaks Trail and 15411 East Oakland Avenue**

Planning Director Kelly Carson stated the applicant is proposing to combine Lots 478 and Tract P, located on the north side of East Oakland Avenue. She noted the request was related to the previously approved easement vacation ordinance, as the applicant is constructing a new building over the shared lot lines. Staff recommended approval.

**Motion by Commissioner Sharman to approve Binding Lot Combination Agreement for 841 Tilden Oaks Trail and 15411 East Oakland Avenue. Seconded by Commissioner Johnson and carried unanimously 5-0.**

C. Recommendation to approve SITE PLAN for 13675 West Colonial Drive (Winter Garden Plaza), subject to conditions

Planning Director Kelly Carson stated the applicant is requesting site plan approval for 13675 West Colonial Drive to demolish the existing Maryland Fried Chicken building and construct a new 3,184-square-foot one-story commercial building. She noted the plan includes enhanced landscaping and a redesigned parking area to eliminate vehicles backing onto West Colonial Drive. Staff recommended approval of the site plan with staff conditions.

There was discussion regarding the nostalgic significance of the former Maryland Fried Chicken sign and building, including whether the Heritage Foundation may have interest in retaining the sign.

**Motion by Commissioner Sharman to approve Site Plan for 13675 West Colonial Drive (Winter Garden Plaza). Seconded by Commissioner Johnson and carried unanimously 5-0.**

D. Recommendation to waive formal procurement process and award purchase orders to Wharton Smith Inc. for repair and replacing gravity sewer for Crest Avenue Wastewater Treatment Facility in the amount of \$2,833,542.47

City Engineer Jim Monahan stated deficiencies were discovered in the existing 24-inch and 30-inch gravity lines serving the wastewater treatment facility during cleaning and inspection operations. He noted that replacement and lining of the lines was the most cost-effective solution and recommended waiving the formal procurement process and issuing a work purchase order to Wharton Smith and its subcontractors, who were already mobilized on-site. Mr. Monahan further stated the work would be funded through the Collections Fund and would not increase the overall wastewater treatment facility project cost.

There was discussion regarding the condition of the existing clay pipes, the amount of pipe that could be lined versus replaced, and the importance of addressing the infrastructure issues to avoid future operational problems at the wastewater treatment facility.

**Motion by Commissioner Sharman to waive formal procurement process and award purchase order to Wharton Smith Inc. for repair and replacing gravity sewer at Crest Avenue Wastewater Treatment Facility in the amount of \$2,833,542.47. Seconded by Commissioners Jones and Johnson simultaneously and carried unanimously 5-0.**

E. Recommendation to approve Lift Station Oversizing Agreement with Beazer

Homes, LLC. for sanitary collection system at Windham Park Subdivision in the amount of \$39,465

City Engineer Jim Monahan stated staff worked with the developer to provide additional capacity to the onsite lift station and increase the depth of the sanitary sewer collection system within the Windham Park Subdivision on Avalon Road to allow surrounding properties the ability to connect to the wastewater system. Staff recommended approval.

**Motion by Commissioner Sharman to approve Lift Station Oversizing Agreement with Beazer Homes, LLC for sanitary collection system at Windham Park Subdivision. Seconded by Commissioner Bennett and carried unanimously 5-0.**

## 6. **Matters From Public**

Norine Dworkin, Winter Garden resident, questioned the timing of the National Day of Prayer proclamation, noting the observance date had already passed. It was noted proclamations for past events had been presented at a later meeting, including an upcoming Autism Awareness proclamation request.

Joe Dunn, Winter Garden resident, commended Planning Director Kelly Carson for her presentation and thanked the City for its continued support of the Friends of Lake Apopka (FOLA) 40 Bike Ride on the Lake Apopka Loop Trail. He highlighted the growth of the FOLA 40 event from 65 riders in 2017 to 300 riders in 2026, noted the economic impact from out-of-town visitors, and discussed efforts to obtain National Recreation Trail designation for the Lake Apopka Loop Trail. He also encouraged collaboration with the City on a future celebration recognizing completion of the trail.

## 7. **Matters From City Attorney**

### A. City Clerk Employment Agreement

City Attorney Kurt Ardaman stated that the proposed City Clerk Employment Agreement was included in the agenda packet and was consistent with previous agreement.

**Motion by Commissioner Bennett to appoint Interim City Clerk Ronisha Martin as the City Clerk. Seconded by Commissioner Johnson and carried unanimously 5-0.**

## 8. **Matters From City Manager**

City Manager Jon C. Williams announced that Congressman Daniel Webster visited the City on May 6, 2026, to recognize the City's receipt of \$750,000 in funding for the Crest Avenue Wastewater Treatment Plant project. He noted the City had received a total of \$40,148,063 in grant funding for the project to date and was awaiting a potential additional \$5 million Community Funding award. Mr. Williams stated the external funding sources could total approximately 32% of the overall project cost and commended city staff for their efforts in securing grant funding. Mr. Williams also congratulated Ronisha

Martin on her appointment as City Clerk and commended her service as Interim City Clerk.

9. **Matters From Mayor and Commissioners**

**Commissioner Sharman** reflected on the Serenity Prayer and its message of acceptance, wisdom, and being present in daily life. He shared personal remarks regarding lessons learned from participating in the National Day of Prayer event at AdventHealth, including the importance of focusing on the present and leading by example. He also expressed appreciation for his family and fellow commissioners, He concluded by thanking newer commissioners for their contributions and service to the city.

**Commissioner Johnson** thanked City staff for their hard work, expressed appreciation to the Police and Fire Departments for their continued service, and congratulated Ronisha Martin on her appointment as City Clerk.

**Commissioner Jones** thanked Joe Dunn, and everyone involved with the 47-mile ride, emphasized the importance of preserving Lake Apopka, and praised the Fire Department for its positive impact on young people and community.

**Commissioner Bennett** thanked staff for their efforts in securing grants benefiting the community, apologized for missing the Fire Department ceremony, congratulated Ronisha Martin on the full-time appointment as City Clerk and thanked Joe Dunn for his contribution.

**Mayor Rees** congratulated Ronisha Martin on the full-time appointment as City Clerk, thanked staff and safety personnel, and everyone involved in the West Orange High School “See You later” parade, noting how proud students and administrators are to be part of the Winter Garden community. He further recognized staff for their success in securing grants and concluded by emphasizing the importance of prayer and faith in daily life.

**Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:13 p.m.

ATTEST:

/S/

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk Ronisha Martin

APPROVED:

/S/

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor John Rees