City Commission and
Community Redevelopment Agency
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
August 13, 2026

A **Regular Meeting** of the City of Winter Garden City Commission was called to order by Mayor Rees at 6:30 p.m. 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 3 - Chloe Johnson
Commissioner District 4 - Colin Sharman

Also Present:
City Manager - Jon C. Williams
City Attorney - A. Kurt Ardaman
City Clerk – Ronisha Martin

Absent:
Commissioner District 1 - Lisa L. Bennett
Commissioner District 2 - Iliana R. Jones

1. **Approval of Minutes**
   A. Regular Meeting Minutes — July 23, 2026
   Motion by Commissioner Sharman to approve the regular meeting minutes of July 23, 2026, as submitted. Seconded by Commissioner Johnson and carried unanimously 3-0.

2. **PRESENTATION**

   A. Proclamation 26-11: West Orange Healthy Selfie Day – September 18, 2026
   Proclaiming West Orange Healthy Selfie Day was read and presented by Mayor Rees and the City Commission. Krista Carter, Director of Healthy West Orange, accepted the proclamation, thanked the City Commission and shared information about related activities.

   B. Solid Waste Rates
   Trevor McCarthy from Raftelis Financial Consultants, Inc. stated that the City operates its Solid Waste Fund as a self-sustaining enterprise fund supported by monthly service charges. He noted that historical rate adjustments tied to the Florida Public Service Commission price index have not kept pace with rising operating costs. He further stated that Raftelis prepared a five-year financial forecast that included projected revenues, operating expenses, capital needs, cash balances, and costs by customer class.

   Mr. McCarthy then provided an overview of the five-year financial forecast, noting that fiscal year 2027 revenues are projected at approximately $7.9 million, while operating expenses are projected at approximately $7.4 million and are expected to increase to approximately $8.4 million by fiscal year 2031. He further noted that existing rates would result in an approximately $500,000 deficit in fiscal year 2027. Raftelis recommended maintaining approximately 65 days of operating reserves and establishing a dedicated emergency reserve for post-storm debris removal, beginning with $250,000 in fiscal year 2027 and adding $100,000 annually thereafter. Mr. McCarthy explained that the reserve would help cover storm cleanup costs while awaiting FEMA or State reimbursement, which can be delayed and may not fully reimburse the City. He stated that the recommended rate path includes a 6.5% overall revenue adjustment in fiscal year 2027, followed by 3.5% annual increases through fiscal year 2030, with a return to the FPSC price index anticipated in fiscal year 2031. He further noted that an alternative phased approach was considered but would result in lower cash reserves than the recommended path.

Regarding residential service, Mr. McCarthy stated that a 65-gallon cart option is proposed as an alternative to the standard 95-gallon cart. **City Manager Jon C. Williams** explained that the smaller cart is intended for single-person households, elderly residents, and others who generate less waste. Mr. McCarthy then noted that customers selecting the 65-gallon cart could maintain the current $24.87 monthly rate through fiscal year 2028. He added that residential and multifamily cart service would increase 7% in fiscal year 2027, commercial and multifamily dumpster service would increase 5.58%, and commercial cart service would increase 18.9%. He noted that despite these increases, rates would generally remain below peer providers.

There was discussion on the proposed rate adjustments, the affordability benefit of the 65-gallon cart option, the potential impact of future property tax reductions on service levels, and whether the rate increase and use of an independent consultant were statutorily required. Mr. Williams explained that the Solid Waste Fund must generate sufficient revenue through user fees to cover the cost of providing services and noted that the independent analysis helps evaluate revenue sufficiency and the Fund's financial requirements.

Mayor Rees requested copies of the presentation and supporting information for further review. Mr. Williams clarified that no action was needed at this time and that staff would seek Commission direction at a future meeting.

3. FIRST READING AND PUBLC HEARING OF PROPOSED ORDINANCES

A. ORDINANCE 26-24: AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF WINTER GARDEN AMENDING THE WINTER GARDEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TO ADDRESS CHANGES TO STATE STATUTES, EXTENDING THE PLANNING HORIZON TO 2050, AMENDING THE FUTURE LAND USE MAP SERIES, AND AMENDING VARIOUS ELEMENTS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TO IMPLEMENT THE COMMUNITY VISION; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE

City Attorney Kurt Ardaman read Ordinance 26-24 by title only. Planning Director Kelly Carson stated that Ordinance 26-24 is the City's long-overdue Comprehensive Plan update, noting that the current plan has a 2020 horizon year. She indicated that the update is necessary to provide a current framework for future growth, redevelopment, and infrastructure planning while maintaining consistency with State requirements. She further noted that the process involved extensive analysis, public engagement, and coordination with Inspire Placemaking Collective. Ms. Carson introduced Eric Raasch with Inspire Placemaking to present the proposed update.

Mr. Raasch provided an overview of the Comprehensive Plan update, noting that the plan establishes a 2050 horizon year and projects the City's population to reach approximately 66,000 residents over the next 25 years. He reviewed the public engagement process, which included community workshops, stakeholder interviews, public events, and online participation. He noted that community input focused on traffic congestion, housing affordability and variety, redevelopment, walkability, preservation of the City's small-town character, historic preservation, sidewalk connectivity, tree protection, and compatibility of new development with existing neighborhoods.

Mr. Raasch further outlined revisions throughout the Comprehensive Plan, including the Future Land Use, Transportation, Housing, Public Facilities, Conservation, Recreation and Open Space, Intergovernmental Coordination, and Capital Improvements elements. He noted that the Future Land Use Element incorporates the previously adopted East Winter Garden land use categories, adjusts certain residential densities to accommodate projected growth, adds activity centers for Dillard Street and historic East Winter Garden, and strengthens compatibility, buffering, and historic preservation policies.

Regarding transportation, Mr. Raasch indicated that the update incorporates the City's Vision Zero Plan, enhances Complete Streets policies, establishes an interim mobility plan, and revises traffic impact study requirements. He further noted that housing revisions address accessory dwelling units, affordable and senior housing, aging in place, historic East Winter Garden, and residential resiliency. Public Facility updates incorporate the 2024 Wastewater Facility Plan and include policies for continued monitoring and reduction of PFAS, commonly referred to as "forever chemicals," as well as the potential future evaluation of reestablishing the recycling program.

Mr. Raasch further highlighted conservation and recreation updates addressing protection of existing live oak trees, water-efficient development, wetland mitigation closer to the City, waterfront and ADA accessibility, tree canopy protection, and continued expansion of the City's trail network as the population grows. He noted that the Public School Facilities Element was revised to reflect coordination with Orange County Public Schools through the existing interlocal agreement. Intergovernmental Coordination policies were updated to address enclaves and continued coordination with Orange County and neighboring municipalities, while Capital Improvements revisions included updated mobility standards and a proposed trail level of service.

Mr. Raasch also stated that a new Property Rights Element was added as required by Florida statute, which provides for the consideration of property rights in the City's decision-making process. He also noted that, following the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting, the maximum commercial building height within the South Beltway Center Future Land Use classification was reduced from seven stories to five stories, with up to seven stories permitted within an activity center subject to additional standards.

Mr. Raasch explained that, following the Commission approval for transmittal, the Comprehensive Plan would be submitted to the Florida Department of Commerce and other State agencies for review and comment. The City would have an opportunity to address any objections, recommendations, or comments before the plan returns to the Commission for final adoption.

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

Motion by Commissioner Sharman to approve Ordinance 26-24 with the second reading and public hearing after State Review. Seconded by Commissioner Johnson and carried unanimously 3-0.

B. <u>ORDINANCE 26-26</u>: AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WINTER GARDEN, FLORIDA, AMENDING CHAPTER 118, "ZONING," ARTICLE II, "ADMINISTRATION," OF THE CITY OF WINTER GARDEN CODE OF ORDINANCES TO CREATE DIVISION 6, TO BE ENTITLED "ZONING COMPLIANCE REVIEW,"; PROVIDING A PROCESS FOR VERIFYING THAT CERTAIN DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES COMPLY WITH OBJECTIVE LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS; PROVIDING FOR PURPOSE AND INTENT; PROVIDING DEFINITIONS; PROVIDING FOR APPLICABILITY AND EXEMPTIONS; PROVIDING APPLICATION AND SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS; PROVIDING REVIEW STANDARDS; PROVIDING PROCEDURES AND TIMEFRAMES FOR ACTION ON APPLICATIONS; PROVIDING FOR CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL, EXPIRATION, EXTENSIONS, AND APPEALS; AUTHORIZING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ZONING COMPLIANCE REVIEW FEES BY RESOLUTION; PROVIDING FOR ENFORCEMENT AND PENALTIES; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS, SEVERABILITY, CODIFICATION AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE

City Attorney Kurt Ardaman read Ordinance 26-26 by title only. Planning Director Kelly Carson stated that this ordinance creates a new Zoning Compliance Review process to ensure certain development activities comply with the City's Land Development Regulations, Comprehensive Plan, and other applicable laws before permits are issued and/or work begins. She explained that the ordinance sets application requirements, review standards and timeframes, conditions of approval, appeal procedures, fees, and enforcement provisions. Staff recommended approval.

Ms. Carson noted that the impetus for the ordinance is Florida House Bill 803, which exempts minor residential work under $7,500 from building permit requirements. Since building permits previously triggered the City's zoning consistency check, this ordinance creates a standalone review to prevent homeowners from unknowingly creating nonconformities subject to code enforcement fines.

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

Motion by Commissioner Johnson to approve Ordinance 26-26 with the second reading and public hearing scheduled for August 27, 2026. Seconded by Commissioner Sharman and carried unanimously 3-0.

4. REGULAR BUSINESS

A. Recommendation to approve request to change traffic lights at South Dillard Street and East Story Road to a split-phase operation and hire Traffic Engineering and Management, LLC dba Control Specialists to modify lights in the amount of $14,600

Assistant City Manager for Public Services Stephen Pash stated that staff has been working with one of the City's traffic consultants to analyze several intersections throughout the City, including South Dillard Street and East Story Road. He noted that vehicles at this intersection have experienced difficulty clearing the signal, particularly with left turns along Story Road. Mr. Pash relayed the consultant's recommendation to modify the eastbound and westbound signals to operate as a split phase, in which eastbound and westbound traffic would clear separately rather than simultaneously, which would reduce backups without requiring major roadway improvements. Staff recommended approval of the change and to hire Control Specialists to complete the work in the amount of $14,600.

There was discussion regarding the proposed split-phase operation and whether a yellow turn signal had been considered. Mr. Pash indicated that the limited capacity of the existing turn lanes causes traffic to back up into the through lanes, and that the split-phase operation would allow traffic to clear without extending the turn lanes, acquiring additional right-of-way, or making other roadway improvements. He added that the volume of opposing traffic would limit the effectiveness of a yellow turn signal.

Motion by Commissioner Sharman to approve request to change traffic lights at South Dillard Street and East Story Road to a split-phase operation and hire Traffic Engineering and Management, LLC dba Control Specialists to modify lights in the amount of $14,600. Seconded by Commissioner Johnson and carried unanimously 3-0.

B. Recommendation to approve request for intersection improvements at Avalon Road & Tucker Ranch/Coscester Street, Avalon Road & Golden Bell Street/Longbeam Way, Marsh Road & Williams Road and Avalon Road & State Road 50 and use City’s contract engineers to design proposed final improvement

Mayor Rees stated that this agenda item has been postponed to a date uncertain.

C. Recommendation to approve bid proposal from Core & Main to purchase 1,225 water meters, meter boxes, and cables in the amount of $382,809.29

Assistant City Manager for Public Services Stephen Pash stated that staff has been working to replace and standardize the City's water meters over several years, transitioning them to a radio-read system. He noted that meter availability was limited during COVID due to production issues; however, Sensus has caught up on production and can now supply the requested meters. Staff recommended approval, noting that the purchase would be funded with budgeted funds carried forward from previous years.

Furthermore, Mr. Pash noted that staff is seeking a contractor to install the meters to expedite the project without impacting other staff operations and will return to the Commission with the contract for approval.

Motion by Commissioner Johnson to approve bid proposal from Core & Main to purchase 1,225 water meters, meter boxes, and cables in the amount of $382,809.29. Seconded by Commissioner Sharman and carried unanimously 3-0.

D. Recommendation to approve Purchase Order for Mead and Hunt, Inc., to design Southwest Reclaimed Water Main in the amount of $576,747.12

City Engineer Jim Monahan stated that the proposal is for the design of a reclaimed water transmission main that would carry reclaimed water from the Smith Street/Dreyfus Tank, located at 440 East Smith Street, and connect with the existing reclaimed water main near Plant Street and Story Road. He noted that the Southwest Reclaimed Water Main is the third of three short-term projects identified in the Reclaimed Water Facility Plan and would move reclaimed water from the six-million-gallon Dreyfus storage tank into the distribution system to serve larger reclaimed-water areas. He further stated that the City's goal is to distribute approximately 90% of its wastewater treated as reclaimed water and reduce reliance on Conserve II. Mr. Monahan noted that the City paid approximately $947,000 to Conserve II from October through June of the current fiscal year.

There was discussion on the overall cost of the three short-term reclaimed water projects. Mr. Monahan explained that two of the project estimates are older and date from the 2021 Reclaimed Water Facility Plan, while the Dreyfus storage tank estimate is more recent, with the three projects totaling approximately $19.7 million. He further clarified that the combined design costs for all three project phases, including the proposed $576,747.12 design cost for this project, represent approximately 8% of that total. In response to a question regarding construction costs, he noted that the 2021 estimate of approximately $4.5 million could increase to approximately $6 million based on current costs.

Motion by Commissioner Johnson to approve Purchase Order for Mead and Hunt, Inc., to design Southwest Reclaimed Water Main in the amount of $576,747.12. Seconded by Commissioner Sharman and carried unanimously 3-0.

E. Recommendation to approve SITE PLAN for property located at 12152 West Colonial Drive (Orlando Orthopaedic Center at Winter Garden)

Planning Director Kelly Carson stated that the applicant is proposing to convert the existing 17,494-square-foot former Badcock Furniture store, located at 12152 West Colonial Drive, into an Orlando Orthopaedic Center medical facility. She noted the proposed use requires site modifications, including additional parking, landscaping, and stormwater improvements, as well as renovation of the building and relocation of the primary entrance toward the rear. Ms. Carson further stated that the stormwater improvements would impact a portion of the wetlands on the property and would be mitigated in accordance with St. Johns River Water Management District requirements. The 2.82-acre property is zoned C-2, Arterial Commercial District, with a Commercial Future Land Use designation. Staff recommended approval, subject to conditions.

Motion by Commissioner Sharman to approve SITE PLAN for property located at 12152 West Colonial Drive (Orlando Orthopaedic Center at Winter Garden). Seconded by Commissioner Johnson and carried unanimously 3-0.

F. <u>Recommendation to approve SITE PLAN for property located at 1680 Marcel Drive (WG Basketball Academy), subject to conditions</u>

Planning Director Kelly Carson stated that the applicant is proposing to construct a one-story, 21,800-square-foot basketball academy at 1680 Marcel Drive, with a two-story element in the rear portion, within the Daniels Commerce Center commercial subdivision. She further stated that the facility would provide basketball training and include associated parking and enhanced landscaping. She noted that the approximately 1.49-acre property is zoned C-2, Arterial Commercial District, with a Commercial Future Land Use designation. Staff recommended approval, subject to conditions.

There was discussion regarding whether the basketball academy would also operate as a school. Ms. Carson clarified that the facility would be used strictly for basketball training and would not include a school curriculum or educational component.

Motion by Commissioner Sharman to approve SITE PLAN for property located at 1680 Marcel Drive (WG Basketball Academy), subject to conditions. Seconded by Commissioner Johnson and carried unanimously 3-0.

G. <u>Recommendation to approve Special Exception Permit and Agreement to remove billboards located at 1101 East Plant Street and 14909 West Colonial Drive and construct new double-sided digital billboard at West Colonial Drive, subject to conditions</u>

Planning Director Kelly Carson stated that OutFront Media is requesting a special exception to remove two existing billboards located at 1101 East Plant Street and 14909 West Colonial Drive in order to construct a new double-sided digital billboard on property located along West Colonial Drive near 9th Street. She noted that the request is consistent with the City's Code provisions regarding the removal and reconstruction of billboards. Ms. Carson also indicated that the proposed digital billboard meets all other City Code requirements. Staff recommended approval of the special exception permit and agreement, subject to the conditions contained in the agreement and staff report.

Motion by Commissioner Sharman to approve Special Exception Permit and Agreement to remove billboards located at 1101 East Plant Street and 14909 West Colonial Drive and construct new double-sided digital billboard at West Colonial Drive, subject to conditions. Seconded by Commissioner Johnson and carried unanimously 3-0.

Dispensed as the City Commission and convened as the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) at 7:37 p.m.

Members Present:
CRA Chairman John Rees and CRA Members, Chloe Johnson, Colin Sharman and CRA Advisory Board Member Larry Cappleman

Members Absent:
CRA Member Lisa L. Bennett and - Iliana R. Jones

H. Recommendation to approve Dragonfly Architecture, LLC to provide architectural and engineering services for property located at 95 Center Street in the amount of $48,900

Economic Development Director Marc Hutchinson noted for the record that the following agenda items were presented to the CRA Advisory Board on August 11, 2026, at which a quorum was established.

Mr. Hutchinson stated that JJ's Grocery Commercial Revitalization Project proposes converting the former JJ's Grocery, located at 95 Center Street, from retail use to a daycare facility. He further stated that the project supports the City's revitalization efforts in historic East Winter Garden and addresses a community need for daycare services. He noted that the property owner, an experienced licensed daycare operator, entered a five-year ground lease with Bethlehem Missionary Baptist Church to provide the required playground area. Staff recommended authorizing the City Manager to engage Dragonfly Architecture, LLC for architectural and engineering services in the amount of $48,900.

CRA Member Larry Cappleman spoke of this item being discussed at the last Community Redevelopment Agency Advisory Board (CRAAB) meeting. He stated that the CRAAB advises the CRA to approve this item.

Motion by CRA Member Cappleman to approve Dragonfly Architecture, LLC to provide architectural and engineering services for property located at 95 Center Street in the amount of $48,900. Seconded by CRA Member Johnson and carried unanimously 4-0.

I. Recommendation to approve grant funding for Habitat's Neighborhood Revitalization program in the amount of $30,000

Economic Development Director Marc Hutchinson stated that the Neighborhood Revitalization Program, administered through West Orange Habitat for Humanity, has been supported by the City since 2023 and provides minor home repairs and property improvements for non-Habitat homeowners in historic East Winter Garden. He noted that 40 families have benefited from the program to date. Mr. Hutchinson further stated that the $30,000 grant request would fund improvements for an additional 20 homes. Staff recommended authorizing the City Manager to execute the grant funding agreement in an amount not to exceed $30,000.

Mr. Cappleman noted the program's continued success and stated that the CRA Advisory Board unanimously recommended approval.

Motion by CRA Member Cappleman to approve grant funding for Habitat's Neighborhood Revitalization program in the amount of $30,000. Seconded by CRA Member Johnson and carried unanimously 4-0.

J. Recommendation to approve reimbursement of General Fund by CRA for Zanders Park renovation work of old playground area in the amount of $68,831.25

Economic Development Director Marc Hutchinson stated that the request is for reimbursement to the General Fund for renovations to the former playground area at Zanders Park. He noted that improvements to the park have been a priority in the revitalization efforts for Historic East Winter Garden and that the former playground area is being converted into an open gathering space. Mr. Hutchinson further stated that due to safety concerns and high pedestrian activity, the City proceeded with the work using General Fund monies. Staff recommended that the CRA reimburse the General Fund in the amount of $68,831.25.

Motion by CRA Member Cappleman to approve reimbursement of General Fund by CRA for Zanders Park renovation work of old playground area in the amount of $68,831.25. Seconded by CRA Member Johnson and carried unanimously 4-0.

K. Recommendation to approve purchase of park furniture for Zanders Park renovation in the amount of $28,976.69

Economic Development Director Marc Hutchinson stated that this item is for the purchase of park furniture associated with the ongoing Zanders Park renovations. He noted that once improvements to the former playground area are completed, the space will be outfitted with benches, picnic tables with ADA accommodations, trash receptacles, and barbecue grills. Mr. Hutchinson further stated that the total purchase cost is $28,976.69 and that City staff will perform the installation. Staff recommended approval.

Mr. Cappleman noted that the CRA Advisory Board unanimously approved the proposal and recommended approval of the purchase.

Motion by CRA Member Cappleman to approve the purchase of park furniture for Zanders Park renovation in the amount of $28,976.69. Seconded by CRA Member Johnson and carried unanimously 4-0.

Dispensed as the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) and reconvened as the City Commission at 7:48 p.m.

5. Matters From Public

Norine Dworkin, Editor-in-Chief of Vox Populi, announced that the publication received third place in the regional Green Eyeshade Awards for election reporting. She recognized reporter Andrea Charur for the award-winning story and noted that the story is also under consideration for a Sunshine State Award.

6. Matters From City Attorney – There were no items.

7. Matters From City Manager

City Manager Jon C. Williams announced the launch of the City's budget portal in preparation for the November 3 Amendment 3 Property Tax Reform vote. He stated that the portal provides residents with a budget prioritization tool, Amendment 3 ballot information, and detailed budget transparency information. He noted that residents can model potential service reductions associated with a projected funding gap of approximately $5.2 million in the first year, increasing to $8.5 million in the second year, and review the potential impacts on City programs and services. The portal also includes a resident survey regarding City services and potential revenue options.

Mr. Williams emphasized that the information is intended to be factual and is not designed to influence voters for or against the amendment. He further noted that survey participation is limited to City residents and that staff will monitor the results through the November 3 election. He recognized staff for developing the portal and thanked the Commission and community members who provided input during the testing process.

8. Matters From Mayor and Commissioners

Commissioner Johnson echoed Mr. Williams's comments, commended staff for making the budget information clear and understandable for residents, and thanked staff for their continued efforts on behalf of the community.

Commissioner Sharman shared a photograph from 2005 and reflected on the influence of Charlie Mae Wilder and Gerald Jowers in shaping his role on the Commission. He noted that Mr. Jowers encouraged his involvement in Winter Garden government and that Ms. Wilder continues to be a valued mentor and example of public service.

9. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

APPROVED:

______________/S/_________________
Mayor John Rees

ATTEST:

___________/S/_______________
City Clerk Ronisha Martin