# City Commission and
# Community Redevelopment Agency
## REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
June 26, 2025

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 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 - Dan Langley
City Clerk - Angela J. Grimmage

## 1. Approval of Minutes

A. Regular Meeting Minutes - June 12, 2025
**Motion by Commissioner Johnson to approve the regular meeting minutes of June 12, 2025, as submitted. Seconded by Commissioner Jones and carried unanimously 5-0.**

## 2. Second Reading and Public Hearing of Proposed Ordinances

A. **Ordinance 25-15**: AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF WINTER GARDEN, FLORIDA, AMENDING SECTION 110-60 GOVERNING EXPEDITED PROCESS FOR ISSUING BUILDING PERMITS IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 177.073, FLORIDA STATUTES; CREATING SECTION 110-126 ESTABLISHING A REGISTRY OF QUALIFIED CONTRACTORS TO ASSIST THE CITY IN EXPEDITING REVIEW OF PRELIMINARY PLAT APPLICATIONS; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY, CONFLICTS, CODIFICATION, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE

City Attorney Dan Langley read Ordinance 25-15 by title only. Planning Supervisor Shane Friedman stated that this ordinance updates the City of Winter Garden code section that deals with building permits prior to final plat approval. He noted that the purpose of this ordinance is to align the City's code with Florida Statutes. The ordinance was reviewed by staff as well as the City’s attorney and believed to meet the Florida Statute requirements. Staff recommended approval.

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

There was discussion on the establishment and utilization of contractors and services.

**Motion by Commissioner Bennett to adopt Ordinance 25-15. Seconded by Commissioner Sharman and carried unanimously 5-0.**

B. **Ordinance 25-16**: AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF WINTER GARDEN, FLORIDA REZONING APPROXIMATELY 0.20 ± ACRES LOCATED AT 522 SOUTH WOODLAND STREET, WEST OF SOUTH WOODLAND STREET, EAST OF SOUTH MAIN STREET, NORTH OF EAST STORY ROAD, AND SOUTH OF EAST VINING STREET FROM CITY R-2 RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT TO CITY R-NC RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL DISTRICT; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE

City Attorney Dan Langley read Ordinance 25-16 by title only. Planning Supervisor Shane Friedman described the property size and noted that the current development includes an existing home. He spoke of the future land use designation, zoning and the proposed rezoning plans. He noted that the plans are consistent with the City's comprehensive plan and City codes. Staff recommended approval.

There was discussion that there were no voiced concerns from the nearby neighbors regarding this rezoning since the last meeting. It was noted that future community meetings would be held after the conversion of the property.

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

**Motion by Commissioner Jones to adopt Ordinance 25-16. Seconded by Commissioner Sharman and carried unanimously 5-0.**

C. **Ordinance 25-17:** AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WINTER GARDEN, FLORIDA VACATING A PORTION OF THE PLAT DEDICATED DRAINAGE AND UTILITY EASEMENT OVER A PORTION OF LOTS 19 AND 20 OF WINTER GARDEN COMMERCE CENTER, PHASE 1, ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF, AS RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK 72, PAGE 133 AND 134 OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS OF ORANGE COUNTY (LOCATED AT 620 & 630 GARDEN COMMERCE PARKWAY) OWNED BY WG6 HOLDINGS, LLC AS MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED HEREIN; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE AND RECORDING

City Attorney Dan Langley read Ordinance 25-17 by title only. Planning

Supervisor Shane Friedman stated that the applicant and owner request to vacate the drainage and utility easement that runs between the properties located at Lot 20 and Lot 19 of the Garden Commerce Center subdivision. He noted that once the easement is vacated and the lots are combined, the applicant intends to build an office warehouse building on Lot 19, which would be combined with the existing building on Lot 20. Furthermore, Mr. Friedman stated that staff has reviewed the request, found that it meets all City code requirements and recommended approval.

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

**Motion by Commissioner Sharman to adopt Ordinance 25-17. Seconded by Commissioner Johnson and carried unanimously 5-0.**

## 3. Regular Business

A. **Resolution 25-05:** A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF WINTER GARDEN, FLORIDA, RELATING TO THE PROVISION OF FIRE RESCUE SERVICES, FACILITIES, AND PROGRAMS IN THE CITY OF WINTER GARDEN, FLORIDA; DESCRIBING THE METHOD OF ASSESSING FIRE RESCUE ASSESSED COSTS AGAINST ASSESSED PROPERTY LOCATED WITHIN THE CITY OF WINTER GARDEN; DIRECTING THE PREPARATION OF AN ASSESSMENT ROLL; AUTHORIZING A PUBLIC HEARING AND DIRECTING THE PROVISION OF NOTICE THEREOF; PROVIDING A VACANCY ADJUSTMENT PROCEDURE; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY, CONFLICTS, CODIFICATION, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE

City Attorney Dan Langley read Resolution 25-05 by title only. City Manager Jon C. Williams reminded that authorization was given in January to proceed with updating the fire assessment, previously adopted in 2008. The purpose was to allow an option for funding for fire services. Furthermore, Mr. Williams spoke of inflation, external labor market pressures, and its effect on retaining staff. He also spoke of the pending legislative conversations regarding property tax relief. He indicated that the study is complete and a consultant from Benesch was available to present the findings. Mr. Williams further explained that this resolution is for the adoption of the study, and not for the implementation of the assessment. He said that the City would formally send out notices, if the resolution is approved, and come back to the City Commission in August with a final recommendation. The goal is to have community engagement meetings, which are tentatively scheduled for July 22 and July 29, 2025.

Nilgün Kamp, Public Finance Group Manager for Benesch, gave a PowerPoint presentation highlighting the technical study and next steps. She provided information on the fire services assessment, which she stated was non-ad valorem special assessment to fund capital and operating costs associated with providing fire protection and first responder services. Ms. Kamp spoke of fire assessment calculations and explained the methodology, assessable budget and determination, demand by land use, and distribution and budget allocation by land use.

Furthermore, Ms. Kamp highlighted assessment rates and gave a timeline for the next steps, which included City Commission input and direction, approval of the preliminary resolution, mailing of the first-class notices, community engagement meetings, and adoption hearings.

There was discussion on the study, the need to review options, Amendment 5, and the hedging against multiple factors, which included competition with other agencies regarding public safety. The possibility of a $12 million deficit was also noted. There was discussion that the City needs to do something, but it is not fully known what is needed yet. Staff recommended approval.

**Motion by Commissioner Sharman to approve Resolution 25-05. Seconded by Commissioner Jones and carried unanimously 5-0.**

B. Recommendation to approve Request for Proposals (RFP 2025-0001) rankings and award contract for construction of Fire Station 21 at 16290 Marsh Road to Mulligan Contractors Inc.
Fire Chief Jose P. Gainza, Jr. provided the City Commission with information regarding recent requests for proposals in relation to the building of Fire Station 21. He noted interests received, submissions, deadlines, and receipt of four comprehensive proposals. He read the list of interested companies, noted scoring and rankings by a selection committee, and identified Mulligan Contractors, Inc. as the highest-ranked, most responsive, and responsible bidder. Staff recommended approval.

**Motion by Commissioner Sharman to approve Requests For Proposal (RFP 2025-0001) rankings and award contract for construction of Fire Station 21 at 16290 Marsh Road to Mulligan Contractors, Inc. Seconded by Commissioner Johnson and carried unanimously 5-0.**

C. Recommendation to authorize Mayor and Police Chief to execute West Orange Narcotics Task Force Agreement with City of Apopka, City of Ocoee, and Orange County Sheriff's Office
Police Chief Steve Graham noted that this request is for renewal of the West Orange Narcotics Task Force Agreement and named the participating agencies.

Staff recommended approval.

**Motion by Commissioner Johnson to approve authorizing the Mayor and Police Chief to execute the West Orange Narcotics Task Force Agreement with the City of Apopka, City of Ocoee, and Orange County Sheriff's Office. Seconded by Commissioner Sharman and carried unanimously 5-0.**

D. <u>Recommendation to approve purchase of red-dot-equipped firearms with $10,000 from the Federal Fiscal Year 2024 Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) County-wide State Solicitation Program and additional funds from the Law Enforcement Trust Fund not to exceed $5,000, with public comment</u>

Police Chief Steve Graham stated that the Federal fiscal year 2024 Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program - JAG Countywide - State solicitation has earmarked $289,690 for Orange County. He noted that $10,000 of the funds are specifically earmarked for the Winter Garden Police Department. Staff requests using the listed grant funds to begin transitioning to red-dot-equipped firearms. As a requirement of the grant program, Orange County must show that 51 percent of the municipalities, representing at least 51 percent of the population of Orange County, agree with the distribution. Staff recommends approval, along with trust fund expenditures not to exceed $5,000. He noted that opening for public comment on this item must be allowed. There was discussion on the red-dot-equipped firearms and the ability for better viewing by the aged.

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

**Motion by Commissioner Sharman to approve the purchase of red-dot-equipped firearms with $10,000 from the Federal fiscal year 2024 Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) county-wide State solicitation Program and additional funds from the Law Enforcement Trust Fund not to exceed $5,000. Seconded by Commissioner Bennett and carried unanimously 5-0.**

E. <u>Recommendation to approve Binding Lot Combination Agreement (Quality Playing Cards) located at 620 and 630 Garden Commerce Pkwy</u>

Planning Supervisor Shane Friedman stated that this is an agreement to allow the properties located at 620 and 630 Garden Commerce Parkway to be combined into a single parcel. He noted that the applicants' site plan approval, lot combination, as well as the easement vacation, heard earlier on this agenda, were conditions of approval. Mr. Friedman noted that the lot combination agreement was reviewed by staff, the surveyor, and the City Attorney, and were found to meet all City code requirements. Staff recommended approval.

**Motion by Commissioner Sharman to approve Binding Lot Combination Agreement (Quality Playing Cards) located at 620 and 630 Garden Commerce Parkway. Seconded by Commissioner Jones and carried unanimously 5-0.**

F. Recommendation to authorize the City Manager execute a Ground Lease Agreement with Eight Waves Corporation located at 971 East Plant Street
Commissioner Chloe Johnson noted that she would recuse herself from this conversation and voting.

Economic Development Director Marc Hutchinson stated that the Eight Waves Corporation, based in the City of Winter Garden, proposed an idea of a children's museum and inquired of the property located at 971 E. Plant Street. He described how the non-profit currently serves approximately 1500 underserved children in the community with enrichment programs and services. He spoke of how the organization has outgrown its current location and its future plans for expansion. To help facilitate this effort, the City proposes a 30-year ground lease agreement to govern the use and terms of this property. He spoke of the planned children's museum, its two-phased construction, and expectations of serving an additional 5,000 students and families. Furthermore, Mr. Hutchinson informed that this children's museum would be the first of its kind in the Central Florida region. Staff recommended approval.

There was discussion on the agreement addressing expected standards of operation, clarification on the use of the term museum, and the facility being a modern interactive experience for children. The location and street crossing safety were also discussed.

**Motion by Commissioner Bennett to approve a recommendation to authorize the City Manager to execute a Ground Lease Agreement with Eight Waves Corporation located at 971 East Plant Street. Seconded by Commissioner Jones and carried 4-0-1; Commissioner Johnson abstained.**

G. BOARD APPOINTMENTS: Election Canvassing Board
City Clerk Angela Grimmage stated that this item is for annual board appointments to the Election Canvassing Board. The City Charter requires that the City Commission fill the four expiring seats by July 1st. She noted that although there is no scheduled City election for the upcoming year, an election canvassing board would still be required for that just-in-case scenario of a special election. The appointments are for two regular members and two alternate members. Furthermore, she informed of the four current board

members still being interested in retaining their seats. Staff recommended approval.

**Motion by Commissioner Sharman to approve appointing Danykqua L. Faulk** (Regular Member), **Martha Lee Lombardy** (Regular Member), **Char F. Jordan** (First Alternate), **Martin Jacoby** (Second Alternate) **to the Election Canvassing Board. Seconded by Commissioner Johnson and carried unanimously 5-0.**

*Dispensed as the City Commission and convened as the Community Redevelopment Agency at 7:02 p.m.*

**Members Present:**
CRA Chairman John Rees and CRA Members Lisa L. Bennett, Iliana R. Jones, Chloe Johnson, Colin Sharman and CRA Advisory Board Member Larry Cappleman

**Members Absent:**
Orange County Appointee Charlie Mae Wilder

H. Recommendation to approve and authorize City Manager to contribute and pay Youngblood Building Movers, Inc. for house relocation services at 996 East Plant Street in an amount not to exceed $80,000
Commissioner Chloe Johnson noted that she would recuse herself from this conversation and voting.

Economic Development Director Marc Hutchinson stated that Winter Garden Salon Development, LLC, the owner of 996 East Plant Street, plans to construct a new commercial development called Point on Plant in late 2025. Instead of demolishing the existing house built in 1926 on the property, the owner is donating it to the local non-profit Eight Waves, Inc. He indicated that Eight Waves would use the donated house as a permanent, larger space for their programs, mentioning the long-term ground lease agreement, and undeveloped property at 971 East Plant Street. Furthermore, Mr. Hutchinson shared that Eight Waves plans to build a two-phased children's museum on this leased property, with the donated house being relocated to face Plant Street. To facilitate this move, the City would contribute $80,000 towards the total relocation cost of $100,000, with the remaining $20,000 covered by Winter Garden Salon Development, LLC. Mr. Hutchinson explained that relocation services would be provided by Youngblood Building Movers, Inc. Staff recommended approval.

CRA Member Larry Cappleman noted that the CRA Advisory Board met and unanimously approved this effort and recommended approval. Discussion ensued over the old house’s past owner.

**Motion by CRA Member Cappleman to approve and authorize the City Manager to contribute and pay Youngblood Building Movers, Inc. for house relocation services at 996 East Plant Street for an amount not to exceed $80,000. Seconded by CRA Member Bennett and carried 6-0-1; CRA Member Johnson abstained.**

*Adjourned as the Community Redevelopment Agency and reconvened as the City Commission at 7:05 p.m.*

## 4. Matters From Public

Dave Buckles, 967 Glenview Circle, Winter Garden, Florida, thanked the City as we continue to expand and grow and upgrade facilities. He shared a recent experience with contractors doing work in the neighborhood, stated that he called the City to voice his concerns, and staff quickly came out to investigate. He thanked staff for what they all do.

Danykqua Faulk, 261 Center Street, Winter Garden, Florida, President of One Winter Garden, thanked the City Commission for an amazing event on Saturday, stating that change is good.

Mike Van Den Abbeel, Winter Garden Salon Development, LLC, 996 E. Plant Street, Winter Garden, Florida, commended the City and everyone that worked on the project for a Win-win situation in the collaboration of so many organizations coming together and their joint actions helping grow the community.

Ken Brown, 432 New Hearth Circle, Winter Garden, Florida, commended City staff in the Planning and Building departments for their efforts. He shared an issue related to complications of a newly installed City BS&A system, which he indicated showed his home with the wrong owner on record. Furthermore, Mr. Brown complimented the City on how well they treat their residents, addressed traffic issues related to Oak Glen Boulevard, and made inquiries related to vehicle speeds. He recommended a three-way stop at the corner of New Hearth Circle and Heathrow Street as a traffic-calming measure.

Mr. Brown also voiced concerns regarding the legislature's attempt to attack local rule in its proposal to eliminate property taxes and suggested the City draft a resolution to the State legislature in opposition. He expressed that the burdens would fall on the taxpayers and spoke of needs for infrastructure, roads, police, and fire. He stated that it is not a tax on a home, but a fee for public services.

Mayor Rees noted that the local agencies have recently met regarding this issue.

Sarah Meyer, Executive Director of Eight Waves, Inc., noted that the Children's Museum is going to be an incredible program, and not only for the children of Winter Garden. She described the hands-on features and activities of the interactive museum as a true classic children's museum with the emphasis on helping local children.

Norine Dworkin, Editor-in-Chief of VoxPopuli, announced the nomination of VoxPopuli as a finalist in the Society for Professional Journalists, she commended the City for rescinding a recent trespass notice against Kaitlyn Bennett, and requested that the City Commission also rescind Resolution 23-02 regarding decorum and media rules.

Maria Lorek, 1320 Azalea Way, Winter Garden, Florida, stated that her community, Westside Townhomes, was one of the first communities to partner with Pet Alliance regarding the spay-neuter program and noted being happy to announce that in the two years she has only heard of one litter. Secondly, she addressed concerns of being a resident of Westside Townhomes, spoke of a traumatic incident, and meeting with staff. She spoke of issues in her community relating to drugs, children running ramped, multiple calls to the Police, boundary markers, streets, traffic issues, electric bikes, shooting crimes, and protection of her family.

City Manager Jon C. William expressed that the City responds every time there is a call and addressed the limitations of the Code Enforcement and/or Police, regarding a concern based on someone’s video evidence. He spoke of limitations regarding the City having any legal recourse in the case of a Homeowner's Association (HOA). He spoke of the several issues raised and read statistical data related to the Westside Townhomes community. He noted that there had been a decrease as shown in some of the data. He also mentioned speed studies and the topic of speed bumps.

Ms. Lorek noted that speed bumps were the least of their worries and spoke of attempts to get help from their HOA but to no avail.

There was discussion on her meeting with the Police Chief and City Manager.

Robin Clark, 1013 Westside Drive, Winter Garden, Florida, noted that she too lives in Westside Townhomes, spoke of meetings with staff, red flags in their community they try to bring to the City's attention for awareness of issues going on in their community. Ms. Clark mentioned her former employment with the City as a Code Enforcement officer, being a taxpayer, and pleaded for the City's help and expressed that she wanted the Mayor to know.

## 5. Matters From City Attorney - There were no items.

## 6. Matters From City Manager

City Manager Jon C. Williams apologized for the late notice but stated that Resolution 25-07 is being added to the agenda for the City Commission's consideration. He explained that it designates the City Manager as the designated administrative official authorized to approve plats and replats. Furthermore, he noted that this item is reflective of a recently approved law by the legislature effective July 1, 2025.

City Attorney Dan Langley read Resolution 25-07 by title only. Discussion ensued on it being unclear as to the State's motives in requiring this item, the City being limited in its choices regarding the issue, and a possible reason being expediting development.

**Motion by Commissioner Sharman to approve Resolution 25-07. Seconded by Commissioner Bennett and carried unanimously 5-0.**

City Manager Jon C. Williams noted that he distributed information on the Duke Energy Neighborhood Saver program for the City Commission to review. He explained that the program assists families in income-eligible neighborhoods by installing up to 23 energy improvements. He indicated that they would follow up with specific dates, so advertisements for the service could get underway and inform the public of this service.

City Manager Jon C. Williams spoke of an issue that took place on Saturday at the Farmers Market. He stated that he wanted to offer comments of support, gratitude, and thankfulness to the City Officers on the scene of that incident. He expressed to the Police Chief and the entire Police Department that it is a tough job and that we have all felt and experienced some of the criticisms in some of the emails received. He expressed that he just wanted to say thank you for the great job that they do.

## 7. Matters From Mayor and Commissioners

A. Florida League of Cities Annual Conference Voting Delegate
*This item was not addressed.*

**Commissioner Chloe Johnson** thanked staff for all their hard work and especially thanked the Police Officers and the first responders for putting the City first, expressing that they are important to us.

**Commissioner Iliana Jones** thanked the Police Officers and first responders for all they do, and she expressed that they are really appreciated.

**Commissioner Lisa L. Bennett** said she echoed the comments of the other Commissioners, thanked staff for a great Juneteenth event, and she recommended that the City get misters for these events when it is so hot.

**Mayor John Rees** thanked City staff and everyone involved in the Juneteenth event and apologized to the City Manager and Police Chief for not formally acknowledging them as attendees in the audience at the event. He stated that he also offered his support to the City's law enforcement officers. He thinks they do a great job and were following past protocols of what they thought to be in the agreement. Furthermore, he voiced strong disappointment, expressing that we can agree to disagree on some things, but he pointed out the people that were so upset and calling his home used profanity. He said it is really sad that we as a nation, we as a people, we as a human race, have come to that. He further expressed his disappointment in his family having to be subjected to it.

## 8. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

APPROVED:

__________/S/______________________
Mayor John Rees

ATTEST:

__________/S/________________________
City Clerk Angela J. Grimmage