



**City Commission and
Community Redevelopment Agency
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

July 24, 2025

Regular Meeting of the City of Winter Garden City Commission was called to order by Mayor Pro Tem Lisa L. Bennett at 6:30 pm. at City Hall, 300 West Plant Street, Winter Garden, Florida. An opening invocation and pledge of allegiance were given.

Present:

Mayor Pro Tem/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 Clerk - Angela J. Grimmage
Acting City Attorney - Benjamin Schafer

Absent: Mayor John Rees

1. Approval of Minutes

A. Regular Meeting Minutes - July 10, 2025

Motion by Commissioner Johnson to approve the regular meeting minutes of July 10, 2025, as submitted. Seconded by Commissioner Jones and carried unanimously 3-0.

Commissioner Sharman arrived at this point in the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

2. Presentation

A. Legislative Update – House of Representatives Leonard Spencer

State Representative Leonard Spencer (District 45) highlighted key outcomes from Florida's recent, record-long legislative session. He noted \$1.5 million for the South Lake Apopka wastewater extension, regional investments, and support for the Central Florida Mother's Milk Bank. Other focuses included family affordability, Live Local Act funding, job readiness, local economic development, and law enforcement pay raises, along with property tax discussions. Representative Spencer also addressed school vouchers, insurance reform, housing, and emphasized the importance of local government control. He concluded by thanking the City for its collaboration.

3. Second Reading and Public Hearing of Proposed Ordinances

A. Ordinance 25-13: AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF WINTER GARDEN, FLORIDA REZONING APPROXIMATELY 4.71 ± ACRES LOCATED AT 14451, 14423, 14411, 14375, and 14345 W. COLONIAL DRIVE GENERALLY LOCATED NORTH OF W. COLONIAL DRIVE, WEST OF HYDE PARK CIRCLE, AND SOUTH OF ROYAL VIEW CIRCLE FROM C-2 (ARTERIAL COMMERCIAL DISTRICT) TO PCD (PLANNED COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT); PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE

Acting City Attorney Benjamin Schafer read Ordinance 25-13 by title only. Planning Director

Kelly Carson described the applicant's plan to rezone the property, noting its size, location, and future uses. She noted the demolition and rebuilding of one of the buildings, a masonry wall, and enhanced landscaping for the property. Furthermore, she noted staff working with the applicant to save as many of the existing live oaks as possible. Ms. Carson stated that the plans were consistent with the City's comprehensive plan, Code of Ordinances, and the West State Road 50 overlay requirements. Staff recommended approval.

Mayor Pro Tem Bennett opened the public hearing; hearing and seeing none, she closed the public hearing.

Motion by Commissioner Johnson to adopt Ordinance 25-13. Seconded by Commissioner Sharman and carried unanimously 4-0.

- B. **Ordinance 25-18:** AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF WINTER GARDEN, FLORIDA PROVIDING FOR THE ANNEXATION OF CERTAIN ADDITIONAL LANDS GENERALLY DESCRIBED AS APPROXIMATELY 1.88 ± ACRES LOCATED AT 1150, 1158, 1166 AND 1204 AVALON ROAD, NORTH OF ROLLING ROCK WAY, SOUTH OF WEST COLONIAL DRIVE, EAST OF TUCKER OAKS BLVD AND WEST OF AVALON ROAD, 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

Acting City Attorney Benjamin Schafer read Ordinances 25-18, 25-19, and 25-20 by title only. Planning Director Kelly Carson informed the City Commission of the applicant's request to annex, and she noted the property size and location. She spoke of the future land use designation and rezoning. Ms. Carson described the existing as well as proposed buildings, uses, phases, and development over time. Furthermore, Ms. Carson noted that any new development would have to go through the City's site plan review before approval. Staff recommended approval.

Mayor Pro Tem Bennett opened the public hearing; hearing and seeing none, she closed the public hearing.

It was recommended that the City Commission cast votes separately for each ordinance.

Motion by Commissioner Sharman to adopt Ordinance 25-18. Seconded by Commissioner Jones and carried unanimously 4-0.

- C. **Ordinance 25-19:** 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 1.88 ± ACRES LOCATED AT 1150, 1158, 1166 AND 1204 AVALON ROAD, NORTH OF ROLLING ROCK WAY, SOUTH OF WEST COLONIAL DRIVE, EAST OF TUCKER OAKS BLVD AND WEST OF AVALON ROAD, FROM ORANGE COUNTY RURAL/AGRICULTURAL TO CITY COMMERCIAL; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE

Mayor Pro Tem Bennett opened the public hearing; hearing and seeing none, she closed the public hearing.

Motion by Commissioner Sharman to adopt Ordinance 25-19. Seconded by Commissioner Johnson and carried unanimously 4-0.

- D. **Ordinance 25-20**: AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF WINTER GARDEN, FLORIDA REZONING REAL PROPERTY GENERALLY DESCRIBED AS APPROXIMATELY 1.88 ± ACRES LOCATED AT 1150, 1158, 1166 AND 1204 AVALON ROAD, NORTH OF ROLLING ROCK WAY, SOUTH OF WEST COLONIAL DRIVE, EAST OF TUCKER OAKS BLVD AND WEST OF AVALON ROAD, FROM ORANGE COUNTY A-1 CITRUS RURAL DISTRICT TO CITY C-3 PROFESSIONAL OFFICE DISTRICT; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE

Mayor Pro Tem Bennett opened the public hearing; hearing and seeing none, she closed the public hearing.

Motion by Commissioner Sharman to adopt Ordinance 25-20. Seconded by Commissioner Johnson and carried unanimously 4-0.

- E. **Ordinance 25-21**: AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF WINTER GARDEN, FLORIDA, AMENDING THE CITY OF WINTER GARDEN FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025 BUDGET; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE

Acting City Attorney Benjamin Schafer read Ordinance 25-21 by title and an excerpt of the revenues and matching expenditures. Finance Director Laura Zielonka stated that this ordinance amends the current year's budget to adjust for changes that have occurred throughout the fiscal year. She noted that Exhibit 1 contains amendments recommended by City staff. Discussion ensued on the very small adjustment for this year.

Mayor Pro Tem Bennett opened the public hearing; hearing and seeing none, she closed the public hearing.

Motion by Commissioner Jones to adopt Ordinance 25-21. Seconded by Commissioner Sharman and carried unanimously 4-0.

- F. **Ordinance 25-22**: AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF WINTER GARDEN, FLORIDA, AMENDING SECTION 22-26 REVISING THE DEFINITION OF "SOLICITOR"; AMENDING SECTION 22-27 PROHIBITING CERTAIN ACTIONS OF SOLICITORS, AGENTS, OR PEDDLERS; AMENDING SECTION 22-30 GOVERNING REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES FOR SOLICITOR PERMITS; AMENDING SECTION 22-34 RELATING TO EXEMPTIONS FROM SOLICITATION PERMITTING REQUIREMENTS FOR NONPROFIT ENTITIES; CREATING SECTION 22-35 ESTABLISHING A PROCEDURE FOR RESIDENTS TO OPT OUT OF SOLICITATIONS; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY, CONFLICTS, CODIFICATION, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE

Acting City Attorney Benjamin Schafer read Ordinance 25-22 by title only. Planning Director

Kelly Carson outlined proposed city code amendments to revise regulations for solicitors and peddlers. The changes aim to bolster public safety, ensure accountability, and grant community members greater control over solicitations at their homes or businesses. Key revisions include expanding the definition of "solicitor" to cover those seeking charitable donations or conducting commercial surveys, while still excluding religious and political canvassing. The ordinance also proposes banning solicitations in public rights-of-way and updating the permitting process to require each individual solicitor, who must be at least 18, to apply separately. Non-profit organizations will also need permits and must adhere to all solicitor rules, though they can request a fee waiver. Additionally, a "no-solicitation list," managed by the Police Department and shared with all permit holders, would allow residents and business owners to opt out of solicitations. Ms. Carson noted a change to the ordinance since its last read and clarifies that these regulations do not apply to panhandlers as the City already has a section in the code that addresses panhandling within the City. She read the change added to Section 22-26. Staff recommended approval.

Mayor Pro Tem Bennett opened the public hearing; hearing and seeing none, she closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Sharman shared that his number one constituent, his wife, approved this ordinance.

Commissioner Bennett noted that as the City Commissioner for District 1, she has received a lot of complaints about people downtown being approached while they are trying to eat, especially in the outdoor areas.

Motion by Commissioner Sharman to adopt Ordinance 25-22. Seconded by Commissioner Jones and carried unanimously 4-0.

4. Regular Business

- A. **Resolution 25-06**: A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF WINTER GARDEN, FLORIDA, AMENDING THE CITY OF WINTER GARDEN PURCHASING MANUAL ADOPTED BY RESOLUTION NO. 11-08; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY, CONFLICTS, CODIFICATION, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE

Acting City Attorney Benjamin Schafer read Resolution 25-06 by title only. Finance Director Laura Zielonka stated that the City's current purchasing manual was last updated in July 2011. She noted that the revised proposed purchasing manual incorporates updated language from Florida Statutes, adds City procedures, and provides purchasing thresholds. Staff recommended approval.

Motion by Commissioner Sharman to approve Resolution 25-06. Seconded by Commissioner Johnson and carried unanimously 4-0.

- B. Recommendation to set the proposed millage rate for fiscal year 2025/2026 at the rate of 5.3000 mills, AND set public hearing dates for FY 2026 budget for the 2nd and 4th Thursdays in September, 9/11/2025 and 9/25/2025 at 6:30 P.M.

City Manager Jon C. Williams stated that he would start with good news, noting the intent to set the tentative millage rate at 5.30 mills, but the budget is a fluid document which they have been working on almost daily. He noted that with some of the most recent updates, staff feel that they can set the millage rate at a much lower rate. He noted that he updated the agenda item and distributed it for review. He explained that, as with the fire assessment, every year the City always sets the millage rate at a higher rate with the intent of giving staff flexibility as they review and work the budget with the goal of bringing it down. He noted that this goal still remains.

Mr. Williams noted that the Truth-in-Millage (TRIM) legislation timetable requires the City to advise the Property Appraiser of the proposed millage rate by August 1st of each year. He noted that staff recommended establishing an initial millage rate of 4.8565 mills. He noted that the City Commission could reduce the rate to the current rate during the budget hearings, which would be held in September; however, the Commission cannot increase the rate above the tentative rate without starting the whole TRIM process over. Furthermore, he noted that this would provide staff with ample time to continue to evaluate the budget for additional reductions, cost savings and/or possible additional revenues. Mr. Williams provided details for the City Commission's consideration, such as the current gross taxable value, the current year rolled-back rate, information on what one mill would generate in revenue, and he spoke of the current year's budgeted Ad Valorem Tax Revenue (AVTR). Mr. Williams gave scenarios of revenue by noting the current millage rate, the rolled-back rate, and the proposed millage rate.

City Manager Williams further reiterated and explained the process involved in setting the millage, requirements if changes are needed to raise the rate or lower the rate and date constraints for providing information to the Property Appraiser. He explained that the set millage rate set by the City of Winter Garden would be sent to all property owners within Winter Garden directly after August 1st. Staff recommended approval to set the proposed millage rate for the Fiscal Year of 2025/2026 budget at the rate of 4.8565 and set the public hearing dates for the second and fourth Thursday in September, which are September 11, 2025, and September 25, 2025, at 6:30 p.m.

Discussion ensued regarding clarification of the voting requirement for setting specific millage rates, this process being a normal procedure and requirements to bring the best possible rate.

Motion by Commissioner Jones to approve setting the proposed millage rate for the Fiscal Year of 2025/2026 budget at the rate of 4.8565 and set the public hearing dates for the second and fourth Thursday in September, which are September 11, 2025, and September 25, 2025, at 6:30 p.m. Seconded by Commissioner Johnson and carried unanimously 4-0.

- C. Recommendation to approve award of Purchase Order to T D Thomson Construction, Inc. to replace asphalt with bricks on East Joiner Street in the amount of \$155,210.54

City Engineer Jim Monahan stated that this is a request for a purchase order to replace the asphalt with brick, and he named the street locations for the work. The project is expected to take four weeks, with segments of the roadway closed at a time for the conversion. Furthermore, he indicated that the contractor would coordinate with local businesses to minimize disruption during construction. Staff recommended approval.

There was discussion on whether repairs are included should issues arise under the road. Mr. Monahan replied that this does not include discoveries. However, there are broken curbs and sidewalks that would be included in the repairs.

Motion by Commissioner Jones to approve award of purchase order to T D Thomson Construction, Inc. to replace asphalt with bricks on East Joiner Street in the amount of \$155,210.54. Seconded by Commissioner Sharman and carried 4-0.

- D. Recommendation to approve authorizing City Manager to execute and renew the Farmers Market License Agreement between the City of Winter Garden and Red Top Productions Corporation

Economic Development Director Marc Hutchinson stated that the license agreement between the City of Winter Garden and Red Top Productions Corporation (RTP) for operating the Winter Garden Farmers Market has expired. He indicated that the agreement would permit RTP to run the market on Saturdays from 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM, including managing the setup and breakdown of the market. Furthermore, Mr. Hutchinson stated that it is the desire of the City to renew this agreement, allowing RTP to continue controlling, operating, and regulating the Farmers Market. Staff recommended approval.

Motion by Commissioner Jones to approve the City Manager execute and renew the Farmers Market License agreement between the City of Winter Garden and Red Top Productions Corporation. Seconded by Commissioner Johnson and carried unanimously 4-0.

Dispensed as the City Commission and convened as the Community Redevelopment Agency at 7:05 p.m.

Members Present: CRA Vice-Chairman Lisa L. Bennett and CRA Members Iliana R. Jones, Chloe Johnson, Colin Sharman, CRA Advisory Board Member Larry Cappleman, and Orange County Appointee Charlie Mae Wilder

Members Absent: CRA Chairman John Rees

- E. Recommendation to approve authorizing City Manager to execute proposed Change Order for Dyson's Plaza shell Construction in the amount of \$36,446

This item was heard after Item 4.F.

Economic Development Director Marc Hutchinson stated that the general contractor for the Dyson's Plaza Shell construction reported an unexpected total price increase of \$36,446 due to material cost hikes. He spoke of the delays stemming from unforeseen structural issues that required re-evaluation. He said that these delays pushed material procurement beyond initial price guarantee periods, coinciding with recent tariff uncertainties, which made it difficult for subcontractors to honor their original quotes. Furthermore, Mr. Hutchinson noted that this proposed change order exceeds the ten percent cost contingency allowance. Staff recommended approval.

CRA Member Larry Cappleman noted the impact of this project on building enthusiasm in the East Winter Garden renovation and noted that the CRA Advisory Board recommends approval.

Motion by CRA Member Charlie Mae Wilder to approve authorizing the City Manager to execute a change order for Dyson's Plaza shell construction in the amount of \$36,446. Seconded by CRA Member Sharman and carried 6-0.

F. BOARD APPOINTMENTS: Community Redevelopment Agency Advisory Board

Economic Development Director Marc Hutchinson gave some history from 2023 on the Community Redevelopment Agency Advisory Board (CRAAB) term changes made in Ordinance 23-04, which would stagger the terms of the board members into three groups. He noted three expiring terms, CRAAB meeting discussions, and the desire of the expiring members to remain on the board. He named the three members seeking reappointment as Carmen Horne, Jamie Holley, Sharee Freeman [formerly Sharee Hodge] and staff recommended approval of the reappointment.

There was an inquiry into whether the CRA board members had any other nominations, and there were none noted. CRA Member Larry Cappleman spoke of the CRAAB, recommending the reappointment of the expiring members, noting they have been good reliable members who have attended the meetings who have contributed and participated and now have experience of being able to move forward with improvements in the East Winter Garden community.

Motion by CRA Member Charlie Mae Wilder to approve the reappointment of CRA Advisory Board members Carmen Horne, Jamie Holley, Sharee Freeman. Seconded by CRA Member Cappleman and carried unanimously 6-0.

Adjourned as the Community Redevelopment Agency and reconvened as the City Commission at 7:11 p.m.

G. Recommendation to approve SPECIAL EVENT - American Legion Challenge 22 "Ruck Walk" - Saturday, November 15, 2025, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., with street closure

Planning Director Kelly Carson stated that the American Legion is requesting approval to hold their Challenge 22 celebration and Ruck Walk. She noted the event dates, times, road closures, and activities. Staff recommended approval, subject to conditions. Mayor Pro Tem

Bennett recognized Kurt Gies to share information about this event.

Kurt Gies, Executive Director and Founder of Challenge 22, shared that they are now a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation. He shared that the American Legion is partnering with them and offering support, but the event permit would actually be under their name. Mr. Gies spoke of their purpose, which is to end veteran suicide, and how he approached the City 8 years ago with no idea where this dream would take them. He shared that since that date, they have raised over \$650,000 in the Winter Garden area. He noted that they have worked with over 10,000 veterans, first responders, active-duty members, and family members. Furthermore, he noted that there have been no reported suicides among that group. He spoke of organizing as a non-profit, challenges within the tax code, the ability to lobby the legislature, and the future of the purpose. He thanked the City for their support and generous donations.

Motion by Commissioner Sharman to approve the special event for the American Legion Challenge 22 "Ruck Walk" on Saturday, November 15, 2025, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., with street closure. Seconded by Commissioner Johnson and Commissioner Jones simultaneously and carried unanimously 4-0.

5. Matters From Public

Gretchen Tope, 512 North Lakeview Avenue, Winter Garden, Florida, addressed concerns about the chamber's sound system, and it was noted that the City Commissioners needed to speak into the microphones. Ms. Tope complimented the Fire and Rescue for their service and shared a recent experience, mentioned that the brand-new fire truck had a broken clock, and thanked the Police and the Firefighters for their service.

Mayor Pro Tem Bennett echoed her comments, sharing that her dad recently needed the ambulance services, and noted how nice and comforting it is to have the service in-house and have our staff show up.

Sarah Wolfe, 221 N. Boyd Street, Winter Garden, Florida inquired of the millage rate of 4.8565 and if it included the fire assessment. City Manager Jon C. Williams responded that it would be separate and explained how the additional millage and the fire assessment were separate tools for addressing the upcoming budget. There was discussion on the Dillard Street project being paused and not canceled. This was mainly due to the costs and growth changes to traffic.

Allison Painter, 393 N. Lakeview Avenue, Winter Garden, Florida, inquired about the project to brick Joiner Street and noted other roads that need attention. She also inquired of City Manager Williams as to the half paving of her back alley, noting traffic using her alley. Discussion ensued.

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

7. Matters From City Manager

City Manager Jon C. Williams noted that the first community engagement meeting was held regarding the proposed fire assessment. He noted a turnout of approximately 60 people and

mentioned that notices were delayed in reaching everyone. He noted that the next community meeting would be on July 29, 2025, which he presumes will probably be standing room only. He expressed that, as with the tentative millage rate, the initial assessment resolution was adopted at the max rate, and it is the City's goal to bring that down as much as possible and make a recommendation at the August 14, 2025, City Commission meeting. Discussion ensued on the max rate, public hearings, and community engagement.

City Manager Jon C. Williams congratulated Mayor Pro Tem Lisa L. Bennett on a job well done in presiding over this meeting.

8. Matters From Mayor and Commissioners

A. Florida League of Cities Annual Conference Voting Delegate

There was discussion about who would attend the Florida League of Cities Annual Conference, and it was noted that Commissioner Iliana R. Jones would be in attendance.

Motion by Commissioner Sharman to appoint Commissioner Iliana R. Jones as the City of Winter Garden Voting Delegate at the Florida League of Cities Annual Conference. Seconded by Commissioner Johnson and carried unanimously 4-0.

Commissioner Colin Sharman complimented Mayor Pro Tem Lisa L. Bennett on a job well done in running the meeting.

Commissioner Chloe Johnson also congratulated Mayor Pro Tem Lisa L. Bennett. She then thanked resident Gretchen Tope for her advice about speaking into the microphones, noting that she would use it more often so that she could be heard. Commissioner Johnson thanked staff for always doing a good job and for protecting and serving.

Commissioner Iliana R. Jones thanked all the staff and the first responders. She congratulated Mayor Pro Tem Lisa L. Bennett for a job well done in running the meeting.

Mayor Pro Tem Lisa L. Bennett thanked the first responders and the fire department, noting their assistance with her dad and she expressed that they were very professional. She thanked them again.

9. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

_____/S/_____
City Clerk Angela J. Grimmage

_____/S/_____
Mayor John Rees