

Alachua County Local Planning Agency/ Planning Commission Meeting Minutes: November 15, 2023

The Alachua County Planning Commission held a public meeting on November 15, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. The meeting was held **in person**.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Ishmael Rentz, Chair
Kristen Young, Vice-Chair
James Ingle
Melissa Norman
Jancie Vinson
Barry Rutenberg--Absent
Raymond Walsh --Absent
Kay Abbitt—School Board Member--Absent

STAFF PRESENT:

Jeff Hays, Director, Growth Management Department
Jerry Brewington, Senior Planner, Development Services, Growth Management
Chris Dawson, Transportation Planning Manager, Growth Management
Corbin Hanson, Sr. Assistant County Attorney, County Attorney --Zoom
Patricia McAllister, Clerk, Development Services, Growth Management
Joshua Massre, Communications Office

Meeting Called to Order:

Meeting called to order by Chair Rentz at 6:00 p.m.

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:
Motion was made by *Commissioner Ingle* to **approve** the agenda.
Motion was **seconded** by *Commissioner Vinson*.
Action: The **agenda** was **approved** with a vote of **5-0**.
2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: October 18, 2023
Motion was made by *Commissioner Young* to approve the minutes from the October 18, 2023, Local Planning Agency and Planning Commission.
Motion was **seconded** by *Commissioner Vinson*.
Action: The **minutes** for October 18, 2023, Local Planning Agency and Planning Commission meeting were **approved** with a vote of **5-0**.
3. **EX PARTE COMMUNICATION/PARTY STATEMENT/SWEARING IN**
Corbin Hanson polled the Planning Commissioners for any Ex Parte Communications. None were disclosed.

Corbin Hanson read the party statement into the record. There were no requests submitted for party status for this meeting.

Patricia McAllister swore in staff, agents and the public wishing to speak at this meeting.

4. **QUASI-JUDICIAL ITEM: Z23-000006 (Cuscowilla Fire Station Special Use Permit)**

A request by Clay Sweger, agent, for Alachua County, owner, for a special use permit to allow a Fire/Rescue Facility on approximately 5 acres in the Rural/Agricultural land use designation (one dwelling unit per 5 acres) with an 'A' (Agriculture) district located at 12264 South US Highway 441 on Parcel 16392-000-000.

Staff Presentation:

Jerry Brewington presented this application. Staff recommend approval of this special use permit with bases and conditions in the Staff Report, as well as the amended condition as noted in the staff report.

Questions for staff:

Commissioner Young questioned if this 5-acre site is part of the 70 acres property purchased by Alachua County with Wild Places & Public Spaces funding.

Commissioner Norman questioned whether there is a need for a cultural resources assessment for this property.

Commissioner Ingle questioned the zoning on this land was Agriculture with Nature Park.

Commissioner Rentz asked about traffic control coming out of this property onto the roadway.

Applicant: Clay Sweger, agent, stated this fire rescue facility is to cover the interlocal agreement between Alachua County and the Town of Micanopy to provide fire rescue services for the southern portion of Alachua County and covers a 5-mile radius from this property. Mr. Sweger also stated this site has no wetlands or wetland issues, will have over 100 feet of natural buffer around the property boundaries except where the existing driveway would need to be improved to accommodate the fire rescue vehicles and keeping most of the heritage trees on the site.

Deputy Chief Jeff Taylor stated there were other sites considered for this fire rescue station with one being within the Cuscowilla property purchased by Alachua County which was a 2-acre site but that site had wetland issues and was taken out of consideration as an acceptable site.

Staff Response:

Corbin Hanson stated this property is indeed a portion of the 70-acre parcel purchased by Alachua County Wild Place & Public Spaces funding but the value of this 5-acre portion would be reimbursed to Wild Places & Public Spaces.

Emily Rodriguez EPD changed wording regarding silt fencing for impacted area. Ms. Rodriguez stated Gopher Tortoises may be relocated from this site, there are no wetlands on this site. Ms. Rodriguez also stated that a cultural resources assessment may be needed for this site and won't be determined until under development review.

Jerry Brewington stated the activities on this property are in line with the rural/ag land uses and there would be no need to rezone or change the land use on this property at this time.

Deputy Chief Jeff Taylor stated there would be an emergency cut and flashing warning lights for traffic on the roadway.

Motion was made by *Commissioner Vinson to approve* this application with the bases and conditions as well as the amended condition as noted in the staff report.

Motion was **seconded** *Commissioner Ingle.*

Public Comments:

- 1) Fred McDowell lives directly across the Highway from this project and requested party status at this meeting.

Commissioner Young **motioned to grant party status to Mr. McDowell.**

Commissioner Vinson **seconded.**

Action: Vote of 5-0 in favor of allowing party status to Mr. McDowell and he was given extra time for his comments.

Fred McDowell stated this application to place fire rescue services on this site is not consistent with the neighborhood as it ruins a quiet area, and he was concerned with traffic, lights and sound from sirens.

- 2) Robert Wallace as a military veteran with PTSD and he lives across the Highway from this project and was concerned with noise, sirens at night along with lights. (*Mr. Wallace did not request party status but did verify his current mailing address with Mr. Hays.*)

Action: Z23-000006 was approved with the bases and conditions as well as the amended condition as noted in the staff report with a unanimous vote of **5-0**.

4. ATTENDANCE REPORT: Distributed in packets. No attendance issues.

5. PLANNING COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS:

Commissioner Ingle addressed the citizens in the audience and encouraged them to continue to pursue their concerns by attending these meetings and expressing their concerns to staff and to the agents for these projects.

Meeting adjourned at 7:14 p.m.