

# THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE



## **Meeting Minutes**

Thursday, February 22, 2024

2:30 PM

Hawthorne City Hall, 6875 SE 221st Street,  
Hawthorne, Florida 36240, City Commission Chambers

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

JEFFREY ARNOLD  
MARLON BRUCE  
MICHAEL CARNEVALE  
TRENTON HIGHTOWER  
LINDA JAMES  
CAROLYNN NATH KOMANSKI  
RICK SMITH  
TRACEY TODD  
ELLIOTT WELKER

# THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## DRAFT MINUTES

Thursday, February 22, 2024

2:30 PM

Hawthorne City Hall, 6875 SE 221st Street,  
Hawthorne, Florida 36240, City Commission Chambers

Members Present: Jeffrey Arnold, Michael Carnevale. Tracey Todd

Others Present: John Martin, Hawthorne City Manager; Randy Martin, Hawthorne Commissioner; Sean McLendon

CALL TO ORDER - Chair Todd called The meeting to order in workshop mode at 2:34 PM.

INTRODUCTIONS - The meeting attendees introduced themselves.

REVIEW OF AGENDA – By consensus, the agenda was adopted.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

January 25, 2024, EDAC Meeting Minutes will be brought back for approval at the March committee meeting.

### DISCUSSION OF HAWTHORNE'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

Manager Martin presented an overview of the City of Hawthorne's economic development priorities.



# THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE



Hawthorne's Status  
New Developments  
City Projects  
Emerging Businesses  
Hidden Gem

## City of Hawthorne

- A rural city with a population of 1,495 according to the 2020 census.
- The Department of Economic Opportunity has designated the City of Hawthorne a REDI (Rural Economic Development Initiative) Community.
- The 2023 North Florida Regional Water Supply Plan (NFRWSP) was approved by the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD) and Suwannee River Water Management District (SRWMD) respective Governing Boards on December 12, 2023; and has partnered with the City of Hawthorne.
- Conveyance in the Hawthorne corridor is unique; Having intersecting Intrastate highways, US Highway 301 and State Route 20 and CXS Railway mainline at the heart of the city.



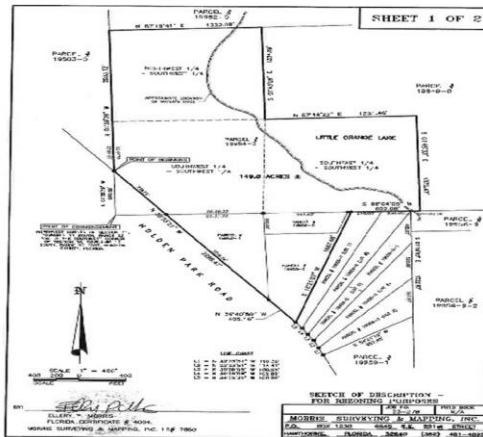
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## Elite Resorts

### Background

- Approximately 149.8 acres
- Located at  
8815 Holden Park Road
- 4 tax Parcels  
19954-000-000  
19960-001-000  
19959-008-000  
19959-000-000



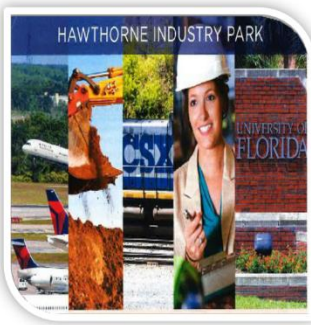
The four tax parcels were a part of a previous Development, known as Gator Landing RV Resort, Which included a golf course, RV parking spaces, boat ramp/Lake access, and accessory Activities.



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## Amenities

- 457 RV Spaces
- Campground
- Restroom and Shower facilities
- Boat ramp/ water access



## Hawthorne Industrial Park (North Florida Mega Industrial Park)

### A Weyerhaeuser Industrial Project



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The Hawthorne Industry Park is ready to support industry in the new economy.

## Location/ Attributes

- o 1,068 acres for industry shovel-ready site
- o Strategically located in the City of Hawthorne (one of Florida's original railroad towns) in Alachua County
- o The Park sits at a crossroads of enviable transportation infrastructure including the internal truck route to Florida
- o This Park has been readied to the Industrial Super Park Status, through a public-private partnership of Weyerhaeuser (the landowner) and the City of Hawthorne.
- o Weyerhaeuser is the largest, private landowner of timberlands in the world, with ongoing development in six States and Canada.



## City Projects

Improving Infrastructure

The City of Hawthorne is committed to economic growth, has planned for it, and is ready to support significant job growth.

- Building a modern water tower replacing the 1920's water tower
- Upgrading the wastewater treatment plant with increased capacity, and eco-friendly, residual drying box for waste after processing, that is shipped for composting
- Replace the 1950's water lines with new water distribution service lines and fire hydrants
- Upgrading public buildings for fire protection services
- CSX railroad crossing improvements
- Establish a Community Redevelopment District within the historic downtown Johnson Street (SE 221 Street) linking the Hawthorne-to-Gainesville Bike Trail to SR 20 and US-301, for a more bike and walkable friendly downtown
- Expand the multi-sports park and Wellness Center improvements
- Opened Little Orange Creek Nature Park & Preserve – making a slice of Natural North Florida

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And there is more to come...

## In-progress

- Green Stormwater Infrastructure – Historic Johnson Street Project
- Cox Broadband Fiber Optics
- CBDG-CV Grant Hawthorne Area Resource Center
- CBDG Master lift station
- Little Orange Creek Lighting Project



Emerging  
&  
Perspective  
Businesses

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## Business Development

### Recent Growth of New Businesses

- Tractor Supply
- Vape Shop
- Dominoes Pizza
- Witty's Imaginarium



### Interested Business Development

- Recycling
- Bike Rental

## HIDDEN GEMS

- Hawthorne Athletic Park
- Hawthorne- Gainesville Rail Trail
- Hawthorne Historical Museum
- Little Orange Creek Preserve
- Community



## Hawthorne Athletic Park

Hawthorne Athletic Park  
6000 SE 205 Street  
Hawthorne, FL 32640

Baseball and Softball  
Fields

Concession Stand  
Playground  
Pavilion with picnic tables  
Splash Park





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## Hawthorne- Gainesville Rail Trail



Gainesville-Hawthorne State Trail stretches 16 miles from the city of Gainesville's Boulware Springs Park through the Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park and other local and state conservation lands. The recreational trail is designed for walking, cycling and horseback riding. On this historic rail bed turned greenway, you will pass by native plants and wildlife, diverse scenery and backyard Florida culture. Overlooks and stops of interest tie together a rich story of small railroad towns, locomotives and human activity along this corridor.



## Hawthorne Historical Museum

The Hawthorne Historical Museum and Cultural Center holds artifacts and paintings from Hawthorne's past. Included are a series of paintings by Francis Moore, an artist known locally as Hawthorne's Grandpa Moses, and a large quilt that incorporates images of 20 historic homes in Hawthorne. Hawthorne started as a railroad town that grew around the 1879 junction of the Florida Southern and Peninsula lines. The Hawthorne Historical Museum and Cultural Center stands near the site of the original train depot. The building was formerly one of the town's African-American churches, originally built in 1907. The painstaking restoration process, completed almost entirely by volunteers, saved the old brick piers and panes of red and yellow colored glass.

## Little Orange Creek Nature Preserve

**GO OUTDOORS!  
VISIT HAWTHORNE!**

**ACTIVITIES:**  
 CYCLING / HIKING / HORSEBACK RIDING  
 CANOEING / SUPPORTING  
 BIRDING / ANGLING  
 FISHING / BOATING  
 GOLFING / PICKLEBALL  
 BASKETBALL / TENNIS / SOFTBALL  
 HUNTING / HORSEBACK RIDING  
 HIKING / CANOEING / SUPPORTING  
 BIRDING / ANGLING / FISHING / BOATING

**ADDRESS:**  
 24113 30 HAWTHORNE RD.  
 HAWTHORNE, FL 32640

**PHONE:**  
 352-266-8000  
 784-662-3722 (TOLL FREE)

**WEBSITE:**  
[www.CityOfHawthorne.com](http://www.CityOfHawthorne.com)

**LITTLE ORANGE CREEK**

**YOU WILL LOVE LOCP!**

**RENT THE BUILDING AT  
LITTLE ORANGE CREEK  
GREEN FOR SPECIAL EVENTS,  
MEETINGS, AND MEALINGS!**

The building is available for rent for special events, meetings, and mealings. The building is available for rent for special events, meetings, and mealings. The building is available for rent for special events, meetings, and mealings.

**ABOUT THE BUILDING:**  
 This is a 10,000 sq. ft. building with a large open area. The building is available for rent for special events, meetings, and mealings.

**CONTACT THE CITY OF HAWTHORNE  
FOR MORE DETAILS:**  
 (352) 461-2439, EXT. 701

# THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE



Hawthorne Hornets

Education, Athleticism, Teamwork,  
Sportsmanship & Community

- Cornelius Ingram, former Florida Gator and NFL tight end, is the head coach and leader of the Hawthorne Hornets.
- The Hawthorne football team wins back-to-back Class 1R state titles
- The Hawthorne Hornets boy's and girl's basketball teams both won Class 1A state titles in the same year.



Thank you



City of Hawthorne

John Martin – City Manager

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<https://www.cityofhawthorne.net>

During the presentation, the Committee asked the Hawthorne representatives about their major impediments to economic development. Their reply was in two parts. The first was a lack of support infrastructure, such as utility connections and stormwater facilities. Business prospects could not pay to connect or construct this needed infrastructure. The second impediment was a general perception that the County was unfriendly to business. The Committee asked about the two issues, which was the bigger problem, and the City representatives said that the perception issues were their biggest obstacle.

As a perception is difficult to address, the Committee urged the City representatives to share specific instances where the County Commission could better address these concerns. The City committed to discuss wetland policies with the County Commission that may impede development opportunities at the Weyerhaeuser Industrial Project.

County staff shared recent instances of supporting Hawthorne's economic development opportunities, which included an aerospace prospect and a plastics recycling company. In addition, County staff have offered to assist the City in reviewing its Florida Commerce Job Growth Grant Application. The County recently submitted one that would benefit economic development-related infrastructure for the City of Alachua and would be willing to share that expertise in a review of Hawthorne's application.

EDAC RECOMMENDATION OF ECOLOOP BUSINESS APPLICATIONS – This recommendation will be discussed at the Committee's March meeting due to a lack of quorum.

# **THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

ADJOURN – The meeting adjourned at 3:37 PM.