



Alachua County Special Meeting

Minutes

January 22, 2024, 3:00 PM

Present: Chair Mary Alford, Vice Chair Charles S. Chestnut, IV,
Commissioner Ken Cornell, Commissioner Anna Prizzia,
Commissioner Marihelen Wheeler

A. Call To Order

City Mayor Ward and Chair Alford called the meeting to order at 3:00pm

B. Welcome

C. Introduction

1. Mayor Harvey L. Ward, Jr., City of Gainesville
2. Chair Mary Alford, Alachua County Commission

D. Adoption of the Agenda

City Commissioner Eastman moved to adopt the City agenda.

2nd City Commissioner Saco

The motion passed 5-0 with Commissioner Cynthia Moore-Chestnut and Commissioner Ed Book not present.

Commissioner Prizzia asked to add an item to the agenda. She would like to have a brief conversation regarding an update on gun violence prevention efforts.

Commissioner Cornell moved to approve the agenda adding the gun violence prevention update.

2nd Commissioner Wheeler

The motion carried 5-0.

To approve the Agenda.

E. Items For Discussion

1. Downtown Strategic Plan Update - 24-00099

Alachua County Facilities Director Dan Whitcraft gave a presentation on the County Downtown Strategic Plan.

The new Civil Courthouse is expected to be completed December 2025. The court complex will include a chill water-central energy plant using thermal energy storage.

Fire Rescue Headquarters & Emergency Operations Center will move into the recently acquired Armory Site. Expected completion date is December 2024 or the first quarter of 2025.

The county is currently working with the University of Florida on a land lease term agreement. Once it is finalized the design phase for the new Animal Resources Facility will start. The expected completion date is December 2026/2027.

Commissioner Prizzia, City Commissioner Saco, Dan Whitcraft, City Commissioner Willits, City Commissioner Eastman, City Mayor Ward, Commissioner Wheeler, Commissioner Prizzia, and Chair Alford all presented comments.

Rick Smith with GCRA gave an overview of the Downtown Strategic Plan Initiative approved by the City Commissioners.

Chair Alford exits meeting at 3:31pm

Chair Alford returns at 3:35pm

City Mayor Ward, Commissioner Prizzia, Rick Smith, Commissioner Cornell, City Commissioner Eastman, and Chair Alford presented comments.

Commissioner Wheeler exits meeting at 3:52pm

Hear the presentation

2. Empower Solar for All - 24-00100

Maryann and LaQuanda gave a presentation to the Board on the above item.

Commissioner Wheeler returned to meeting at 3:59pm

Commissioner Wheeler, Commissioner Prizzia, Commissioner Cornell, and LaQuanda all presented comments.

Commissioner Prizzia moved for Alachua County Commission to sign the letter of collaboration and continue to work with the empower project.

2nd Commissioner Cornell

Public Comment

Chair Alford recognized Khalil Blount, and Tamara Robbins who presented comments.

The motion carried 5-0.

City Mayor Ward, City Commissioner Willits, LaQuanda, Maryann, and City Commissioner Willits presented comments,

City Commissioner Willits moved to sign letter of collaboration and continue to work with the empower project.

2nd City Commissioner Eastman

Commissioner Duncan-Walker presented comments.

The motion passed unanimously.

Hear presentation and authorize the County Chair and City Mayor to sign the green jobs partnership letter of collaboration.

3. Gainesville Community Reinvestment Area GTEC – Cornerstone – EHEDI Update (B) - 24-00101

Rick Smith with GCRA presented the above item to the Board.

Commissioner Cornell, Commissioner Prizzia, Rick Smith, Commissioner Wheeler, Bill Doorman GTEC Manager at GCRA, City Mayor Ward, Rick Smith, Chair Alford, and Commissioner Prizzia all presented comments.

Chair Alford exits meeting at 5:21pm

Chair Alford returns to meeting at 5:25 pm

Hear staff update

F. Gun Violence Prevention Efforts

Assistant Deputy County Manager Carl Smart introduced Fire Chief Joe Dixon to the Board to give an update to the commission.

Chief Dixon reviewed key achievements, data and the different organizations working together to cease gun violence. Chief Dixon states that addressing the issue as a public crisis will help contribute to preventing gun violence.

Commissioner Prizzia, Chief Dixon, City Mayor Ward, Commissioner Prizzia, City Mayor Ward, Commissioner Cornell, Assistant Deputy County Manager Carl Smart, Commissioner Cornell, Commissioner Prizzia, and Assistant Deputy County Manager Carl Smart all presented comments.

Commissioner Prizzia moved to ask staff to use the department of justice 10 essential actions that you can take to reduce violence now, to put together a plan in coordination with the city, the public defender, the state attorney, the sheriff's office, and any other relevant stakeholders based on those 10 actions and bring it back to the commission within the next two months.

The motion failed for lack of a second.

City Commissioner Willits, Commissioner Prizzia, City Commissioner Willits, Chair Alford, City Commissioner Duncan-Walker, City Mayor Ward, City Commissioner Book, Commissioner Wheeler, Commissioner Prizzia, City Commissioner Moore-Chestnut, and Commissioner Cornell all presented comments.

Commissioner Cornell moved refer to staff the task of identifying the current steps and existing stakeholders at both the county and city, and the activities that are occurring related to the local gun violence state of crisis and return it to the Board within 60 to 90 days with a report of these activities. Which would include but not limited to each of the January 2022 executive summary, 10 essential

activities and tasks to reduce violence now. As well as other immediate short-term and long-term recommendations that could serve as a draft for both commissions to begin to consider.

2nd Commissioner Prizzia

Commissioner Wheeler, Commissioner Cornell, County Manager Lieberman, Commissioner Cornell, and Chair Alford all presented comments.

Public Comment

Chair Alford recognized Khalil Blount, Tamara Robbins, Patricia Lee, Genevieve Helton, and Jo Beatty who presented comments.

The motion passed 4-1 with Commissioner Wheeler voting Nay.

City Commissioner Duncan-Walker moved to mirror the following County motion:

refer to staff the task of identifying the current steps and existing stakeholders at both the county and city, and the activities that are occurring related to the local gun violence state of crisis and return it to the Board within 60 to 90 days with a report of these activities. Which would include but not limited to each of the January 2022 executive summary, 10 essential activities and tasks to reduce violence now. As well as other immediate short-term and long-term recommendations that could serve as a draft for both commissions to begin to consider.

2nd City Commissioner Eastman

City Commissioner Eastman, City Commissioner Duncan-Walker, City Mayor Ward, and City Commissioner Book all presented comments.

The motion passed unanimously.

G. Public Comment

Chair Alford recognized Jo Beatty, Patricia Lee, and Tamara Robbins who presented comments.

H. Commission General Comments and Information Discussion

1. County Commission Comment

Commissioner Prizzia stated an email was received from Food and Nutrition Services from the school board asking for a letter of support for a grant application. They are asking for funding to look at how they can expand their local food procurement for the school lunch program.

Commissioner Prizzia moved to ask the Chair to sign the letter of support asked for by the school board.

2nd Commissioner Wheeler

The motion carried 5-0.

Commissioner Wheeler stated Legacy Outreach meeting will be Saturday 10am at Springhill Baptist Church to discuss ideas with the community regarding the site the county has purchased on 15th.

2. City Commission Comment

City Commissioner Duncan- Walker would like to extend an invitation to anyone who would like to join the discussion about the cultural arts center at the Cotton Club this Saturday at 6:00pm

I. Adjourn

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 6:38 p.m.

To adjourn the meeting.