

Equity Advisory Board

January 16, 2025

6:00 Pm

Greater Bethel AME Church

701 SE 43rd Street Gainesville, FL 32641

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

Members Present: Ronald Rawls (Chair), Kali Blount, Yvette Carter, Gerie Crawford (Vice Chair), Nancy Dean, Alena Lawson-Bennett, and Frank White

Members Absent: Jorelle Degan

Gerie Crawford arrived at 6:03 p.m.

Staff present were Gina Peebles, Nephtali Dzubin. Jeffrey Hays, the Growth Management Director was present.

2. Approval of the Agenda

Chair Ronald Rawls made a motion to approve the agenda as presented; Alena Lawson-Bennett second; unanimous approval; motion carried.

3. Listening Session

A listening session is one where the board and county staff want to hear from the community. In adherence to the function of the Equity Advisory board, the aim is to ensure that equity is involved in listening discussions.

3.1 Zoning

Growth Management Director Jeffrey Hays presented on Zoning. The long-range planning document that is approximately 20 years old, which expresses community overarching vision, goals, objectives, policies, and strategies, is called the Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan is a living document, meaning it is one that continuously receives community feedback, but the goal is to receive more feedback during meetings such as this one and to do a major update that starts with an evaluation and appraisal report, then bringing their plans back to groups such as the EAB to see if they are meeting current strategies and goals. The process they are about to embark on is one where they follow that vision, and it includes the EAB and Equity Audit. Future Land Use is part of the Comprehensive Plan, and zoning must be consistent with the future land use map designation pursuant to the Comprehensive Plan.

3.2 Enterprise Zone Designation

As part of his presentation, Jeffrey Hays discussed the Gainesville Enterprise Zone. Although the State of Florida program that helped encourage economic development was sunset several years ago, the City of Gainesville Enterprise Zones

still exist. The city offers discounts to development while Alachua County has fee incentives for development in the form of a 50% reduction in application fees for building permits, zoning, and development plans within the eastern portion of the Urban Cluster. The intent is to encourage development in unincorporated East Gainesville.

A Q&A Session was held at the end of the presentation between members of the board, the public, and the presenter. The goal was to listen to their feedback and provide clarification on terms and questions about zoning and enterprise zoning.

4. Member Comments

Board member Aletha Lawson-Bennett wanted clarification on what areas are designated for business and what areas were wetlands and to know if developers know where to develop. Growth Management work on developing on land that are partially not wetland; for example, properties along Hawthorne Road are designated commercial. Meanwhile, everything in the activity center is a mixed-use piece of property, meaning that it includes residential and commercial.

Board members were also pleased about the public attendance during this listening session and wanted to know what methods were effective in contributing towards high attendance.

Board member Yvette Carter expressed the desire to get in touch with the city and county and clarified that there are no enterprise zones in the city but there are activity centers in the city. Yvette Carter thanked Jeffrey Hays for presenting and expressed the desire to reach more of the community and to be equitable to people across all age groups who have different access to communication in 2025.

5. Public Comment

None

6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.