

Economic Development Advisory Committee

Date: February 27, 2025
Time: 2:30 pm
Location: County Administration Building - Grace Knight Conference Room
12 SE 1 Street, 2nd Floor, Gainesville, FL 32601

1. Call to Order

With quorum achieved Sean McLendon called the meeting to order at 2:35 PM as there was no Chair or Vice Chair available.

Members Present: Carrie Bush, Linda James, Alexander Hamilton-Sanchez, Nedra Goettling, Sarah Rockwell, and Levy Odera.

Members Absent: Romona Jackson, Elliott Welker, and Ying Xu.

2. Review of Agenda

Sarah Rockwell made a motion to approve the agenda. It was seconded by Levy Odera and approved unanimously.

3. Nomination & Election of 2025 EDAC Chair and Vice-Chair

The floor was opened for nominations of the Chair. Sarah Rockwell offered to be chair and was approved unanimously by the committee. Chair Rockwell opened the floor for nominations for Vice Chair. Alexander Sanchez-Hamilton offered to be Vice Chair and was approved unanimously.

4. Approve Minutes: January 23, 2025, Joint EDAC & TDC

Linda James moved to approve the minutes, and Levy Odera seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

5. Approve 2025 Workplan & 2024 Accomplishments Report

Alexander Hamilton-Sanchez motioned to approve the 2025 Workplan & 2024 Accomplishments Report, and Linda James offered a second. The motion was approved unanimously.

6. Review of Draft Economic Development Organization Resolution

Staff provided a summary of efforts to establish a partnership between the Department of Tourism & Economic Development and the Greater Gainesville

Chamber of Commerce in the joint administration of the Economic Development Organization for the County. Once the draft resolution is ready, it will be shared with EDAC. Staff are still consulting with the Chamber on procedures and how best to coordinate their efforts.

7. Staff Update: Forward Focus Eastern Alachua County

Staff presented the County's Forward Focus Eastern Alachua County project. The presentation covered the Project Description and Purpose, the Project Team, the Project Map, the Project Components and Phases, and the Deliverables and Timeline.

Project Description and Purpose: The study, divided into three phases, focuses on the unique needs in eastern Alachua County. This assessment will identify community service needs and economic development opportunities to attract grant funding and inform future County initiatives. Missy Daniels, Assistant County Manager, leads the project team, which includes staff from the Growth Management, Community Support Services, and Tourism & Economic Development Departments.

Forward Focus Project Area: The study area includes, but is not limited to, the municipalities of Hawthorne, Waldo, and Micanopy and the unincorporated communities of Montecocha, Melrose, Island Grove, and rural clusters.

Project Components: Includes collection of Existing Data; ongoing Stakeholder Engagement through 2025; Data Analysis (existing and from stakeholders) from 2025 through 2026; and periodic Report Findings and Final Recommendations in 2027 that will have Prioritized Needs/Actions alongside recommended Grant Funding Identification.

Phase 1 will occur over 2025 with the following sub-phases:

- Developed a draft study area map for Board approval
- Identify existing data relevant to the Needs Assessment - demographics, housing, transportation, environmental factors
- Comprehensive Outreach Plan with Critical Stakeholders - public input, gathering information from Community Health Workers, Contact with Clients, Surveys, Community Meetings
- Kick-Off Meeting - in Hawthorne 6 PM Oct 24, 2024
- Develop Scope of Work and RFP for consultants going into FY26

- Report Initial Findings to the Board

Phase 2 will occur over 2026 with the following sub-phases:

- Social Services Needs and Economic Development Assessment
- Climate Change Vulnerability Correlation

Phase 3 will go into effect in 2027 with the following sub-phases.

- Mid-Project Report to the Board
- Develop a grant-ready strategy to address identified needs.
- Identify Grant Funding Opportunities
- Identify Non-Grant eligible funding needs
- Final Report and Recommendation

Project Deliverables will include a Public Engagement Summary, a Data Analysis Report, and a Community Asset Map.

The community is invited to follow progress on the project's website at <https://forwardfocus.alachuacounty.us/> and to sign up for email updates and newsletters at ForwardFocus@alachuacounty.us.

8. Member Comments

9. Public Comment

10. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:35 PM.