

Economic Development Advisory Committee

Date: June 26, 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

The meeting was called to order at 2:37 PM.

Members Present: Vice Chair Alex Hamilton, Nedra Goettling, Romona Jackson, Levy Odera, Ying Xu, Linda James

Members Absent: Sarah Rockwell, Carrie Bush

Others in Attendance:

Jessica Hurov, Sean McLendon, Bailey McClellan, Nephtali Dzubin, Patricia Lee, Matthew Traum

2. Review of Agenda

Romona Jackson made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Levy Odera and approved unanimously.

3. Approval of Minutes - May 22, 2025

Ying Xu noted a typo on page 2 of the minutes.

Nedra Goettling motioned to approve the minutes pending the following changes:

- Add Romona Jackson to the list of members in attendance
- Add Patricia Lee to "Others in Attendance"
- Correct type on page 2 from "Precede" to "Pre-seed".

The motion was seconded by Ying Xu and approved unanimously.

4. Environmental Protection Department - Resiliency Office Presentation - Climate Action Plan

Presenter: Jennison Kipp, Resiliency Specialist, Alachua County Environmental Protection Department (EPD)

Jennison Kipp, who joined the County's Resiliency Office in February, introduced

herself. She shared her background in environmental engineering and economics.

A roundtable introduction of EDAC members followed. Jennison then provided an overview of the Climate Action Plan (CAP), which is currently in development. The goal is to present it to the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) for approval in November.

Upcoming Events:

- **Climate Festival:** November 15, UF/IFAS Extension Office, Newberry
- **Keynote Speaker of Climate Festival:** Michael Grunwald, with a book signing scheduled for Friday, June 27 at Lynx Bookstore.

Discussion Highlights:

- **Nedra Goettling** asked about the order of implementation within the CAP. Jennison noted that items will follow the structure of the drafted chapters.
- A public workshop to provide input and comments on draft chapters is scheduled for August.
- **Linda James** asked about eligible upgrades under the \$15,000 Alachua County Energy Efficiency Program. Jennison clarified that funds may be used for mutually agreed-upon energy-efficient upgrades between landlords and tenants. Currently, options are broad, but as more data is gathered, specific recommendations (e.g., windows, HVAC, appliances) may be developed.

Group Discussion: Green Industries Chapter

Jennison opened the floor for input on the upcoming Green Industries chapter of the CAP.

- **Nedra Goettling** asked whether this chapter would be last. Jennison suggested it may be placed first, as it directly relates to daily life. Nedra emphasized the need for vision and strategic partnerships.
- **Levy Odera** stressed the importance of inclusive and resilient language to prevent future political or ideological resistance.
- **Ying Xu** recommended positioning the chapter as the final section to serve as a solution-oriented conclusion and call to action.

- **Linda James** questioned the chapter title, suggesting that “Green Industries” may not integrate well with the rest of the CAP. She raised questions about:
 - Whether the focus is on transforming existing industries or developing new ones
 - The funding sources—public dollars, private investment, or otherwise
 - The roles of individuals, sectors, and government in implementationShe suggested the chapter be structured like a business plan.
- **Levy** asked about the chapter’s placement in the CAP. Jennison noted it is still being determined.
- **Nedra** referenced county-funded irrigation replacements available to HOAs, recommending a central landing page for all partnership opportunities.
- **Levy** proposed incorporating multimedia content (e.g., videos, photos) to increase engagement and help reach the county’s goal of making 20% of residents aware of the CAP.
- **Jennison** highlighted a past storytelling project presented at the Matheson Museum, which explored local climate impact narratives.
- **Nedra** asked about challenges identified through the project. Jennison responded:
 - Transportation limitations hinder access to jobs and services
 - Disaster recovery following hurricanes remains a concern
- **Linda** emphasized the need for accessible community engagement and communications that aren’t overly negative. She recommended:
 - Using platforms like the *Gainesville Word of Mouth* Facebook page
 - Sharing summary-focused content that highlights solutions and successes
- **Nedra** suggested renaming the chapter “Green Opportunities.”
- **Ramona Jackson** encouraged grassroots engagement and outreach through trusted community groups.

- **Linda** asked how other communities are measuring engagement around their CAPs.
 - Jennison cited the South Florida initiative (involving five counties) and the Tampa region as leading examples. She noted that Alachua County is the first inland Florida county to create a CAP and has the potential to serve as a resource for rural counties in the region.

5. **Member Comments**

Nephtali Dzubin announced that the BOCC will hear a presentation from the Chair on EDAC's work plan and accomplishments report on **August 26, 2025** at **12:00 PM**.

6. **Public Comment**

Patricia Lee raised a question regarding the CAP's 80% emissions reduction goal:

- What are the primary sources of emissions and what are the action items to reach that target?

Jennison's response:

- The largest source of emissions is transportation, followed by electricity use in buildings.
- The City has received a grant to study vehicle and transit electrification.
- The County is exploring solar energy solutions for public buildings.

Patricia also noted that expanded bike trails could support both recreational and commuter cycling.

7. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:02 PM.