



## Alachua County Special Meeting Minutes

**September 2, 2025, 9:30 AM**

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

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### **A. Approval of Agenda**

Chair Chestnut called the meeting to order at 9:30am

**Commissioner Cornell moved** approval of the agenda.

2nd Commissioner Alford

**The motion carried 5-0.**

To approve the Agenda.

### **B. Items for Discussion**

1. Workshop on Comprehensive Plan Evaluation and Update – Housing and Economic Development - 25-00664

Ben Chumley, Principal Planner Growth Management Department presented the above item.

#### Staff Recommended Key Update Areas - Housing Element

1. Broadly update Housing Element to align with the 2024 Alachua County Housing Plan. Ensure that goals, objectives, and policies reflect current Board priorities and strategies as articulated in the 2024 Housing Plan.
2. Incorporate general policies regarding use of infrastructure surtax funds for affordable housing.

3. Incorporate general policies on the County's affordable housing trust fund as a dedicated funding source for affordable housing
4. Add policy to recognize the potential for motel conversions for affordable housing.
5. Workforce Housing – Add definition and references to "affordable workforce housing" in Element (required by statute)
6. Incorporate appropriate cross references to inclusionary housing provisions that were recently adopted in the Future Land Use Element.
7. General updates to names of housing partner agencies and programs.

Commissioner Prizzia, Ben Chumley, Commissioner Cornell, Commissioner Alford, Commissioner Wheeler, Jeff Hayes, Missy Daniels, and Chair Chestnut presented comments.

Commissioner Alford exits the meeting at 10:44am

Commissioner Alford returns to the meeting at 10:49am

Commissioner Prizzia asked that staff bring back some ideas and options on how the board may address the missing middle housing opportunities within the zoning development.

Commissioner Cornell exits the meeting at 10:50am

Commissioner Cornell returns to the meeting at 10:52am

Commissioner Prizzia exits the meeting at 10:53am

Commissioner Prizzia returns to the meeting at 10:55am

#### Public Comment

Chair Chestnut recognized Jim Konish, Khali Blount and Patricia Lee who presented comments.

Ben Chumley, Principal Planner Growth Management Department continued the presentation of the item.

Sean Mclendon and Jessica presented the item on Economic Element.

Commissioner Prizzia, Commissioner Alford, Commissioner Wheeler and Commissioner Cornell presented comments.

### Staff Recommended Key Update Areas - Economic Element

#### 1. Build on the County's Core Competitive Advantages: Education & Healthcare

- Recognize and leverage strengths in education and healthcare as a driver of economic development.
- Prioritize industries directly tied to the County's strengths, such as life sciences, bio-sciences, and medical research.
  - This will help attract and retain higher-wage employers.
- Align workforce with industry needs: Emphasize partnerships with educational institutions like UF and Santa Fe College to create workforce pipelines for higher-wage, certificate, and technical programs.
  - Ensures that local talent meets the demands of modern industries, especially those shaped by AI advancements.
- Promote research parks: Continue to recognize and support research and technology parks as valuable assets for the community and give them high priority

#### 2. Cultivating a Unique Market Differentiator: Food and Food Systems

- Elevate local food systems from a general policy topic to a central pillar of County's economic identity.
- Support Local Producers: Nurture small producer sector with strategic support and capital investments. This includes strengthening policies that encourage agricultural entrepreneurship and value-added opportunities, such as local food processing.

- Invest in Infrastructure: Include a policy framework for supporting critical infrastructure investments, such as a Food Hub.

- Connect to Tourism: Include policies that formalize the connection between food culture and tourism, promoting agritourism, and farm-to-table experiences.

### 3. Leveraging Quality of Life: "Where Nature and Culture Meet"

- "Where Nature and Culture Meet," represents a significant economic driver. Policies in the element should integrate this concept as a core business attractant and a source of tourism revenue.

- Arts & Ecotourism: Update policies to recognize that arts, cultural events, and ecotourism as major contributors to Florida's economy and the County's quality of life.

- Sports Visitation: Add policies to acknowledge the importance of sports tourism and the Board's investment in assets like the Sports Events Center.

- Marketing and Data-Driven Decisions: The updated element should empower the new Tourism & Economic Development (TED) Department to serve as the community's overall Economic Development Organization (EDO). This would include telling the community's story through marketing and using data to inform decisions that align with the Board's priorities.

- Update home-based business language for consistency with Sec. 559.955, Florida Statutes (update required by statute).

- Consider adding policy language to acknowledge the Forward Focus – Eastern Alachua County initiative related to economic development.

### Public Comment

Chair Chestnut recognized Patricia Lee, and a citizen who presented comments.

Receive presentation and provide any direction to staff on potential updates to bring forward as proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan.

## **C. Closing Comments**

1. Public Comment

Chair Chestnut recognized Patricia Lee who presented comments.

2. Commission Comment

There were no comments presented at this time.

**D. Adjourn**

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 12:35 p.m.

To adjourn the meeting.