

**Rural Concerns Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes**

February 17, 2026

4:00 pm

Community Support Services, Conference Room A

218 SE 24th St., Gainesville, FL 32641

1. Call to Order

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

In person: Dr. Rodney Clouser (Chair), Lyman Conover, Janet Hearn, Sarah Luther, Micky McMillan (Vice Chair), John Nix, Missy Norman, Dr. Cindy Sanders, Kelsey Waters, Brent Weisman

Virtual: Tyrone Johnson

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

STAFF PRESENT:

Ken McMurry, Senior Planner, Growth Management

Ben Chumley, Principal Planner, Growth Management

Bailey McClellan, Agricultural Economic Development Coordinator, Tourism & Economic Development

Jessica Hurov, Tourism and Economic Development Director, Tourism & Economic Development

Chair Clouser called the meeting to order at 4:04 pm. There were 8 members present in person, which was confirmed to satisfy the requirement for at least a quorum under County Advisory Board Guidelines, and 1 present virtually (Mr. Johnson) through a County-approved disability accommodation. Chair Clouser said that, per the Guidelines, Mr. Johnson as Alternate member can vote today until such time as the remaining two regular members arrive.

Ms. Norman joined the meeting at 4:05 pm.

2. Public Comment (~ 10 minutes total)

There were no public present.

3. Approval of the Agenda

Motion was made by Ms. Luther to approve the agenda; seconded by Mr. Nix.

ACTION: Motion passed unanimously.

4. New Business

4.1 Update on Food Hub Feasibility Study and Phase II Pilot Project – Bailey McClellan, Agricultural Economic Development Coordinator, Tourism & Economic Development

Ms. McClellan gave a presentation on the County's Food Hub Feasibility Study including a description and potential variations of food hubs; the consultant's market analysis; stakeholders' responses; the current phase 2 pilot project goals, Request for Proposals, and submissions; the

County's food hub study website. She also presented information on the County's farmers market assessment survey and key shopper and vendor takeaways.

Ms. Waters joined the meeting at 4:15 pm.

There were discussion and questions by Committee members regarding the food hub pilot project RFP submissions; total cost of the pilot study; location priority for a facility; "farm stop" concept; use of SNAP/EBT benefits; food hub fee pricing structure, self-sustainability, and potential City or County financial support; potential for a mobile food market; determination of final food hub components; local foodshed radius, product seasonality, producer transparency, and consumer education. There were also discussion and questions regarding farmers markets; vendor turnover rates; and product sales, current trends, and categories distribution by location.

4.2 RCAC Bylaws Draft Revisions (for approval at next meeting)

Mr. McMurry reviewed the draft revisions and said they're to make the RCAC Bylaws consistent with recent changes to the Advisory Board Guidelines. He said that staff brought those changes to the Committee when they were adopted and the Committee has been following them. He said that in accordance with the Bylaws, the revisions are being provided to the Committee at least 3 weeks prior to the meeting at which they'll be considered for approval.

4.3 RCAC 2026 Schedule of Meetings and Breaks

Mr. McMurry shared a draft RCAC 2026 meeting schedule on the screen. There were discussion and questions by Committee members regarding potential meeting dates, breaks, and locations. Motion was made by Ms. Luther for the Committee to take breaks from regular meetings in April, July, and December; seconded by Dr. Sanders.

ACTION: Motion passed unanimously.

5. Approval of minutes for 01-20-2026 meeting

Motion was made by Mr. Nix to approve the minutes for the 01-20-2026 meeting; seconded by Dr. Sanders.

ACTION: Motion passed unanimously.

6. Attendance Report

Mr. McMurry said the current Attendance Report showed all members in compliance with the attendance policy at this time. He said the Attendance Report is always sent out with the meeting materials and that if members have any questions about their status, they should ask staff.

7. Chair Comments

Chair Clouser said he would be presenting the RCAC annual report to the County Commission on March 24th and asked for any suggestions for things to include. He said that Mr. Nix received an award for volunteer activity from the County. He said there is always potential for education regarding the significance of agriculture and rural areas of the County.

8. Staff Updates

Mr. McMurry summarized questions from the Committee that he has given to upcoming scheduled presenters and asked for any additional questions from the Committee. There was discussion by Committee members on issues regarding the County Property Appraiser's Office and Value

Adjustment Board, the State Department of Revenue, and RCAC's role in advising the County Commission.

Mr. McMurry said that Mr. Johnson had some questions regarding County Road 235, a roundabout scheduled for construction at the intersection with Newberry Lane, and the potential for a pedestrian trail. He provided information on the roundabout funding source and construction schedule and said if more information is needed he could invite County transportation planning staff to an upcoming meeting. There were discussion and questions by Committee members regarding pedestrian safety in the area, jurisdictional issues, and the potential for City-County collaboration on a trail along CR 235 from Newberry to Alachua.

Dr. Sanders left the meeting at 5:40 pm.

9. Committee Members Comments

Vice Chair McMillan said that the Committee's concerns expressed in their letter to the County Commission regarding the Wildflowers Music Festival permit had been addressed at the public hearing approval. Ms. Hearn said that she was recently able to connect to fiber internet in the rural area. Ms. Waters said there are issues with the fiber installation impacting private fences.

10. Public Comments

There were no public present.

11. Next Meeting

Next Meeting – March 17th @ Extension Office

12. Adjournment

Motion was made by Mr. Nix to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Vice Chair McMillan.

ACTION: Motion passed unanimously.

Chair Clouser called the meeting to a close at 5:45 pm.

Approved 03-17-2026