

**FRUITLAND PARK CITY COMMISSION REGULAR
MEETING MINUTES
July 24, 2025**

A regular meeting of the Fruitland Park City Commission was held at 506 W. Berckman Street, Fruitland Park, Florida 34731, on Thursday, July 24, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

Members Present: Mayor Chris Cheshire, Vice Mayor Patrick DeGrave, Commissioner Martina Williams, and Commissioner Joseph Cosenza III

Also Present: City Manager Karen Manila, Acting City Attorney Sandy Minkoff, Human Resources Director John Klein, Finance Director Gary Bachmann, Public Works Director Robb Dicus, Interim Police Chief Henry Rains, Interim Community Development Director Michael Rankin, Administrative Manager Sharon Williams, Permit Tech I Brenda Sigala, Parks and Recreation Director Michelle Yoder and City Clerk Gwen Johns

Total Attendance: 23

1. CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

After Mayor Cheshire called the meeting to order, Pastor James Mckenzie of New Genesis Ministries gave the Invocation and Interim Police Chief Henry Rains led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

2. ROLL CALL

After the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance, Mayor Cheshire called the meeting to order and announced decorum for the meeting. He then requested that Ms. Johns call roll where a quorum was declared present.

3. CONSENT AGENDA

(a) Approval of Minutes (city manager/city clerk)

July 10, 2025, Regular Meeting

(b) Resolution 2025-049, Approval of Staff Recommendation to Increase City Manager Compensation in Accordance with the Employment Agreement

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF FRUITLAND PARK, FLORIDA, APPROVING AN INCREASE OF \$5,000.00 IN THE CITY OF FRUITLAND PARK CITY MANAGER'S SALARY PURSUANT TO SECTION 2. OF THE EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF FRUITLAND PARK, FLORIDA, AND KAREN MANILA; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

- (c) **Resolution 2025-051, Approval of an Agreement for Planning Services between the City of Fruitland Park and LPG Urban & Regional Planners, LLC**

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF FRUITLAND PARK, FLORIDA, APPROVING AN AGREEMENT FOR PLANNING SERVICES BETWEEN THE CITY OF FRUITLAND PARK, FLORIDA AND LPG URBAN & REGIONAL PLANNERS, LLC; AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE THE AGREEMENT; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

ACTION: A motion was made by Vice Mayor DeGrave and seconded by Commissioner Cosenza to approve the Consent Agenda Items as presented. The motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

4. REGULAR AGENDA

5. PUBLIC HEARING

- (a) **Second and Final Reading of Ordinance 2025-017, Amending the City of Fruitland Park Land Development Code Chapter 151 and 161 re Floodplain Management.**

Sandy Minkoff, Acting City Attorney, read Ordinance 2025-017 by title only.

AN ORDINANCE BY THE CITY OF FRUITLAND PARK, FLORIDA, AMENDING THE CITY OF FRUITLAND PARK'S LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE CHAPTER 151 – DEFINITIONS AND CHAPTER 161 – BUILDING CODES TO MAKE MODIFICATIONS TO BRING THE REGULATIONS INTO AGREEMENT WITH THE MOST CURRENT FEMA-APPROVED, CODE-COMPANION FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT ORDINANCE FOR FLORIDA COMMUNITIES; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING DIRECTIONS TO TRANSMIT TO THE FLORIDA BUILDING COMMISSION; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Mr. Rankin stated that this ordinance focuses on the definitions and makes the City's code consistent with the recent eighth edition of the 2023 Building Code.

ACTION: A motion was made by Commissioner Cosenza and seconded by Commissioner Williams to approve Ordinance 2025-017, on second and final reading, as previously cited.

Mayor Cheshire opened the public hearing. No one indicated a desire to speak, and the public hearing was closed.

Mayor Cheshire called for a roll call vote on the motion and declared it carried unanimously, 5-0.

- (b) **Resolution 2025-034, Approval of the 7th Amendment to an Interlocal Agreement with Lake County for Joint Development of a Soccer Field, to include a PA System and reconstruction of softball and t-ball fields at Northwest Lake Community Park**

Sandy Minkoff, Acting City Attorney, read Resolution 2025-034 by title only.

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF FRUITLAND PARK, FLORIDA, APPROVING THE SEVENTH AMENDMENT TO INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN LAKE COUNTY, FLORIDA AND THE CITY OF FRUITLAND PARK REGARDING JOINT DEVELOPMENT OF A SOCCER FIELD AT NORTHWEST LAKE COMMUNITY PARK THAT PROVIDES AN ADDITIONAL \$100,000 IN FUNDING FOR IMPROVEMENTS OF THE PARK; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Michelle Yoder, Recreation Director, stated that every year, Lake County Parks and Trails gives the City of Fruitland Park funding to develop and build the Northwest Lake Community Park. This year the funds will be used to purchase and install a PA System for the Soccer Fields and to rehabilitate the softball and t-ball field.

ACTION: A motion was made by Commissioner Williams and seconded by Commissioner Raysin to approve Resolution 2025-034, as previously cited.

Mayor Cheshire opened the public hearing. The public hearing was closed.

Mayor Cheshire called for a roll call vote on the motion and declared it carried unanimously, 5-0.

- (c) **Resolution 2025-054, Approval of an Agreement with Sky Elements for a Drone Show on September 26, 2025**

Sandy Minkoff, Acting City Attorney, read Resolution 2025-054 by title only.

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF FRUITLAND PARK, FLORIDA, APPROVING AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN SKY ELEMENTS, LLC, AND THE CITY OF FRUITLAND PARK FOR A DRONE SHOW DISPLAY IN THE AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$34,998; AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO SIGN THE AGREEMENT; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Ms. Yoder stated that 2025 marks Fruitland Park's Centennial, and funds were budgeted for celebration events throughout the year. With approval of this agreement, a drone show would be part of the festivities at the Centennial event on September 26, 2025, at Veterans Memorial Park.

ACTION: A motion was made by Commissioner Cosenza and seconded by Vice Mayor DeGrave to approve Resolution 2025-054, as previously cited.

Mayor Cheshire opened the public hearing. The public hearing was closed.

Mayor Cheshire called for a roll call vote on the motion and declared it carried unanimously, 5-0.

(d) Resolution 2025-052, Approval of Right of Way Dedication Agreements with Various Property Owners Relating to Sunset Way

Sandy Minkoff, Acting City Attorney, read Resolution 2025-052 by title only.

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF FRUITLAND PARK, FLORIDA, APPROVING RIGHT-OF-WAY DEDICATION AGREEMENTS WITH VARIOUS PROPERTY OWNERS RELATING TO SUNSET WAY; ACCEPTING WARRANTY DEEDS CONVEYING REAL PROPERTY ALONG SUNSET WAY TO THE CITY OF FRUITLAND PARK FOR RIGHT-OF-WAY; AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO EXECUTE THE AGREEMENTS; DIRECTING THE CITY MANAGER OR DESIGNEE TO RECORD THE WARRANTY DEEDS; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Robb Dicus, Public Works Director, presented the details associated with the dedication of rights of way along Sunset Way. He stated there is one more property where the City needs to acquire right of way. Once all rights of way are secured, HALFF will be engaged to look at the provision of a proper roadway in the area.

ACTION: A motion was made by Commissioner Cosenza and seconded by Commissioner Raysin to approve Resolution 2025-052, as previously cited.

Mayor Cheshire opened the public hearing. The public hearing was closed.

Mayor Cheshire called for a roll call vote on the motion and declared it carried unanimously, 5-0.

(e) Resolution 2025-053, Adopting a Not to Exceed Millage Rate of 3.9134, Levying Ad Valorem Taxes for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 and Setting the Date, Time, and Place of the Budget Hearing for Fiscal Year 2025-2026

Mayor Cheshire stated that the City of Fruitland Park is prepared to set the millage rate of 3.9134, which is a 10.79% increase over the rolled-back rate of 3.5324 percent. The millage rate of 3.9134 mills is the same rate as the past seven years. Once the rate is established, the commission may not exceed this rate.

Sandy Minkoff, Acting City Attorney, read Resolution 2025-053, by title only.

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF FRUITLAND PARK, LAKE COUNTY, FLORIDA, ADOPTING A NOT TO EXCEED MILLAGE RATE OF 3.9134 LEVYING OF AD VALOREM TAXES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026 AND SETTING THE DATE, TIME, AND PLACE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON THE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Gary Buchmann, Finance Director, explained the budget is healthy and staff did not see any need to increase the millage rate this year. He stated that the rolled-back rate is something that the state and county look back on in the event that the City wishes to receive additional revenues.

Mayor Cheshire said that while there continue to be increases in inflation, the anticipated new construction will offset the city's income.

ACTION: A motion was made by Commissioner Cosenza and seconded by Vice Mayor DeGrave to approve Resolution 2025-053, as previously cited.

Mayor Cheshire opened the public hearing.

Carl Yauk, 1123 Ritter Road, The Villages of Pine Hills, asked about the assessed values of the properties. Mayor Cheshire responded that the Lake County Property Appraiser controls assessed property values. Mr. Yauk asked if properties that are not yet active have been considered in the total value. Vice Mayor DeGrave noted the incoming development would not be reflected on the tax roll until Certificates of Occupancy have been issued.

Mr. Minkoff advised the dates for property value assessments were Dec 31st – Jan 1st, and he said if the CO was received Oct 1, the value would not be reflected in the current year assessment.

The public hearing was closed.

Mayor Cheshire called for a roll call vote on the motion and declared it carried unanimously,

6. QUASI-JUDICIAL PUBLIC HEARING

END OF QUASI-JUDICIAL PUBLIC HEARING

7. (a) City Manager

i. Discussion Item: Planning and Zoning Commission to Special Magistrate

Ms. Manila introduced what it would mean to have a special magistrate for planning and development. She asked Mike Rankin, Interim Community Development Director, to explain why transitioning to a magistrate process may streamline the process for development. He recommended going to a special magistrate process. He also spoke about the challenges associated with a volunteer board versus a special magistrate.

Mayor Cheshire said the charter change was made by referendum. The voters of Fruitland Park made the decision.

Vice Mayor DeGrave asked if the magistrate process could be operated in a revenue neutral position. Mr. Rankin said there are cities who incorporate the magistrate fees into their process so that the cost does not come out of general revenue. Vice Mayor DeGrave felt the magistrate process was a terrific direction for the City. He would like to see application fees adjusted to accommodate the additional associated costs.

Next steps: The consensus of the City Commission was for staff to develop an Ordinance for consideration.

(b) City Attorney

- i. Linda Herald v. City of Fruitland Park, Lake County Case No. 2025-CA-000116
- ii. Florida Municipal Attorney Association Annual Conference, July 24 – July 26, 2025

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There were no unfinished business items.

9. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Carl Yauk, 1023 Ritter Road, asked about FEMA and floodplain. Mr. Rankin responded, explaining the formula used to determine floodplain calculations and use of the FEMA floodplain map. He noted that in some cases certain areas may allow for retention to wetlands, but in most cases the development is expected to be designed to accommodate the uplands without interfering with the wetlands. Ultimately, Mr. Rankin said it depends on the project.

Mr. Yauk requested an update on the expansion of sewer and water. He questioned the status, asked who would pay for it, how it would be funded, and stated that he did not want the residents of The Villages to bear any cost.

Wanda Trace, 110 Tropic Circle, asked what would need to be done to allow for chickens in the city.

10. COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Vice Mayor DeGrave mentioned that the Lake County League of Cities now includes Sumter County and will be referred to as the Heartland League of Cities.

Commissioner Williams stated that she was curious to learn more about the chicken issue.

Commissioner Cosenza – No comment.

Commissioner Raysin – No comment.

11. MAYOR'S COMMENTS

Mayor Cheshire announced dates to remember.

12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:42 p.m.


Gwen Keough-Johns, City Clerk


Chris Cheshire, Mayor