

**FRUITLAND PARK CITY COMMISSION WORKSHOP  
MEETING MINUTES  
January 25, 2024**

A workshop meeting of the Fruitland Park City Commission was held at 506 W. Beckman Street, Fruitland Park, Florida 34731 on Thursday, January 25, 2024, at 6:55 p.m.

**Members Present:** Mayor Chris Cheshire, Commissioners John L. Gunter Jr., and Chris Bell.

**Members Absent:** Vice Mayor Patrick DeGrave and Commissioner John Mobilian

**Also Present:** City Attorney Anita Geraci-Carver; City Treasurer Gary Bachmann; Police Chief Erik Luce; Human Resources Director John Klein; Deputy Finance Director Dennis Bowers; Michael “Mike” Rankin, Interim Community Development Director, LPG Urban & Regional Planners Inc. (consultant retained by the city); Permit and Zoning Technician Keli Fielder, Community Development Department, and City Clerk Esther B. Coulson.

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Cheshire called the meeting to order at 6:55 p.m.

**2. ROLL CALL**

After Mayor Cheshire requested that Ms. Coulson call the roll where a quorum was present, he announced the absences of Vice Mayor DeGrave and Commissioner Mobilian.

Upon Mayor Cheshire’s recommendation and **by unanimous consent, the city commission excused the absences of Vice Mayor Patrick DeGrave and Commissioner John Mobilian from this evening’s meeting.**

**3. PROPOSED RECOMMENDED CHARTER CHANGES**

Ms. Geraci-Carver referred to her February 12, 2023 memorandum regarding the draft charter amendments and ballot questions. She addressed the need to follow existing laws on amending the initiation issues in the charter that does not align with the law and recognized some of the following proposed questions:

- Question 7, City treasurer, Appointment of City Treasurer;
- Question 8, City clerk, Appointment of City Clerk;
- Question 9, City attorney, Removal of city attorney and any assistant city attorney by majority vote of the city commission;
- Question 11, Planning and Zoning Board, Move language establishing the Planning and Zoning (P&Z) Board from the charter to the city code which she indicated should not be in the charter, and
- Question 5, Charter amendments, Require citizen petitions for charter amendments and elections held on amendments to comply general law.

Ms. Geraci-Carver described the procedures for ballot summaries of proposed amendments or other public measures; suggested changing same which are not superseded by Florida

Statutes and impacted directly by the charter if approved, and relayed her recommendation to prioritize.

After discussion, Ms. Geraci-Carver concurred with Mayor Cheshire's suggestion to consider Questions 7, 8, 9, and 11 and consider the other proposed amendments or public measures in 2026. She referred to Questions 7, 8, 9, and 10, Appointment and term of office of city treasurer, city clerk and city attorney, . . . delete language relating to appointment and term of city treasurer, city clerk, and city attorney. . . .

Ms. Geraci-Carver recommended that language under Questions 1 and 11 would move from the charter to the code, with respect to Questions 7, 8 and 10, that there would be two different versions to choose from, and for the following Questions 7 and 8, that alternatives are proposed for the city treasurer and city clerk.

- *Should the Charter of Fruitland Park be amended to provide for the (city treasurer or clerk) to be a city employee hired by and under the direction and authority of the city manager subject to approval by a majority vote of the commission?*

or

- *Should the Charter of Fruitland Park be amended to provide for the (city treasurer/clerk) to be appointed upon recommendation from the city manager and under the day-to-day direction and supervision of the city manager?*

Ms. Geraci-Carver recognized that the provision under Question 10, . . . *If the city treasurer and city clerk are hired by the city manager and not appointed by the city commission, should the provisions relating to the appointment of those positions, the term of appointment, and the process for their removal be deleted from the charter?* She indicated that same would not be applicable if the positions are approved to be hired by the city manager and employed subject to the city manager's control, termination, and discipline which would be a cleanup provision.

Ms. Geraci-Carver addressed the need to review Question 9, . . . *Should the charter of Fruitland Park be amended to make clear that the city attorney and any assistant city attorney serves at the pleasure of the city commission, may be terminated by a majority vote of the commission at any time and without a public hearing?* . . . and Question 10.

- **Charter Provisions for City Code**

The charter provisions for the city code were addressed earlier in the meeting.

- **Charter Review**

The charter review was addressed earlier in the meeting.

4. **ESTABLISHING FUTURE MEETING DATES**

Following extensive discussions, Ms. Geraci-Carver suggested that she would review the provisions in the proposed questions; provide a concise language in question for the city commission's consideration, and address same in her report at a future meeting.

Ms. Geraci-Carver addressed her plan to give a report by the next meeting to include one change on the questions and the deadline required by the Lake County Supervisors of Elections on the translation of referendums/charter amendments from English to Spanish with an ordinance to appear on the November 2024 General Election Ballot.

Subsequent to further discussion and **by unanimous consent, the city commission agreed with the city attorney's recommendation to provide both alternatives on the proposed questions previously cited.**


5. **OTHER BUSINESS**

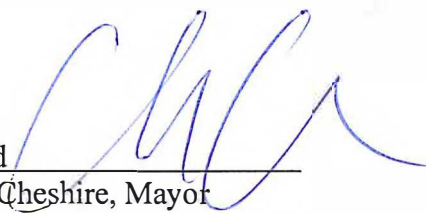
There was no other business to come before the city commission at this time.

6. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

The minutes were approved at the February 8, 2024, regular meeting.

  
Signed  
Esther B. Coulson, City Clerk, MMC

  
Signed  
Chris Cheshire, Mayor