

**FRUITLAND PARK CITY COMMISSION REGULAR
MEETING MINUTES
March 28, 2024**

A regular meeting of the Fruitland Park City Commission was held at 506 W. Beckman Street, Fruitland Park, Florida 34731 on Thursday, March 28, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.

Members Present: Mayor Chris Cheshire, Vice Mayor Patrick DeGrave, Commissioners John L. Gunter Jr. and Chris Bell.

Member Absent: Commissioner John Mobilian participated by telephonic video conference.

Also Present: City Manager Gary La Venia, City Attorney Anita Geraci-Carver; City Treasurer Gary Bachmann; Police Chief Erik Luce; Captain Henry Rains, Lieutenant Timothy “Tim” Ross, Sergeants David Cox, Keith Flanary, Brad Heidt, and Brian Hilberer, police department; Public Works Director Robb Dicus; 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); Lieutenant Jason Liska and Firefighter Codey Carpenser, Lake County Fire Rescue, and City Clerk Esther B. Coulson.

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

After Mayor Cheshire called the meeting to order and The Reverend Dr. George A. Mulford III, Grace Bible Baptist Church, gave the invocation, Chief Luce led in the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

ACTION: 6:01:41 p.m. No action was taken.

2. ROLL CALL

Mayor Cheshire requested that Ms. Coulson call the roll where a quorum was declared present.

ACTION: 6:01:52 p.m. No action was taken.

By unanimous consent, Mayor Cheshire took the following items out of order on this evening’s agenda.

3. SPECIAL PRESENTATION

(b) Erik Luce Day - Proclamation and Plaque

On behalf of the city commission, Mayor Cheshire read into the record a proclamation proclaiming “*March 28, 2024 as Erik Douglas Luce Day* in the City of Fruitland Park and extending the very best of wishes in his future endeavors.

ACTION: 6:03:25 p.m. Chief Luce accepted the proclamation with much gratitude. He thanked the citizens for their support of the agency, the city commission on the department’s needs, and Mr. La Venia together with the department’s staff as well as his wife Karen. He addressed his intent to visit in the future to monitor the progress of the new public safety building.

(a) Swearing-in Oath of Office

Ms. Coulson administered the oath of office to Mr. Gary L. Barrett Jr., as the new police chief.

ACTION: 6:06:59 p.m. Mr. Barrett thanked the city commission for the opportunity; indicated that he was a long-time former employee of the City of Leesburg and is a City of Fruitland Park resident where he looks forward to working with the community. He addressed the intent to proceed in accrediting the police department.

Following the family's pinning of police (ranking) badges on Mr. Barrett, the city commission welcomed him to the city.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

The city commission considered its action to approve the consent agenda, the approval of the March 14, 2024 regular meeting minutes.

ACTION: 6:13:36 p.m. **On motion of Vice Mayor DeGrave, seconded by Commissioner Gunter and unanimously carried, the city commission approved the consent agenda as previously cited.**

5. REGULAR AGENDA

Resolution 2024-016 National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Program Coordination Agreement and Statement of Work – FY 2023-24

After Ms. Geraci-Carver read into the record the following title of proposed Resolution 2024-016, Mayor Cheshire called for interested parties to be heard:

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF FRUITLAND PARK, FLORIDA, APPROVING THE AGREEMENT AND STATEMENT OF WORK CITY OF FRUITLAND PARK NPDES PROGRAM COORDINATION FISCAL YEAR 2023-2024 AND ADDENDUM THERETO BETWEEN THE CITY OF FRUITLAND PARK, FLORIDA AND SURFACE WATER PROFESSIONAL, LLC FOR A NOT TO EXCEED FEE OF \$9,000; AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF THE AGREEMENT AND ADDENDUM; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

ACTION: 6:13:49 p.m. After discussion, **a motion was made by Commissioner Gunter and seconded by Commissioner Bell that the city commission adopt Resolution 2024-016 as previously cited.**

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

6. (a) **City Manager**

i. **Economic Development Status Update**

Mr. La Venia did not address the status on economic development.

ACTION: 6:16.01 p.m. No action was taken.

ii. **Commercial Developments Permits Issued Status Update**

Mr. La Venia did not give the status of commercial development permits issued.

ACTION: 6:16.01 p.m. No action was taken.

iii. **Collection of Storm Debris - Lake County Interlocal Agreement**

Mr. La Venia referred to Lake County's amended and restated interlocal agreement regarding the collection of storm debris from streets and right-of-way with the city; pointed out his previous discussions with Mr. Dicus in that regard, and conveyed the city's Option A) to utilize the county's debris hauling contracts but assume its own responsibility to manage and fund the debris removal activity within its jurisdiction.

ACTION: 6:16.01 p.m. No action was taken.

iv. **Public Safety Building – Buffer Area**

At Mr. La Venia's request, Mr. Rankin referred to the March 15, 2024 inquiry from GatorSkitch (architects and planners retained by the city) regarding the property line setback for the proposed public safety building construction; relayed the recommendation to move the building back eight feet to accommodate the patio (concrete area) and elevator room that would encroach 30 foot set-back and reviewed the sketch depicting same. He conveyed the conclusion to allow a variance for the entire building to remain. (Copies of the sketch and rendering are filed with the supplemental papers to the minutes of this meeting.)

Following Vice Mayor DeGrave's concerns on the origins of the mistake, Mr. Rankin voiced his intent to provide a report to the city commission.

After further discussion and in response to Mayor Cheshire's inquiry, Ms. Geraci-Carver addressed the plan to submit a variance for consideration at the Planning and Zoning Board's future meeting before it is presented to the city commission.

ACTION: 6:16:36 p.m. No action was taken.

v. **Fire Department Schedule Asbestos Removal and Demolition**

Mr. La Venia addressed the plan for the fire department building to be demolished and the site cleared within the next 40 to 45 days.

ACTION: 6:29:51 p.m. Upon Vice Mayor DeGrave’s suggestion and **by unanimous consent, the city commission directed the city manager to write a letter to Lake County Public Safety Director Emergency Services, with a copy to the Lake County Board of County Commissioners and County Manager, identifying the next 40 to 45 days as the date when the City of Fruitland Park would be commencing with the asbestos removal and demolition of the city’s fire department building.**

(b) City Attorney

i. Wayne Goodridge and Tammy Goodridge v. City of Fruitland Park, Lake County Case No. 2022-CA-001628

With respect to the Wayne Goodridge and Tammy Goodridge v. City of Fruitland Park, Lake County Case No. 2022-A-1628, Ms. Geraci-Craver recognized that the special session (closed to the public) will take place at 7:00 p.m. upon the conclusion of this evening’s meeting and confirmed that Litigation Counsel Mr. Donovan A. Roper, attorney at Roper and Roper P.A., is expected to be in attendance.

ACTION: 6:33:13 p.m. No action was taken.

ii. Code of Ordinances – Codification

Ms. Geraci-Carver reported on the ongoing review of the city code and land development code regulations proof sheets received from CivicPlus prior to the deadline scheduled for the middle of April 2024 to provide comments back.

ACTION: 6:32:57 p.m. No action was taken.

iii. Underground Utility Easement – ARPA Funds 16” Water Main “Reserve at Spring Lake Water Main Improvements Project”

Ms. Geraci-Carver referred to the non-exclusive underground utility easement for The Reserve at Spring Lake Cove; pointed out the August 25 2022 master development agreement to accept the easement and noted the provision where same can be executed and recorded.

Mr. La Venia interjected that on March 25, 2024, a \$1m check (American Rescue Plan Act Funds disbursement) was received from the county for the *Fruitland Park Spring Lake Water Improvement*.

ACTION: 6:32:13 p.m. No action was taken.

7 UNFINISHED BUSINESS

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

ACTION: 6:33:31 p.m. No action was taken.

8. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Steven “Steve” Girard Stivlosky, City of Leesburg resident, addressed his attendance and copy of the flyers and bookmarks regarding the personhood resolution (city concept) at the March 23, 2024 Fruitland Park Day event and requested that the city commission allow Mr. La Venia to place said concept on the city commission agenda prior to May 12, 2024, Mother’s Day. (A copy of the flyer is filed with the supplemental papers to the minutes of this meeting.)

Ms. Christian Nelson, City of Leesburg resident, cited a verse from the bible.

ACTION: 6:33:32 p.m. No action was taken.

9. COMMISSIONERS’ COMMENTS

(a) Commissioner Mobilian

Commissioner Mobilian was absent from this evening’s meeting.

ACTION: 6:40:31 p.m. No action was taken.

(b) Commissioner Bell

Commissioner Bell reported on his recent medical improvements.

ACTION: 6:40:38 p.m. No action was taken.

(c) Commissioner Gunter

Commissioner Gunter stated that he has nothing to report at this time.

ACTION: 6:40:55 p.m. No action was taken.

(d) Vice Mayor DeGrave

Vice Mayor DeGrave stated that he has nothing to report at this time.

ACTION: 6:41:08 p.m. No action was taken.

10. MAYOR’S COMMENTS

(a) Dates to Remember

Mayor Cheshire announced the following dates:

- March 28, 2024 Attorney-Client Session at 7:00 p.m.,
- March 30, 2024, *Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day*, The Venetian Center, 1 Dozier Circle, Leesburg, Florida 34748 at 10:00 a.m.;
- March 30, 2024, Erik Luce’s Retirement Celebration, Recreation Center, 205 West Berckman Street, Fruitland Park, Florida 34731 at 2:00 p.m.;

- April 10, 2024, *Reading Between the Wines*, Fruitland Park Library, 604 West Berckman Street, Fruitland Park, Florida 34731 at 4:00 p.m.;
- April 11, 2024, AARP Tax-Aide, Fruitland Park Library, 604 West Berckman Street, Fruitland Park, Florida 34731 at 9:00 a.m.;

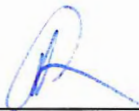
- April 11, 2024, *Pieces of my Mind* Meet the Poet, Fruitland Park Library, 604 West Berckman Street, Fruitland Park, Florida 34731 at 2:00 p.m.;
- April 11, 2024, City Commission regular at 6:00 p.m.;
- April 12, 2024, *State of Elections*, Lake County League of Cities, Mount Dora Golf Course, 1100 South Highland Street, Mount Dora, Florida 32757 at noon;
- April 13, 2024, Mommy and Son Mess, Northwest Lake Park Soccerfield, 300 Shiloh Street, Fruitland Park, Florida 34731 at 10:00 a.m.;
- April 24, 2024, Lake~Sumter Metropolitan Planning Organization Governing Board Meeting, 1300 Citizens Blvd., Suite 175, Leesburg, Florida 34748 at 2:00 p.m., and
- April 25, 2024, City Commission regular at 6:00 p.m.

ACTION: 6:41:11 p.m. No action was taken.


11. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 6:42 p.m.

The minutes were approved at the April 25, 2024 regular meeting.

Signed 

Esther B. Coulson, City Clerk, MMC

Signed 

Chris Cheshire, Mayor

