



OCOEE CITY COMMISSION

Ocoee Commission Chambers
1 N. Bluford Avenue
Ocoee, Florida

September 16, 2025

MINUTES

6:15 PM

REGULAR CITY COMMISSION MEETING

• CALL TO ORDER 6:15 PM

Mayor Johnson called the regular session to order at 6:15 PM in the Commission Chambers of City Hall. The invocation was led by **Ages Hart**, *Ocoee Resident*, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag led by **Commissioner Wilsen**. **City Clerk Sibbitt** called the roll and declared a quorum present.

Present: Mayor Johnson, Commissioner Kennedy, Commissioner Wilsen, Commissioner Firstner, and Commissioner Oliver

Also Present: City Manager Shadrix, City Attorney Geller, and City Clerk Sibbitt

• PRESENTATIONS AND PROCLAMATIONS 6:16 PM

2025 Hispanic Heritage Month Proclamation – Proclaimed by **Mayor Johnson**.

9/11 Remembrance Proclamation – Proclaimed by **Mayor Johnson**.

• STAFF REPORTS AND AGENDA REVIEW 6:17 PM

City Manager Shadrix announced that the City received a letter from the Department of Commerce declaring the City's Comprehensive Plan null and void and inconsistent with the law created by Senate Bill 180 (SB180), which prohibits adopting any more restrictive comprehensive plan amendments, during the timeframe of August 1, 2024, through 2027, which related to Hurricane Milton. The City included opt-out language in the Comprehensive Plan, as part of the adopted resolution, as well as in the introduction of the Comprehensive Plan itself. The City Attorney's office responded with a letter stating that the City does not believe that the Department of Commerce has authority to make this determination. He requested a consensus from the Commission, to preserve the City's rights, should a hearing be requested with the Department of Administrative Hearings.

City Attorney Geller stated that when the City adopted the Envision 2045 Comprehensive Plan, he emphatically voiced that the City was in compliance with SB 180 because of the opt-out provision and believes the letter received from the Department of Commerce was given to the City in error. He advised that his partner Dan Langley sent a letter back to the Department of Commerce requesting that the initial letter to the City, which was received on August 27th, be rescinded. He stated that the Department of Commerce overlooked the opt-out provision, which is critical and fatal to the Department of Commerce's position. The letter also pointed out that the Department of Commerce lacks the authority and jurisdiction to make this determination; SB 180 provides that only business owners or city residents can challenge the

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Comprehensive Plan as being more restrictive or burdensome. The Department of Commerce stated that it could make this determination under Chapter 163. **City Attorney Geller** stated that September 26th marks the 30th day since the Department's letter was received. He expressed concern that if the City does not initiate a proceeding before the Department of Administrative Hearings seeking a ruling to rescind the Department's letter, the Department may argue that the letter constitutes a final determination and that the City waived its rights by not filing such a proceeding earlier. He further asked for a consensus from the City Commission to bring a proceeding with the Department of Administrative Hearings (DOAH) to challenge the Department of Commerce's letter in order to preserve the City's rights. **Consensus of the City Commission was to proceed with requesting a hearing with the Department of Administrative Hearings (DOAH) to preserve the City's rights, if needed.**

• **PUBLIC COMMENTS 6:22 PM**

The following persons addressed the City Commission:

- **Norine Dworkin**, *Editor in Chief VoxPopuli*, discussed the Sunshine State awards that took place earlier this month, mentioning that VoxPopuli was a finalist in the competition in the Print and Digital category.
- **Dave Denmark**, *Ocoee Resident*, expressed his concerns with the Tiger Minor Park Pickleball Court, specifically the lighting, noise, and other activities happening around the park. He requested a change to the hours of operation of the park.
- **Debbie Gulley**, *Ocoee Resident*, expressed her concerns with the noise from the Tiger Minor Park Pickleball Court and also requested a time change for the hours of operation of the park and suggested the gate be reinstalled. She also stated that there are pickleball courts on the main tennis courts, which are already lit; therefore, no additional lights need to be added.

Commissioner Wilsen stated that the change of hours has been mentioned, and she has also spoken to Parks & Leisure Services Director Johnson regarding what can be done to deflect the noise coming from the pickleball courts. She asked the City Commission to consider an ordinance restricting the use of the park to 8:00 AM – 8:00 PM, with gates that can be closed.

City Manager Shadrix shared that the request from the public is reasonable and asked that the City Commission direct him to bring a plan to the next City Commission meeting, as he has already spoken to the Parks & Leisure Services Director about some solutions. **Commissioner Kennedy** shared he would also like to see hours of operation options and what are acceptable uses of the park prior to 8:00 AM. **Consensus of the City Commission was for the City Manager and City staff to bring a plan to the next City Commission meeting, addressing the Tiger Minor Park issues presented by the residents.**

- **Dr. Jim Moyer**, *Orange County District 2 Soil and Conservation Supervisor*, gave an update on the recent meeting with Orange County, regarding Starke Lake.

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- **David Swisher**, *Ocoee Resident*, expressed his concerns with the fiber optics hub placement within the Johio Shores right-of-way. **Public Works Director Krug** stated that the companies have the right to be in public right-of-way, and the City coordinates with the fiber optic providers to ensure there are no sight distance issues. He added that the companies have agreed to and complied with the City's requests. Brief discussion ensued on the location and permitting process for fiber optic placement and staff were directed to meet with Mr. Swisher.

• **CONSENT AGENDA 6:46 PM**

Consent Agenda Motion

Motion: Move to adopt Consent Agenda Items #1-13; Moved by Commissioner Kennedy, seconded by Commissioner Oliver; Motion carried 5-0.

1. Approval of Minutes from the Regular City Commission Meeting held August 19, 2025, the Budget Workshop held August 27, 2025, and the Tentative Budget Hearing held on September 10, 2025. **(City Clerk Sibbitt)**
2. Approval of District 2 Member Appointment to the Human Relations Diversity Board (HRDB). **(City Clerk Sibbitt)**
3. Approval of Reappointments and New Appointment to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB). **(City Clerk Sibbitt)**
4. Approval of a Two-Year Warranty Surety and Maintenance, Materials, and Workmanship Agreement with 7-Eleven, Inc. for 7-Eleven #41318 (Southeast Commercial at Ocoee Village Center). **(Development Engineer Keaton)**
5. Approval of a Two-Year Warranty Surety and Maintenance, Materials, and Workmanship Agreement with Darren Center LLC for the Darren Center. **(Development Engineer Keaton)**
6. Approval of the Darren Center Utility Easement. **(Development Engineer Keaton)**
7. Approval of Cambria Suites at Ocoee Large-Scale Final Site Plan: Project No. LS-2024-005. **(Development Services Deputy Director Whitfield)**
8. Approval of the One (1) Year Optional Contract Renewal with Eurofins and Tri-Tech Labs for ITB 21-001 Laboratory Services for City Water & Wastewater Facilities. **(Procurement Manager Tolbert)**
9. Approval of the One (1) Year Optional Contract Renewal with CHA Consulting, Inc. for RFQ 20-006 Continuing Engineering Services for Water Utility Modeling & Minor Utility Studies. **(Procurement Manager Tolbert)**
10. Approval of the Setaram Mediated Settlement Agreement. **(City Engineer Womack)**
11. Approval of Extension to City Hall HVAC Service Agreement with Energy Air, Inc. **(Assistant Public Works Director Gajadhar)**
12. Notification of an Emergency Repair of Clarifier #3 in accordance with Section 21.6 of the City of Ocoee Code of Ordinances. **(Utilities Director Bolling)**
- 13. Approval of Rewis Street Sidewalk Replacement. **(Utilities Director Bolling)**

- **FIRST READING OF ORDINANCE** - None
- **SECOND READING OF ORDINANCE – PUBLIC HEARING** - None
- **PUBLIC HEARING 6:46 PM**

14. Approval of Resolution for Abandonment and Vacation for Portions of North Lakewood Avenue and Clarcona Ocoee Road Rights of-Way; Project No. VAC-22-34. (Concurrency & Commitment Coordinator McFarlane)

Development Services Deputy Director Whitfield gave a brief summary of the subject property, which is located in District 2. She stated this request was initiated because of a Vacation and Dedication Agreement executed in 2022, whereby the developer agreed to construct and dedicate to the City, the new segment of North Lakewood Avenue. Following that completion, the City would process the vacation of the old segment of North Lakewood Avenue and a portion of Clarcona Ocoee Road.

City Attorney Geller read the title of the resolution.

The public hearing was opened. As no one wished to speak, the public hearing was closed.

Motion: Move to adopt Resolution 2025-14 for Abandonment and Vacation for Portions of North Lakewood Avenue and Clarcona Ocoee Road Rights of-Way; Project No. VAC-22-34; Moved by Commissioner Kennedy, Seconded by Commissioner Firstner; Motion carried 5-0.

15. Approval of Ocoee Pickleball Complex - Vasant Sports LLC Large-Scale Preliminary Site Plan; Project No. LS-2025-005. (**Development Services Deputy Director Whitfield**)

Development Services Deputy Director Whitfield presented a brief overview of the subject properties and the proposed development. She summarized the previous request for a special exception that was denied by the City Commission. She further highlighted the Pickleball Complex features, building elevations, and landscaping. **Development Services Deputy Director Whitfield** advised that although this project was submitted as a Preliminary/Final Large-Scale Site Plan, the Development Review Committee (DRC) elected to split the application and proceed to public hearings for a Preliminary Site Plan only at this time, to allow for the applicant to work with staff regarding the engineering and utilities requirements applicable to the Final Site Plan. As such, the DRC, Planning & Zoning Commission, and staff recommend approval of the Preliminary Site Plan with no conditions.

Sravan Tummala, *Project Manager*, presented an overview of the concept for the Pickleball Complex project, pointing out that they have addressed the concerns of the residents.

The public hearing was opened.

The following persons addressed the City Commission:

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- **Angel de la Portilla, Ocoee Resident**, informed the City and the applicant that Orange County offers a Sports Incentive Fund, supported by the Tourist Development Tax, with up to \$10 million available annually. If the complex is expected to host large-scale pickleball tournaments, the project may qualify for marketing funds, and the City could potentially serve as a co-applicant alongside the owners.

The public hearing was closed.

Commissioner Wilsen thanked the applicant, stating that they had answered and addressed a lot of her questions and questions of the residents who attended the community meeting on this project.

Commissioner Oliver gave kudos to the developer and asked for a timeframe on construction for the project. **Mr. Tummala** addressed his question. **Commissioner Oliver** asked if the complex is open to the public and if they will offer Ocoee resident discounts. **Mr. Tummala** addressed his questions.

Mayor Johnson asked if there is an entry fee. **Mr. Tummala** addressed his question.

Commissioner Kennedy expressed his appreciation for the improvements made to the project and stated that the new proposed plans show that he listened to the residents' concerns.

Motion: Move to approve the Ocoee Pickleball Complex - Vasant Sports LLC Large-Scale Preliminary Site Plan; Project No. LS-2025-005; Moved by Commissioner Wilsen, Seconded by Commissioner Kennedy; Motion carried 5-0.

• **REGULAR AGENDA**

16. Approval of the Shortlisted Firms for Interviews for Request for Proposals (RFP) #25-006 Lease and Operation of the Forest Lake Golf Club. (**Procurement Manager Tolbert**)

Procurement Manager Tolbert presented a brief overview of the shortlisted firms interviewed for the purpose of securing a lease agreement with a qualified golf operator as the new tenant to operate, maintain, and market the city's municipal golf course and related facilities known as Forest Lake Golf Club.

There were six (6) responses received and evaluated, and the Evaluation Committee short-listed the top three (3) firms. She further noted that the Committee's recommendations are recommendations only and that the City Commission has final authority over the list of respondents who are granted an interview. **Procurement Manager Tolbert** announced that the next steps are to hold City Commission-led interviews of the Commission-approved shortlist, and then to hold lease negotiations with the lease agreement subsequently brought back to the City Commission for approval.

Purchasing Analyst Stokych presented the timeline for the remainder of the RFP #25-006 process and advised that staff is recommending the City Commission approve the shortlisted three (3) firms for RFP #25-006 Lease and Operation of the Forest Lake Golf Club, as recommended by the Evaluation Committee or some variation thereof, determine any pre-

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interview submissions to be required of interviewees for review, and authorize the City Manager to schedule the date(s) for the City Commission to interview the Commission's approved shortlisted firms at a Special Session of the City Commission.

Mayor Johnson noted that two members of the review committee had previously worked with Hampton Golf and felt this should be disclosed. He then asked City Manager Shadrix to outline the next steps in the process. In response, **City Manager Shadrix** explained that several elected officials have expressed specific priorities during the review, and as a result, the City has the option to request that the firms provide brief responses addressing those particular concerns.

Commissioner Kennedy stated that he is okay with holding a special meeting for interviews; however, he is not satisfied with having only the three (3) firms. He expressed his dissatisfaction with all six (6) proposals submitted and referenced the evaluation scores assigned by the reviewers. He advised that he has some items he would like to have the firms provide prior to the interviews. Brief discussion ensued regarding the proposals received and which firms should be interviewed.

Commissioner Firstner expressed confusion over the submitted proposals due to their lack of consistency and requested a financial summary sheet for the top three (3) selected firms. He agrees that they should provide questions for the firms to respond to.

Commissioner Oliver stated that he agrees with the RFP selection process and echoed Commissioner Firstner's sentiment that it was somewhat confusing. He also expressed interest in reviewing a financial summary sheet for each firm. He commented on the firm's years of operation and noted that he is comfortable with the top three (3) firms recommended by the evaluation committee.

Commissioner Wilsen also voiced her confusion and agreed that if they interviewed the top three (3) that they should have standardized questions to be fair to the firms.

The following persons addressed the City Commission:

- **Doug Gomber**, *Ocoee Resident*, expressed his dissatisfaction with the evaluation committee and the selected firms.

Commissioner Kennedy commented that the evaluator with the most expertise in golf, having managed and restored golf courses, did not select the top three firms. **Mayor Johnson** stated that if, after interviewing the top three (3) firms, there is still dissatisfaction, they have the option to restart the process.

Motion: Move to approve the shortlisted three (3) firms for RFP #25-006 Lease and Operation of the Forest Lake Golf Club, as recommended by the Evaluation Committee; Moved by Commissioner Oliver, Seconded by Commissioner Wilsen; Motion carried 5-0.

Motion: Move to request the top three (3) firms to submit a more detailed one-page summary outlining their compensation and rent structure, revenue sharing analysis, a bank letter verifying proof of funds and financial capacity, a five-year capital improvement plan, a golf business growth strategy, and expanded details regarding food and beverage operations; Moved by Commissioner Kennedy, Seconded by Commissioner Firstner; Motion carried 5-0.

• **COMMENTS FROM COMMISSIONERS 7:51 PM**

Commissioner Kennedy – No Comments.

Commissioner Wilsen – Commented on the following: 7:51 PM

- 1) Thanked the City Commission for their support on the issue at Tiger Minor Park.
- 2) Announced the Final Budget Hearing date and time.

Commissioner Firstner – No Comments.

Commissioner Oliver – Commented on the following: 7:52 PM – 8:03 PM

- 1) Inquired about the Hackney Prairie Traffic Calming solution. **City Manager Shadrix** stated that the money remains allocated for this project. **Assistant City Manager Rumer** gave a brief update on the status of the project.
- 2) Announced that he has a town hall meeting scheduled for this Thursday and he wanted to have it noticed on the City's website; he asked for clarification on Rule 7.1.1 and asked for City Commission consensus regarding noticing town hall meetings on the City's website.

Major Johnson stated that it was published on social media and asked for clarification on who the meetings are intended for, as some residents expressed concern online about not being invited. **Commission Oliver** addressed his concerns, stating that all of his meetings are open to everyone.

Commissioner Kennedy stated that the rule is stated as it implies that the City Commission has to vote on this type of request. He shared that he is not opposed to allowing town hall meeting announcements to be added to the City's website; however, he would like to view the proposed announcement prior to voting on it.

Commissioner Wilsen questioned why State Representatives are not speaking to all residents and just the residents of one district.

Mayor Johnson – Commented on the following: 8:03 PM – 8:07 PM

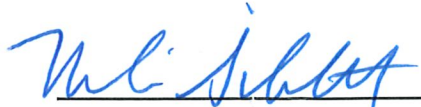
- 1) Announced the Final Budget Hearing date and time.
- 2) Announced upcoming City Events for the remainder of September and the month of October
- 3) Inquired about the status of Christmas lights. **City Manager Shadrix** provided a brief update.

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• ADJOURNMENT 8:07 PM

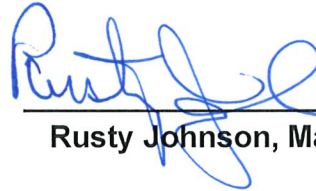
APPROVED:

Attest:



Melanie Sibbitt, City Clerk

City of Ocoee



Rusty Johnson, Mayor