



CITY COUNCIL MEETING

City Hall – Council Chamber
405 Bagshaw Way, Edgewood, Florida
Tuesday, October 21, 2025 at 6:30 PM

MINUTES

A. CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Council President Horn called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm. He asked for a moment of silence and then led the Pledge of Allegiance.

B. ROLL CALL & DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

City Clerk Riffle confirmed there was a quorum with Mayor Dowless and all five Councilmembers present.

Elected Officials	Staff:
John Dowless, Mayor	Sandra Riffle, City Clerk
Richard A. Horn, Council President	Dean DeSchryver, Police Chief
Chris Rader, Council President Pro-Tem	Miguel Garcia, Deputy Chief
Susan Lomas, Councilmember	Scott Zane, Police Officer/Code Enforcement
Casey McElroy, Councilmember	Ellen Hardgrove, City Planner
Beth Steele, Councilmember	Holly New, City Attorney

C. PRESENTATIONS AND PROCLAMATIONS

1. Week of the Family Proclamation

The representative from Week of the Family was not in attendance and the Proclamation will be sent to them.

2. FMIT Insurance Update

Tyler Denahan, Account Executive for the Florida League of Cities (FLC), provided the Council with an update on the insurance market and its impact on the City.

Premium Savings: Mr. Denahan reported that the City realized approximately \$20,000 in savings during the current fiscal year. He projected that, unless the number of employees increases, the City should anticipate another premium decrease in the next fiscal year.

He noted that health insurance calculations are separate from the other numbers, but the trend is toward an increase.

Mr. Denahan reviewed market trends, noting that auto renewal premiums may increase by 14-25%, the property market dropped by approximately 15%, and Claims for Police Department (PD) vehicles and Workers' Compensation (WC) are still trending upwards overall.

3. FDFC PACE Presentation

Ryan Bartkus, Senior Director of Commercial Florida Development Finance Corp Inc. (FDFC), presented on the Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE) program. A local Edgewood business is interested in C-PACE financing, but the City must first opt into the program for the business to qualify.

Program Function: C-PACE is a state policy-enabled financing process that allows commercial property owners to access capital for energy efficiency, water conservation, and renewable energy projects. The financing is repaid as a non-ad valorem special assessment on the property tax bill. C-PACE currently accepts only commercial applications. The C-PACE assessment creates a lien senior to the existing mortgage.

Administrative Burden: The program utilizes special districts, which eliminates any administrative burden for the City.

Councilmember Rader requested that staff provide further information, noting that he was not yet comfortable voting.

Council President Horn expressed concern regarding potential state preemption.

Public Comment

Tina Demostene emphasized the lien's seniority and suggested no immediate action was necessary until an application was received.

Mr. Bartkus offered to return to the Council to discuss the program further.

D. CONSENT AGENDA

1. September 16, 2025 City Council Meeting Draft Minutes
2. September 22, 2025 Final Budget Hearing Draft Minutes

Councilmember Rader made a motion to approve the consent agenda with corrections provided by the City Clerk; seconded by Councilmember Lomas. The motion was approved by voice vote (5/0).

E. ORDINANCES (FIRST READING)

F. PUBLIC HEARINGS (ORDINANCES – SECOND READINGS & RELATED ACTION)

1. Ordinance 2025-06 Waterwitch FLU Amendment

Attorney New read Ordinance 2025-06 in title only.

Planner Hardgrove said that there have been no changes since the first reading. The Ordinance is intended to correct the Waterwitch subdivision making the future land use for

the subdivision Low-Density Residential rather than Medium-Density Residential. The subdivision is developed consistent with the Low Density Residential designation.

Public Comment:

Tina Desmostene thanked the staff for being proactive and making the correction.

Councilmember Rader made a motion to approve Ordinance 2025-06; seconded by Councilmember McElroy. The motion was approved by roll call vote (5/0).

2. Ordinance 2025-08 ECD Mixed Use

Attorney New read Ordinance 2025-08 by title only.

Planner Hardgrove outlined two primary goals for the Ordinance: Clarifying the ECD (Edgewood Central District) Permitted Use “Multi-Dwelling Residential Buildings when included as one component of a mixed-use master development plan,” and clarifying how to achieve an ECD Activity Node Bonus.

Mixed-Use Permitted Use and Requirements: Planner Hardgrove explained that multi-family residential is permitted in the ECD if specific requirements are met. A mixed use residential development is allowed by right when the density is no more than 25 units per acre. The ordinance defines the Non-Residential component of the Mixed Use: Requires a minimum cumulative 2,000 square feet of at least one of the following uses:

- Retail
- Tenant-ready Restaurant (no drive-through)
- Personal Service
- Motion Picture/Live Performance Theater
- Office
- Live/Work Units (capped at 35% of the total required non-residential square footage)

Activity Node Bonus: Planner Hardgrove explained that a mixed use development greater than 25 units/acre is allowed in the ECD only with an activity node bonus, which requires the development site to be a minimum of 5.0 acres as proposed in the ordinance (currently 7.5 acres) and the following nonresidential uses: the same for less than 25 units/acre plus a required minimum 2,500 square feet/tenant ready restaurant.

Discussion on the required mix ensued including related to the following:

- Live/Work Units (Line 82): In response to Mayor Dowless's inquiry about the 35% cap on Live/Work Units, Planner Hardgrove stated the Planning and Zoning (P&Z) Board recommended this cap to prevent Live/Work Units from becoming too much of the non-residential mix and a loophole for not providing active nonresidential uses.
- Tenant-ready restaurant requirement: Councilmember Steele expressed concerns about high restaurant failure rates, though she agreed with the 2,500-square-foot minimum.

Mayor Dowless expressed reluctance to mandate a restaurant, citing potential economic constraints on developers.

Planner Hardgrove noted that the P&Z Board strongly recommended a restaurant, arguing that requiring it is the only way to ensure its inclusion and that restaurants are key to meeting the goal of the Activity Node: a destination with a diverse mix of uses. Councilmember Rader also favored the requirement, and Councilmember Steele commented that restaurants perform better when clustered, providing patrons with options.

- Waiver vs. Predictability: In response to Mayor Dowless, Planner Hardgrove confirmed that flexibility could be obtained through a waiver. Mayor Dowless stressed the need for predictability in the code to avoid applicants needing to seek Council approval for every detail.

Signage in the Activity Node was discussed (Master Sign Plan (Line 370)): Planner Hardgrove explained a Master Sign Plan is required for all developments designated as an Activity Node to ensure a cohesive, unified design for all signage. Councilmember Rader suggested adding verbiage to highlight temporary signage

Mayor Dowless commented on Lines 240-242 relating to prohibited uses in a Live/Work unit, stating he did not want to limit recruiters and businesses that hire employees, differentiating them from businesses that contract day laborers. After discussion, the consensus was to keep the wording as is.

Public Comment:

Ms. Demostene offered several points and suggestions:

She noted that regulating operating hours for Live/Work units is challenging. Mayor Dowless mentioned that there are waiting lists for Live/Work spaces in other developments.

She requested clarity on prohibiting drive-throughs on Line 76. Planner Hardgrove confirmed that the only place where a drive-through is prohibited is in the activity node. They are permitted in non-activity nodes for mixed-use developments, but do not count toward the minimum nonresidential requirement for mixed-use developments.

Ms. Demostene suggested increasing the tree island width related to the parallel parking allowance on the new commercial streets from 5 feet to 7 or 8 feet to support sufficient tree growth, especially for shade trees. Mayor Dowless requested a solid example to weigh the need for tree space against parking demands.

She stated that a restaurant component is essential to a mixed-use development.

Live/Work Unit Operational Requirement: More discussion ensued regarding Life/Work operational requirements and whether there should be a minimum number of work hours on the commercial side of a Live/Work unit to prevent the business from never operating.

The Council agreed to require a minimum of 20 hours of commercial operations per week in Live/Work units, rather than specifying certain days or hours.

Planner Hardgrove said she will provide an updated version of the Ordinance at the next City Council meeting.

Councilmember Rader made a motion to defer Ordinance 2025-08 to the November 18, 2025 City Council meeting; seconded by Councilmember Steele. The motion was approved by voice vote (5/0).

G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

H. NEW BUSINESS

1. Decommissioning of Police Vehicle #68

Chief DeSchryver reported the decommissioning of Police Vehicle #68 due to high mileage and significant required repairs. Vehicle #68 exceeded 100,000 miles and required an estimated \$10,000 in repairs. The vehicle was funded by a JAG grant, and a replacement vehicle is expected soon. Vehicle #68 was sold at auction for \$1,775.00

Council President Horn made a motion to approve the decommissioning of vehicle #68; seconded by Councilmember Lomas. The motion was approved by voice vote (5/0).

2. Resolution 2025-05 CPACE (from Presentations)

Councilmember Rader made a motion to defer a decision on C-PACE until the November 18, 2025 City Council meeting. Councilmember Lomas seconded the motion. The motion was approved by voice vote (5/0).

Attorney New said she would investigate if their law firm had clients that have dealt with C-Pace. Mr. Bartkus said he will provide a list for the City Clerk.

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

J. CITIZEN COMMENTS

K. BOARDS & COMMITTEES

L. STAFF REPORTS

City Attorney Smith – no report

Police Chief DeSchryver

1. Chief DeSchryver's Report - Month of September 2025

- **Personnel:** Haymee Watkins resigned; 25-30 resumes received, narrowed to five candidates. A new officer was hired to replace Officer Zane and has completed training.

New Officer Class finished his training and is doing well working with Officers Meade and Barretto.

- **Proactive Policing:** On October 19th, Officers Aponte and Tejada located runaway juveniles at Versailles Plaza who were in possession of a burglary tool and approximately \$900.00 stolen from VanBarry's. The Chief commended the officers.
- **Uniforms:** The department is reviewing new shoulder patch designs, as the current patch has been in use since 1995.
- **Council Inquiries:**
 - In response to Councilmember Rader, the Chief said there were no reports of firearm discharge incidents in the City.
 - In response to Councilmember Lomas, the Chief could not confirm speeding enforcement on Holden Avenue, but noted high enforcement activity at railroad crossings.

City Clerk Riffle

1. City Clerk's Report 9/15 through 10/14/2025

- **Code Violation Issued:** Staff prepared and issued a Notice of Violation (NOV) to the Quick Stop located at Holden Avenue and Orange Avenue. The NOV cited issues related to sign spinning and the use of a smoke shop. The business owner was given 7 days to stop sign spinning and 45 days to discontinue the smoke shop activity.
- **Business Tax Receipts (BTRs):** 75% of businesses have renewed their BTRs. Delinquent notices were sent out during the week of October 13th.
- **Police Department Irrigation:** Brett flagged a spike in irrigation costs at the Police Department. The Police Chief and Deputy Chief are currently investigating the matter.
- **Verizon Wireless Application:** Mayor Dowless and staff have raised concerns regarding Verizon's application for a 30-foot wireless pole on Jessamine Lane. Mayor Dowless and Brett met with Verizon to discuss potential alternatives. Resident feedback on the proposal is actively being gathered
- **Financial Audit:** Fieldwork for the 2024–2025 financial audit is scheduled for early December. Staff have been requested to begin providing initial documentation.
- **Lake Jessamine Estates Hydraulic Leak:** There are reports of a possible hydraulic leak in the Lake Jessamine Estates area, with smaller leaks reported on other roads. While there is no confirmed camera footage from FCC Environmental Services trucks, they are actively cleaning the affected area. Staff will request that CPH view the roads after cleaning to ensure there is no road damage.
- **FCC Billing Errors:** FCC Environmental Services has erroneously billed some commercial accounts for large rate increases. Sandy is in contact with the new FCC representative to ensure corrections are made.
- **Road Depression:** A depression in the roadway near a drain in front of 5109 The Oaks Circle has been reported. City staff has contacted a company to investigate and diagnose the issue.

M. MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL REPORTS

Mayor Dowless

- **Redevelopment:** Councilmember Rader and Planner Hardgrove have met with a marketing company to identify potential redevelopment areas. Once they've had a chance to review her proposal, the Council will be briefed.
- **Grant Funding:** Mayor Dowless contacted MetroPlan to seek assistance with the Soto grant application.
- **Police Compensation:** \$1,000 checks were issued to police officers in recognition of the extra work and coverage they have provided.
- **Gated Community Roads (Paving Requirement):**
City Code and Legacy bylaws mandate that roads in gated communities be repaved every 15 years, regardless of condition. Mayor Dowless stated that many of these roads are not experiencing the wear and tear necessary to warrant such frequent repaving.

Councilmember Rader noted that deterioration accelerates toward the end of a road's useful life. Councilmember Lomas acknowledged that road maintenance is expensive and suggested that sending the City Engineer to examine the roads would greatly help the gated communities by potentially avoiding unnecessary work. Council directed staff to consider a code amendment to provide flexibility in the timing of repaving.

- **Orange County Districts:** Mayor Dowless showed Council and the public the new Orange County districts.

Council Member Lomas - No report

Council Member McElroy

- Councilmember McElroy expressed appreciation for the Mayor's article in the newsletter, which clarified the use of taxes and funds.

Council Member Rader- No report

Council Member Steele - No report

Council President Horn

- **Waterfront Property:** Council President Horn requested an update on the Waterfront property. Mayor Dowless responded that the Waterfront staff is actively working on obtaining funding to support the planned use of the property.
 - Council President Horn noted that the location looks terrible and cannot remain in its current condition.
 - Councilmember Lomas agreed that the grass needs to be mowed.
 - Officer Zane spoke to Attorney Smith regarding potential actions the City can take and is awaiting Attorney Smith's recommendation.
 - In response to Councilmember Lomas, Chief DeSchryver confirmed that the police have not found any evidence of vagrancy or people residing in the building.
- **Deeper Fellowship Church:** Council President Horn noted concerns from residents about high conference attendance resulting in many people crossing the roads. Mayor Dowless confirmed that the City cannot prevent people from walking but stressed the importance of using

crosswalks. Chief DeSchryver confirmed the church had a valid permit for a conference on October 10, 2025.

- **State Property Tax:** Council President Horn noted residents' questions about the potential elimination of state property taxes and had sent emails expressing concern to Governor DeSantis. Mayor Dowless stated this is a significant concern for the Florida League of Cities, and they are actively addressing the issue.

N. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:52 pm.



Richard A. Horn, Council President

Attest:



Sandra Riffle, City Clerk