



MINUTES

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

Council President Horn called the meeting to order at 6:30 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 a quorum and said that Councilmember Steele was unable to attend the meeting and asked to be excused.

Councilmember Rader made a motion to excuse Councilmember Steele's absence; seconded by Councilmember McElroy. The motion was approved 4/0 by voice vote.

Elected Officials Present:

Richard A. Horn, Council President
Chris Rader, Council President Pro-Tem
Susan Lomas, Councilmember
Casey McElroy, Councilmember

City Staff Present:

Sandra Riffle, City Clerk
Dean DeSchryver, Police Chief
Miguel Garcia, Deputy Police Chief
Scott Arellano-Zane, Code Enforcement/IT Manager

Absent: Beth Steele, Councilmember

C. PRESENTATIONS AND PROCLAMATIONS

D. CONSENT AGENDA

1. November 18, 2025 City Council Meeting Minutes

Councilmember Rader made a motion to approve the November 18, 2025, City Council meeting minutes; seconded by Councilmember Lomas. Approved by voice vote (4/0).

E. ORDINANCES (FIRST READING)

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

1. Ordinance 2025-12: Certified Recovery Residences

Attorney Smith read the ordinance by title. He clarified that this ordinance is a state-mandated measure to ensure that local procedures comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ordinance allows for "reasonable accommodation" as current land development regulations do not specifically carve out areas for these properties.

Councilmember Rader made a motion to approve Ordinance 2025-12; seconded by Councilmember McElroy. The motion was approved by roll call vote (4/0).

Councilmember McElroy	Favor
Councilmember Lomas	Favor
Councilmember Rader	Favor
Council President Horn	Favor
Councilmember Steele	Absent

2. Ordinance 2025-13: Street Repaving Gated Communities

Attorney Smith read Ordinance 2025-13 in title only. He said the ordinance focuses on gated communities and that the Council can revisit non-gated private roads in the future.

There was no public comment.

Councilmember Lomas made a motion to approve Ordinance 2025-13; seconded by Councilmember Rader. The motion was approved by roll call vote (4/0).

Councilmember Lomas	Favor
Councilmember McElroy	Favor
Councilmember Rader	Favor
Council President Horn	Favor
Councilmember Steele	Absent

G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. C-PACE Program

Attorney Smith read Resolution 2025-05 in title only.

The Council revisited the Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE) program. President Horn noted he had attempted to contact other Florida local governments regarding their experience with the program but received little feedback.

Ryan Barkis (FDFC) clarified that the program has existed for over 10 years and involves no advertising or recording costs for the City. It uses private funds, and the responsibility lies solely with the commercial property owner. Anthony Fiorino (Emerald Sun Energy) added that C-PACE helps small businesses compete by providing accessible financing for energy upgrades.

Public Comment:

Catrin Schuetz-Kroehler asked who would be affected. She has solar and has lost batteries. Her system will not help.

Council President Horn explained that C-PACE is a method for a business owner to be able to finance projects and allow small companies to better compete. Mr. Barkis said it is for commercial businesses only. He also confirmed that batteries are available.

Caleb Castro asked whether any cities have redirected their programs and, if so, why. Mr. Barkis responded that a couple of cities terminated the residential PACE program due to concerns about people losing their homes, but this does not apply to commercial businesses. Mr. Fiorino said the residential contractors were adding services that did not apply to solar or power.

Council President Horn made a motion to approve Resolution 2025-05, authorizing a commercial property assessed clean energy program (C-PACE) within the corporate limits of the City; seconded by Councilmember Lomas. The motion was approved by voice vote (4/0).

H. NEW BUSINESS

1. 2026 Municipal Election and Canvassing Board

City Clerk Riffle outlined the requirements for the Canvassing Board, including a logic and accuracy test on February 26 and certification on Election Night (March 10, 2026).

Councilmember McElroy and Council President Horn volunteered to serve on the Canvassing Board.

Council President Horn made a motion to appoint the City Clerk, Councilmember McElroy, and himself, both elected officials not appearing on the March 2026 ballot, to serve on the 2026 Municipal Election Canvassing Board committee. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Rader. Motion approved by voice vote (4/0).

City Clerk Riffle also explained that, if there is an election, the City Clerk must be designated to assist Orange County staff with the opening and handling of absentee and provisional ballots.

Council President Horn made a motion for the City Clerk to assist the OrangeCounty Supervisor of Elections staff with the opening and handling of absentee ballots on Election Day, March 10, 2026, as needed; seconded by Councilmember Lomas. The motion was approved by voice vote (4/0).

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

J. CITIZEN COMMENTS

K. BOARDS & COMMITTEES

L. STAFF REPORTS

City Attorney Smith

Police Chief DeSchryver

1. Chief's Report - November 2025

- Chief DeSchryver reported on the Santa Fly-in and toy delivery to the Orlando Union Rescue Mission.
- He also briefed the Council on new Florida legislation regarding license plate obstructions. He clarified that while plate frames are legal, any frame or cover that obscures the plate number or validation decal is now subject to criminal penalties.

City Clerk Riffle

1. Clerks Report - 11/13 through 12/10

- City Clerk Riffle reported on the following:
Reported that the financial audit is proceeding smoothly and the workers' compensation audit has been completed.
- The Florida Department of Revenue approved the City's TRIM submittal.
- Regarding the "Quiet Zone," thermoplastic striping is complete (except for the Holden Ave crossing, handled by the County), and the Federal Railroad Administration has been asked to conduct a follow-up visit to complete their Quiet Zone audit.
- FCC Environmental Services has begun cleaning the areas at Stratemeyer, Legacy Oaks, and Jessamine Lane. CPH will need to examine the clean areas.

M. MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL REPORTS**• Mayor Dowless**

- **Planning & Zoning Board Recommendations** (This item was heard after the consent agenda.)

Mayor Dowless said P&Z Board Member David Gragg did not wish to be reappointed and was replaced by Caleb Castro. For geographic diversity, Mayor Dowless recommended Evan Franco. Mr. Castro and Mr. Franco attended the meeting and introduced themselves.

Council President Horn made a motion to approve the appointment of Caleb Castro and Evan Franco and the re-appointment of Todd Nolan to the Planning and Zoning Board; seconded by Councilmember Lomas. The motion was approved (4/0).

Council President Horn said Planning and Zoning is the beginning of what comes to City Council and he looks to them for guidance with their recommendations.

- In response to Mayor Dowless' inquiry regarding illegal signs attached to City poles, Attorney Smith confirmed the City has the authority to remove them immediately.
- The Mayor will attend the Florida League of Cities' Legislative Days (Jan 26-28). He expressed concern over proposed property tax changes, noting that no clear plan has been identified to replace lost municipal revenue.
- Confirmed with City Clerk Riffle that all Councilmembers have successfully completed their required 2025 ethics training.

- Reported that the Governor's Office and the Economic Development Office have grant funding available for small cities. He will work with Councilmember Rader and Planner Hardgrove to identify "shovel-ready" redevelopment projects that demonstrate a strong return on investment.
- **Council Member McElroy**
 - Councilmember McElroy provided an update on pending state legislation regarding property tax relief tied to insurance. He noted Edgewood has approximately 808 residential parcels; a proposed \$200,000 homestead exemption could effectively eliminate municipal tax liability for many Edgewood homeowners.

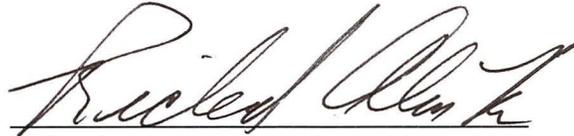
Discussed state-level proposals to eliminate property taxes for residents 65 and older. The Mayor noted this demographic is historically affluent in Edgewood. Attorney Smith warned that business lobbyists are organizing against these measures, while President Horn noted Edgewood's limited commercial base makes the City more vulnerable to residential assessment changes.

Discussed potential state pass-through funding to offset losses. Exemptions for first responders and seniors could result in an estimated \$50,000 fiscal impact. President Horn concluded that a formal Financial Impact Statement is required moving forward.

- **Council Member Lomas** - No report.
- **Council Member Rader** - No report.
- **Council Member Steele** – Absent.
- **Council President Horn**
 - Council President Horn reported on discussions with Pete Madison regarding helicopter flight paths over City Hall. New power lines have created navigation challenges. He suggested moving the parking lot median closer to the sidewalk for safety, though Chief DeSchryver noted a lift station on the island complicates relocation.
 - Initiated a discussion on moving away from current fire service contracts to establish an independent or volunteer fire department. He cited Melbourne Beach as a successful model and has consulted their Chief on funding.
 - He noted that for partnering with Belle Isle, their geography requires at least two stations (East and West), which would necessitate doubling the equipment. Councilmember Lomas volunteered to assist with further research. The Council discussed gauging interest among the community's retired firefighters to assess the viability of a local volunteer force.

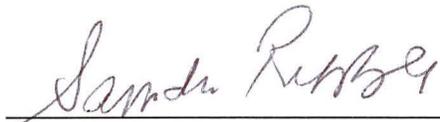
N. ADJOURNMENT

Councilmember Rader made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:32 pm.



Richard A. Horn, Council President

Attest:



Sandra Riffle, City Clerk