



**TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 3, 2024 – 4:00 PM
TAVARES CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
201 EAST MAIN STREET, TAVARES**

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

**Bob Grenier, Mayor
Sandy Gamble, Vice Mayor
Lori Pfister, Council Member
Walter Price, Council Member
Troy Singer, Council Member**

STAFF PRESENT

**Lori Houghton, Finance Director
Lindsay Holt, City Attorney
Susie Novack, City Clerk
Antonio Fabre, Interim Community Development Director
Scott Aldrich, Community Services Director
Bob Tweedie, Economic Development Director
Richard Keith, Fire Chief
Crissy Bublitz, Human Resources Director
James Dillon, Public Works Director
Mark O'Keefe, Public Communications Director
Sarah Coursey, Police Chief
Phil Clark, Utilities Director**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Grenier called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. He asked those who wished to speak on an agenda item to complete and submit a Request to Speak form.

II. INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Tab 1. Pastor Russell Cushman, Journey Christian Church

Pastor Russell Cushman, Journey Christian Church, provided the invocation and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Grenier asked if there were any changes to the Agenda. Ms. Houghton said the staff had no changes.

MOTION

Troy Singer moved to approve the Agenda, seconded by Sandy Gamble. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

IV. PROCLAMATIONS/PRESENTATIONS

V. SWEARING IN BY CITY ATTORNEY AND DISCLOSURE OF EXPARTE COMMUNICATIONS

Attorney Holt stated there were no quasi-judicial matters before the Council for consideration.

VI. READING OF ALL ORDINANCES/RESOLUTIONS INTO THE RECORD

Ms. Novack read the following ordinance by title only:

ORDINANCE 2024-03

PURSUANT TO CHAPTER 163 OF THE FLORIDA STATUTES, AMENDING THE PUBLIC FACILITIES ELEMENT AND CONSERVATION ELEMENT OF THE TAVARES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2040 IN ORDER FOR CONSISTENCY WITH THE CITY'S WORK PLAN AND REGIONAL WATER SUPPLY PLANNING INITIATIVES; BY PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY AND CONFLICTS; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Grenier asked if anyone wished to pull an item from the Consent Agenda for discussion. There were no requests.

MOTION

Walter Price moved to approve the Consent Agenda [Tab 2. Approval of the March 20, 2024, City Council Meeting Minutes], seconded by Lori Pfister. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Tab 2. Approval of the March 20, 2024, City Council Meeting Minutes

Approved on the Consent Agenda.

VIII. RESOLUTIONS

IX. ORDINANCES – PUBLIC HEARING

First Reading

Second Reading

Tab 3. Ordinance 2024-03 – Comprehensive Plan 2040 Text Amendment of the Public Facilities Element and Conservation Element pursuant to the City's 10-Year Water Supply Facilities Work Plan and Regional Water Supply Planning Initiatives

Mr. Fabre made the following presentation:

Local governments within a regional water supply planning area are required to develop a Water Supply Facilities Work Plan ("Work Plan") in order to ensure that adequate water supplies will be available to meet future demands for a minimum 10-year planning period, pursuant to F.S. Section 163.3177(6)(c)3. In addition to the Water Supply Facilities Work Plan requirements, local governments are required to revise their Comprehensive Plan for consistency with the Work Plan and Regional Water Supply Planning Initiatives.

The purpose of the Water Supply Facilities Work Plan is to identify and plan for water supply sources and associated facilities to serve City of Tavares (City) potable water customers for the 2023 through 2032 planning period. The Work Plan has been prepared in accordance with Chapter 163 F.S., which requires local governments to adopt a Work Plan and supporting comprehensive plan policies within 18 months of the approval of a regional water supply plan. The Central Springs/East Coast (CSEC) Regional Water Supply Plan was approved by the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD) on February 8, 2022.

On February 7, 2024, the City Council reviewed and approved the transmittal ordinance to the State's Department of Commerce and other requisite state reviewing agencies. On March 15, 2024, the City received a letter from the Department of Commerce, Bureau of Community Planning and Growth to act on the City's adoption of the subject ordinance.

On January 18, 2024, the Planning & Zoning Board voted unanimously (6-0) to recommend approval of Ordinance 2024-03 as presented.

Staff recommends Option 2, that the City Council moves to approve Ordinance 2024-03 - Comprehensive Plan 2040 Text Amendment to the Public Facilities

Element and Conservation Element pursuant to the City's 10-Year Water Supply Facilities Work Plan and Regional Water Supply Planning Initiatives.

Mayor Grenier asked for comments from the Council.

Vice Mayor Gamble inquired about the Consumptive Use Permit (CUP). Mr. Clark said the ordinance did not apply to the CUP.

MOTION

Lori Pfister moved to approve Ordinance 2024-03, seconded by Sandy Gamble. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

X. GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Tab 4. Fred Stover Sports Complex Purchase and Sale Agreement with the School Board of Lake County

Mr. Aldrich made the following presentation:

At the June 21, 2023 regular City Council meeting, staff was directed to negotiate a Purchase and Sale Agreement with the School Board of Lake County for the sale of the Fred Stover Sports Complex. Highlighted points are as follows:

- *The School Board of Lake County, FL will purchase the property for a cash sum of \$600,000.*
- *Tavares would still have access to the sports fields for the next five (5) years for the City's Babe Ruth League.*
- *The School Board will maintain the complex and make upgrades to the facility, such as new sidewalks and parking that would benefit both the City and the School Board. The City would maintain the two smaller youth fields designated for City programs.*

At the March 25, 2024 School Board of Lake County, FL regular meeting, the school board voted unanimously to approve the Purchase and Sale Agreement as presented.

Mayor Grenier asked for comments from the Council.

Council Member Price inquired about the City's maintenance costs for up to five years while using the fields. Mr. Aldrich said the City would maintain two smaller fields, including mowing, fertilizing, seeding, and watering. There would be no utility costs.

Council Member Price referred to the contract and inquired about the cost of rectifying easements and encroachments. Mr. Aldrich said the City had incurred survey and engineering costs. Mr. Fabre said there would be additional staff costs that would be de minimus.

Council Member Pfister said she was thankful to see a sale agreement on the property and said former Mayor Robert Wolfe began the process many years ago.

Council Member Singer said the City worked on the project for over eighteen years. He thanked Vice Mayor Gamble for his efforts and said it would be great for Tavares High School to have its own baseball field. He said the Lake County School Board (School Board) would be investing \$1 million dollars on the fields over the next five years.

Council Member Singer said there was a clause in the contract regarding terminating the Gridiron Gang fundraising program and asked for an update. Mr. Aldrich noted the City contracted with the Gridiron Gang through February 2025. The agreement would be terminated with the City, and the School Board would have to decide on future contracts. He said the School Board contacted the Gridiron Gang to advise them of the field transition.

Council Member Singer said it was his understanding that the City anticipated a sale price of \$525,000. Ms. Houghton noted that in the 2024 budget, there was a conservative estimated revenue of \$525,000. There was also an off-setting expenditure of \$525,000 for improvements at Woodlea Sports Complex. Any additional difference would go into City reserves unless the Council designated otherwise.

Vice Mayor Gamble said he was glad to see the purchase and sale come to fruition. He noted that past school board member Jimmy Conner had initiated the purchase and sale many years ago. Vice Mayor Gamble said he played little league baseball at Fred Stover Field as a child. Mayor Fred Stover donated the property to the youth, and the City eventually took it over. He said it was a win for the City to utilize the smaller fields until Woodlea Sports Complex is completed.

MOTION

Sandy Gamble moved to approve the Fred Stover Sports Complex Purchase and Sale Agreement with the School Board of Lake County, seconded by Walter Price. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Tab 5. Discussion on Fourth of July Fireworks vs. Drone Show

Mr. Aldrich made the following presentation:

An opportunity is provided for Council to discuss the upcoming Fourth of July scheduled fireworks program. Three options exists:

- 1. Continue with the fireworks program as scheduled. We are currently under contract with Imperial Pyro & Special Effects for the 2024 Fourth of July Program.*
- 2. Cancel the current 2024 contract with Imperial Pyro & Special Effects and replace the fireworks with a drone show.*
- 3. Do both fireworks and a drone show.*

The current budget for the fireworks program is \$33,000, which provides a traditional 23-25 minute long fireworks show to include a grand finale. This is budgeted and funded for this July. A drone show of similar effect and duration on the July 4th holiday would cost around \$160,000. As a point of reference, the recent Planes, Tunes & BBQ drone show on March 2, 2024 featured 200 drones flying for 10-12 minutes and cost \$40,000. If the council wished to shorten the drone show on July 4th to approximately 15 minutes, the costs would be around \$80,000. As there is no money in the budget to do both this year, if the City wanted to have both, they would need to take the difference out of reserves or significantly shorten or reduce the quality of both shows. Or as an alternative, continue this year as planned with traditional fireworks and place in next years budget for consideration along with all the other budgeted items, a drone show in in the FY 2025 budget.

An opportunity is provided for the Council to discuss the three options and provide staff with direction.

Council Member Pfister noted her support for a drone show. She said all other cities have fireworks shows and noted drone shows could be personalized. She said the five branches of the military could be honored.

Council Member Price said he is a traditionalist and supported continuing with a fireworks show. He said the citizens he spoke with indicated they would like to keep the fireworks show and felt Tavares hosted the best shows in the area. He noted the cost difference and anticipated budget constraints for Fiscal Year 2025.

Council Member Singer concurred with Council Member Price. He said if the City put the \$80,000 cost of a drone show toward fireworks, it would be an unbelievable fireworks show.

Vice Mayor Gamble said he loved the drone shows, not the price difference. He said the City worked with the Chamber of Commerce to assist with funding in the past, and the City may wish to find partners to help fund a drone show or increase the fireworks budget. He said a drone show would be an enhancement and did not support utilizing reserve funds.

Council Member Singer asked Ms. Houghton to contact the Tavares Chamber of Commerce to see if they could partner with the City and possibly sponsor a drone show. Ms. Houghton confirmed and said staff would also work with the City Attorney to look at other potential partnerships.

Council Member Pfister said a local business might be interested and could have its logo displayed during a show.

Vice Mayor Gamble said he would prefer the Chamber of Commerce to initiate seeking donors.

Mayor Grenier noted his support for a drone show.

MOTION

Lori Pfister moved to leave the fireworks show for July 4, 2024, as is and bring back a discussion for a future drone show after staff researched how to obtain sponsorship, seconded by Sandy Gamble.

Vice Mayor Gamble said that provides a year for the City to work and partner with the Tavares Chamber of Commerce to raise needed funds.

Council Member Pfister said she was contemplating a show during Christmas rather than waiting until the 4th of July.

AMENDED MOTION

Lori Pfister moved to leave the July 4, 2024, fireworks show as is and work on finding a sponsor for a Christmas drone show, seconded by Sandy Gamble.

Mr. Aldrich asked if the Council would be amenable to a fifteen-minute drone show. He noted that the fireworks show was twenty-five minutes. Council Member Pfister said she would be okay with a fifteen-minute drone show due to the intensity of the show.

Council Member Singer said he would like to see the possibility of a drone and fireworks show during the 4th of July.

Council Member Price said the drone company identified in the agenda could integrate with fireworks.

The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Tab 6. Road Renaming Request – Lane Park Cutoff Road

Ms. Houghton made the following presentation:

Council member Sandy Gamble informed the City Council at a prior City Council meeting that the County Commission, at their March 12th County Commission meeting, asked him to ask the Tavares City Council to rename Lane Park Cut-Off Road - Ken Bragg Way (See the attached March 12, 2024 Lake County Board of Commissioner's Agenda Summary Item IX Tab 13). At this County meeting, it was sledged that Lake County did not own the road and the City was the proper authority on renaming as it owned the road. (Staff is still working to confirm the City legally owns the road as of this writing). By way of background, the below information is provided:

Lane Park Road is a Lake County Road. Lane Park Cut-Off Road, a different road is potably technically a Tavares City Road (staff is still legally confirming this at the time of this writing). It connects State Road 19 to County Road 561 (See attached map). On Lane Park Cut-Off Road there exists the Tavares Middle School, Big House and other businesses, residents and institutions, including the Lake Technical College Institute of Public Safety. On their website it states:

“The Institute of Public Safety’s state-of-the-art training facilities are located in Lake County, Florida, approximately one hour north of Orlando. Our Firefighting and Law Enforcement, and weapons driving range facilities are considered to be among the best in the country.”

The Institute hosts the Florida Police Academy, Sheriff Training Academy, Corrections Academy and Firefighter School where people attend to receive various certifications in these Public Safety professions.

Affixed to the Institute of Public Safety building is a plaque that reads: “Kenneth A. Bragg Vo. Tech Regional Public Safety Complex – Erected 1993 (See attached Photo). This plaque honors Mr. Braggs, the first Executive Director of the Lake Technical College. The College operates as a Charter School under the Lake County School Board’s prerogative. The College has two campuses, both owned by the Lake County School Board, with one located off Kurt Street in Eustis and the other located at Lane Park-Cut Off in Tavares. There is a nine-member Lake Technical College Board of Directors. Deanna Thomas, the current Director, is the College’s 8th Executive Director to hold this position, with Kenneth Bragg being the first to hold this position.

An opportunity is provided for the City Council to decide if they want to rename the road from Lane Park Cut-Off Road to Ken Bragg Way.

City Government Impact:

The cost is minimal for the city with new signage and staff time along the following lines:

- 1. Community Development to notify the Businesses, Institutions and residents of the proposed name change.*
- 2. Community Development to agendize, at a future Council meeting, a formal vote on this, after all impacted parties have been notified.*
- 3. Community Development to notify the Lake County Communications Center (911), United States Post Office, and various mapping organizations such as Google and Apple maps.*
- 4. Public Works sign replacement materials and labor cost.*

Resident/business Impact:

There are three (3) residents, three institutions (Middle School, Fire Station, Institute of Public Safety) and several businesses along this road, including a

Regional Indoor Sports Park – “The Big House”, all of which will be notified and provided an opportunity to provide input on this decision should it move forward. There is a cost associated with this change to them, including but not limited to changing driver’s licenses, vehicle registrations, bank accounts, Tax Collector systems for processing property taxes, Property Appraiser information systems to manage the property assessments, Clerk Of the Court information systems to manage titles and historical information, telephone landline, cellular, cable, and fiber optic providers, credit card information, web pages, stationery, business cards, and the like.

Staff provided the following options:

- 1) Vote on establishing The City Council's intent to vote on renaming the road at a future meeting and instruct staff to notify all affected property owners along Lane Park Cut-off of the City Council's intent to rename the road at an upcoming City Council meeting.*
- 2) Designate the road "Ken Bragg Way" as an honorary memorial designation with appropriate honorary signs at both ends of the road and do not officially rename the road.*
- 3) Do not take any action on this item.*

Attorney Holt said the City worked with Lake County on the question of ownership. She said no vesting documents were found dedicating Lane Park Cutoff Road to the City. A 1998 ordinance was discovered where a portion of Lane Park Road, possibly just the right-of-way, was annexed and incorporated into the City. Attorney Holt said she recommended a survey if the Council wished to rename the road to clarify, based on the legal description, what part the City owns.

Council Member Pfister noted her support to memorialize the road and not change the name.

Council Member Singer concurred with Council Member Pfister and said Mr. Bragg had done much for the community and should be honored. He asked for an update on the naming policy. Ms. Houghton said the staff was still working on a naming process to bring back to the Council for consideration. She said the Council wished to include city residency in the policy. Council Member Singer said he felt a person should be deceased to receive a named recognition. He said he would like to wait until a policy was approved.

Council Member Price said a road should be named after a Tavares resident and stated his support for a memorial sign, not a legal road change. Council Member Price said naming the road after Chester Lemon, who brings a lot of business to the area each weekend, may be more appropriate.

Mayor Grenier said he supported name recognition for both living and past residents. He said he would support a memorial dedication with a sign on each end of the road.

Vice Mayor Gamble said a road dedication would be reasonable.

MOTION

Lori Pfister moved to approve Option 2, seconded by Sandy Gamble.

Council Member Singer said he would feel more comfortable waiting until a policy was implemented.

Vice Mayor Gamble inquired about road ownership. Attorney Holt said she believed, based on Ordinance 1998-36, the City may own a portion of the right-of-way. Vice Council Member Pfister noted that the Institute of Public Safety building displayed a memorial plaque in honor of Mr. Bragg.

The motion carried 4-1 as follows:

Bob Grenier:	Yes
Sandy Gamble:	Yes
Lori Pfister:	Yes
Walter Price:	Yes
Troy Singer:	No

Tab 7. Community Grant Award

Ms. Novack made the following presentation:

The Council budgeted \$2,000 for community grants in the current fiscal year 2024. The City previously advertised an invitation to submit community grant applications for area not-for-profit organizations with a 501c3 designation for up to \$500.00 in funding for community and social service projects. The Council awarded three \$500.00 grants on January 17, 2024, to Friends of the Tavares Library, Lake County Museum of Art, and Triangle Community Alliance, Inc. After the three grants were awarded, there was a \$500.00 grant balance to be considered by the Council on a first come, first served basis on any future applications received.

An application was received requesting a \$500.00 Community Grant from the Educational Foundation of Lake County, Inc., for a Tavares High School graduate scholarship program for students who have attended Tavares public schools. (see attached application)

A ranking committee consisting of the City Clerk, Finance Director, and Community Services Director met on March 25, 2024, and reviewed the application to determine whether it met the criteria for the Community Grant Program. The grant application met the requirements. If awarded, the ranking

committee recommends that the Council invite the grant recipient to provide an update on their grant award and program at the end of the fiscal year.

Advertisements were placed in the Daily Commercial and on the City Website at the beginning of the fiscal year.

Staff recommends Option 1, for the Council to award a \$500.00 community grant to the Educational Foundation of Lake County, Inc.

Council Member Pfister and Council Member Singer noted their support.

Council Member Singer said he would like to invite the grant recipients to provide an update on their grant awards at the end of the fiscal year.

MOTION

Lori Pfister moved to approve Option 1 [Award a \$500.00 community grant to the Educational Foundation of Lake County, Inc.], and to invite all recipients to provide an update on their grants at the end of the fiscal year, seconded by Sandy Gamble. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

XI. NEW BUSINESS

XII. OLD BUSINESS

Tavares Square

Council Member Price asked about the status of the Tavares Square mixed-use project.

Attorney Holt said the Staff worked with Mr. Cagan's counsel and recently executed a purchase and sale agreement. Mr. Cagan will be in the due diligence period for 60 to 90 days, with a closing after.

Approved Developments

Council Member Pfister said she would like a list of all approved undeveloped developments, including those approved in the past twenty years, to be provided to the Council and Planning and Zoning Board members.

Vice Mayor Gamble said a developer only has so much time to bring a final plat back to the Council for approval.

Ms. Houghton said Staff would review the approved developments and bring a report to the Council.

Road Repaving

Mayor Grenier asked for an update on road repaving.

Mr. Dillon said all paving, except East Caroline Street, was completed for the current fiscal year, including Mansfield Road and Lake Elsie Drive. He said the Staff is waiting on the developer to move forward with their improvements before East Caroline Street is repaved.

XIII. AUDIENCE TO BE HEARD

Gary Santoro, Royal Harbor, said Trident Boats erected a chain link fence with barbed wire that goes into the lake. Mr. Santoro said it sends the wrong message to those who pass by.

XIV. REPORTS

Tab 8. City Administrator Report

Ms. Houghton noted upcoming events and outside agency meetings were provided to the Council in their agenda packets.

Mr. Dillon said the America in Bloom judges would evaluate the City on June 16, 2024, and Staff was preparing for their visit. He said the Public Works project would be concluded in the next 90 days, with a ribbon-cutting ceremony scheduled for August 26, 2024.

Mr. Clark noted the City's annual Water Day event was scheduled for April 27, 2024, in Wooton Park.

Mr. Aldrich noted the groundbreaking ceremony for the Regional Park behind the YMCA would be held on April 25, 2024, at 10:00 a.m.

Mr. Fabre said a workshop would be held during the April 18, 2024, Planning and Zoning Board meeting. He said the workshop would include zoning, future land use, and current development activities that were approved, in construction, and planned. He said information on the Live Local Act would also be provided.

Tab 9. City Council Member Reports

Council Member Pfister commended the Planning and Zoning Board on their hard work and efforts.

Council Member Singer commended Mr. Dillon and his team for light pole signage in Wooton Park.

Council Member Singer sent his thoughts and prayers to the Drury family on the recent loss of their dog.

Vice Mayor Gamble noted the Kayakathon event was scheduled for April 6, 2024, and the annual Steamboat Meet was scheduled for April 8 through 12, 2024.

Vice Mayor Gamble asked for an update on the zipline. Mr. Dillon said the Staff was working with the manufacturer and that no defects had been found. He said the item was removed until the investigation was complete.

Vice Mayor Gamble said he did not believe a person should be deceased to receive named recognition. He said it was a way to honor and respect an individual while they were still alive.

Mayor Grenier said he enjoys receiving emails from Mr. Drury about the projects the Staff had completed. He said it was wonderful to see their achievements in the City. He said the Staff works hard each day.

Vice Mayor Gamble thanked Mr. Aldrich and Attorney Holt for their efforts on the Fred Stover Field project.

XV. ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business, and Mayor Grenier adjourned the meeting at 5:07 p.m.

Respectfully,

Susie Novack, MMC, FCRM
City Clerk