

AGENDA



City of Tavares Planning & Zoning Advisory Board

October 16, 2025 -- 3:00 PM

**TAVARES CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
201 E MAIN STREET, TAVARES**

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Pledge of Allegiance**
- III. Approval of Minutes**
 - 1. Approval of August 14, 2025, Planning and Zoning Board Meeting Minutes (Deputy City Clerk)
- IV. Swearing in by City Attorney and Disclosure of Exparte Contacts**
- V. Public Hearings**
- VI. Other Business**
 - 2. Integrating America in Bloom with Planning & Zoning Initiatives (Public Works)
 - 3. Community Development Director Report
- VII. Audience to be heard**
- VIII. Adjournment**

F.S. 286.0105 If a person decides to appeal any decision or recommendation made by Council with respect to any matter considered at this meeting, he will need record of the proceedings, and that for such purposes he may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

Individuals with disabilities needing assistance to participate in any of these proceedings should contact the City Clerk at least two (2) working days in advance of the meeting date and time at (352) 742-6209.

**AGENDA SUMMARY
TAVARES PLANNING & ZONING ADVISORY BOARD
10/16/2025**

AGENDA TAB NO.: 1.

**SUBJECT TITLE: Approval of August 14, 2025, Planning and Zoning Board Meeting Minutes
(Deputy City Clerk)**

OBJECTIVE:

For the Board to approve the August 14, 2025, Planning and Zoning meeting minutes.

SUMMARY:

Attached are the August 14, 2025 Planning and Zoning meeting minutes as submitted by the Deputy City Clerk.

OPTIONS:

1. Approve the Planning and Zoning meeting minutes as submitted.
2. Approve the Planning and Zoning meeting minutes with corrections.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

For the Board's consideration.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None

LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

Yes.

ATTACHMENTS AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC UPON REQUEST:

1. 8-14-2025 PZ Minutes

Attachments not provided are available to the public upon request to the City Clerk.



**CITY OF TAVARES
PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD MEETING
TAVARES CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
201 E. MAIN STREET, TAVARES, FLORIDA 32778
AUGUST 14, 2025**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

**Gary Santoro, Chairman
Jay Cunningham, Board Member - Absent
Deborah Murphy, Vice-Chairperson
Brooke Matthews, Board Member
Bruce Peterman, Board Member
James Sweezea, Board Member
Dara Treadwell, Board Member**

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

**Anarquis Frias, City Planner
Lindsay Holt, City Attorney
Michelle Winegard, Deputy City Clerk**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Santoro called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. and asked those present to silence their cell phones.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Santoro led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Tab 1. Approval of July 17, 2025, Planning and Zoning Board Meeting Minutes

Chairman Santoro asked if there were any additions or corrections to the July 17, 2025 Planning & Zoning Board meeting minutes. There were none.

MOTION

Deborah Murphy moved to approve the July 17, 2025 Planning and Zoning meeting minutes, seconded by Dara Treadwell. The motion passed unanimously 6-0.

IV. SWEARING IN BY CITY ATTORNEY AND DISCLOSURE OF EX PARTE COMMUNICATIONS

Attorney Holt stated there was one quasi-judicial item on the agenda: Ordinance 2025-09, rezoning of the Palm Garden property.

Attorney Holt administered the oath to all individuals who wished to provide testimony.

Attorney Holt asked for any ex parte communications. There were none.

V. PUBLIC HEARING

Tab 2. Ordinance 2025-08 – Amendments to the City’s Land Development Regulations, Chapter 4 – “Application Procedures and Permitting”, Table 4-B and Section 4-22 –Procedure for Consideration of a Final Plat, and Chapter 16 – “Subdivision Regulations”, Section 16-31 –Forms; and replacement of Form 16-13. (Community Development)

Anarquis Frias made the following presentation:

On July 1, 2025, the State of Florida has amended s. 177.071, F.S. (see attached 2025-164 Laws of Florida); requiring that certain plat or replat submittals be administratively approved with no further action by City Council authority. The subject Ordinance proposes amendments to the City’s Land Development Regulations to revise and streamline the approval process for plat and replat submittals. Specifically, the ordinance:

- *Amends Table 4-B and Section 4-22 within Chapter 4 to reflect changes to the final plat approval process;*
- *Amends Chapter 16, Section 16-31 regarding forms associated with subdivision regulations;*
- *Repeals and replaces Form 16-13 in its entirety;*

These amendments will allow for administrative approval of plats and replats, where appropriate, in a manner consistent with applicable Florida law.

OPTIONS:

1. *That the Planning & Zoning Advisory Board moves to recommend approval of Ordinance 2025-08.*
2. *That the Planning & Zoning Advisory Board moves to recommend denial of Ordinance 2025-08.*

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Planning & Zoning Advisory Board moves to recommend approval of Ordinance 2025-08.

Chairman Santoro asked for public comment. There was none.

Board Member Murphy stated that she found the proposal reasonable and appreciated that it would not slow down the approval process. However, she expressed concern that once a development was approved by the Planning and Zoning Board, no major changes could have been made before the final sign-off. Mr. Frias responded that by the time a project reached the final plat stage, just before City Council's approval, the project was essentially complete, with only the final documentation remaining to make it official.

Chairman Santoro referred to Ordinance 2025-08 Chapter 4, Section 4-22, Subsection E. He stated that he had no concerns with the proposed changes but asked who the "administrative authority" referenced. Attorney Holt stated that, for final plat approval as proposed, "administrative authority" would include the Community Development Director and City Administrator. She further stated that if the Planning & Zoning Board wished to revise the term to "City Administrator or designee" for consistency, she did not consider it a substantial change.

MOTION

James Sweeza moved to amend Ordinance 2025-08, Chapter 4, Section 4-22, Subsections E and F, by replacing the term "administrative authority" with "City Administrator or designee" to ensure consistency with the rest of the document. Bruce Peterman seconded the motion.

Chairman Santoro inquired about the proposed language on the Certificate of Approval, Form 16-13. He said it should refer to an individual rather than the city as a whole. Attorney Holt stated the language replaced the former phrase "Certificate of Approval of the Tavares City Council" and that all contracts and agreements processed through the City used the proposed language. She recommended no changes.

Gary Santoro restated the motion as stated above, noting that Ordinance 2025-08 was approved as amended per Attorney Holt's recommendation. The motion passed unanimously 6-0.

Tab 3. Ordinance 2025-09 – Palm Gardens Property - Rezoning of approximately 20.83 acres located on the northwest intersection of US Hwy 441 and Dead River

from City of Tavares Planned Development (PD) zoning to a Mixed Use (MU) zoning district. (Community Development)

Mr. Frias read the following report into the record:

The applicant is requesting a rezoning of the subject property from the expired Planned Development (PD Ordinance 2007-24) to the Mixed Use (MU) zoning district. The proposed MU zoning is intended to bring the site into consistency with the City's adopted Future Land Use Map designation of Mixed Use (MU) as outlined in the 2040 "Taking Flight" Comprehensive Plan.

The subject property is located at the northwest intersection of U.S. Highway 441 and Dead River, commonly known as Palm Gardens (AKA: Florida Lakefront RV Park). The parcel is approximately 20.83 acres in size. The property is bounded by the Dead River and associated wetlands to the east, U.S. Hwy 441 to the south, jurisdictional wetlands to the north, and a commercial land use (shed sales and storage facility) to the west. Demolition of the former manufactured home park on the site was completed in early 2024. The property is currently vacant, though some structures remain on-site, including a former restaurant, associated structures and boat dock.

A traffic study analysis was conducted by the applicant and accepted by the City's traffic consultant. Environmental and wetlands assessments were conducted for the site and provided to the city. Accordingly, any future development on the site will be required to comply with all applicable provisions of the City's Land Development Regulations.

At this time, the applicant does not have a specific proposed use or project for the site. Therefore, the applicant elects to defer concurrency determination until such time as a final development order. Staff finds the rezoning request to be consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Regulations.

OPTIONS:

- 1. That the Planning & Zoning Advisory Board moves to recommend approval of Ordinance 2025-09.*
- 2. That the Planning & Zoning Advisory Board moves to recommend denial of Ordinance 2025-09.*

Staff recommends that the Planning & Zoning Advisory Board moves to recommend approval of Ordinance 2025-09.

Mr. Frias stated that a representative of the applicant was available to answer any questions from the Board.

Chairman Santoro asked for public comment. There was none.

Chuck Hiott, a Professional Engineer at Halff, located at 902 N. Sinclair Ave., introduced himself and stated that they agreed with staff's recommendation and supported the approval of the ordinance. He explained that there was no end user identified at this time, as the applicant was seeking zoning approval first before pursuing potential users.

Board Member Peterman commented that the request felt vague and wished there had been more detail on future plans. Mr. Hiott responded that the immediate goal was to finalize zoning. He noted that any future development would need to comply with environmental, stormwater management, and City of Tavares regulations. He also explained that the property currently had no zoning, as the former Planned Unit Development (PUD) had expired.

Mr. Frias clarified that at that stage, the purpose was to bring the parcel into compliance with the City's Land Development Regulations and Comprehensive Plan through rezoning. He emphasized that City codes for stormwater and environmental protection were stringent and would apply to any future plans.

Board Member Sweeza asked about the approval process. Mr. Frias explained that, since the applicant was requesting straight zoning, the process would proceed through Community Development without additional public hearings.

Board Member Treadwell sought clarification that there were no end users identified and that a mixed-use zoning classification would align with the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Hiott confirmed this.

Board Member Matthews asked what it meant that the property currently had no zoning. Mr. Frias explained that the expired planned development left the parcel without zoning, and that the City typically does not proactively rezone property without applicant interest.

Board Member Sweeza asked how long the rezoning would remain in effect if approved. Mr. Frias stated it would remain until another rezoning request was submitted. Attorney Holt stated that any future rezoning request would be returned to the Planning and Zoning Board for review.

Board Member Peterman asked if the new development would fall under the recently adopted impact fees. Mr. Frias confirmed that it would.

Board Member Murphy raised concerns about potential development in the area. Mr. Hiott noted that prior residential buildings on the property were inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan but were grandfathered in because they had existed before the plan was adopted.

Chairman Santoro commented that most rezoning requests are tied to specific development proposals. He expressed concern about removing opportunities for public

input and did not want the public to feel the Board was attempting to “slip something by them.”

Attorney Holt stated that public comment was available at the present meeting and the Board’s role was to determine whether the rezoning request was consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. She also provided background on the former development, the non-conforming subdivision, and the lack of existing zoning.

Chairman Santoro agreed but reiterated his concern that the public could not comment on a specific development plan since none had been submitted.

Troy Vick, Chief Executive Officer of Capital Group, clarified that approval of the ordinance would not permit unrestricted development. He stated that any project would be required to comply with mixed-use zoning regulations and that his intent was to align with the Comprehensive Plan by including both residential and commercial components.

Board Member Treadwell asked how the applicant could proceed without a defined plan. Mr. Vick explained that securing the zoning designation first was necessary before investing in detailed design plans.

Board Member Sweeza expressed concern that approving the rezoning would mean the matter would not return to the Board. Mr. Frias reiterated that the request was consistent with the City’s long-term vision for the area.

Board Member Treadwell confirmed with Mr. Frias that any development plans would be submitted to the Community Development Department, including the City Planner. Mr. Frias affirmed this was correct.

As a follow-up, Board Member Treadwell asked when and how the Planning and Zoning Board would be informed of the plans. Mr. Frias explained that once plans are submitted, they become public records and are available to anyone through a public records request made to the City Clerk’s office.

Chairman Santoro stated that while he trusted the City to enforce its codes, he was concerned about approving a rezoning without associated plans. He noted this was the first such instance he had encountered and worried about public perception.

Mr. Vick responded that he understood he would need to request variances for anything outside of code requirements. He stated that he was ready to invest in the property; however, he could not proceed without knowing what zoning would be.

Discussion continued between Chairman Santoro and Mr. Vick regarding the rezoning request and its role in advancing development consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Chairman Santoro further noted that this was the first time he had seen a property without active zoning due to expiration.

Attorney Holt stated that normally, such properties include a “reverter” clause that restores the prior zoning classification. In this case, no reverter was in place, leaving the parcel without zoning. If it had reverted, it would have returned to a mobile home park designation, which would not be consistent with the 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

Chairman Santoro reiterated his concerns about approving rezoning without plans and asked for Attorney Holt’s opinion. Attorney Holt stated that she could not provide a judgment but stated that the applicant’s request was legally consistent with the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. If approved, it would provide the applicant with the zoning “rulebook” needed to move forward.

MOTION

Brooke Matthews made a motion to approve Ordinance 2025-09 – Palm Gardens Property - Rezoning of approximately 20.83 acres located on the northwest intersection of US Hwy 441 and Dead River from City of Tavares Planned Development (PD) zoning to a Mixed Use (MU) zoning district. Dara Treadwell seconded the motion. The motion failed 4-2 as follows:

- Bruce Peterman: No**
- Brook Matthews: Yes**
- Dara Treadwell: Yes**
- Gary Santoro: No**
- Deborah Murphy: No**
- James Sweeza: No**

VI. OTHER BUSINESS

Tab 4. Community Development Director Report

Mr. Frias stated there was nothing to report.

Chairman Santoro expressed appreciation to the Building Department City staff for their efforts.

VII. AUDIENCE TO BE HEARD

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION

Bruce Peterman moved to adjourn the meeting. There was no second. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 3:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Winegard
Deputy City Clerk

AGENDA SUMMARY
TAVARES PLANNING & ZONING ADVISORY BOARD
10/16/2025

AGENDA TAB NO.: 2.

SUBJECT TITLE: Integrating America in Bloom with Planning & Zoning Initiatives (Public Works)

OBJECTIVE:

Demonstrate how the America in Bloom (AIB) program aligns with planning and zoning efforts and may facilitate enhancement of local government initiatives focused on community development, beautification, and sustainability.

SUMMARY:

America in Bloom is a national awards program for cities, towns, colleges and business districts that “strives to empower communities to beautify and improve the overall quality of life through their programs, grant opportunities, resources library and more.” The program focuses on seven areas of impact within the municipal, business, and residential sectors; identified as: Overall Impression, Floral Impact, Urban Forestry, Environmental Initiatives, Landscaped Areas, Celebrating Heritage, and Community Vitality.

These areas of impact closely mirror those that we try to achieve when planning and anticipating the growth of a city. Community Vitality is the beneficial result of excellent master planning, strong ordinances and communication of those efforts. Endeavors become sustainable when the heartbeat of the municipality is one of Community Vitality, demonstrating civic pride and volunteerism.

Policies, programs, activities and facilities that lead to a vibrant community and promote a sense of health and well-being sustain that vitality. The AIB program focuses on elements that align with comprehensive planning goals, often included in master plans or community development strategies:

- Beautification – landscaping, floral displays and urban forestry
- Environmental Efforts – sustainability and green infrastructure
- Heritage Preservation – historical, cultural, natural, agricultural and industrial resources

The AIB program provides various tools to support municipal leaders and planners in identifying community strengths and weaknesses with metrics that define the program goals to aid in self-assessment, suggestions from professional advisors, and recognition programs that incentivize best practices. Through participation and implementation of the program, planners can prioritize investments, engage the public, and align beautification, environmental efforts, and heritage preservation with land use policies.

Through program tools and participation, AIB can act as the catalyst for planning and zoning success by:

- Enhancing community engagement
- Supporting sustainable land use
- Promoting alignment between beautification and regulatory frameworks

Allowing AIB initiatives to support zoning goals through:

- Increasing walkability in neighborhoods through the encouragement of mixed-use developments
- Reducing sprawl and expenses through the revitalization of underused spaces with the promotion of infill development
- Embracing rising trends such as form-based codes that focus on the physical form of the built environment and encouraging small-scale, often more attainable development

Tavares has enjoyed substantial success through our participation in the America in Bloom program. We enrolled in the program in 2017 as a Level 3 participant and have been celebrated numerous times including:

- Coolest Place for Kids 2017
- Overall Impression 2017
- Environmental Efforts 2018
- Overall Impression 2019
- Best Innovative Project or Program 2019
- Champion Community 2019, Population 18,000 – 23,000
- Tavares did not participate during 2020 & 2021, when the program was administered virtually, due to Covid 19.
- Overall Impression nominee in 2022
- Coolest Downtown 2023
- Champion Community 2023, Population 20,000 – 25,000
- Overall Impression 2023
- Coolest Place for Kids 2024
- Overall Impression 2024
- Community Involvement 2025
- Innovation in Action – Most Impressive New Project or Program recognizing the Tavares Public Works Transportation Training and Operations Center partnership with Lake Technical College
- Champion Community 2025, Population 20,000 – 25,000

Tavares was instrumental in establishing the first America in Bloom chapter in the country with the Lake County Chapter, facilitated through Keep Lake Beautiful and now successfully being adopted and replicated nationwide. This year, three local cities participated in the Level 3 program: Eustis, Leesburg, and Tavares, with Eustis and Tavares attending the National Symposium in Orion Township and Rochester, Michigan during September.

OPTIONS:

N/A

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

N/A

FISCAL IMPACT:

N/A

LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

N/A

ATTACHMENTS AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC UPON REQUEST:

**AGENDA SUMMARY
TAVARES PLANNING & ZONING ADVISORY BOARD
10/16/2025**

AGENDA TAB NO.: 3.

SUBJECT TITLE: Community Development Director Report

OBJECTIVE:

To report to the Planning & Zoning Advisory Board on matters related to the City of Tavares community development.

SUMMARY:

To report to the Planning & Zoning Advisory Board on matters related to the City of Tavares community development.

OPTIONS:

N/A

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

N/A

FISCAL IMPACT:

N/A

LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

N/A

ATTACHMENTS AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC UPON REQUEST: