



AGENDA
TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
April 1, 2026
4:00 PM
TAVARES CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
201 E MAIN STREET, TAVARES

(Members of the public wishing to speak on an item that is on the agenda must fill out a Request to Speak form available from the City Clerk or at the Council Meeting prior to the meeting being called to order. In addition, the Mayor will ask for comment under the agenda item titled "Audience to be Heard" for matters not on the Agenda. For further information contact the City Clerk at (352) 742-6209 or snovack@tavares.org)

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Tab 1 Reverend Thomas "Jay" Kowalski, First United Methodist Church of Eustis

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

IV. PROCLAMATIONS/PRESENTATIONS

Tab 2 Lake County 'America's 250-Year Celebration' Plans - City Administrator

Tab 3 Tavares Chamber of Commerce Update

Tab 4 Powerhouse Youth Project (Mayor)

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

VI. READING OF ALL ORDINANCES/RESOLUTIONS INTO RECORD

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

Tab 5 Approval of the March 18, 2026, City Council Meeting Minutes (City Clerk)

VIII. RESOLUTIONS

Tab 6 Resolution 2026-08 - Special Use Permit for a Laundromat at 1248 Wells Avenue (Community Development)

IX. ORDINANCES - PUBLIC HEARING

First Reading

Tab 7 **Ordinance 2026-03 - Charter Amendment Referendum for Four-Year Terms for City Council Members (City Administrator)**

Second Reading

X. GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Tab 8 **2026 America in Bloom Discussion (Public Works)**

Tab 9 **SECO Energy - Utility Easements at Golden Triangle Regional Park West Campus (Community Services)**

XI. NEW BUSINESS

XII. OLD BUSINESS

XIII. AUDIENCE TO BE HEARD

XIV. REPORTS

Tab 10 **City Administrator Report**

Tab 11 **City Council Member Reports**

XV. 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 CITY COUNCIL
4/1/2026**

AGENDA TAB NO.: 1

SUBJECT TITLE: Reverend Thomas “Jay” Kowalski, First United Methodist Church of Eustis

OBJECTIVE:

Reverend Thomas “Jay” Kowalski, First United Methodist Church of Eustis, will provide the invocation and lead those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

SUMMARY:

Reverend Thomas “Jay” Kowalski, First United Methodist Church of Eustis, will provide the invocation and lead those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

OPTIONS:

N/A

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

N/A

FISCAL IMPACT:

N/A

LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

N/A

ATTACHMENTS AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC UPON REQUEST:

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

**AGENDA SUMMARY
TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
4/1/2026**

AGENDA TAB NO.: 2

SUBJECT TITLE: Lake County 'America's 250-Year Celebration' Plans - City Administrator

OBJECTIVE:

To provide the City Council with an update on Lake County's planning efforts for the United States' 250-Year Celebration in 2026:

SUMMARY:

Levar Cooper, Director of the Lake County Office of Communications, will provide an update regarding Lake County's coordinated efforts to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States to include the following objectives:

- Foster civic pride by celebrating Lake County's unique contributions to America's 250-year story.
- Unite communities around shared values of freedom, service, and opportunity.
- Educate residents about local history and Lake County's unique environmental qualities.
- Drive tourism and economic impact by promoting historic destinations and local businesses.
- Engage stakeholders across 14 municipalities and key county entities.

OPTIONS:

1. Receive the update on Lake County's efforts to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States.
2. Do not receive an update.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Option 1, for the Council to receive the update.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None.

LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

Yes.

ATTACHMENTS AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC UPON REQUEST:

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

**AGENDA SUMMARY
TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
4/1/2026**

AGENDA TAB NO.: 3

SUBJECT TITLE: Tavares Chamber of Commerce Update

OBJECTIVE:

Receive an update on the Tavares Chamber of Commerce.

SUMMARY:

The Tavares Chamber of Commerce will provide an update on Chamber activities.

OPTIONS:

1. Receive an update from the Tavares Chamber of Commerce.
2. Do not receive an update.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Option 1, for the Council to receive an update from the Tavares Chamber of Commerce.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None.

LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

Yes.

ATTACHMENTS AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC UPON REQUEST:

1. April 1st, 2026 Council Report

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

**AGENDA SUMMARY
TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
4/1/2026**

AGENDA TAB NO.: 4

SUBJECT TITLE: Powerhouse Youth Project (Mayor)

OBJECTIVE:

To provide the City Council with information regarding the Powerhouse Youth Project and its impact on youth in the community.

SUMMARY:

Mayor Pfister will introduce and invite the Executive Director Scott Chevalier to present information regarding the Powerhouse Youth Project, an initiative focused on supporting and empowering youth through mentorship, education, and community engagement opportunities.

OPTIONS:

1. Receive the presentation.
2. Do not receive the presentation.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Optoin 1, for the Council to receive the presentation.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None.

LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

yes

ATTACHMENTS AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC UPON REQUEST:

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

**AGENDA SUMMARY
TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
4/1/2026**

AGENDA TAB NO.: 5

SUBJECT TITLE: Approval of the March 18, 2026, City Council Meeting Minutes (City Clerk)

OBJECTIVE:

For the Council to consider approval of the March 18, 2026, City Council meeting minutes.

SUMMARY:

Attached are the March 18, 2026, City Council meeting minutes as submitted by the City Clerk.

OPTIONS:

1. Move to approve the meeting minutes under the Consent Agenda.
2. Move to approve the meeting minutes with corrections.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

For the Council's consideration.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None.

LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

Yes.

ATTACHMENTS AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC UPON REQUEST:

1. 03-18-2026 CC Minutes

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



**TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 18, 2026 – 4:00 PM
TAVARES CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
201 EAST MAIN STREET, TAVARES**

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Lori Pfister, Mayor - *Absent*
Bob Grenier, Vice Mayor
Sandy Gamble, Council Member
Doug Keown, Council Member
Walter Price, Council Member

STAFF PRESENT

John Drury, City Administrator
Lindsay Holt, City Attorney
Susie Novack, City Clerk
Antonio Fabre, Community Development Director
Scott Aldrich, Community Services Director
Bob Tweedie, Economic Development Director
Lori Houghton, Finance Director
Richard Keith, Fire Chief
Crissy Bublitz, Human Resources Director
Sarah Coursey, Police Chief
James Dillon, Public Works Director
Mark O'Keefe, Support Services Director
Brian Dykes, Utilities Director

I. CALL TO ORDER

Vice 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. Melanie Chen, Central Florida Freethought Community

Melanie Chen, Central Florida Freethought Community, provided the invocation and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Vice Mayor Grenier recognized Lake County Commissioner Chairman Kirby Smith in the audience.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Vice Mayor Grenier asked if there were any changes to the Agenda. Mr. Drury said staff had no changes.

MOTION

Walter Price moved to approve the Agenda, seconded by Doug Keown. The motion carried unanimously 4-0.

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 2026-01

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF TAVARES, FLORIDA, AMENDING THE CITY OF TAVARES LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS, CHAPTER 8 ZONING REGULATIONS, SECTION 8-12 SUPPLEMENTAL REGULATIONS TO ESTABLISH A UNIFORM, LIMITED, AND EXCLUSIVE PROCEDURE FOR THE REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF CERTIFIED RECOVERY RESIDENCES AND CERTIFIED RECOVERY RESIDENCE REQUESTS FOR REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION; PROVIDING FOR CONSISTENCY WITH STATE AND FEDERAL LAW; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

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

MOTION

Doug Keown moved to approve the Consent Agenda [Tab 2. Approval of the March 4, 2026, City Council Meeting Minutes], seconded by Walter Price. The motion carried unanimously 4-0.

Tab 3. Approval of the March 4, 2026, City Council Meeting Minutes

Approved on the Consent Agenda.

VIII. RESOLUTIONS

IX. ORDINANCES – PUBLIC HEARING

First Reading

Second Reading

Tab 3. Ordinance 2026-01 – Amending Land Development Regulations to allow for Reasonable Accommodation of Certified Recovery Residences per F.S. Sec. 397.487

Mr. Fabre made the following presentation:

The Florida Legislature requires local governments to adopt objectives and procedures for processing requests related to Certified Recovery Residences per SB 954 (See Attached). Florida law establishes a statewide framework for the certification and oversight of recovery residences that provide housing to individuals recovering from substance-use disorders (Section 397.487, Florida Statutes). The proposed ordinance amends Chapter 8 of the Land Development Regulations to implement a narrowly tailored review process applicable only to Certified Recovery Residences according to section 397.487, Florida Statutes.

Furthermore, the proposed ordinance establishes a written application process, defined review timelines, and objective standards for approval or denial, while ensuring consistency with the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988 and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Adoption of the proposed ordinance will bring the City into compliance with state law while preserving the City's authority to enforce generally applicable land development, health, and safety regulations.

On February 19, 2026, the Planning & Zoning Advisory Board met and voted unanimously (4-0) to recommend approval of Ordinance 2026-01 as presented (see attached draft minutes).

City Staff recommends Option 1, for the City Council to move to approve Ordinance 2026-01 to be in compliance with state law.

Attorney Holt said that upon review of Section 2(1)(b), language had been identified that could expand applicability beyond what was required by statute. Attorney Holt stated that the phrase “or is actively seeking certification” could be removed so that the ordinance would apply only to facilities that had already received certification.

Vice Mayor Grenier recognized Gary Santoro, who requested to speak on the item.

Mr. Santoro stated that he was speaking as a member of the Planning and Zoning Board and requested clarification on concerns previously raised. He stated that based on his understanding of the legislation, certified recovery residences could potentially be located within any residential area, including 55 and older communities, and expressed concern regarding the lack of local jurisdiction and public hearing requirements. He also raised questions regarding homeowners’ association authority and the potential concentration of such facilities within neighborhoods.

Attorney Holt stated that the legislation was new and that there was currently no case law or Attorney General opinions providing additional guidance. She said that the law appeared to preempt certain aspects of local control and that the approval process would be administrative and expedited. Attorney Holt stated that there was no clear guidance regarding homeowners’ association authority under Chapter 720, Florida Statutes, and noted that those issues may be addressed through future litigation. She further stated that the statute did not provide a specific occupancy limit, and that factors such as square footage and number of bedrooms would be considered as fire code requirements could apply depending on the nature of the facility.

Vice Mayor Grenier asked for comments from the Council.

Council Member Price thanked Mr. Santoro for his research and asked what level of control the City would retain regarding location, number of units, and number of residents. Attorney Holt stated that adoption of the ordinance was mandated by the State and that the City’s role was limited to implementing minimum requirements, with properties remaining subject to applicable codes. She further stated that failure to adopt the ordinance could expose the City to potential liability if an application were submitted without an established process.

Council Member Gamble stated that based on the information presented, the City’s authority appeared limited and referenced legislative history indicating that such facilities were typically approved for a small number of residents depending on the size of the dwelling. He asked whether a church could operate such a facility. Attorney Holt

stated that such uses would still be subject to the City's land development regulations and would not typically qualify as a residential or converted housing type.

Vice Mayor Grenier expressed concern regarding the legislation and its impact on local control and stated that he supported moving forward with adoption in order to remain compliant with State requirements. He asked whether the ordinance could be revisited in the future, and stated it reflected a shift of control from local governments to the state.

Attorney Holt recommended proceeding with adoption and reiterated that Council could remove the phrase "or is actively seeking certification" from Section 2(1)(b). She stated that staff would continue to monitor legislative changes and could bring back revisions or schedule a workshop if needed.

MOTION

Doug Keown moved to approve Ordinance 2026-01 with the removal of the language "or is actively seeking certification" from Section 2(1)(b), seconded by Walter Price.

Council Member Gamble stated that he would support the motion as the City had limited discretion in the matter and noted concern regarding the potential impact on 55 and older communities.

Attorney Holt stated that additional clarity on those issues may emerge through future litigation or guidance and that staff would continue to monitor developments.

The motion carried unanimously 4-0.

X. GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Tab 4. Award Invitation to Bid Number (ITB) 2025-006 for N. St. Clair Abrams Treatment Pond (Eagle Park) to Second Lowest Responsive Bidder

Ms. Houghton made the following presentation:

At the July 19th, 2023, City Council meeting, the City Council approved the acceptance of a Lake County Water Authority (LCWA) Stormwater grant of \$376,955 to design and build a new wet detention stormwater treatment pond on North St. Clair Abrams. At the December 6th, 2023, City Council meeting, the Council approved the acceptance of a State of Florida Direct Appropriation/Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) LPA grant for the same project for \$200,000. A second Florida Department of Environmental Protection grant for the same project, amounting to \$176,955, was accepted at the March 20, 2024, City Council meeting. This brought the total grant funding for the project to \$753,910.

On March 16, 2025, the City of Tavares advertised an Invitation to Bid (ITB) 2025-0006 for the St. Clair Abrams Treatment Pond Project. Eight (8) companies responded to ITB 2025-0006, with Valencia Construction Group being the lowest responsive bidder at \$784,790.66. Don Griffey of Griffey Engineering, the engineer for the project, had reviewed all bid respondent proposals for ITB 2025-0006, and recommended awarding a contract to Valencia Construction Group for the project. At the April 16, 2025, City Council meeting, the City Council approved awarding the contract for the project to Valencia Construction Group, and authorized staff to amend the budget to use \$30,880.66 from Stormwater reserves to cover the difference between the total grand funding (\$753,910) and Valencia Construction Group's bid (\$784,790.66).

At the 8/20/2025 City Council meeting, the City Council authorized staff to amend the grant agreements to extend the length of the agreements due to an active eagle nest nearby, which caused permitting and construction delays. Due to the delays, Valencia Construction Group has withdrawn from the project. Staff (and Don Griffey) recommend that the City Council award the second-lowest bidder, Close Construction Services, with the contract for this project.

Staff has contacted Close Construction Services, and they have agreed to honor their original bid of \$984,116.56. To award the bid to Close Construction Services, staff recommends authorizing the use of Water/Wastewater Fund reserves to cover the difference between the original bid and the new award, which is \$230,206.56.

Staff recommends Option 1, for the Council to move to award Invitation to Bid (ITB) 2025-0006 to Close Construction Services and execute the construction contract, and authorize a budget amendment from Water/Wastewater fund reserves in the amount of \$230,206.56.

Vice Mayor Grenier asked if there were any questions from the Council.

Council Member Keown stated that he had considered whether rebidding the project would be beneficial, although he believed that current economic conditions, including fuel costs, would likely result in higher pricing and place the City at a disadvantage.

Vice Mayor Grenier commented on the availability of Water and Wastewater reserves and noted that those funds provided the City with the ability to move forward with projects of this nature.

Council Member Gamble asked how soon the project would begin.

Mr. Dykes stated that construction was anticipated to begin around May 15, following the eagle nesting period. He added that the City was awaiting final permits from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and noted that Project Engineer Don Griffey expected to receive those permits prior to that time.

MOTION

Doug Keown moved to approve the second lowest bidder, seconded by Sandy Gamble. The motion carried unanimously 4-0.

Tab 5. Charter Referendum Ballot Language on City Council Terms

Mr. Drury stated that at the previous meeting, the Council had directed the City Attorney to draft ballot language for a proposed City Charter Amendment by referendum to establish four-year terms for City Council members. He directed the Council's attention to the proposed ballot language and clarified that the Council was voting only on the language, not the ordinance itself. He stated that if approved, the ordinance would be brought back at the next meeting for first reading and at a subsequent meeting for second reading and adoption.

Mr. Drury read the proposed ballot language and stated that the amendment would extend Council member terms from two years to four years and align municipal elections with statewide election cycles, with transitional provisions to establish staggered terms. He noted that one of the primary reasons previously discussed by the Council was the potential cost savings associated with eliminating off-year elections.

Vice Mayor Grenier asked for comments from the Council.

Council Member Price stated that, in addition to cost savings and alignment with other municipalities, a public education effort should highlight the increase in voter participation during statewide election cycles. He noted that off-year elections may draw significantly fewer voters compared to general election cycles, resulting in broader community participation under the proposed change. Mr. Drury stated that staff would include that information as part of the public education effort.

Vice Mayor Grenier asked for clarification on the action before the Council. Mr. Drury reiterated that the Council was voting on the ballot language and an ordinance would come before the Council for two readings, formal adoption, and placement on the ballot.

Council Member Keown stated that he supported the proposal and noted that staggered terms and alignment with general elections would provide greater voter participation and continuity.

Council Member Gamble stated that he supported the proposed language.

MOTION

Walter Price moved to approve the referendum ballot language, seconded by Doug Keown. The motion carried unanimously 4-0.

XI. NEW BUSINESS

XII. OLD BUSINESS

XIII. AUDIENCE TO BE HEARD

John McCoy – 2730 Vindale Rd, Imperial Terrace East, Tavares, addressed the Council and expressed appreciation for the recent roadway resurfacing completed within his community, noting that residents were pleased with the improvements. He stated that there were ongoing concerns regarding speeding within the park, particularly from vehicles cutting through the area, including delivery services and school buses. Mr. McCoy requested consideration of traffic-calming measures, including the installation of speed bumps, and noted that residents along Vindale Road were generally supportive of them. He referenced a recent incident in which a dog was struck and emphasized the need to improve safety in the neighborhood. Mr. McCoy asked for guidance on how to proceed with the request.

Mr. Drury thanked Mr. McCoy for his comments and for bringing the matter to the City's attention. He asked Mr. McCoy to leave his email address with the City Clerk and said he would follow up with additional information.

XIV. REPORTS

Tab 6. City Administrator Report

Mr. Drury reported on the ongoing waterfront project being completed under the direction of Mr. Tweedie, which included new parking, sidewalks, and stormwater improvements. He stated that the project was enhancing connectivity along the waterfront, including connections to the ecological park, local businesses, hotels, and the seaplane base, and noted that the improvements had been well received by the community.

Mr. Drury also announced that Chief Coursey had recently been elected as President of the Central Florida Police Chiefs Association. He congratulated Chief Coursey and stated that she was highly respected within the profession.

Public Works Director James Dillon provided an update on the West Main Street gateway sign and stated that the structure had recently received its first coat of paint. He noted that installation was anticipated toward the end of April.

Members of the Council and staff offered congratulations to Chief Coursey on her appointment.

Tab 7. City Council Member Reports

Council Member Gamble stated that activities throughout the City were progressing well and that he looked forward to the installation of the West Main Street gateway sign. He expressed appreciation for staff resolving a water-related issue on the west end of the

City and noted that there were many positive developments occurring throughout Tavares, including additional parking availability. Council Member Gamble also asked about the use of asphalt along the waterfront area between the railroad tracks and the park and whether signage prohibiting motorized vehicles should be considered.

Mr. Drury stated that asphalt had been utilized in certain areas near the marina, and Mr. Tweedie added that the area was designed to be navigable by vehicles where appropriate.

Council Member Gamble asked about the status of the Citizens Police Academy. Chief Coursey stated that the program was currently in its third week.

Council Member Keown stated that he had recently attended a Citizens Police Academy session and noted that it was progressing well. He stated that approximately twenty-two participants were enrolled and that the program was providing valuable insight into Police Department operations. Council Member Keown announced that he would hold office hours on March 22 from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. in Conference Room 1 to meet with residents and discuss concerns. He also noted that the Chamber of Commerce's Taste of Tavares event was upcoming and stated that ticket sales had increased compared to the prior year.

Council Member Price congratulated Chief Coursey and commended the Utilities Department for their response to a recent water main break in a neighborhood. He stated that crews worked late into the evening and provided door-to-door notification to residents, including boil water notices, and noted their dedication to the community. Council Member Price also said the recent Planes, Tunes, and BBQ event was a great event.

Vice Mayor Grenier stated that recent events in the City continued to reflect positively on the community. He commented on the return of vintage boats and on the event's success. Vice Mayor Grenier thanked Mr. Tweedie for his efforts in coordinating events and enhancing the City's event offerings, and noted that these events attracted visitors to extended stays. He expressed appreciation for City staff and stated that Tavares was a great place to live, work, and visit.

XV. ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business, and Vice Mayor Grenier adjourned the meeting at 4:43 p.m.

Respectfully,

Susie Novack, MMC, FCRM
City Clerk

**AGENDA SUMMARY
TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
4/1/2026**

AGENDA TAB NO.: 6

SUBJECT TITLE: Resolution 2026-08 - Special Use Permit for a Laundromat at 1248 Wells Avenue (Community Development)

OBJECTIVE:

To consider a petition for a Special Use Permit for a laundromat proposed to be located at 1248 Wells Avenue (The abandoned Gas Station off SR 19).

SUMMARY:

An application for a Special Use Permit has been submitted to allow the operation of a laundromat at 1248 Wells Avenue. The subject property is located on the west side of Wells Avenue at the north corner intersection with South Duncan Drive. The building on the site was most recently occupied by a convenience store with gas & fuel sales. The property is located within the Mixed Use (MU) zoning district, where a laundromat is permitted only upon approval of a Special Use Permit by the City Council.

Accordingly, the applicant has included a Special Use Site Plan that has a list of conditions of approval for construction. Please note that the existing fuel tanks and canopy are scheduled to be removed. The Special Use Site Plan is attached for your review and consideration.

The subject property is contiguous to a commercial (C-1) zoned development (Dora Canal Plaza) to the north and is surrounded by a mix of Planned Development (PD) commercial uses and Residential Multi-Family (RMF-3) zoning. Based on the surrounding land uses and zoning patterns in the area, staff finds that the proposed laundromat is a compatible and appropriate use for the property.

OPTIONS:

1. That the City Council moves to approve Resolution 2026-08.
2. That the City Council moves to deny Resolution 2026-08.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

On March 19, 2026, the Planning & Zoning Board met and voted unanimously (6-0) to recommend approval of Resolution 2026-08 as presented.

Staff recommends that the City Council moves to approve Resolution 2026-08.

FISCAL IMPACT:

N/A

LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

The resolution has been reviewed by the City Attorney and approved for legal sufficiency.

ATTACHMENTS AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC UPON REQUEST:

1. Resolution 2026-08
2. Location Map
3. Aerial Map
4. SUP Site Plan
5. Newspaper Ad

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

**AGENDA SUMMARY
TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
4/1/2026**

AGENDA TAB NO.: 7

SUBJECT TITLE: Ordinance 2026-03 - Charter Amendment Referendum for Four-Year Terms for City Council Members (City Administrator)

OBJECTIVE:

To consider approval of an ordinance proposing a Charter amendment to extend City Council member terms from two (2) years to four (4) years, establish staggered terms, and align municipal elections with statewide general election cycles, subject to voter approval by referendum.

SUMMARY:

The proposed ordinance amends Sections 3.03 and 10.04 of the City Charter to provide for four-year terms for City Council members and to align municipal elections with statewide general elections held in even-numbered years, which will significantly reduce election costs. Currently, City Council Members serve two-year terms.

The ordinance includes transitional provisions to establish staggered terms. Council Seats One (1), Three (3), and Five (5) elected in November 2026 would serve four-year terms, while Seats Two (2) and Four (4), elected in November 2025, would serve three-year transitional terms. Beginning in November 2028, all Council members would serve four-year terms, with elections continuing every two years.

Pursuant to Section 166.031, Florida Statutes, the proposed Charter amendment must be approved by the electors of the City through a referendum. The ordinance provides the ballot title and question for placement on the next available municipal election ballot.

OPTIONS:

1. Approve Ordinance 2026-03.
2. Do not approve Ordinance 2026-03.
3. Provide direction to staff for revisions.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Option 1, for the Council to approve Ordinance 2026-03.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The estimated one-time cost to place the referendum on the ballot is \$14,000 (ballot pages, postage,

advertising and translation services). This is off-set in the long run because of the estimated election expense savings of \$35,000 every other year if this passes.

LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

Yes.

ATTACHMENTS AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC UPON REQUEST:

1. ORDINANCE 2026-03 - Ballot Referendum Four Year Term

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

ORDINANCE 2026-__

AN ORDINANCE PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO THE CHARTER OF THE CITY OF TAVARES, FLORIDA; AMENDING SECTION 3.03 OF THE CHARTER PERTAINING TO TERMS OF OFFICE OF CITY COUNCILMEMBERS; AMENDING SECTION 10.04 OF THE CHARTER PERTAINING TO MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS; PROVIDING FOR FOUR (4) YEAR TERMS OF OFFICE FOR CITY COUNCILMEMBERS; PROVIDING THAT MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS SHALL BE HELD EVERY TWO (2) YEARS IN EVEN-NUMBERED YEARS CONSISTENT WITH STATEWIDE GENERAL ELECTION CYCLES; PROVIDING TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS ESTABLISHING STAGGERED TERMS; PROVIDING FOR A REFERENDUM; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, the City of Tavares operates pursuant to its municipal charter adopted under the laws of the State of Florida; and

WHEREAS, the Charter currently provides that members of the City Council are elected at large by the electors of the City and serve terms of two (2) years; and

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that extending the term of office for councilmembers to four (4) years will promote continuity in governance, enhance stability in municipal policymaking, and permit the effective implementation of long-term municipal initiatives; and

WHEREAS, the City Council further finds that aligning municipal elections with statewide general election cycles occurring every two (2) years in even-numbered years will improve voter participation and administrative efficiency; and

WHEREAS, Section 166.031, Florida Statutes, authorizes the governing body of a municipality to propose amendments to its charter for approval by the electors of the municipality; and

WHEREAS, the City Council desires to submit to the electors of the City of Tavares a proposed amendment to the Charter to extend councilmember terms to four (4) years and establish staggered terms so that municipal elections will continue to occur every two (2) years.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TAVARES, FLORIDA:

SECTION 1. AMENDMENT TO SECTION 3.03 OF THE CITY CHARTER.

Section 3.03 of the Charter of the City of Tavares, Florida, is hereby amended to read as follows:

Section 3.03. Election and terms.

Terms for newly elected councilmembers shall commence at the first regular meeting following the general municipal election. The members of the city council shall hold their office for the term of ~~two (2)~~ four (4) years or until their successors are elected and qualified, except as otherwise provided in the transitional provisions of this Charter amendment.

SECTION 2. AMENDMENT TO SECTION 10.04 OF THE CITY CHARTER.

Section 10.04(a) of the Charter of the City of Tavares, Florida, is hereby amended to read as follows:

Section 10.04. Elections.

(a) *General election.* A general election shall be held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November of each even-numbered year to choose successors to each councilmember whose term will expire before the next general election and, except as otherwise provided in the city Charter, to fill each vacancy in elective office for the unexpired portion of the term.

(b) *Council positions.* For each council seat that is up for election, the candidate who receives the highest number of votes cast for the office shall be declared elected.

SECTION 3. TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS

In order to establish staggered four-year terms while maintaining municipal elections every two (2) years:

1. Council Seats One (1), Three (3), and Five (5) elected at the November 2026 municipal election shall serve four (4) year terms expiring in November 2030.
2. Council Seats Two (2) and Four (4) elected at the November 2025 municipal election shall serve three (3) year transitional terms expiring in November 2028.
3. Beginning with the elections held in November 2028, and thereafter, councilmembers elected to all seats shall serve four (4) year terms.
4. Following completion of the transitional terms, municipal elections shall continue to occur every two (2) years in even-numbered years, alternating between presidential and gubernatorial election cycles.

SECTION 4. REFERENDUM

Pursuant to Section 166.031, Florida Statutes, the Charter amendments proposed by this ordinance shall be submitted to the electors of the City of Tavares for approval at the next available municipal election.

The ballot title and question shall read substantially as follows:

CHARTER AMENDMENT REFERENDUM

FOUR-YEAR TERMS FOR TAVARES CITY COUNCIL

Shall the City of Tavares Charter be amended to extend City Councilmember terms from two (2) years to four (4) years and align municipal elections with statewide election cycles occurring every two (2) years, with transitional terms to establish staggered four-year council terms?

- YES FOR APPROVAL
- NO FOR DISAPPROVAL

SECTION 5. SEVERABILITY

If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, or provision of this ordinance is held invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, such invalidity shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this ordinance.

SECTION 5. EFFECTIVE DATE OF ORDINANCE

If approved by a majority of the electors voting on the measure, the Charter amendments set forth herein shall become effective immediately upon certification of the election results.

PASSED AND ORDAINED this __ day of _____, 2026, by the City Council of the City of Tavares, Florida.

Lori A. Pfister, Mayor
Tavares City Council

Passed First Reading _____, 2026

Passed Second Reading _____, 2026

ATTEST:

Susie Novack, City Clerk

Approved as to form and legality

Lindsay Holt, City Attorney

**AGENDA SUMMARY
TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
4/1/2026**

AGENDA TAB NO.: 8

SUBJECT TITLE: 2026 America in Bloom Discussion (Public Works)

OBJECTIVE:

To identify which City Council members will be attending the annual America In Bloom National Awards Program.

SUMMARY:

This spring, the America in Bloom evaluation team will conduct a comprehensive assessment of the City of Tavares. Any subsequent awards or recognitions resulting from this year's evaluation will be announced during the annual National Symposium. The National Symposium provides a platform for educational sessions, informative tours, and an opportunity for community leaders to connect and exchange ideas aimed at fostering improvement and collaboration. The 2026 symposium is scheduled to take place in Washington, D.C., hosted by Alexandria, Virginia, from September 24th to September 26th. The total cost for registration, airfare, and accommodation equates to \$1,715 per attendee. It has been customary to send staff and Council members to attend this important event.

OPTIONS:

Option 1: Identify which Council members will attend.
Option 2: Do not attend.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Option 1: Identify which Council members will attend.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There are funds budgeted in the current budget to accommodate up to three attendees this year.

LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

Legally Sufficient

ATTACHMENTS AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC UPON REQUEST:

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

**AGENDA SUMMARY
TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
4/1/2026**

AGENDA TAB NO.: 9

SUBJECT TITLE: SECO Energy - Utility Easements at Golden Triangle Regional Park West Campus (Community Services)

OBJECTIVE:

To approve an easement agreement between the City of Tavares and SECO Energy granting twenty-foot (20') easements on City-owned property located at the Golden Triangle Regional Park West Campus, currently known as the Woodlea Sports Complex.

SUMMARY:

SECO Energy is requesting twenty-foot (20') easements on City-owned property located at the Golden Triangle Regional Park West Campus, currently known as the Woodlea Sports Complex. The first easement will run north / south for an approximate distance of seven hundred fifty feet (750'), just west of the water treatment plant access road to the new maintenance barn. The second easement will run for approximately six hundred thirty feet (630') just on the east side of the road to the electrical box and fenced in electrical building. The easements shall grant SECO the privilege to construct, operate, and maintain underground electric transmission and distribution lines, and communication systems and all associated equipment necessary to serve future growth at the park. This easement request has been reviewed by City staff with no objections.

OPTIONS:

1. City Council moves to approve the easement agreement between the City of Tavares and SECO Energy granting twenty-foot (20') easements on City-owned property located at the Golden Triangle Regional Park West Campus, currently known as the Woodlea Sports Complex.
2. Do not approve the easement agreement.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends option 1.

FISCAL IMPACT:

N/A

LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

The easement agreement has been reviewed by the City Attorney and approved for legal sufficiency.

ATTACHMENTS AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC UPON REQUEST:

1. SECO Easement SoD 1

2. SECO Easement SoD 2
3. SECO Utility Easement SoD 1 (FULL AGREEMENT)
4. SECO Utility Easement SoD 2 (FULL AGREEMENT)

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

**AGENDA SUMMARY
TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
4/1/2026**

AGENDA TAB NO.: 10

SUBJECT TITLE: City Administrator Report

OBJECTIVE:

The City Administrator will inform the City Council on city-related matters.

SUMMARY:

The City Administrator will provide a summary at the meeting.

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

| | |
|---|--|
| City Council Meeting | April 15, 2026, 4:00 p.m., Tavares City Council Chambers |
| Planning and Zoning Board Meeting | April 16, 2026, 3:00 p.m., Tavares City Council Chambers |
| Library Board Meeting | May 13, 2026, 4:00 p.m., Tavares Library Expansion Room |
| Code Enforcement Special Magistrate Hearing | April 28, 4:00 p.m., Tavares City Council Chambers |

OUTSIDE AGENCY MEETINGS:

| | |
|--|---|
| Heartland League of Cities Meeting | April 10, 2026, 12:00 noon, Location to be Determined |
| Lake Sumter MPO Governing Board Meeting | April 22, 2026, 2:00 p.m., Suite 175, 1300 Citizens Boulevard, Leesburg |
| Tavares Chamber of Commerce Business Meeting | April 22, 2026, 11:30 a.m., Tavares Civic Center |

Attached is the current 2026 Event Calendar.

OPTIONS:

N/A

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

N/A

FISCAL IMPACT:

N/A

LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

N/A

ATTACHMENTS AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC UPON REQUEST:

1. Tavares_EventCalendar_2026_Rvsd 3.24.2026

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

**AGENDA SUMMARY
TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
4/1/2026**

AGENDA TAB NO.: 11

SUBJECT TITLE: City Council Member Reports

OBJECTIVE:

To inform the Council on city-related items.

SUMMARY:

The Council will be offered an opportunity to provide a report at the meeting.

OPTIONS:

N/A

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

N/A

FISCAL IMPACT:

N/A

LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

N/A

ATTACHMENTS AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC UPON REQUEST:

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