A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

FEBRUARY 24, 2026

The Lake County Board of County Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, February 24, 2026, at 9:00 a.m., in the County Commission Chambers, Lake County Administration Building, Tavares, Florida. Commissioners present at the meeting were: Leslie Campione, Chairman; Sean Parks, Vice Chairman; Anthony Sabatini; Kirby Smith; and Timothy Morris. Others present were: Jennifer Barker, County Manager; Melanie Marsh, County Attorney; Misty Spahn, Executive Office Manager, County Manager's Office; Kristy Mullane, Chief Financial Officer; and Josh Pearson, Deputy Clerk.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE

Commr. Campione welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Rabbi Jeffery Solomon, with Traditional Congregation of Mount Dora, gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA UPDATE

Ms. Jennifer Barker, County Manager, requested to pull Tab 24, which was a presentation on the Lake County Historical Museum, noting that they would like to have this meeting at a later date. She then commented that Chief David Kilbury, Public Safety Director, was present to provide an update on the current drought conditions.

DROUGHT CONDITIONS UPDATE

Chief Kilbury said that he had information published by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS), and that the State looked at several items to make the determination of drought. He pointed out that the drought index was the amount of p recipitation in the duff layer, and that it looked at the moisture content. He relayed that the State published information by county and that Lake County was currently at an average of 453, noting that less than 25 percent of the County was over 500, which was their current threshold for the burn ban. He said that the surrounding counties to the east were slightly damper and about 50 points less, though 90 percent of Marion County was currently above 500. He commented that 19 percent of Polk County was above 500 and that 40 percent was above 600, and that Osceola County was at the precipice and had decided to enact a burn ban. He stated that Lake County's burn ban currently would go into effect at 500 and would expire once it was below 500 for more than five days. He said that Lake County was currently in a moderate state for fire danger according to the State's maps, and that the drought index did not discuss the fuel load. He elaborated that they had much fuel load from the recent freeze, though it was not the catastrophic fuel load one might see in a hurricane. He said that they were entering into the drier months, and that this was just a tool to predict how they could handle their fire response and a burn ban. He explained that this was a tool to prevent open burning, and reiterated that they were not currently in extreme fire conditions. He mentioned that they had a response posture policy which mimicked the Board's ordinance and which was based on the State of Florida Keetch-Byram Drought Index (KBDI), noting that this came out daily. He commented that they were currently in a brush response one (BR1), which sent a single engine, and that this went up to four. He explained that the dispatch center and

morning briefing started monitoring when they were above 450, and that the Deputy Chief had the ability to request additional resources based on weather conditions. He related that the State had moved in additional resources because of the freeze, and that they had the resources and the flexibility, though reiterated that according to the data, they had not reached the threshold of extreme fire conditions. He clarified that there was nothing wrong with additional precautions, and that another tool was social media where they could offer tips and advise residents. He said that they went up three points from the previous day, and predicted that they would be around the high 450s by the end of the current day.

Commr. Campione expressed concerns for their proximity to Marion County and the dryness there, and she mentioned the dry material and windy conditions. She said that she had many people ask her why they did not have a burn ban, and she stated that there was a State of Florida state of emergency in effect. She opined that the County needed to revisit the way its ordinance was written, and said that she would feel more comfortable if they instituted a burn ban. She commented that it would inconvenience some people who wanted to burn, though she opined that they could be in a costly situation. She added that she would favor the County enacting its own state of emergency to put that burn ban in effect.

Chief Kilbury relayed that he would support the Board's effort, opining that there was nothing wrong with a preventative effort.

Commr. Smith asked if it was Chief Kilbury's professional opinion that they should enact a burn ban.

Chief Kilbury replied that looking at the State's data, the county was not at the threshold of the drought index; however, there was a significant fuel load. He opined that they did not need to enact a burn ban at the current time based on the available data, though he would be open to the Board's decision.

Commr. Morris asked if they were moving equipment around regardless.

Chief Kilbury confirmed this.

Commr. Morris relayed his understanding that if they thought that there was possibly going to be a brushfire toward Altoona or Astor, then they would have a unit ready to go.

Chief Kilbury said that this was correct, and that the State had brought additional resources, though more of this was south of State Road (SR) 60. He clarified that there were resources available to manage this; however, Lake County had not reached the threshold of extreme fire conditions. He clarified that this was not to say that a burn ban would prevent all fires; rather, it would just prevent open burning. He opined that it could be caused by items such as a cigarette thrown out a window, motocross, and other items in those areas, and that it would typically be a spark, a weld, someone not being cognizant of their environment when they burned, or unattended open burning.

Commr. Campione asked how many fires they had in the last month.

Chief Kilbury replied that there were three on the previous day that crews were able to extinguish quickly, and that they were in a ready posture. He added that they had many resources available, and that they had the option of upstaffing tankers and brush trucks.

Commr. Campione opined that there was value to everyone coming to the table with their own concerns, and that a burn ban added protection. She indicated that she favored it, and opined that it was prudent to do. She expressed interest in being safe and taking into account the fuel load and the proximity of other counties that were in the extreme index. She then asked if there was any chance that the State would change how they did this.

Chief Kilbury replied that they continually improved this, and that they were using state of the art satellite technology to review moisture content. He added that there were meteorologists in the state who reviewed this daily.

Commr. Campione inquired why the fuel side was not built into this.

Chief Kilbury explained that it was the moisture content and the rate of ignition of the dead fuel, noting that some of it had moisture and that it would rebound in the spring. He clarified that it was not the dangerous fuel load like downed limbs and trees, and that it was currently considered to be light fuel. He said that they were trying to legislate human behavior to prevent a wildfire, and that with regards to the current conditions of the drought index and the mapping of the fire danger, Lake County had not reached a high threshold of wildfire.

Commr. Smith relayed that he liked to manage by facts, and he assumed that the State had enacted an emergency response for the southern half of the state because they had a high fire danger. He indicated that he would put much weight on Chief Kilbury's professional opinion.

Commr. Parks said that he valued Chief Kilbury's professional experience, and that he heard about an artificial intelligence (AI) based system in Travis County, Texas which people had commented positively about regarding its accuracy in predicting where fires would occur. He asked if Chief Kilbury could look into something like this, noting that he could possibly give the Board reports which broke out certain areas, and that there could potentially be a burn ban in that particular micro area based off data.

Chief Kilbury relayed that the State's numbers were similar to what was being described, and that less than 25 percent of Lake County was currently over the 500 threshold. He indicated that they would like to have this for forecasting, and that they would encourage this.

Commr. Campione opined that this was interesting, especially if the County was looking at changing the ordinance and if they had the technology to support having specified areas within the county with burn bans.

Chief Kilbury clarified that he could not say with confidence where the 22 percent of the county was above 500, though 75 percent of the county was below this threshold; however, this was not to say that they could not have a significant fire.

Commr. Smith asked if Cities could enact their own burn ban.

Chief Kilbury confirmed this and said that the Cities of Groveland and Clermont did not allow open burning, though relayed his understanding that they had enacted a burn ban.

Commr. Smith inquired if the Cities that allowed open burning stopped this because of the conditions.

Chief Kilbury replied that he was not aware of this.

Commr. Campione relayed that most of her district, Commission District 4, was a forest, and that they did not have cities in those areas.

Commr. Morris asked about changing an ordinance, opining that they currently had an ordinance which was working.

Commr. Campione clarified that she was not bringing forward an ordinance change; rather, she opined that they should consider an ordinance change. She mentioned that she had brought a possibility of a state of emergency so that they could do a burn ban currently.

Commr. Morris opined that the State was correct.

Commr. Campione said that the State had enacted a state of emergency.

Commr. Morris clarified that this was not in Lake County, and opined that they had the statistics to say that they did not need a burn ban.

Commr. Campione indicated that she would prefer a burn ban knowing that 22 percent of the county was over the index. She opined that the key was providing information, though what she was receiving back from people was them questioning why the county did not have a burn ban.

Commr. Sabatini inquired how long they were discussing doing a ban for.

Ms. Melanie Marsh, County Attorney, explained that if they chose to add this item to the agenda, it would be a local state of emergency, and that by statute it could not be longer than seven days. She elaborated that this draft would allow the Chairman to renew it at the end of seven days or terminate it early based on the recommendation of Chief Kilbury and the County Manager if it was no longer needed.

Commr. Sabatini indicated that he was agreeable with seven days, noting that 22 percent of the county was in that sector. He clarified that he would oppose this if there was an aggrieved party who would be affected in a serious way, though he did not have knowledge of someone who would be adversely affected by a burn ban.

Ms. Marsh displayed the draft on the screen and explained that it would apply to all incorporated and unincorporated areas unless a municipality had issued a burn permit. She added that it would ban open burning including the following during this seven day period which could be extended: campfires; bonfires; unpermitted controlled burns; burning of yard and household trash; burning of new or old construction debris; burning of organic debris; and lighting of fireworks and sparklers. She said that the Board could change the applicability and the types of items it would prohibit.

Commr. Parks wondered if it was possible for Chief Kilbury to come back with some recommendations on localized areas in the following week, and if the County could potentially enact a burn ban in those areas only.

Chief Kilbury said that the State may have this availability, and relayed his understanding that they knew more than Lake County at the local level. He clarified that there was risk and that they were in wildfire season.

Commr. Campione opined that they could do this as a stopgap and then bring back something that would be a modification to the existing ordinance, such as what Commissioner

Parks had suggested. She opined that this would give them a period of time until the next meeting to see if they could get this language in place.

Commr. Parks confirmed his suggestion to wait a week.

Chief Kilbury stated that due to the concern of the Board, they would move to a BR2 response and send additional resources for anything until he reported back. He added that he would return with as much information as he could for the Board to make informed decisions.

Commr. Smith asked if Chief Kilbury would be able to explain their action items when there was potential for a fire.

Commr. Campione urged everyone to be careful and wait to burn.

Commr. Parks said that the County could do extra communication efforts.

Commr. Campione opined that they would receive questions of why there was not a burn ban.

MINUTES APPROVAL

On a motion by Commr. Sabatini, seconded by Commr. Smith and carried unanimously by a vote of 5-0, the Board approved the minutes for the BCC meetings of January 6, 2026 (Regular Meeting) and January 20, 2026 (Regular Meeting) as presented.

CITIZEN QUESTION AND COMMENT PERIOD

Commr. Campione remarked that anyone who had joined the meeting through Zoom may press *9 to virtually raise their hand, or click the raise hand button to identify that they wished to speak. She added that everyone would have three minutes to speak, and that after three minutes, an alarm would sound to let them know that their time was up.

Ms. Cindy Newton, a resident of Commission District 4, thanked Commissioner Parks for speaking at the Passion Flower Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society on February 14, 2026. She also opined that the Eco Expo went well on the previous Saturday, and that many had left better informed with positive views of some items occurring in Lake County; additionally, she thanked Commissioner Sabatini for attending.

Mr. Banks Helfrich, a farmer from the Clay Road District of South Lake, said that a farm tip of the day was to leave one’s plants and trees alone after the recent freezes and water them, along with clipping them above the new buds. He then relayed information about a pig farmer receiving a conditional use permit (CUP) from Lake County, noting that he had assisted her. He opined that he helped citizens get through the intricacies of government, and relayed that he was an advocate for South Lake and a candidate for State House of Representatives District 25.

Ms. Susan Fetter, a resident of the City of Leesburg and President of the Lake County Conservation Council, recalled that they had organized the Eco Expo, and opined that it was a great opportunity for citizens to learn about some of the great things happening there. She thanked the Board for their support, along with County staff who participated; furthermore, they had about 700 people onsite at the event.

Commr. Campione expressed appreciation for the event.

Mr. Manuel Mejie, a resident of the Shockley Heights area in the Ocala National Forest, requested clarification regarding an article published in the North Lake Outpost on February 19,

2026. He relayed that the Shockley Heights Community Club was in the process of evicting four elderly campers from their homes on the grounds that the campsite operated by the club was not zoned for being a campground. He relayed that the Office of Code Enforcement had informed them that the campsite was not supposed to be there, though opined that the location of the campsite in the Lake County Property Appraiser records was marked as a recreational vehicle (RV) campsite. He indicated his understanding that they were not supposed to be shutting down utilities as part of an eviction proceeding, and that the Office of Code Enforcement would visit to see if the individuals were gone. He inquired if the Office of Code Enforcement was aiding or saying that they could go outside Florida Statutes to carry out this eviction.

Ms. Marsh explained that there was an active code enforcement case against this property, and that the Office of Code Enforcement would issue a notice of violation, allowing the property owner a certain amount of time to cure or apply for proper permits. She clarified that the Office of Code Enforcement did not issue eviction notices or evict people, nor did they shut off utilities. She said that if eviction notices were issued by a property owner to tenants, then this was a separate process which went through the court system and was governed by other statutes. She relayed that if one did not come into compliance, then there would be a hearing held in front of a Code Enforcement Special Master, and if they found that there was a violation, they would issue an additional amount of time to come into compliance; furthermore, if one still did not comply at that point, the County had the option to file for an injunction with the circuit court. She stated that typically, the Board did not become involved in active cases because it was a quasi-judicial process handled by a Special Master, and that Mr. Mejie could reach out to the Office of Code Enforcement to receive more information.

Mr. Mejie commented that legal counsel had been contracted by some of the campers over this matter.

Ms. Marsh indicated that their legal counsel could contact her office, and that they could work through the legal counsel with their issues; additionally, staff would not talk with another party if they were represented by counsel.

Ms. Vicki Dewey, a resident speaking via Zoom, spoke in reference to her friend near Postal Colony Road, relaying her understanding that tract six had been split off in the 1920s and that her friend's property was the east half of tract six. She elaborated that the west half of tract six was owned by another individual. She explained that it was a dirt road which split off, and that they only had a small portion to enter their property, though it was currently being blocked off. She indicated her understanding that the Office of Code Enforcement was allowing an individual to block it with gates and fences, and opined that this had become a burden. She relayed that the warranty deed indicated that it was subject to easements, restrictions and reservations of record, and that a public record showed that it said "alleyways and roadways for public use." She said that Postal Colony Road was not County maintained, though opined that this should not affect this individual being able to put up a gate that her friend had to get out of her vehicle to unlock when it was not her property. She asked how to move forward with this.

Ms. Marsh asked for the individual's name, noting that she could talk with the Office of Code Enforcement and receive more information.

PROCLAMATION 2026-14 IRISH AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

On a motion by Commr. Sabatini, seconded by Commr. Morris and carried unanimously by a vote of 5-0, the Board approved Proclamation 2026-14 designating March 2026 as Irish American Heritage Month.

Commr. Campione read and presented Proclamation 2026-14 to Mr. Greg Seán Canning, Deputy Secretary for the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH).

Mr. Canning remarked that on behalf of the Irish American community in the State of Florida and the AOH, the oldest and largest Irish organization in the world, tracing their roots back to the 1500s, he expressed gratitude for their kind consideration in designating March 2026 as Irish American Heritage Month. He mentioned that St. Patrick's Day on March 17 was the largest celebration of a national day across the globe, and that throughout the cities of America and Canada, as well as Ireland, the United Kingdom, Germany, Norway, Denmark, Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, Japan, Nigeria, Granada, and the Caribbean Island of Monserrat, people would be celebrating this occasion and proclaiming themselves Irish for the day. He commented that this proclamation would coincide with festivities that were currently underway as Irish Americans once again gathered to celebrate their heritage throughout the State of Florida, and that during the month of March, Irish Floridians proudly reflected on the legacy of their Irish forebearers, who had contributed significantly in the areas of education, business, sports, literature, science, engineering, medicine, law enforcement, and the arts. He related that those were just some of the contributions that had been made not only by the Irish but by so many ethnic and racial groups who came to the United States (U.S.) from the four corners of the world and who had assisted in developing this great country. He stated that as current national AOH Deputy Secretary, the Florida State Secretary, past National Director of the Southern States, and past Florida State President of the AOH, he would like to acknowledge the honor the Commissioners had bestowed upon all Irish Americans living within this county and the great State of Florida, and he wished everyone a blessed St. Patrick's Day.

CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT AND COMPTROLLER'S CONSENT AGENDA

On a motion by Commr. Sabatini, seconded by Commr. Morris and carried unanimously by a vote of 5-0, the Board approved the Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller's Consent Agenda, Items 1 through 3, as follows:

List of Warrants

Notice is hereby provided of warrants paid prior to this meeting, pursuant to Chapter 136.06 (1) of the Florida Statutes, which shall be incorporated into the Minutes as attached Exhibit A and filed in the Board Support Division of the Clerk's Office.

City of Mount Dora Annexation Ordinance

Notice is hereby provided of having received Annexation Ordinance 2025-25 from the City of Mount Dora as required by Chapter 171.044(3) Florida Statutes with the accompanying map.

City of Umatilla Annexation Ordinance

Notice is hereby provided of having received Annexation Ordinance 2025-K and map of the Small-Scale Comprehensive Plan Amendment from the City of Umatilla as required by Chapter 171.091, Florida Statutes.

COUNTY MANAGER'S CONSENT AGENDA

Commr. Sabatini asked to pull Tabs 5 and 7 to the regular agenda.

Commr. Campione noted that she had a comment card for Tab 16.

On a motion by Commr. Morris, seconded by Commr. Sabatini and carried unanimously by a vote of 5-0, the Board approved the Consent Agenda, Tabs 4 through 21, pulling Tabs 5, 7 and 16 to the regular agenda, as follows:

COUNTY ATTORNEY

Recommend approval to remove an advisory committee member from the Sales Surtax Oversight Advisory Committee. There is no fiscal impact.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Management and Budget

Recommend approval for the Chairman to execute a letter to the Florida Department of Criminal Justice Bureau Chief Office of Criminal Justice Grants on behalf of the Lake County Sheriff's Office requesting the return of $35,423 JAGC funds related to Grant Award Number 6N169/Award Title C-6N169 Negotiation Team Training & Police Equipment.

There is no fiscal impact.

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Economic Development

Recommend approval to authorize the County Manager to execute payments for economic development incentive grants due under the applicable agreements to:

1. Encompass Health for the Economic Development Grant Incentive Program in the amount of $63,641.84;

2. Encompass Health for the Agreement for Waiver of Impact Fees in the amount of $45,089.32.

The fiscal impact is $108,731.16 (expenditure) and is within, and will not exceed, the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Fire Rescue

Recommend approval of a Perpetual Utility Easement to Sumter Electric Cooperative, Inc. (SECO), needed for electrical services at Fire Station 85, located at 17800 CR455, in Montverde (a/k/a Alternate Key 3938174).

There is no fiscal impact. Commission District 2.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Solid Waste

Recommend approval:

1. Of Contracts 25-918A with Aftermath Disaster Recovery, Inc. (Prosper, TX), 25-918B with Ceres Environmental Services, Inc. (Sarasota, FL), and 25-918C with Southern Disaster Recovery, LLC (Greer, SC) to provide on-call emergency debris removal services throughout the County; and

2. To authorize the Office of Procurement Services to execute all supporting documentation.

The fiscal impact (expenditure) cannot be determined at this time, as costs are incurred only during an emergency event.

Transit Services

Recommend approval:

1. Of the submittal of the 2027 Public Transit Block Grant application; and

2. Of the adoption of Resolution 2026-23 supporting the 2027 Public Transit Block Grant application.

The estimated fiscal impact is $2,072,054 — $1,036,027 (revenue/expenditure - grant funded) and $1,036,027 (expenditure - county match) and will be included in the Fiscal Year 2027 Budget request.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

Fleet Management

Recommend approval:

1. Of Contract 25-725I with Graham Automotive Supply, Inc. (Leesburg, FL) as an additional vendor to the pool for Fleet Parts Suppliers; and

2. To authorize the Office of Procurement Services to execute all supporting documentation.

The addition of a vendor to the vendor pool does not affect the estimated annual fiscal impact and will not exceed available funding in any Fiscal Year Budget.

Public Works

Recommend approval to proceed to closing on a deeded right-of-way dedication for Integra Wellness Way Apartments (DR-24035), which is in the City of Clermont, and authorization for the Chairman to execute any required closing documents.

The estimated fiscal impact is $800 (expenditure) and is within, and will not exceed, the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget. Commission District 1.

Recommend approval to proceed to closing on a deeded right-of-way and right-of-way easement dedication by plat for Griffin Preserve (DR-24031), which is in the City of Fruitland Park, and authorization for the Chairman to execute any required closing documents.

The estimated fiscal impact is $800 (expenditure) and is within, and will not exceed, the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget. Commission District 5.

Recommend approval to proceed to closing on a deeded right-of-way dedication for Huntington Oaks (DR-25026), which is in the City of Leesburg, and authorization for the Chairman to execute any required closing documents.

The estimated fiscal impact is $800 (expenditure) and is within, and will not exceed, the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget. Commission District 1.

Recommend approval of Resolution 2026-24 to reduce the speed limit from 45 MPH to 35 MPH on Number Two Road from CR 48 south to 1,850 feet east of Silverwood Lane.

The estimated fiscal impact is $800 (expenditure) and is within, and will not exceed, the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget. Commission District 3.

Recommend approval of Change Order #1 to the Old 441/CR 19A at Eudora Road Roundabout contract for the addition of a small roundabout at the intersection of Bay Road and Short Street along with a permanent traffic signal at the intersection of CR 19A and Triangle Drive.

The fiscal impact is $628,453.55 (expenditure) and is within, and will not exceed, the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget. Commission District 4.

Recommend approval:

1. To award the Sun Eden Water Quality Retrofits construction project (Contract 26-706) to Estep Construction Inc. for $938,625.

2. Of a budget transfer in the amount of $303,625 from the Lower Palatlakaha Basin project to the Lake Harris/Little Lake Harris Basin project.

The fiscal impact is $938,625 — $285,000 (revenue/expenditure - grant funded) and $653,625 (expenditure - county match). Commission District 3.

Recommend approval:

1. Of Resolution 2026-25 declaring the collapse of Empire Church Road as a qualifying event under Section 255.20(1)(c)1, Florida Statutes, which exempts the repair and reconstruction of the road from the competitive bidding requirements otherwise required;

2. To increase the emergency expenditure limits of Contracts 25-743A-C for on-call emergency infrastructure repair services from $250,000 to a not to exceed $3,000,000; and

3. To authorize the Office of Procurement Services to execute all supporting documentation.

The estimated fiscal impact is unknown at this time as expenditures are emergency event related. Most projects shall not exceed the FEMA acceptable funding limits per project. Expenditures will not exceed available funding in each fiscal year's budget.

PARKS AND WATER RESOURCES

Parks and Trails

Recommend approval:

1. To adopt Resolution 2026-26 authorizing the program manager of the Mosquito Management Division, Department of Parks and Water Resources, to execute any necessary grant agreements or required amendments or other documents associated with the receipt of state funding for the arthropod control program; providing that the program manager of the Mosquito Management Division, shall be Lake County's Authorized agent for this purpose only; and providing for an effective date.

2. To authorize the Chairman to submit a letter to the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) acknowledging the change of position for Brad Russ and recommending Justin Walker as the Mosquito Management Program Manager.

There is no fiscal impact.

TAB 5: WAIVER OF CONFLICT FOR GRAYROBINSON

Commr. Sabatini asked if this conflict was due to another attorney at the firm.

Ms. Marsh confirmed this. She said that Mr. Chris Carmody, with GrayRobinson, was their lobbyist, though he had not lobbied for any funding for Round Lake Road; therefore, staff did not see that there was a conflict with another part of the firm representing Pulte Home Company. She added that Pulte Home Company had apparently been a longtime client of GrayRobinson.

Commr. Sabatini said that he would be voting no on this item, opining that they had a major firm working for one of the largest homebuilding companies in the country which he did not trust . He opined that the County needed an independent firm which did not have profit sharing agreements with companies that were possibly conflicted.

Commr. Parks mentioned that some Counties had their own lobbyists on staff because of this issue.

Commr. Campione expressed concerns for when someone argued for one thing and then they argued for another item, opining that it did not feel right.

Commr. Smith asked if GrayRobinson was on a three year contract and if the County was on their last year.

Ms. Barker confirmed this, and said that they would be going out to bid in the current year.

Commr. Smith relayed that the County had done this in the past, and that there were some opportunities coming up in the future to correct it; however, he did not think there was any reason to slow down the process on the current day for this request, opining that they could address this later.

Commr. Campione inquired if the Round Lake Road project from south of Wolf Branch Road to north of SR 44 meant that there was a project that Pulte was working on in that location.

Ms. Marsh assumed that Pulte was likely under contract and had not purchased the property yet, noting that the Public Works Department had been working with some large acreage property owners there to acquire the right of way needed for that road expansion. She was unsure if Pulte was one of those or if they were under contract.

Commr. Campione asked what would happen if the Board did not approve this item.

Ms. Marsh replied that Pulte would retain eminent domain counsel through another law firm.

On a motion by Commr. Smith, seconded by Commr. Morris and carried by a vote of 3-2, the Board approved a waiver of conflict for GrayRobinson regarding its representation of the Pulte Home Company with respect to the Round Lake Road project from South of Wolf Branch Road to North of S.R. 44.

Commr. Campione and Commr. Sabatini voted no.

TAB 7: LIABILITY CLAIM SETTLEMENT

Commr. Sabatini said that he trusted staff to tell the Board when it was worth settling these cases, though he did not have the chance to discuss the specifics of this item. He opined that it was a slightly higher settlement, and said that he wanted to receive a few notes regarding why the liability looked clear.

Ms. Barker explained that this was related to a motor vehicle accident involving one of their firetrucks which hit a gas station's pumps; therefore, this item was to settle the claim with the gas station property owner for the damages.

On a motion by Commr. Sabatini, seconded by Commr. Parks and carried unanimously by a vote of 5-0, the Board approved a Liability Claim Settlement for a motor vehicle accident on May 20, 2025.

TAB 16: PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY AND EASEMENT DEEDS

Commr. Campione relayed that a comment card for item referenced a Britt Road update.

Mr. Jeff Earhart, Engineering and Operations Director for the Public Works Department, clarified that one of the properties being accepted was on Britt Road.

The Chairman opened the floor for public comment.

Ms. Newton opined that there was much discussion online with much information, and she asked if there would be enough right of way to the south end of the damage to then align the road.

Commr. Campione confirmed this, and added that they were close to having the State sign off on the bidding process, which would hopefully take around 30 days. She said that they would start thereafter, and that the County would ensure that this information was sent to the public.

There being no one else who wished to address the Board regarding this matter, the Chairman closed the floor for public comment.

On a motion by Commr. Smith, seconded by Commr. Sabatini and carried unanimously by a vote of 5-0, the Board approved to accept public Right of Way and Easement Deeds that have been secured in conjunction with development, roadway, and stormwater projects.

PRESENTATION OF 2026 ECONOMIC FORECAST

Mr. Neil Hamilton, Vice President for Research and Strategy with the Orlando Economic Partnership (OEP), displayed information for the national outlook and said that they were waiting on some data due to the Federal Government shutdown in October and November 2025. He relayed that the U.S. economy slowed in 2025 and that they came out at 2.2 percent economic growth from 2.8 percent. He reviewed national economic factors, and said that the optimistic forecast was that they could rebound in 2026 due to inflation decreasing and positive tax changes for the consumer and business, along with investment in AI and likely some interest rate reductions. He mentioned that the pessimistic perspective said that the consumer was tired and that they needed to be careful. He opined that people continued to spend even when there was uncertainty and volatility. He relayed that the Wells Fargo forecast was a 2.7 percent change in gross domestic product (GDP), and he opined that they would be fine. He then displayed information for the state outlook and said that they outperformed the nation through 2025, noting that the labor market softened in the second half of 2025. He relayed that the forecast for the State was that it would continue to outperform the U.S., and that population growth was slowing. He indicated that he was not overly concerned about this, and he added that job growth was also slowing and that unemployment would increase slightly. He related that the City of Orlando region was always one year behind in local data, and that in 2024 they were the eighth fastest growing metro area in the U.S. He showed information for net balance performance, and pointed out that more businesses were positive than negative. He specified that innovation had increased in the last quarter, and that employment had stayed stagnant, noting that companies thought they could grow without adding jobs and that AI was an emerging trend in the labor market. He said that the final quarter of 2024 was the presidential election, and that there was a large decrease in confidence in the U.S. economy because there was uncertainty. He added that the fourth quarter of 2025 had not picked back up due to the Federal Government shutdown, though people were still confident in their own businesses. He stated that they only added 4,000 jobs locally in the previous year, which was a significant slowdown. He explained that the reason for this softness in the consumer-facing sect was the advent of AI, opining that the new normal was fewer jobs and companies sometimes trying to grow without adding jobs. He mentioned that there was not much demand for labor, and that there was talent in the market, noting that this was an opportunity for some. He said that through 2024, Lake County population growth diverged from the state and the region in the sense that it accelerated and the State and region had slowed. He opined that they may not possibly accelerate next year in Lake County, though they would slow less than the state and the region because people were choosing Lake County. He showed a chart regarding net migration to the region, relaying that there was a changing dynamic of declining domestic

migration and surging international migration. He clarified that Lake County was less exposed to declining international migration, and that they drew many of their residents from the State of Florida. He specified that they were gaining their largest influx from Orange, Osceola and Seminole Counties, along with South Florida. He displayed a map of this data, and he then indicated that Lake and Osceola County were the two fastest growing economies in the State in the previous year among counties with a population of at least 100,000. He stated that there was a slight slowdown in unemployment in Lake County, though it was still above the region and the state. He showed a chart which compared 2019 to 2024 regarding if Lake County was growing its share of jobs in high wage sectors, noting that they were; furthermore, they were seeing a declining proportion of employment in retail and the visitor economy, with more employment in manufacturing and construction. He clarified that the percentages in the service economy were still more than what was in the U.S. He showed a chart reviewing a five year timeframe which indicated that around 70 percent of Lake County residents were commuting out of the county for work, and relayed that an opportunity for Lake County was to get more jobs in this market. He opined that the labor market would soften moving forward, and that unemployment was rising. He opined that this was not a major issue, and that healthcare would buttress the Lake County market, noting that it was still the most active job posting. He said that the net loss of the 25 to 34 year old demographic had been improving slightly, and that this had an effect on labor force participation. He elaborated that one in two residents were actively in the labor market because many of them were retired, and said that Lake County was going to be one of the fastest growing employment markets in the state. He opined that as long as the county continued to attract residents from the rest of the State of Florida and increased diversification of the economy, then the future looked positive. He also opined that the State of Florida and the City of Orlando could slow slightly, along with Lake County.

Commr. Parks opined that this helped the Board when they tried to make policy decisions, and he asked how the value of the dollar might affect some of the travel to the county.

Mr. Hamilton replied that the dollar was still the standard, and that tourism brought money into the economy. He opined that Lake County had a strong point for this.

Commr. Parks hoped that this continued to improve, and opined that they needed this funding being brought into the county. He then opined that the issue of 70 percent of the workforce commuting out of the County was significant.

Commr. Campione inquired about a slide which showed Walt Disney World and Universal Orlando Resort as the main employers, opining that this skewed the rest of the numbers when this was included and then averaged across the board.

Mr. Hamilton clarified that it was a subset of the Orange County portion.

Commr. Campione opined that there was nothing wrong with this, noting that they were close geographically. She added that it was a younger group of people.

Commr. Parks confirmed that many people worked at Disney and Universal, though opined that it was still an issue when they had this many people moving. He opined that a current focus was trying to get some of those cars turned around.

Commr. Campione opined that the slide looked like it was a large percentage of the people commuting out of Lake County, and that it could be broken down further so that the Board could understand what other types of jobs they were leaving for.

Mr. Hamilton mentioned Wellness Way and said that the County was allocating some of the developments and large plans for commercial there.

Commr. Parks opined that the key was sticking with the vision, and that it took many years to turn the numbers around economically.

Commr. Morris relayed his understanding that of the four companies looking for the most employees, three of them were healthcare. He expressed concerns for this.

Mr. Hamilton opined that it was great, and stated that they would lose jobs in the region if healthcare was removed.

Commr. Morris said that it was higher paid jobs, though there were service level jobs which would offset much of it to take care of retirees.

Commr. Parks opined that an innovator, entrepreneur or someone who was younger would be more centered toward Metro Orlando, and he hoped that Lake County could change this slightly.

Mr. Hamilton opined that they needed to not parachute people in for healthcare, and he questioned how to get this prosperity to the residents and have them participate.

2050 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Mr. Mike Fitzgerald, Director for the Office of Planning and Zoning, stated that Lake County was currently undergoing a revision to its Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan), and that they were drafting new policies, goals and objectives that would guide the County through the 2050 planning horizon; furthermore, the County had entered into a contract with Kimley-Horn and Associates to assist them.

Mr. Kelley Klepper, Vice President for Kimley-Horn, stated that his organization had been working collaboratively with staff on the review of the update based on the initial assessment, as well as updating their respective goals, objectives and policies. He added that they had much of this information in final draft form which was being reviewed by the County departments, and that there would be additional online engagement opportunities. He said that they were looking at a potential April 2026 timeframe for public hearings, and that Senate Bill (SB) 180 was in their minds as they went through this. He related that they identified some items based off additional updates from the Florida Legislature, and that they updated and reviewed much of the technical data which went into supporting data, including the population. He also mentioned that the County had a robust vacant land analysis which was a collaborative effort with the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council (ECFRPC). He recalled that they had two outreach meetings, and opined that they had been well received; furthermore, they had also started talking with high school students. He commented that they had recommendations from a matrix and also for each of the elements which provided recommendations and revisions to the respective goals, objectives and policies based off a number of items. He said that they looked at traffic and transportation, potable water, sanitary sewer, stormwater, parks and recreation facilities, population, and land use.

Ms. Emily Thomas, Senior Planner for Kimley-Horn, stated that they wanted to understand some of the challenges and opportunities perceived by county residents, and that they held a few different sessions of community outreach exercises. She recalled that they held three open houses throughout the county in July and August 2025, and that they also had an online survey which received 1,500 responses; furthermore, they recently held a second round of presentations to provide an update to residents, noting that they would have three more toward the end of this process. She commented that largest item they heard throughout these community engagement exercises which stood out was the importance of conservation and preserving the beautiful natural lands in the county, as well as the rural character which made Lake County unique and special. She also mentioned the importance of strategic land use to reduce urban sprawl, and said that they heard much about flooding, stormwater management and traffic congestion. She recalled that they involved some high school students and that they wanted to reach a wide range of demographics, and that while there were many similarities between what they heard from general outreach, input from the younger generation included all types of housing being more of a priority. She showed an example of activities from the first round of engagement, and stated that they had also held three meetings where planners from the municipalities attended and provided insight regarding some of their challenges and things they were doing to address those challenges, as well as how the County could work with them to address this. She said that some of the items they heard across most of the jurisdictions included the following: strategic land use; focusing on job creation to improve economic development; concerns about urban sprawl; conserving rural and natural land; the need for new and improved facilities; and traffic congestion. She relayed that they worked closely with the municipalities to assess their utility availability, and that most of the municipalities allowed County properties to connect without annexation, though there was sometimes a surcharge required. She then discussed the vacant land use analysis and related that they were looking at future land use (FLU), existing land use, and vacant land use. She said that Lake County was growing quickly and that by Florida Statutes, the county needed to be able to accommodate this. She indicated that they looked at densities on vacant parcels to see what could be accommodated, and that between unincorporated Lake County and the municipalities, based on household projections and sizes, the densities in the county were sufficient to support this growth; therefore, they did not need to increase densities in any of the FLUs. She commented that the projections for FLUs on each parcel would not necessarily be built out to full capacity, and that they needed to recognize that there was still a need for some strategic land use decisions to accommodate this growth. She specified that they needed to consider where this growth was going to go, and that they may want to direct this to where there was existing infrastructure and utilities for new development to connect to.

Mr. Klepper discussed some of the top changes or updates they looked at, noting that this included the five year capital improvements plan which was a requirement under Chapter 163, Florida Statutes. He listed the following top updates and changes: a new FLU paper designation that the County would have the ability to start applying in certain situations; increased coordination with the municipalities within the county; different housing types throughout the urban areas;

preservation of natural lands; incorporating some economic development policies, ideas and recommendations into the Comp Plan; and some items in the Comp Plan were better suited to be in the Land Development Regulations (LDR). He said that when they start looking at the FLU, this included identifying standards which were better suited to be in the LDR, along with strengthening additional policies; additionally, he mentioned the new FLU designations they identified with urban transition and an additional mixed use, as well as looking at some of the potential compatibility between uses. He remarked that urban transition was identified to be around urban areas, and that one of the County's current tools was a planned unit development (PUD), opining that it did not get to the level that his organization thought was appropriate for a transition. He clarified that this was a paper designation that they would be considering with a series of standards that the County would have in its toolbox moving forward. He said that a mixed use FLU would start to replace the PUD process and Comp Plan designation, and that instead of having a PUD for those types of uses, it created additional standards, guidelines and opportunities for true mixed use. He then mentioned compatibility standards and looking at information for new buildings and supporting infill. He said that there was a new policy which would support the Florida Wildlife Corridor, and that they would be looking at some transfer of development rights (TDR) options. He commented that there was a similar approach from a conservation standpoint, and that they would be looking at preservation of wetlands, habitats, and ground and surficial waters; furthermore, there was a separate item for moving items which were currently in the conservation element into the new ordinance, which would also be consistent with State law. He mentioned the economic element, and then said that they were looking at updating some of the lists for the State and Federal housing programs, along with looking at some of the flexible design guidelines and site components within the LDR to encourage additional flexibility in the code. He relayed that there was a proposed revision to the affordable housing policy, especially where they were promoting affordable housing near transit and employment centers. He commented that they were also looking at support for accessory dwelling units (ADUs) to help with housing affordability. He said that integrated communities was a new proposed policy which would focus on infill and redevelopment when it was in close proximity to transit and employment centers to create some neighborhood options from a protection standpoint and facilitate, promote and enhance communities in and around those hubs. He stated that transportation would be looking at level of service standards, and he mentioned supporting multimodal transportation systems and increasing mobility in a safe and efficient manner, along with utilizing the Florida Department of Transportation's (FDOT) context classification criteria. He remarked that a new potential policy was for trails and other facilities which could be used for pedestrian bicycles and provide additional connectivity between cities, employment hubs and more urbanized areas. He stated that they would be looking at some potential items for the environmental impacts with wildlife crossings and similar structures, and that they would be helping to facilitate and support those types of efforts. He said that a new objective and policy was safety was for all users and trying to enhance vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle safety throughout the community. He commented that they would continue to facilitate the enhancement of the community's parks, the relationship that the

County had with some of the Cities, and looking at levels of service to ensure that they had enough active and passive parks to meet the population's needs. He mentioned looking at some outdated policies for public facilities, as well as reviewing statutory requirements for septic to sewer conversions; furthermore, much of this language was in collaboration with Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) staff. He commented that basin management action plans (BMAPs) were another State mandate, and that communities were having to approach this as it related to best management practices (BMPs), nutrient loading and water quality to be consistent with the State statute. He related that there was another form of State statute recommendations for advanced wastewater treatment, and that this was ensuring that the County was consistent with these items. He said that there was a similar approach for the policy for the enhanced nutrient reducing systems, and that there would be revisions in each element except for property rights, which was mandated by the State. He relayed that they would be working closely with the State, and that they would be doing a final round of public engagement and coming back before the Board to continue to work toward an adoption cycle in the current year. He also opined that there were several items identified which were currently in the Comp Plan that would be better served in the zoning code.

Commr. Campione recalled the urban transition and mixed use land uses, and she relayed her understanding that they had enough inventory and did not need to increase their densities. She asked if this would increase their capacity.

Mr. Klepper replied that it could if it was applied in all of those lands, noting that it was an extra tool and could redesignate or be a different tool than the PUD that the County currently had. He elaborated that it provided additional design and development standards up against the cities, and that it was increasing compatibility.

Commr. Campione inquired if this would trade out Urban Low or Urban High.

Mr. Klepper said that it would start to address some challenges with this, noting that not all properties were going to develop; therefore, they could try to right size where they could be looking at additional developments.

Commr. Campione opined that in their situation in Lake County, it seemed that those were the places where Cities annexed and applied their new Comp Plan designations. She was unsure how beneficial it was for the County to be increasing the maximum density on those designations.

Mr. Klepper stated that one of the ideas behind this was to not necessarily push someone to be annexed, and that if they were being more compatible or consistent, then this created an option where they could get sanitary sewer and infrastructure but remain in the county versus someone annexing raw land with the County having no say. He clarified that part of this was a tool to help guide and design, and be an incentive to stay in the County.

Commr. Campione opined that this made sense in certain locations, though she would have to see how it looked on the map.

Commr. Parks inquired if part of this went in parallel with new codes to ensure what they were going to get in those areas. He then commented that there was a threshold which did not get

reviewed and come in front of the Board, and he asked if this was lowering the threshold for a subdivision development.

Mr. Klepper related that it was applying to subdivision and mixed use.

Commr. Parks opined that they ideally wanted more mixed use.

Mr. Klepper clarified that this was a paper designation and that they were not saying that the County had to map these areas, though it would be targeted for these areas. He opined that they needed a better code when it came to this, and said that they would have to update their code regardless.

Commr. Parks asked about a rural boundary as a policy.

Mr. Klepper replied that it was a tool that most communities across the state and country had, and that they could look at the boundary versus the current Comp Plan designations.

Commr. Campione relayed her understanding that the boundaries would follow where the Rural designations were already located, though if the County did not get interlocal agreements or joint planning agreements (JPAs) in place with the Cities, then it would not matter because the Cities could annex over them. She opined that if they were doing all of this at the same time and making progress on the agreements, then this could be the perfect time to show the agreed upon boundaries on their map.

Commr. Smith opined that they needed to ensure that they stuck to their transitional and agriculture zones.

Commr. Parks expressed concerns for transportation level of service, opining that it had caused many issues; therefore, he was glad to see that they were moving to the FDOT context sensitive classifications. He commented that the County had many road projects, and inquired if they could have them as a series of maps, noting that for development review it was sometimes not acknowledged that there was a plan which staff had put forward to improve a corridor. He asked if this could be incorporated so that it would be upfront in the Comp Plan as they were making transportation decisions.

Mr. Klepper did not think that there was any prohibition on this, and he questioned if this could be more burdensome or if they were just discussing certain types of enhancements. He opined that they needed to identify those projects.

Commr. Parks expressed appreciation for the public process and for them making a great effort to involve the younger generation.

Mr. Klepper thanked staff for being forward thinking and proactive.

Commr. Campione stated that she liked the idea of possibly showing the rural boundary lines with the anticipation that the County would get those agreements in place with the Cities.

Commr. Morris said that he liked that they were trying to keep county land in the county with the urban transition portion.

WOLF BRANCH INNOVATION DISTRICT LOGO

Ms. Meg Brew, Director for the Office of Economic Development, explained that the Wolf Branch Innovation District (WBID) was one of four strategic corridors in Lake County that was identified to absorb some of the growth they knew was coming and to serve as an employment

center. She said that the WBID was the result of a long term collaboration between Lake County and the City of Mount Dora, and that when it was completed, it would capitalize on the potential for entrepreneurship, technology, research and innovation while protecting existing natural resources through effective master planning. She relayed that this strategic corridor would provide the opportunity for residents to work and play where they lived with designated commercial and industrial areas planned to drive economic development. She mentioned that the Office of Communications had partnered with the Office of Economic Development, the City of Mount Dora, and the WBID stakeholders to develop the logo which would be presented on the current day, and that the logo would be used throughout the WBID and on marketing materials to attract employers to the location and give the WBID a distinct sense of place.

Mr. Levar Cooper, Director for the Office of Communications, stated that he was presenting the WBID brand design to position this corridor competitively while honoring the character which made Lake County distinctive. He said that he and his team developed this brand with the objectives of economic competitiveness and community support, and that it served the County's economic development objectives for the project, as well as creating a marketable identity that differentiated the WBID from competing corridors. He added that it also served the area residents and stakeholders in the City of Mount Dora and Lake County, along with serving developers and investors who increasingly prioritized environmental, social and governance (ESG) criteria; furthermore, a brand rooted in environmental heritage and community values directly addressed those investment criteria. He said that developers were increasingly choosing locations based on factors of market differentiation, community support and regulatory certainty, and that a strong brand contributed to each of these factors and told the market what this place was for, as well as demonstrating community buy in and helping to define expectations for development. He relayed that Lake County's competitive advantage was their "Real Florida" character, rural heritage, natural amenities and small town quality of life, and that their approach was to extend the existing identities of both entities by creating a brand which reflected the value proposition of both Lake County as "Real Florida, Real Close" and the City of Mount Dora as "Someplace Special." He said that they studied how other strategic corridors branded themselves, and that they asked what made Lake County distinctive, what was already there, and how they could build a brand which authentically underscored who they were and captured their value proposition. He said that the brand centered on a live oak tree which defined the area's landscape and was prominent throughout the county, noting that they were native, resilient and permanent, and that staff believed that strong roots promoted healthy growth. He added that the City of Mount Dora recently adopted the live oak as its official canopy tree, and that the response from the Mount Dora City Council was overwhelmingly positive. He stated that their positioning for this brand was innovation rooted in tradition, opining that this differentiated the WBID from other innovation corridors in Central Florida; additionally, they were offering innovation in a Real Florida setting. He requested approval for the WBID development brand and to authorize staff to develop brand implementation guidelines.

Commr. Sabatini made a motion to approve this item.

Commr. Morris seconded the motion.

Commr. Sabatini asked if the logo was a dark brown, and Mr. Cooper clarified that it was like an olive green and that they could use any color.

Commr. Campione said that she liked the idea of the tree, but opined that it was slightly wobbly at the bottom.

Commr. Smith relayed that they were discussing innovation but had a 50 year old tree. He also opined that this logo was better than the other innovation district logos, though he was unsure if this exemplified what it was trying to do.

Commr. Sabatini indicated that he was agreeable with slightly altering the tree.

Commr. Campione pointed out that it was on the edge of the Wekiva River Protection Area, and that the innovation area would be juxtaposed with the forest and Wekiva area, along with a place with many live oak trees. She said that she liked the tree combined with innovation, but opined that the tree needed to be modified.

Mr. Cooper stated that it was a natural logo and that the county offered natural resources, opining that this stood out in a crowded space where everything looked the same.

Commr. Campione asked if they could still have the City of Mount Dora be agreeable if they modified the logo.

Mr. Cooper confirmed that they would engage those stakeholders, and that staff could modify the bottom of the tree and bring it back to the Board and the City Council.

Commr. Sabatini opined that the curvature of the tree almost gave him the feeling of a foreign tree, and said that he would straighten the tree out slightly.

Commr. Campione remarked that a sign with the logo looked like it had moss on it.

Commr. Sabatini stated that he liked the Spanish moss, and Mr. Cooper relayed that staff would add this.

Commr. Campione clarified that this item was for direction and that there was consensus.

REGULAR AGENDA

TREE PROTECTION ORDINANCE

Mr. Fitzgerald said that this item was to clarify the requirements of tree removal associated with a development project, as well as tree protection. He read the ordinance title block, and he explained that the county currently defined specimen trees as protected trees based on size of a 30 inch caliper, along with age, form, ecological value and rarity. He relayed that they also defined heritage trees with the same criteria, though it would be a 40 inch or greater caliper tree, noting that this also included historical significance; furthermore, the code currently required heritage trees to obtain a variance for removal, and developers should be designing around heritage trees. He mentioned that staff became aware that their code needed to be addressed slightly in regard to heritage trees, and that this ordinance was proposing for the removal of a heritage tree, when associated with a development, to be specifically called out in the ordinance that the Board was potentially approving. He added that they would be removing the reliance upon a conceptual plan incorporated into a zoning ordinance as being an approval to remove a heritage tree, and clarified that this item was just an approval to advertise this ordinance.

Commr. Sabatini relayed that he would likely have some amendments or thoughts at a later time, though he was fine with advertising it.

Commr. Campione indicated that currently for other trees that came in as part of a development plan, they marked the trees and did a tree survey, and then the rule was that they had to plant mitigation trees for the removed trees.

Mr. Fitzgerald said that they had the choice of paying mitigation fees or doing a replacement.

Commr. Campione said that if a project was proposed on a property with many trees and there was a buffer off the right of way, then instead of necessarily having those trees removed or trees along the perimeter, they could possibly use that as an opportunity to leave established trees in place. She opined that they currently took everything out and replanted. She opined that it was important to have new trees planted, though this was something that could be done better. She asked if there was any interest in staff reviewing what an ordinance like this could look like.

Commr. Sabatini and Commr. Parks expressed support for this.

Commr. Smith opined that they had to be careful to not restrict removal of invasive trees.

Commr. Campione then opined that the County's front buffer off right of ways was too narrow, and that they should not wait until an LDR rewrite to address this.

Commr. Smith suggested to agendize this.

Mr. Fitzgerald clarified that staff was working on an ordinance.

Ms. Marsh added that staff would be bringing this back on April 10, 2026, along with Commissioner Smith's request for 65 foot minimum lot widths.

On a motion by Commr. Smith, seconded by Commr. Sabatini and carried unanimously by a vote of 5-0, the Board approved to advertise an Ordinance amending Section 9.02.00, Lake County Code, Land Development Regulations, entitled Tree Protection.

ORDINANCE REGARDING LAKE COUNTY AFFORDABLE HOUSING ASSISTANCE TRUST FUND AND LIVE LOCAL ACT REQUIREMENTS

Ms. Maria AbdoulKarim, Director for the Office of Housing and Community Services, said that this item was a requested action for approval to advertise a public hearing for a proposed ordinance amending Sections 11-33 and 11-40 of the Lake County Code to align with updates to Chapter 420, Part VII, Florida Statutes, and Section 125.01055, Florida Statutes, as amended by Senate Bill 1730 (2025). She commented that the sections included the Local Housing Assistance Trust Fund and the affordable housing covenants and guarantees, and that the highlighted changes included for the Local Housing Assistance Trust Fund updated the eligible uses of funds, along with authorization for certain rent subsidies using State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) Local Housing Assistance Trust Fund dollars. She specified that this funding was awarded annually to the County and that this was consistent with the limits set in the County's Local Housing Assistance Plan (LHAP). She also relayed that the changes reflected statutory changes to the Live Local Act, ensuring compliance with updated State requirements related to affordable housing covenants and guarantees.

On a motion by Commr. Morris, seconded by Commr. Smith and carried unanimously by a vote of 5-0, the Board approved to advertise an Ordinance amending the Lake County Affordable Housing Assistance Trust Fund and Live Local Act requirements pursuant to Senate Bill 1730 (2025).

FIVE-YEAR DESTINATION STRATEGIC PLAN

Mr. Ryan Ritchie, Director for the Office of Tourism, recalled that in April 2023 his office received Board approval to develop a five-year destination strategic plan, noting that they had a formal request for proposal (RFP) process and that Downs and St. Germain Research was awarded the contract in December 2023 after a competitive review. He remarked that there was c omprehensive stakeholder engagement which launched in January 2024 with extensive outreach including focus groups and one-on-one meetings with County Commissioners, Tourist Development Council (TDC) members, hospitality and attraction leaders, sports organizers, municipalities and marketing partners. He indicated that they looked at Smith Travel Research (STR) reports, Tourist Development Tax (TDT) collection data, marketing documents, accommodation stakeholder outreach, a community sentiment survey, and a market perception study to ensure a thorough understanding of Lake County's tourism landscape. He mentioned that there had been some review with the TDC and that on October 6, 2025, the TDC unanimously approved recommending the final five-year destination strategic plan to the BCC.

Mr. Joseph St. Germain, President for Downs and St. Germain Research, listed the following five strategic goals: continuing to expand the sports market; developing a robust partnership program; further aligning with the community at large; continuing with the current brand and marketing program and having a focus on the off-peak shoulder season; and updates to the event sponsorship program and capital project funding program. He mentioned that for sports, the county had much infrastructure and facilities, and that there may be some future capital improvements to make the facilities even better. He mentioned developing some onsite accommodations next to those facilities and investing in tried and true sports such as softball, volleyball, basketball, endurance sports, fishing and golf. He said that developing a robust partnership program included talking with stakeholders, as well as County offices working together in many places; furthermore, the Office of Tourism could be the connector and inform municipalities and stakeholders about events, as well as align stakeholders to work toward common goals and result in better return on investment (ROI) for businesses and a better visitor experience. He commented that for outreach to the community, 64 percent of residents had a positive perception of tourism versus nine percent being negative, though there was not much knowledge regarding how tourism was a great economic impact; therefore, communicating this to residents was important. He stated that for continuing with the current branding with a focus on the off peak season, their current brand pillars included outdoor adventure, water adventure, small town charm, and food and drink. He elaborated that the feedback they heard was to continue with this but also integrate the themes of relaxing/active lifestyles which connected to sports tourism, along with other niches such as sports and agritourism to expand the current brand. He related that the event sponsorship program and capital project funding program were both requested to be

modified. He specified that this was to focus on events with greater ROI and heads in beds, as well as giving extra credit to events which had people visiting multiple areas of the county and which occurred in the off peak season. He remarked that the capital project funding program was currently viewed as ineffective with a lack of organization and clear standards; however, some small changes could make it more effective, with the goals including ensuring that it aligned with Florida Statutes for how TDT could be used for capital improvements, and also taking an onus off the staff recommendations. He clarified that staff would still be involved and vet it, though the TDC would ultimately evaluate these projects. He said that they wanted individuals to have done research or feasibility studies, along with having sports partnerships in place, so that there would be a plan before the County invested in those places.

Commr. Parks asked about some of their niche areas for the 2028 Olympics and beyond.

Mr. Ritchie replied that staff had conversations with national governing bodies on how they could get some events or relocate them to Lake County, and he mentioned rowing and track and field.

Commr. Morris relayed his understanding that they were tight on rooms, and that event participants were often staying elsewhere.

Mr. Ritchie commented that in most destinations they looked at this leakage rate, and that they sometimes said that about 20 percent were leaking from Lake County into other counties. He mentioned that this was something that each destination dealt with.

Commr. Morris indicated his understanding that it was not that Lake County did not have the rooms, but individuals were staying elsewhere.

Mr. Ritchie confirmed this.

Commr. Campione relayed her understanding that one was staying somewhere else because they could not find a room there.

Mr. Ritchie clarified that this was during Leesburg Bikefest.

On a motion by Commr. Smith, seconded by Commr. Morris and carried unanimously by a vote of 5-0, the Board approved the Five-Year Destination Strategic Plan.

APPOINTMENTS TO THE LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD

Commr. Sabatini asked about the applicants' positions and goals on their duties, and if they understood their job.

Commr. Morris replied that they were trying to keep $5 million per year so that they could help with the library system, and that they met to distribute the impact fee credits.

Commr. Campione added that it was heavily driven by staff recommendations.

On a motion by Commr. Morris, seconded by Commr. Smith and carried unanimously by a vote of 5-0, the Board approved to appoint the following members to the Lake County Library Advisory Board: Ms. Betsy Dokken as the primary member representing the City of Eustis (reappointment), with a term expiring on February 28, 2030; Ms. Beth Sharpe as the primary member representing the City of Mount Dora to fill an unexpired term ending February 28, 2028; and Ms. Marcia Ford as the alternate member representing the City of Mount Dora to fill an unexpired term ending February 28, 2028.

APPOINTMENT TO THE BOARD OF BUILDING EXAMINERS

Commr. Parks made a motion to appoint Mr. Randy Bumbalough to the Board of Building Examiners to fill the position of Architect.

Commr. Sabatini opined these positions were important and that it was almost the equivalent of putting a judge on the bench. He indicated interest in postponing this item until the applicant was present, noting that he wanted to speak with the applicant in front of the Board about what his role would be. He relayed that he wanted to put people on this board who were mediation and settlement focused, and opined that this was not like the other boards.

Commr. Parks withdrew his motion.

Commr. Campione asked if it would be fine to ask the applicant to attend and interview them.

Commr. Morris opined that Commissioner Sabatini could possibly call the applicant and ask questions.

Commr. Sabatini opined that it was a good trend when it was a quasi-judicial board, and stated that he wanted to emphasize the importance of the position by having the applicant come before the BCC so that they understood what they were being trusted with.

Commr. Campione opined that Commissioner Sabatini could reach out to the applicant and ask if he minded attending the next BCC meeting.

On a motion by Commr. Parks, seconded by Commr. Morris and carried unanimously by a vote of 5-0, the Board tabled this item.

ADJOURNMENT FOR MT. PLYMOUTH-SORRENTO CRA MEETING

The Chairman adjourned the BCC meeting at 12:02 p.m. to open the Mt. Plymouth-Sorrento Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Board meeting. The BCC meeting was then reopened at 12:08 p.m.

COMMISSIONERS REPORTS

COMMISSIONER CAMPIONE – CHAIRMAN AND DISTRICT 4

ALUM TREATMENT DEMONSTRATION

Commr. Campione said that the alum treatment demonstration at Lake Yale on the previous day was great, and that there was an opportunity between the current time and the end of March 2026 for Commissioners who would like to visit, noting that they could have staff arrange this. She added that they were creating a video which went into the science involved with this and how it worked, and she urged the Board to watch it.

COMMISSIONER SMITH – DISTRICT 3

THANKING STAFF

Commr. Smith thanked staff for the recent workshop, opining that it was good.

COMMISSIONER MORRIS – DISTRICT 5

TOWN OF LADY LAKE CHILDREN'S LIBRARY

Commr. Morris commented that they had a great grand opening of the Children's Library at the Town of Lady Lake on the previous day, noting that the Town was appreciative of the County and their partnership.

COMMISSIONER PARKS – VICE CHAIRMAN AND DISTRICT 2

100TH BIRTHDAY OF CLERMONT VFW POST 5277

Commr. Parks congratulated the Clermont Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 5277, noting that they were celebrating their 100th birthday. He added that he attended the event and that it was great.

THANKING STAFF

Commr. Parks thanked staff for the workshop in the previous week.

COMMISSIONER SMITH – DISTRICT 3

NATIONAL TORTILLA DAY

Commr. Smith relayed that it was National Tortilla Day.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to be brought to the attention of the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 12:11 p.m.

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LESLIE CAMPIONE, CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

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GARY J COONEY, CLERK