



OBSERVER CORPS REPORT
Edgewater City Council
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May-August 2026

Agendas & Playback Links: <https://www.cityofedgewater.org/543/Agendas-and-Minutes>

The Edgewater City Council convenes in regular session on the first Monday of each month at 6:00pm, calling special meetings as needed. Current Council is comprised of Mayor Diezel Depew and four district representatives: #1 Charlotte Hope Gillis, #2 Mike Thomas, #3 Deb Dolbow, #4 Eric Rainbird.

Preview Summary

In the first quarter of the new year, the City had convened its Charter Review Committee, which scheduled over a dozen public meetings and presentations to discuss potential modifications to the City Charter. The five-person Committee represented each of the existing voting districts and their videostreamed deliberations are linked for viewing at: <https://www.cityofedgewater.org/543/Agendas-and-Minutes>

City of Edgewater Charter Review

Every five years, the City of Edgewater is charged to review and recommend any changes to its Charter, then adopt any related ballot questions for public vote. In this cycle, the appointed Committee took six months to fully consider issues of home rule authority, fiscal and ethical accountability, community engagement, procedural administration & management, population growth, environmental protections, development, disposition of City property, land use and personnel. Late in the process, added questions were raised concerning data centers, privacy, surveillance, and Flock camera usage.

Through first and second public readings before Council in July, many of the Committee's noted environmental concerns were deferred to future action through ordinance (favoring stem wall construction, water conservation, native plants and flood mitigation). Questions of re-districting, annexation density, Clerk supervision, and referendum procedure were eliminated. Related actions requiring unanimous Council vote for sale of City Hall, and a permanent moratorium on data center development were put forth as regular agenda items and later adopted.

Once the consolidated CRC recommendations were finalized and approved by Council in August, five Charter questions were transmitted to the Supervisor of Elections for inclusion on Edgewater's fall ballot. In November, voters will be asked to consider: 1) Adoption of revised Charter Preamble; 2) Expansion of City Council to six (6) district seats (triggered if/when population increases to 37,000); 3) Requiring voter approval for



sale of City Parks; 4) Prohibition on Data Centers; 5) Creation of Community Engagement program.

Independent of Charter Review, a non-binding question was added to the ballot, seeking to discontinue contracted recycling services (with language suggesting pre-emptive budget relief tradeoff).

Related to items also governed by Charter, Council had voted in April to double its future salaries (as permitted by ordinance), and several interview rounds had been conducted to secure a new City Clerk. Cassie Killgore was offered and accepted the position in July, after nearly a year of interim service by Assistant Monique Toupin.

Development

After 20 months of project review and voiced public comment, Council approved the first phase of site plans for a major riverfront development at 161 Jones Camp Road. The eastern portion of the Edgewater River Oaks complex will consist of a 71,550-sq.ft dry stack boat storage facility with 338 dry slips, a 10-wet-slip marina, and a 14,400-sq-ft restaurant with 400 seats on 18.8 acres. Represented by Cobb & Cole, the project also includes a separate hotel component, west/adjacent to the marina. Developer addressed concerns about mangrove preservation & re-planting, invasive species, oyster beds, wet slip allocations, conservation and Manatee Protection Plan updates.

West of US1, a 137 dry slip storage facility proposal is advancing through re-zoning and site planning stages, and major construction is underway for several new commercial properties along the US1 corridor.

In April, Council had approved modified Crestwood subdivision plans, with the number of overall units reduced to 254 on 74 acres. Over 18 months of review, amendments had included converting private roads to public, narrowing 6' walking paths to 5' to reduce impervious surface, and adding a 530-foot littoral shelf to preserve wetland.

Summary

The City of Edgewater is responsive to marquee issues that draw public attention and comment, such as ... no to feral hogs, yes to backyard chickens, no on toilet-to-tap, yes to SunTrail expansions. For planning purposes, Mayor Diezel Depew is now able to quickly re-focus on standing issues, after his short re-election campaign closed with an outright win in the August primary. Mayor Depew secured a second term with a 55% majority finish, combined across four precincts, each reporting approximately 30% turnout on average. Heading into the November general election, two incumbent Council members face challengers for their seats in Districts 1&3.