

Observer Reports

February/March Voter

Ormond Beach Commission

Submitted by Susan Bayley

January 21, 2025

It was a very long meeting, thanks to a discussion on three ordinances about a proposed development on west Granada, Little Tomoka Village near Hunters Ridge, featuring 31 homes and a house of worship. Flooding after Milton dominated commissioners' concerns. Developers and legal counsel along with Hunters Ridge residents spoke during the discussion. Although the planning board approved these plans, eventually commissioners unanimously rejected these plans. In contrast, Sargent brought up the issue of fluoridated water at the end of the meeting after the formal agenda had ended. Tolland even asked her dentist about fluoridating water who thought that the 1950s environment is long past. Interestingly, all commissioners thought that today everyone uses fluoridated water, also going to a dentist for teeth cleaning. It was surprising to see that this issue was addressed so quickly after the formal agenda had been completed.

Ponce Inlet Town Council

Submitted by Amy Legare

November 19, 2024

The Town repealed the Ordinance against aggressive solicitation based on a recommendation of the Town's attorney. The Police Chief stated that there are other Town Ordinances in place to handle any issues.

The Town passed an Ordinance against using non-medical cannabis, marijuana, or hemp on public property.

The Town approved a resolution electing not to grant ad valorem tax 309 exemptions to certain properties under the Live Local Act for affordable housing.

The Town Public Works has been working on matters related to the Watershed Master Plan (backflow preventers) and the Stormwater Resiliency Plan (prioritization work list). Land Use and Development Code as well as the Town's Comprehensive Plan may be amended based on these Plans.

The Mayor requested a resolution be drafted in support of the Florida League of Cities 2025 Legislative Agenda.

The Town is installing additional security cameras in the parks to reduce vandalism.

November 21, 2024

The Town has supported planting several hundred native plants on the town hall property. Town residents and the Florida Native Plant Society volunteered for the planting effort.

The Ponce Inlet Code Enforcement Board will be replaced with a magistrate. The change will be effective once a magistrate is hired. Town ordinances have been amended to reflect this change.

The Town wants additional information before supporting the Volusia County Council idea of a moratorium on new residential development.

Orange City

Submitted by Rhiannon Riegel

January 14, 2025

City Council member and Vice Mayor Alexander Tiamson unexpectedly passed away at age 60 in late December, 2024. Among other proclamations and presentations, January 14 was announced as Alexander Tiamson Memorial Day.

Discussion of the First Reading of a proposed Parks & Recreation Ordinance took place. The proposed ordinance would repeal prior inconsistencies in the city code and would permit Mill Lake Park to be open until 9 p.m. This extension has been requested by citizens.

There will be a special meeting on February 11 to vote on the new City Council member replacing Mr. Tiamson. Candidates wishing to be considered must apply by February 6. The Council member who will be named Vice Mayor will be decided after the Council seats are filled.

Analysis and discussion of options for a Mass Notification System occurred. It was noted that the Everbridge system is available at no cost until 2029 due to the Florida Department of Emergency Management covering the cost. Council budgeted approximately 560 employee hours to research, test, and produce an operating procedures manual for the Mass Notification System.

No items were pulled from the Consent Agenda, no second & final reading ordinances, no resolutions. New business briefly mentioned included possible future implementation of a shopping cart ordinance and a citizen's academy.

Daytona Beach City Commission

Submitted by Cindy Wakeland

December 4, 2024

Early business of the meeting included a presentation regarding a proposal to build a multi-sports event location on west ISB in Daytona Beach. Facilities would include ballparks, a stadium and indoor courts for basketball, volleyball and gymnastics. Location would be 600 acres on west ISB and built in conjunction with Volusia County. Much discussion was made concerning the increase of weekend travel by families, even from out of state, to sporting events for their children's participation. Such a venue would add to tourist spending (i.e. tax dollars) at the city's hotels, restaurants and other tourist attractions.

The meeting went on to include a discussion regarding animal control in the county. There were several people in attendance from surrounding cities including Port Orange, to lend support to this issue. The concern centered around whether the current staff of 2.5 animal control officers was sufficient. Three or four examples of animals being improperly housed during the past hurricanes were discussed as well as how the city interacts with the Halifax Humane facility.

December 18, 2024

The DB City Commission approved an Introduction of Ordinances to repeal an ordinance from 2023 (#2023-268) which established current boundaries for the city commission.

The 2023 ordinance was subsequently challenged under Florida Statutes arguing the redistricting plan adopted was developed with improper intent to favor each incumbent commissioner.

The Commission denies the ordinance was adopted with the intent to favor any incumbent or candidate. The Commission agrees it is indisputable that the consultant who assisted in developing the adopted redistricting plan requested and considered the residential addresses of each of the incumbent City Commissioners. The Commission recognizes the significant exposure the City faces if the case were to proceed to trial, and, as such has decided to mitigate the potential exposure by repealing the 2023 ordinance and adopting a new redistricting plan to be effective for the next regular municipal election in 2026.

Deland City Council

Mara Whitridge reporting

At the last meetings, the main topic was flooding. At every meeting, at least 15 people stood up and talked about the disasters from the flooding in this area.

This week, another piece of land is coming up for development in the flood area on Blue Lake and Taylor. This piece of land will be annexed into the city. It may not pass because of the fragility of the property.

The Cloisters - an assisted living facility - was sold and the new, rebranded Aventine is now renting apartments and cottages as an active adult community. It is no longer offering long-term healthcare. Aventine came before the council about their parking problem. They would like to implement parking across the street. However, the road is dangerous, especially at night. They would also like to establish more bike parking in lieu of car parking. It seems doubtful that in this senior community many people will be riding bikes.

Also, the property across from City Hall wants to build apartments. They do not have enough parking for all the apartments they want to put in and add bike parking.