# FRUITLAND PARK CITY COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OCTOBER 8, 2026

A regular meeting of the Fruitland Park City Commission was held at 506 W. Berckman Street, Fruitland Park, Florida on Thursday, October 8, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

**Members Present:** Mayor Chris Cheshire, Vice Mayor Patrick DeGrave, Commissioners Martina Williams, Al Goldberg, and Michael Raysin

**Also Present:** City Manager Karen Manila, City Attorney Anita Geraci-Carver, Police Lt. Courtney Corman, Police Officer Brad Heidt, Finance Director Kim Gehrke; Interim Community Development Director Michael Rankin, Community Services Director Barbara Fields, Public Works Director Robb Dicus, and City Clerk Gwen Johns.

Total Attendance: 39

## 1. CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

After Mayor Cheshire called the meeting to order, an Invocation was given by Pastors Gavin Frost and Daniel McLean, Heritage Community Church.

Vice Mayor DeGrave led the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

## 2. ROLL CALL

After the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance, Mayor Cheshire announced decorum for the meeting. He then requested that Ms. Johns call roll where a quorum was declared present.

## 3. RECESSED TO THE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY MEETING AT APPROXIMATELY 6:02 PM.

## 4. CONSENT AGENDA

**(a) Approval of Minutes.**

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| September 21, 2026 | Special City Commission Meeting |
| September 24, 2026 | Regular City Commission Meeting |

**A motion was made by Vice Mayor DeGrave and seconded by Commissioner Williams to approve the Consent Agenda, as presented.**

**Mayor Cheshire called for a vote on the motion and declared it carried unanimously, 5-0.**

## 5. REGULAR AGENDA

## 6. PUBLIC HEARING

**(a) Second and Final Reading of Ordinance 2026-011, Annexation of Approximately 25.41± Acres of Property Generally Located East of US Hwy 27/441 and South of S Grays Airport Road. Petitioner: Fruitland Park Development V, LLC on behalf of the owners, Richard D. Gunter and Agnes S. Berry, Trustee – Kensington Gardens**

Ms. Geraci-Carver read Ordinance 2026-011 by title only.

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF FRUITLAND PARK, FLORIDA, AMENDING THE BOUNDARIES OF THE CITY OF FRUITLAND PARK FLORIDA, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROCEDURE SET FORTH IN SECTION 171.044, FLORIDA STATUTES, TO INCLUDE WITHIN THE CITY LIMITS APPROXIMATELY 25 ± ACRES OF LAND GENERALLY LOCATED SOUTH OF GRAY'S AIRPORT ROAD AND EAST OF US HIGHWAY 27/441; DIRECTING THE CITY MANAGER TO PROVIDE CERTIFIED COPIES OF THIS ORDINANCE AFTER APPROVAL TO THE CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT, THE LAKE COUNTY MANAGER AND THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA; PROVIDING FOR SCRIVENER'S ERRORS AND SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

**A motion was made by Vice Mayor DeGrave to approve Ordinance 2026-011, as presented. The motion failed due to lack of a second.**

**A motion was made by Commissioner Raysin and seconded by Commissioner Williams to DENY the final reading of Ordinance 2026-011.**

Mayor Cheshire called for public comments.

James P. Logan, owner of property adjacent to the proposed annexation, expressed support for the project. He stated that, as a nearby resident, he would be directly impacted by the development and expressed confidence in the developer. He requested that the City Commission reconsider its decision to deny the annexation.

Richard Wohlfarth, Developer, provided a presentation outlining the proposed annexation, noting that one parcel is a complete enclave and another is a partial enclave. He clarified that the Commission's consideration was limited to annexation of the parcel entirely surrounded by City limits. He discussed his collaboration with Mr. Logan and the City in securing property for a future water treatment plant and addressed existing water consumption and capacity. He indicated that land use and zoning matters would be presented for consideration at a future meeting. Mr. Wohlfarth noted that his team would be willing to meet with Lake County to support signalization at South Grays Airport Road and US 441. He requested reconsideration to table the item to the December meeting.

Mayor Cheshire expressed surprise that the annexation was placed on the agenda prior to the November 3 election, given the Commission's previously expressed concerns regarding Amendment 3.

Commissioner Raysin expressed concern about the traffic issues that would be created by the proposed development. Mr. Wohlfarth commented that if the item were tabled, he would return to the commission with a proposed solution for the flow traffic. He acknowledged the issue with trying to get out onto US 441 from S Grays Airport Road. Mr. Raysin asked if there was any alternate access points. Mr. Wohlfarth said there may be an opportunity to use Register Road, and the developer would be amenable to making that connection immediately.

Carl Yauk, 1123 Ritter Road, expressed opposition to the annexation and objected to tabling the ordinance.

Mitchell Langley, 101 S. Valley Road, opposed the annexation, discussed ordinance adoption procedures, and referenced a recent annexation lawsuit involving the Town of Lady Lake.

Mayor Cheshire asked City Attorney Geraci-Carver to explain the ordinance adoption process under Florida Statutes. Ms. Geraci-Carver stated that she was unaware of any statutory requirements inconsistent with the City's established procedures. She explained that the City traditionally conducts a first reading, allowing public comment and an initial vote, followed by the statutorily required public hearing, at which time the Commission takes final action. She noted that she was not familiar with the previously cited lawsuit pertaining to the Town of Lady Lake.

Sarah McCallum, 2125 Miller Blvd., questioned the distinction between the first reading and a public hearing, noting that signage identified the previous meeting as a public hearing. She expressed understanding for the developer but stated that his existing development rights were not being affected. She spoke in opposition to the annexation.

Jay McCallum, 101 S Dixie Ave., spoke about growth, inventory and demand. He was opposed to the annexation.

**Mayor Cheshire called for a roll call vote on the motion and declared it carried unanimously, 4-1. Vice Mayor DeGrave dissented.**

**(b) Second and Final Reading of Ordinance 2026-014, Amendment to Exhibit B Incorporating a Fuel Adjustment Rate – Waste Management Inc.**

Ms. Geraci-Carver read Ordinance 2026-014 by title only.

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF FRUITLAND PARK, FLORIDA, ADOPTING RATES FOR THE PROVISION OF WASTE MANAGEMENT SERVICES TO THE RESIDENTS OF THE CITY OF FRUITLAND PARK; APPROVING AN AMENDMENT TO THE AGREEMENT

BETWEEN THE CITY OF FRUITLAND PARK AND WASTE MANAGEMENT SERVICES TO INCORPORATE AND REPLACE EXHIBIT B; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS AND SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR INCLUSION IN THE CODE OF ORDINANCES; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Jose Bascom, Waste Management, answered the question of why a diesel fuel index increase was contractual. He said the diesel fuel index does have an impact on the cost of providing a service to the City. He asked that in lieu of the fuel index increase, Waste Management be given the opportunity to meet individually with the City Commission to discuss contract extension.

Vice Mayor DeGrave clarified that the City's contract with Waste Management includes a fuel adjustment clause.

Commissioner Williams emphasized the importance of honoring the contract.

Chuck Padgett, Trinity Assembly of God Church, expressed concern regarding the monetary impact of increased Waste Management fees on elderly church members and urged the City Commission and Waste Management to reconsider the proposed increase.

Mitchell Langley, 101 S. Valley Road, urged the City Commission to consider the offer to waiver the fees in exchange for an opportunity to negotiate a contract extension with Waste Management in good faith.

Carl Yauk, 1123 Ritter Road, questioned whether the contract specifies compressed natural gas or diesel fuel and supported the Commission's consideration of Mr. Bascom's offer.

Mayor Cheshire asked Anita for direction since the contractual provision has been waived. She advised that the City Commission could table the ordinance indefinitely.

**A motion was made by Vice Mayor DeGrave and seconded by Commissioner Goldberg to TABLE Ordinance 2026-014, as presented.**

**Mayor Cheshire called for a roll call vote on the motion and declared it carried unanimously, 5-0.**

**(c) Second and Final Reading of Ordinance 2026-015, Approval of a 3% Increase in Water Usage Rates.**

Ms. Geraci-Carver read Ordinance 2026-015 by title only.

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF FRUITLAND PARK, LAKE COUNTY, FLORIDA AMENDING SECTION A-27 IN APPENDIX A OF THE FRUITLAND PARK CODE OF ORDINANCES TO ADJUST THE WATER UTILITY RATES BASED ON JULY 2026 CONSUMER PRICE INDEX; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; PROVIDING FOR REPEAL OF ALL CONFLICTING

ORDINANCES; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Williams and seconded by Vice Mayor DeGrave to approve the final reading of Ordinance 2026-015, as presented.**

Chuck Padgett asked the City Commission to consider delaying approval of this ordinance.

Mitchell Langley, 101 S Valley Road, supported Mr. Padgett's suggestion to delay approval of the ordinance. He suggested tabling the ordinance until January.

Vice Mayor DeGrave stated that the utilities operate as enterprise funds, which has nothing to do with Amendment three. In addition, it was only a few years ago when the city had a significant deficit. He further commented that utilities have fixed costs regardless of use.

Heather Delaporte, 737 Sugarfoot Lane, opposed the ordinance.

Carl Yauk, 1123 Ritter Road, referenced a previously funded wastewater treatment plant project that was unsuccessful and expressed his concerns regarding the proposed increase.

**Mayor Cheshire called for a roll call vote on the motion and declared it carried unanimously, 5-0.**

(d) **Second and Final Reading of Ordinance 2026-016, Approval of a 3% Increase in Wastewater Usage Rates.**

Ms. Geraci-Carver read Ordinance 2026-016 by title only.

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF FRUITLAND PARK, FLORIDA, AMENDING A-6 IN APPENDIX A OF THE FRUITLAND PARK CODE OF ORDINANCES TO ADJUST THE WASTEWATER UTILITY RATES BASED ON JULY 2026 CONSUMER PRICE INDEX; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; PROVIDING FOR REPEAL OF ALL CONFLICTING ORDINANCES; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY, PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

**A motion was made by Vice Mayor DeGrave and seconded by Commissioner Raysin to approve the final reading of Ordinance 2026-016, as presented.**

Mitchell Langley, 101 S Valley Road, spoke in opposition to approving the ordinance at this time.

Mayor Cheshire asked that monthly financial reports be provided to the City Commission. He also asked Ms. Manila about the audit, and she stated the auditors had recently asked for additional documents, but they are working to finalize the audit.

Rick Carlins, 5144 Albert Road, commented about the ordinance and the hardship an increase would create for some residents.

Carl Yauk, 1123 Ritter Road, questioned fund balances.

Heather Delaporte, 737 Sugarfoot Lane, addressed the commission.

Kay Cunningham, 500 Mary Sue, questioned whether the 3% utility rate increase was related to the agreement with Lady Lake and whether future increases were anticipated. Mayor Cheshire explained that the increase was based on the Consumer Price Index and noted the City's plans for a future wastewater treatment plant.

Mayor Cheshire inquired about utility assistance funds. Ms. Manila stated that approximately $6,000 was available to assist City residents with utility bills.

**Mayor Cheshire called for a roll call vote on the motion and declared it carried unanimously, 5-0.**

**(e) Second and Final Reading of Ordinance 2026-018, Approval of Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Loan Agreement DW350830.**

Ms. Geraci-Carver read Ordinance 2026-018 by title only.

> AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF FRUITLAND PARK, FLORIDA, RELATING TO THE STATE REVOLVING FUND LOAN PROGRAM; MAKING FINDINGS; APPROVING THE DRINKING WATER STATE REVOLVING FUND PLANNING, DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION LOAN AGREEMENT FOR PROJECT DW350830 IN THE FUNDING AMOUNT OF $347,004 WITH ESTIMATED PRINCIPAL FORGIVENESS OF $173,502, ZERO PERCENT PER ANNUM INTEREST RATE ON THE UNPAID PRINCIPAL LOAN FOR A TERM OF 20 YEARS; ESTABLISHING PLEDGED REVENUES; DESIGNATING AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVES; PROVIDING ASSURANCES; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS, SEVERABILITY, AND EFFECTIVE DATE.

**A motion was made by Vice Mayor DeGrave and seconded by Michael Raysin to approve the final reading of Ordinance 2026-016, as presented.**

Carl Yauk, 1123 Ritter Road, asked if a similar agreement would be entered into for wastewater. Ms. Manila responded that the city is trying to get on the project list. The next meeting for SRF funding is in November.

**Mayor Cheshire called for a roll call vote on the motion and declared it carried unanimously, 5-0.**

**END OF PUBLIC HEARINGS**

6. (a) **City Manager** – Nothing to report.

(b) **City Attorney** – Nothing to report.

## 7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

## 8. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Sarah McCallum, 2125 Miller Road and 101 S Dixie, spoke about the budget.

Carl Yauk, 1123 Ritter Road, asked a question regarding The Enclave at Lake Geneva infrastructure.

Mitchell Langley, 101 S Valley Road, discussed the budget.

Ms. Manila stated that cash balances from investment accounts and auditor-reviewed documents could be provided. However, she noted that significant reconciliation work was necessary and emphasized the importance of auditor-verified balances. Staff anticipates the audit presentation in October.

Chuck Padgett complemented the City staff and stated that he believes city employees show up and do the best job they can for the residents of Fruitland Park. He also stated that he believes the City Commission members are honest and do the best job they can.

Kay Cunningham, 500 Mary Sue, talked about a water leak and asked about available water leak adjustment. Ms. Manila said there is a policy that has recently been rewritten and the $500 limit has been removed. She recommended that Ms. Cunningham contact the city utility department.

Rae Winn, 500 Mary Sue Street, spoke about the Fruitland Park Skate Park. Mayor Cheshire noted there is money in the upcoming budget to address improvements to the skate park.

Jay McCallum, 101 S Dixie, spoke about storm drains on county roads that are located in the City of Fruitland Park.

## 9. COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

(a) **Commissioner Williams** – Nothing to report.

(b) **Commissioner Goldberg** – Nothing to report.

(c) **Commissioner Raysin** – Nothing to report.

(d) **Vice Mayor DeGrave** – Nothing to report.

## 10. MAYOR'S COMMENTS

Mayor Cheshire announced the following important dates:

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| **Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays** | **Indoor Aerobics Classes at the Gardenia Center 9:15 a.m.** |
| **Thursday, October 22nd** | **City Commission Meeting** |
| **Saturday, October 24th** | **Blues Brews & Bites Gardenia Center 6:30 – 9:30 p.m.** |
| **Saturday, October 31st** | **Halloween at Shiloh** |

## 11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:39 p.m.

Gwen Johns, MMC, City Clerk

Chris Cheshire, Mayor