

City of Auburndale Commission Minutes March 2, 2026

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the City Commission of the City of Auburndale held March 2, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. in the Commission Room of City Hall, after having been properly advertised, with the following members present: Mayor Alex Cam, Vice Mayor Jordan Helms, Commissioners: Sean Levy. Commissioners Travis Avery and Crystal Tijerina were absent. Also, present were: Interim City Manager Amy Palmer, City Attorney Frederick J. Murphy Jr., City Clerk Brandon Henry, and Police Chief Terry Storie.

Mayor Alex Cam declared a quorum present, and the Meeting was opened with prayer by Father Rick Gomer, St. Alban's Episcopal Church, and a salute to the flag.

Motion by Vice Mayor Helms, seconded by Commissioner Levy, to approve Minutes of the Special City Commission Meeting of February 11, 2026; and the City Commission Meeting of February 16, 2026. Upon vote, all ayes.

Interim City Manager Amy Palmer announced that the Auburndale High School's Navy Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps' (JROTC) Pass-In-Review Ceremony is this Wednesday, March 4th, at 10:00 a.m. The Ridge League of Cities dinner is being hosted by Bartow on March 12th. The Auburndale Public Library is hosting a Renaissance Faire on March 6th.

Interim City Manager Palmer announced that for the seventh year in a row, the Finance Department received the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting.

Finance Director Christopher Reeder expressed his gratitude.

Mayor Cam asked if there was public comment on any item not on the agenda. There was no public comment.

1. ORDINANCE #1847 AMENDING THE OFFICIAL ZONING MAP – EVEREST PROPERTY

Community Development Director Julie Womble said in 2005, the City approved a Planned Development-Commercial 1 (PD-C1) zoning classification for a development known as Ebersbach. The overall development was envisioned to have a mix of uses on 917.35 +/- acres and stretched along the Polk Parkway from Old Dixie Highway to K-Ville Avenue. In the fall of 2008 the project was abandoned, and individual properties of the large development were sold off.

In July of 2021, the City re-established the expired Planned Development-Commercial 1 (PD-C1) on 52.39 acres located on the northwest corner of US Highway 92 and the Polk Parkway, known as the Everest property. Since then, construction plans were approved for a rehabilitation hospital on the east side of the site closer to the Polk Parkway. In December of 2024, the PD-C1 was modified again (Ordinance #1802) to include multi-family on the east side of the properties and add in permitted future commercial uses which include a gas station.

Charles Booker, PE/Traditions Engineering, on behalf of Mark Sparks has requested to amend +/- 2.29 acres of the overall +/- 52.39 acres in order to construct a gas station accessing US Highway 92., which is a permitted use per Ordinance #1802.

She presented a graphic depicting the proposal. She presented a graphic depicting a timeline of the process.

As required by the Land Development Regulations (LDR's) for Planned Developments, this request is accompanied by a binding site plan. She presented a graphic depicting the site plan. The binding site plan depicts the design, number of pumps, traffic patterns, landscaping, and full site development on the requested +/- 2.29 acres.

The requested modification to the zoning district of Planned Development-Commercial 1 (PD-C1) is compatible with the existing Future Land Use of Neighborhood Activity Center (NAC) and is consistent with the zoning classification Planned Development-Commercial 1 (PD-C1) and all Land Development Regulations.

The Planning Commission recommended approval of the proposed modification to the Zoning classification of Planned Development-Commercial 1 (PD-C1) (+/-2.29 acres) (4-0). Staff recommends approval of the proposed Ordinance #1847 amending the Zoning classification of Planned Development-Commercial 1 (PD-C1) (+/- 2.29 acres).

Interim City Manager Palmer said the proposed Ordinance was prepared by the Community Development Department and reviewed by the Interim City Manager and City Attorney. The proposed Ordinance was approved on first reading February 16, 2026, and is being presented for second and final reading. Staff and Planning Commission recommend approval.

City Attorney Frederick J. Murphy Jr. read Ordinance No. 1847 entitled: **AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF AUBURNDALE, FLORIDA, AMENDING ORDINANCE NO. 764, THE LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS OF THE CITY OF AUBURNDALE, FLORIDA, BY AN AMENDMENT TO THE OFFICIAL ZONING MAP ESTABLISHING A MAJOR MODIFICATION TO THE CITY OF AUBURNDALE ZONING MAP CLASSIFICATION OF PLANNED DEVELOPMENT — COMMERCIAL 1 (PD-C1) ON A PARCEL OF LAND TOTALING +/- 2.29 ACRES; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE (General Location: us Hwy 92 W. and Polk Parkway),** by title only.

Mayor Cam asked for public comment. There was no public comment.

Motion by Commissioner Levy, seconded by Vice Mayor Helms, to approve Ordinance #1847 amending the Official Zoning Map – Everest Property, as read on second and final reading by title only. Upon vote, all ayes.

Mayor Cam closed the Regular Meeting and opened the Public Hearing.

2. PUBLIC HEARING – VACATING A RIGHT OF WAY – STEWART STREET

Interim City Manager Palmer read the public notice.

Community Development Director Womble said the City has received a petition from Darren Embry, of 130 McNichols Avenue, Auburndale, and Mark Carr of 529 McDonald Avenue, Auburndale, FL to vacate, abandon, and discontinue a portion of an unimproved right-of-way located on Stewart Street and McDonald Avenue. The right-of-way was platted in Don's Place Subdivision in 1948 but was never constructed.

She presented a graphic depicting the proposal.

The Resolution to vacate and close the portion of Stewart Street shown in Exhibit "A", is subject to the reservation of a utility easement for use by the City of Auburndale and its successors and assigns, which is consistent with the public interest relating to the provision of utility and other municipal services that may be located in the right-of-way.

Staff recommends approval of Resolution #2026-01 Vacating Right-of-Way – portion of Stewart Street.

Interim City Manager Palmer said the proposed Resolution was prepared by the Community Development Department and was reviewed by the City Attorney.

Mayor Cam asked for public comment. There was no public comment.

Mayor Cam closed the Public Hearing and reopened the Regular Commission Meeting.

3. RESOLUTION #2026-01 VACATING A RIGHT OF WAY – STEWART STREET

Interim City Manager Palmer said staff recommends approval of Resolution #2026-01 Vacating Right-of-Way – portion of Stewart Street.

City Attorney Frederick J. Murphy Jr. read Resolution No. 2026-01 entitled: **A RESOLUTION VACATING, ABANDONING AND DISCONTINUING PORTIONS OF A RIGHT-OF-WAY; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE (General Location: McDonald Ave and Stewart Street)**, by title only.

Motion by Vice Mayor Helms, seconded by Commissioner Levy, to approve Resolution #2026-01 Vacating Right-of-Way – portion of Stewart Street. Upon vote, all ayes.

Mayor Cam closed the Regular Meeting and opened the Public Hearing.

4. PUBLIC HEARING – COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT FUNDING

Interim City Manager Palmer read the public notice.

She said in compliance with the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) regulations, the City of Auburndale is holding a Public Hearing for the purpose of receiving direct citizen input on suggested proposals. After a presentation by City Staff on suggested proposals, the Commission will entertain public comment on these and other community development needs.

The City of Auburndale is scheduled to receive an estimated \$110,195 in Community Development Block Grant funding for Fiscal Year 2026-2027. In addition, the City anticipates roll-over funds from previous funding cycles (Fiscal Year 2025-2026) to spend during the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 funding cycle. City staff is proposing to utilize the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Community Development Block Grant funding to:

- Provide additional parking on Cleveland Street adjacent to the Auburndale Community Center. The proposed project will include construction. This project has been included during previous funding cycles but had been delayed due to complications with property acquisition. She presented graphics depicting the proposal.
- Provide improvements to Earl Wright Park, including new asphalt parking, new playground equipment, and undergrounding of electric service. This project may be a multi-year project, depending on available funding for each improvement to the park. She presented graphics depicting the proposal.

Staff recommends approving the proposed projects for the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Community Development Block Grant funding.

Mayor Cam asked for public comment. There was no public comment.

Mayor Cam closed the Public Hearing and reopened the Regular Commission Meeting.

5. APPROVAL OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROJECTS

Interim City Manager Palmer said staff recommends approval.

Motion by Commissioner Levy, seconded by Vice Mayor Helms, to approve the proposed projects for the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Community Development Block Grant funding.

Commissioner Levy asked how many extra parking spaces can we fit?

Interim City Manager Palmer said she will get that figure.

Upon vote, all ayes.

6. CONSIDER DEVELOPER'S AGREEMENT AMENDMENT – SCHALLER PRESERVE

Community Development Director Womble said the City has received a request from Schaller Preserve Community to amend their Developer's Agreement. On December 18, 2023, the City and Schaller Preserve

Community Development District, Brooklane Development, LLC, and Saddle Creek Road Investors, LLC., otherwise known as Schaller Preserve Community, entered into a Developer's Agreement to establish the respective rights and obligations between Schaller Preserve and the City. The improvements listed in the Development Agreement were identified by the City's 2022 Utility Study as necessary to allow future development on the subject site. The property is located in unincorporated Polk County but is within the City of Auburndale's utility service area. She presented a graphic depicting the proposal.

The study showed that development could not discharge into the City's wastewater system until the Pace Road Utility Improvements and the Southern Force Main re-route had been completed and operational, along with the planning and design phase of the Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant expansion was underway. Since the original Developer's Agreement was adopted, the Pace Road Utility improvements have been completed, Phase I of the Southern Force Main is being constructed, and easements have been granted for Phase II of the Southern Force Main.

Per the Development Agreement, City approval is needed to amend the Developer's Agreement. The requested amendment allows Schaller Preserve to construct, develop, including the construction of homes and/or other structures, and be permitted to commence (including receipt of building permits from Polk County). However, per the requested amendment, the development shall not be allowed to discharge in the City's Collection System until such time as both Phases I and II of the Southern Force Main Reroute Project are completed and are operational as determined by the City. She presented additional graphics of the proposal.

Staff recommends approval of the proposed amendment to the Developer's Agreement with Schaller Preserve.

Interim City Manager Palmer summarized the request.

Mayor Cam asked for public comment. There was no public comment.

Motion by Vice Mayor Helms, seconded by Commissioner Levy, to approve the proposed amendment to the Developer's Agreement with Schaller Preserve.

Commissioner Levy asked if this will open the door for any other developments within the City's purview to want to do the exact same thing?

Community Development Director Womble answered that every agreement is a little different. There are some that are attached to the Gapway Force Main. For the western side of the City, they are attached to the Southern Force Main. She and the Public Utilities director have been meeting with all of the developers to let them know the easement has been acquired from Tenorac, and several of them will be looking to amend their agreements. But there is a process of going to their attorneys and making amendments. The developers all have had the ability to put things into the ground, but they did not want to do that until they can go vertical. A lot of it has to do with their investors. She does think that is coming, but we have been having open communication on a weekly basis regarding the agreements.

Commissioner Levy said so basically it is case-by-case.

Community Development Director Womble said yes. Some of them will not want to develop until they can tie-in.

Interim City Manager Palmer expressed her gratitude to staff.

Upon vote, all ayes.

7. CITY DEED OF PARCEL TO COOPERATIVE VENTURES AND ACCEPTANCE OF UTILITY EASEMENT

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Interim City Manager Palmer said in 2023, Chastain Skillman completed an analysis of the City's wastewater treatment service area for the Regional Wastewater Treatment System and identified several infrastructure projects that are necessary to accommodate the growth the City is experiencing. One of the projects identified was the construction of the Southern Force Main, which extends from US Highway 92 to the Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant. The City has been working with several property owners to obtain easements to accommodate the new Southern Force Main.

In the fall of 2025, the City approached Cooperative Ventures, LLC for an easement on their property located at the northwest corner of Braddock Road and the Polk Parkway to accommodate the Southern Force Main. The Cooperative Ventures property is located south of and adjacent to City-owned property that is currently used for effluent discharge. She presented a graphic depicting the proposal. The City's property contains a small 1.71-acre portion which the City is unable to utilize for discharge because its location and shape will not provide for the setback requirements for a sprayfield. This small portion of property wraps around the north-eastern side of the Cooperative Ventures property and would give them additional road frontage on Shirley Lowrance Road. In exchange for deeding the property to Cooperative Ventures, the City would receive the easement required to construct the Southern Force Main through this area.

The proposed Special Warranty Deed and Utility Easement were prepared by the City Attorney and reviewed by the City Manager's Office, Public Utility Director, and the representative of Cooperative Ventures, LLC. Staff recommends approval of the deed and acceptance of the easement.

She summarized the request further.

Mayor Cam asked for public comment. There was no public comment.

Motion by Commissioner Levy, seconded by Vice Mayor Helms, to approve the deed and accept the easement, and to authorize the Mayor and City officials to execute the deed. Upon vote, all ayes.

The Meeting was adjourned at 7:27:30 p.m.

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing Minutes are true and correct.



Brandon Henry, City Clerk