

**AGENDA MINUTES
CITY COMMISSION MEETING
CITY HALL, 501 W MEADOW STREET
MONDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2024 5:30 PM**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The City of Leesburg Commission held a regular meeting on Monday, October 14, 2024, at Leesburg City Hall. Mayor Burry called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. with the following members present:

Commissioner Allyson Berry
Commissioner Jay Connell
Commissioner Mike Pederson (5:32 p.m.)
Commissioner Alan Reisman
Mayor Jimmy Burry

Also present, were City Manager (CM) Al Minner, City Clerk (CC) J. Andi Purvis, City Attorney (CA) Grant Watson, Deputy City Clerk (DCC) Anna Rottermond, the news media, and others.

INVOCATION

Mayor Burry gave the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

2. PROCLAMATIONS

A. Orlando Health Air Care Team 40th Anniversary

Mayor Burry read a proclamation proclaiming and recognizing the importance of the emergency services provided by the Orlando Health Air Care Team and offered congratulations on their 40th anniversary.

3. PRESENTATIONS:

A. Leesburg CDC Update

John Christian, Executive Director of the Leesburg Community Development Corporation, presented the commission with a presentation showing an update of everything they have been doing. Starting, he pointed out that the official name for their organization is Community Development Corporation of Leesburg, Inc.; there is no such thing as East Leesburg CDC or Leesburg East. Initially, it was the

Corporation of Leesburg and Vicinity, but the board members in 1997 were concerned not to spot just Leesburg but Okahumpka, Yalaha and Lisbon. They have three employees; one, Ms. Jones, has been there from the beginning of 1997, and she is the keeper of their records. Just so the commission is aware, the CDC has submitted a report every year since 1998 to receive CRA funding. If they want to know what they do, they do submit that every year. When they were doing the Pine Street renovations, the CDC reduced all the business owners' rent in half. Some were actually zero, because some months they had a hard time, and that cost the CDC about \$40,000 in revenue that they should have received, but they wanted to make sure the business owners stayed afloat. In 2024, they purchased two duplexes on East Street at the cost of \$280,000, and they did that with cash. That prepared them for the Floyd Lane Development, which will add two additional duplexes. They hired the Land Planning Group to create the conceptual plan. In Carver Heights, they have constructed three brand-new homes each valued at about \$310,000 and an estimated value of \$900,000. They completed the renovations at 945 East Main Street, which is a commercial building, for \$50,000, which included the renovation, labor, and \$8,000 in materials. Many people think that, because they are a nonprofit, they do not pay taxes, but they paid \$26,571 in taxes. For maintenance and repair, they paid \$46,072, and utilities cost \$25,534. Often, they cannot brag about what they do as an organization, but they also gave \$10,000 to local nonprofits. One of our local churches was under code enforcement indictment for a roof, and needed help, so they gave them \$5,000 to repair that roof to get out from under Code Enforcement. They are excited about what the CDC is doing, and his talking does not give the full example.

Referring to his slides, he showed Snow Place that they acquired. It was under the City of Leesburg Code Enforcement, and had almost \$900,000 in fines. The CDC purchased these properties with the help of the City of Leesburg by relieving the code enforcement fines for the local residents, so instead of them losing the property, the CDC actually gave over \$150,000 to that owner so that they did not walk away from anything. This property had raw sewage running down Snow Place, so the CDC purchased those three triplexes. They purchased them, renovated them, and made them look new and livable. The rent goes for \$1,000 a month for a two-bedroom, one-bath house. They did that to make sure that they stayed affordable, so people could have a decent place to live in Leesburg. He showed what Pine Street looked like in 2020 when the City of Leesburg partnered with the CDC to purchase the property across the street from where the Aquatic Center is located now. They got \$350,000 and bought everything on the other side of Pine Street. He showed a picture of the second restaurant that they would hear more about later. He showed the interior renovation that they had done. He showed them what it looked like when they purchased it and what it looks like now. He showed the Pine Street Lounge when they purchased it. He showed how the candle shop looked when they bought it compared to what it looks like now. He showed the CDC Business Incubator both then and now. They have two businesses: Kingdom Garden Security Service, and another clothing shop inside that building. He showed the Floyd Lane East Street property that was purchased for \$280,000. He showed the board of directors doing a groundbreaking in Carver Heights. In 2022, when the City of Leesburg, and he commended the city manager and staff because the commission at that time, when covid funds came in, they took out \$750,000. From that, they took \$550,000 out, because they knew Pine Street was so important, so they had \$450 left, and they took \$100,000 because they had CDC cash, so they purchased the other block on Pine Street. He showed what it looked like then compared to now. People actually live in those places, and they created the Betty Stevens Coney Business Center of Excellence signage that they paid for. They put it out front to make Pine Street look just like any other business quarter in Leesburg. These are business owners who came to Leesburg believing in the CDC vision. He showed the inside of what used to be living quarters. It is now for business owners to have small business incubators on Pine Street. They created four of those. He showed the corner of Pine Street which is now home of Sandras Cleaning Services, after the CDC was renovated. He showed the inside of Mr. Sanders cleaning service. He showed Mike Street, which has a Barber and Flower Shop, after renovations. He showed a picture of the first chairperson, Reverend Arthur Bishop Middleton. He showed the Heritage Estates, because he wanted them to realize where the CDC

came from and what Leesburg had in the city. He showed outhouses that were from around 2000. They were still building outhouses, and they were still in Leesburg in the year 2000. He showed the Main Street building that used to be a nightclub. The CDC renovated it and paid \$68,000 in 2020, and they used some of the covid funds to renovate this year, it included \$50,000 in labor and \$8,000 in materials. He showed what it looked like inside then and now. He showed a picture of the bathroom and the kitchen that was removed to provide new office space. UF Health donated the facility office that used to be the police CID building, and they believe this is the kind of partnership that the federal consent decree talks about for the hospital partnering with the CDC and donating the building for their office space. He showed more apartments on Snow Place, and they go for \$950 a month for rent. He knows they can find another place for \$950. These are the homes they are building on Harlem Avenue, and they are all three bedroom two-bath houses and some commissioners were there at the ribbon cutting. He showed a picture of 220 Harlem Avenue. It included the kitchen and bathrooms. This is what homeownership does. On Georgia Avenue they have their newest homeowner who was out raking her yard after the hurricane. If she did not live in that home, that debris would continue to be on that lot. They really believe in homeownership because it creates value and pride in the community. With future capital projects, they have a second restaurant on Pine Street. That is what they are working on now. It will be in 2025. They will create a second restaurant, and continue the development of Snow Place. Right now, they have three triplexes, and they are looking at a five acre track potentially for more multifamily development or single family development to build out Floyd Lane and add two duplexes. They are waiting for the city to approve a duplex or quad-plex, but that will be in 2025. They did have lots donated by the City of Leesburg on Childs Street, and they are preparing a conceptual plan of what would be the best and highest use for that property. They will continue their single family construction throughout the City of Leesburg through fair housing. Once again, they look and ask for the City of Leesburg to continue to partner. Some of the community empowerment things that they do is to provide financial literacy. They have a grant from PNC Bank homeownership education, and they found out and realized through the building of homes that many people in our community are far away from the education of how to become a homeowner. Betty Stevens-Coney was in attendance, and she spearheaded the people's brunch where they do a monthly brunch for over 100 seniors. They show up and get information, knowledge, and fellowship with each other. It gets them out of the house and the CDC has been doing that for seven years. We have been doing the people's brunch every month, and they thanked the City of Leesburg for partnering with them for the people's brunch.

Now, what are their expectations of the city? They would like a continued partnership that continues to add stability to the most vulnerable areas of our city. Our Leesburg CRA and Montclair Carver Heights and those vulnerable areas. We ask the city to adhere to the federal consent decree and provide necessary resources and capacity building opportunities for the CDC. This is easy, and it is important that the city commissioners show up to City CDC activities and events just as they show up for other partnered events throughout the city. Many times they have events where many of the commissioners do not show up. We call the commissioners, and they do not return phone calls. His secretary calls and they do not call back. He looks on Facebook and sees commissioners at everybody else's events, so they say they are an important part of our city too, and they expect the commissioners to understand that they represent the entire city. They have requests, and request number one is to ask the commission, the city manager, and the city attorney to meet with the CDC because they have some things to request. First, they would like to request that the central business district be expanded to include Pine Street. Number two is to request that residential lots be donated to the CDC as soon as possible in accordance with page 6, subsection B of the consent decree. They provided a copy of that showing what the city should be doing. It says that the city should back initiatives formulated by the CDC and, being that the city has already donated property to Habitat, they think that this is something that should be normal and, with the federal consent decree, it should not be an ask, it should be something that the city should want to do since they see what they built in Carver Heights. They also request \$50,000 from the Greater Leesburg CRA for the build out of a commercial kitchen, per page 7, subsection 12 of the federal consent decree, which states that the CDC

feels the City has additional funding, that they could ask for that funding, and if the City disagrees, then they would have a meeting to discuss the funding. There is some money that rolled over from the CRA that they did not spend two years ago, which means they may not need it, so they are asking for \$50,000. They also ask that they have the same ordinance that was passed at the last meeting where the City of Leesburg amended a city code ordinance of Chapter 5, Section 5-6 for consumption of open containers, because they would like Pine Street to be an open container spot when the restaurants open and their lounge, so people can interact between the two restaurants without having to worry about open containers. They also built the house and this is where they needed the city manager and the city attorney to talk with them, because they think on page 6 subsection F, where it says the city will seek reasonable development activities and products of the CDC and support those including appropriate and necessary infrastructure. They are building a house in Harlem where they ran into a problem with infrastructure and the city manager was so gracious and the public works director sent city workers out to find the tap. First, the city identified the tap and their plumber dug it up about 10 feet for two days, but they could not find the tap. The city came, and they did find the tap, but they dug and found the right spot to dig in, so the city manager said he had to charge him \$2,610.61, and they felt when looking at the consent decree that the city should provide the necessary infrastructure, so they requested to get that money back from the city. Also, there was an issue in Carver Heights with flooding, and he knows it has been an ongoing issue and the city put two retention ponds at Berry Park that are located at McCormick and Berry, but that still floods. They also request that the city find use of the \$300,000 in the CRA funding that is extra, that is a roll-over, and it would be ideal to use it on the three pieces of land on Stenson for \$140,000. They could buy it and make it a storm water project, and they could use the CRA funds to alleviate the flooding as soon as possible. So they have thirteen residential units ranging from \$400 to \$950 and eighteen commercial units, ranging from \$650 to \$1,800. That was the presentation, and he would be happy to answer any questions.

Commissioner Berry thanked him for the presentation. She asked if he would go back through the requests and if he could provide a copy of those requests. **Mr. Christian** said yes, he would provide her with a copy. However, it is a perception of, and he must say while he was a commissioner they did not bring out the federal consent decree because the city manager did a phenomenal job of adding to the CDC's requests. They did not have to talk about it because the city donated code enforcement houses that were in bad shape, and they fixed them up and sold them. They did business because the CDC was actively working. He hopes and prays that it is not an adversary approach from the CDC in the city because they should be partners, since they are charged with getting rid of blight in the worst areas of the city. He feels they have done a phenomenal job the last two years, and they expect the same participation and cooperation that you give other nonprofits. His community has to come out and pack the room while other groups that come in get whatever they want with two people. This body needs to really understand and give the city manager, whether they agree or not, because it is talked about in the consent decree. If you read it, it talks about the city supporting the planning and zoning applications of the CDC. That does not mean you rubber stamp it, but you should not be voting against planning and zoning activities of the CDC per the consent decree. That is why they would like to sit down with the city attorney because he has documents from 2005 when Fred Morrison gave his opinion on the CDC and the CRA's relationship, so he would really like the city attorney and the city manager to sit down with the CDC so we can be on the same page when they bring requests to the city. That way they do not have to get up here and argue about things that they think are in black and white. He would really like it if the city manager or the city attorney could sit down with them because they do have requests that mirror what is happening in Downtown Leesburg. **Commissioner Berry** asked if, being the commissioner for district one, could she be included in that meeting as well, so she could find out what was going on. She just got a wealth of information, and she thanked him for sharing it. However, there was a lot that she did not know. She is ready to work with the CDC of Leesburg as well as the CDC for Carver Heights and Montclair. **Mr. Christian** said yes. Lastly, people ask all the time why they have two CDCs. We have two CDCs

because of the federal consent decree that states if another CDC was created they would get \$30,000 for ten years, so he petitioned the federal lawyers for another CDC. That was how the CDC West started with \$30,000 for ten years, because of the federal consent decree, and they were working together as one until some things happened, and they branched off and did their own thing, with their own bank account. If they go back and check the records initially, this CDC of Leesburg held all the funds until some things happened, and they wanted to use their funds the way they wanted to use them, so it got a little hectic. He was not there at that time when they branched out, but that is why we have two CDCs; per the federal consent decree.

B. America in Bloom Overview

Public Works Director (PWD) Cliff Kelsey stated a little over a year ago the public works department was tasked with looking into the America in Bloom Program, so this is an update on where we are and what the program is about. America in Bloom is a nationwide program that recognizes cities for beautification efforts in educating the community on flowers, horticulture, and trees. It looks at communities getting together, improving their surroundings, and the quality of life for the residents. He gave a quick overview of the organization's vision and their mission; stating basically, it is all about education and the beautification of your surroundings, and it really thrives with community participation. It is a three-step program. Level one is activating your community, which is what Public Works did. We filled out the forms, paid the initiation fee, and now we are at a point where they sent us a lovely plaque that we can hang in the chambers, and they also sent us a nice sign that will most likely be placed in Town Square, per the city manager's discretion. Level two is building your community. So far there have been a few plank owners of this program; Commissioner Reisman, himself, and Ms. Sandi Moore from the Chamber of Commerce. We have pushed this about as far as we can go. Internally, we have gone to meetings to educate ourselves, and we have been brainstorming ideas. We had lunch today to discuss some initiatives and topics we would like to push forward, so we need to take that next step. He found that most cities have what they call a Beautification Board made up of volunteers. City staff will definitely support that and be the action arm to do the heavy lifting, but to drive the community spirit, the volunteers, and to really make the program thrive, that is where we feel this program needs to go. Why do we want to do this? It improves the quality of life for our residents. There are economic benefits downtown, and when downtown looks beautiful, a lot of people want to go there and patronize the merchants. There is community pride, improved ecosystems, and just an all in all community engagement.

Recommendations from public works and the plank owners of the American Bloom program are to establish a Beautification Board comprised of volunteers and city staff. The city will act as the action arm for executing the initiatives and the projects that improve our standing throughout the city and in the American in Bloom program. We can work separately or together, and just do good things to make the city more beautiful than it is already. Before we take questions, I will let Ms. Sandi Moore say a few words. And, as we were talking today, we feel the city of Leesburg is already doing a lot of these initiatives; we are already planting flowers in downtown on Main Street, we do the annuals every quarter, and there are a lot of things that we just need to take credit for. Take everything to the next level, get credit, and bring the City of Leesburg to the stage.

Sandi Moore said she thinks the city has done an incredible job and going to these meetings and listening to the other cities that have adopted this program, has actually made her even more proud of our city and what we have already been doing. When it comes to the downtown and the different parks that we have, the beautification efforts, she thinks one of the main things is going to be inventorying where we are already doing really great things. We need to really promote and advertise it more as a destination for people to be able to come and see different types of gardens, like the library has a butterfly garden, Bourley Park and, obviously, the Venetian Gardens. Even our cemeteries. Tavares had to redo their

cemetery because they had allowed it to really get run down, and we have a beautiful cemetery thanks to our city and the private investment that has gone on there. She thinks this is an incredible program for us to be a part of, and it allows us to identify with people who really have a passion for this type of thing. She was talking to someone on the phone earlier today who really has a passion for seeing us do a community garden with everybody, with food insecurities and different people, to have a garden like that and to be able to teach people how to grow their own food. To have a place where people can harvest food from a community garden that the city has, so this is just a program I think the city is going to benefit from and will continue to do really great things with.

Commissioner Berry asked if this is just for the City of Leesburg or could it be considered as a spot for planting flowers at each entrance to a community where we have our city signs introducing where you are entering? **PWD Kelsey** replied absolutely. He and the city manager actually talked about doing that. It would be a good initiative for the American in Bloom to go to the community signs, beautify them, to improve the look, and grow the community. Yes, ma'am.

Commissioner Reisman thanked Sandi and Cliff for their hard work and their dedication to this. He thinks this will be good, and it is not just for downtown, this is for every part of our city. If the commission felt okay about it, would we be open to having people apply to be on the committee and then establishing rules like we do our other boards? I know there are a lot of people who have shown interest or we can appoint people, but I think if you get people that actually apply, they will have a better interest in it. **Commissioner Pederson** said Sandi may not speak to him again after this, but his idea is maybe a committee under the chamber. **Commissioner Reisman** said that is kind of what they talked about because of the beautification and the business aspect of it. He asked Sandi if she would be open to being involved like that. **Sandi Moore** replied sure. **Commissioner Berry** asked would it be the city appointing people or just volunteers who want to work with on it. How many on the board? How would you establish it? **Commissioner Reisman** answered he thinks anyone can volunteer for the initiatives, the committee who would pick the projects. So that Andi would put an application out and then people could apply for it, and it would be under the chamber. **Mayor Burry** said he is in favor of it. His only concern would be that, potentially, by just allowing anybody that applies, we may become heavily vested in one community and not the entire city. He thinks it is kind of important that membership be decided on the board. **Commissioner Reisman** replied we could make it so that they have to come back to us for the final decision for approval. **Mayor Burry** said he just wants to make sure every community has an equal say. **Commissioner Pederson** asked if they came in here tonight with the intention of putting it under the chamber. Was that discussed? **Commissioner Reisman** replied under the Chamber's umbrella, but the city oversight. **Mayor Burry** asked if this is something we need to establish by ordinance. **CM Minner** replied it might, so we will come back to you. **CA Watson** agreed, saying we have the committees and advisory boards and everything in the code so we will take a look at the procedures. **Mayor Burry** thanked everyone.

4. **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

This section is reserved for members of the public to bring up matters of concern or opportunities for praise. Issues brought up will not be discussed in detail at this meeting. Issues will either be referred to the proper staff or will be scheduled for consideration at a future City Commission Meeting. Comments are limited to three minutes.

Murray Tucker of Lone Oak Cemetery Board of Trustees stated that in a few days, on October 24th, is our annual Moonlight Tour where we open up the Cemetery at 5:30 p.m. We have lots of surprises, so come out and help us raise some money because we need all the help we can get. I know several of you all have been there before, it is a great time, and we are going to have our old stand-bys where our

founding fathers are featured, and we are going to be featuring three or four other families; not going to tell you who that is, so you have to come out and see. Also, on the 14th of December is our Wreaths Across America. We are still short wreaths for both Lone Oak and Shady Oak, so if the public wants to help with that, you can either purchase them at our office or go to wreathsassacrossamerica.com and choose one. Believe they are \$15 a piece or a package deal for more, so if you can help us out with some wreaths, that would be great. He is glad Mr. Christian is here with all his people because this part affects Shady Oak. We had a volunteer, Alan, who is a mapmaker, and he went out, made a map of Shady Oak, along with all the grave sites. Most people do not know that the history of Shady Oak was lost when Dabney burned down; there is not much left, but now that we have a record of all the graves, we are going through Lone Oak and Shady Oak to GPS every grave site. You will be able to use a GPS app on your phone, like grave finder, and all that if you are doing genealogy looking for your family history. It is going to make it really easy for people to find their loved ones and have a good record. We had a couple of wind events out at Shady Oak, but the flag has been fixed, the trees have been cut down, and he is sure we have more to do out there, but we are trying to keep both of them looking good. Please come out and support us next week and in December.

Dr Erica Jasper gave kudos to the electric and the public works departments for such an expeditious job doing hurricane aftermath and the cleanup after Hurricane Milton. Thank you so much to the city manager as well for dealing with the Lake Griffin issue. Also, to Mayor Burry, thank you for coming to check on our neighborhood, Carver Heights. There was extensive flooding in the areas of Talladega, John Avenue, Georgia, Nebraska, and also Stinson Street she believes. She appreciates everything that was done.

Tiffany Portier, a business owner on Pine Street, came to see if the Commission would consider a dumpster at the end where the lounge is located between the four businesses. We already pay for trash, but when they have something at the lounge, it gets full, does not look good, and if not put out by the road it does not get picked up. So just asking if we could get one dumpster, if you will consider that. **CM Minner** said he will speak with Cliff to see what we can do. **Ms. Portier** thanked him.

Athia Linzy owner of Cotton's Kitchen, said since the road construction, which she is so grateful for, on the side of her restaurant, what she calls her parking lot, is flooded. Since the road construction, even the dumpster truck driver has trouble coming in and out of there and the more he comes in and out the deeper it is getting. Just wanted to know if she could get some dirt or something or whatever you could do to fill in that spot because it is not safe. City Manager pointed her to Cliff. Ms. Linzy said alright, she will talk with Cliff. All she wants is some dirt. Everyone laughed.

Kelly Veilleux, new to this arena, here tonight to represent the SALT Outreach. She is representing a nonprofit who has for the last 12 years been serving the unsheltered, we like to call them that rather, than homeless, of the greater Orlando area. Great successful things have really been happening there and we are looking to bring an outpost center up here to Lake County, specifically in this area. You see on the flyer that part of the mission is comprehensive mobile drop in centers. They do that through shower trailers here in our area. We have a lot of feeding programs and I think that is wonderful, but some of the other services are greatly lacking. This takes care of showers and laundry facilities as well as counseling, outreach coordinating, and case management. Helping people to transition from unsheltered status to low reasonable housing is something that we do in the Orlando area, and we are hoping to be able to partner and do some of that up here as well. You can see the success here, it kind of speaks for itself, but the other side of the pamphlet talks about our goal of bringing it here to Lake County. We have an \$80,000 startup cost, which includes the cost of a brand-new trailer, and we are 90% funded already. In fact, we have already got the trailer on location, we just need to get the rest of our startup costs to get going. We are hoping to have it ready for the next outreach that friends of the homeless will be doing next month.

Just wanted to raise the awareness and let you know I have been working with Lake County Housing, think her name is Maria, and they are very supportive in what we are doing. She does have a few extra flyers if anyone else in the room is interested. Thank you.

Carmen Rogers said she knows there has been some ordinances past recently concerning the homeless or the disenfranchised, as she likes to call them. Long story short, she just started a nonprofit, has all the paperwork in order, not state funded yet, but a nonprofit, and is trying to make sure that when we are going out to feed and serve the homeless, that we are not arrested. She is a correctional officer and does not plan to go behind bars as anything but a correction officer. Something that is very concerning to her. She knows many laws have passed that are changing things, but she needs to make sure that they are safe when they are out to serve our people in this community. There is a homeless problem in this community. I do not care what anybody says, friends of the homeless go out, Ms. Kashada, she feeds anywhere from 50 to 85 people every single Monday. I go out three to four times, three two to three times a week and I feed several people, also Linda Mobley, goes out and feeds several times a week. We do have a homeless problem in Lake County, Florida, and we want to make sure that we are able to continue to do the vision and the plan that we have set out. What I have started my nonprofit out to do, is to help to eradicate homelessness one person at a time, one family at a time. If the things that happen to some of them happened to some of us in this room, we could be in that exact same position, but thank God that we are not. So, my mission is to eradicate homelessness one family at a time. My vision is a commitment to improving the lives of the homeless, restoring dignity to those we serve. We will provide hot meals to those in our community who are in need and I just want to make sure that is not going to be a problem. She provided a copy of her credentials to have on file, so you will know not to bother Carmen Rogers.

Tralonie Montoute, 816 Georgia Avenue, said she and her family have been living there for about 25 years, and she is here to talk about the concerns of this neighborhood. This is a flood area and she has been dealing with flooding for well since she been there. Milton was the most devastating flood we ever had. She is both mother and father to her kids and if her home would have been taken away by flooding, she could have done nothing and they would have just been homeless. She has complained to the city of Leesburg, wanting them to fix the flooding problem there for a while. She has documentation, video and pictures. This last flooding, they had to literally rip the top of the drain off the drain so that they could relieve some of the water that was around our houses, our gates. On the wall, she showed how high the water was on her side and her neighbors. She thought they were going to flood out. She has damages to her brand-new gate that the city of Leesburg has granted her, it is broken and leaning to the side. The city came out and tried to relieve the water and they put sandbags on the side of the gate that brought pressure inside her gate, so the gate broke and the water did not go outside the gate because of the sandbags; it was not draining. We have a drainage problem in our neighborhood, they are clogged, the trees are bad, overlapping the streets, clogging the drains. We do not have any lights. My son Jeremiah has seizures. There are no lights outside my house. I have cameras around my house so if he was to go out the door I do not know where he is going or which way he went because there is no lighting out there.

This has been going on for almost 27 years. One neighbor said in the first year she was there it flooded. The city of Leesburg knows this is going on. I do not want to go into my old age with my house being flooded like this. I need for the city of Leesburg to rectify this. The damages done to my house; I have a shed in the back with about \$2,500 worth of furniture, it is flooded, it is no good. I work hard, I am a CNA and I drive school buses, been doing this for over 25 years and I work hard for what I have. To have it flooded out, that is ridiculous when the city of Leesburg could have rectified this before this storm. They knew about this and could have taken care of it, but they didn't, they overlooked it. I have video, when I notified the public works department, when we flooded, the guy came by the house but he did not even stop, did not even look at the drains, just kept going. I have a video of that. I am tired of being scared whether my house is going to be here today or tomorrow. I pay my taxes like everybody else and I want this to be rectified.

5. CONSENT AGENDA:

Routine items are placed on the Consent Agenda to expedite the meeting. If the Commission/Staff wish to discuss any item, the procedure is as follows: (1) pull the item(s) from the Consent Agenda; (2) vote on remaining items with one roll call vote, (3) discuss each pulled item and vote by roll call

Items pulled for discussion:

5.B.1 - Purchase Request for three (3) Ford Explorer SUV 4x2 vehicles from Duval Ford, LLC., for the City of Leesburg Police Department for the total amount of \$111,978.00;

5.C.1 - Approving a mural sign for placement on the side of the building on a parcel owned by Star Five Properties, Inc., and operating at Checkers Restaurant, and being located at 2508 Citrus Boulevard.

Commissioner Reisman moved to adopt the Consent Agenda except for 5.B.1 and 5.C.1, and Commissioner Pederson seconded the motion.

The roll call vote was:

Commissioner Connell	Yes
Commissioner Reisman	Yes
Commissioner Pederson	Yes
Commissioner Berry	Yes
Mayor Burry	Yes

Five yeas, no nays, the Commission adopted the Consent Agenda, as follows:
(Each item has its coordinated resolution number listed below the header)

A. CITY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES:

1. Regular meeting held September 23, 2024

B. PURCHASING ITEMS:

1. Purchase request for the purchase of three (3) Ford Explorer SUV 4x2 vehicles from Duval Ford, LLC, for the City of Leesburg Police Department in the total amount of \$111,978.00. Duval Ford, LLC is the contract holder for the central Florida region under the Florida Sheriffs Association contract #FSA24-VEL32.0.

Commissioner Reisman introduced the purchase request to be read by title only. CC Purvis read the purchase request by title only.

Commissioner Reisman made a motion to approve the purchase request and Commissioner Berry seconded the motion.

Mayor Burry requested comments from the Commission and the audience.

Commissioner Reisman wanted to know if there was a way to get a bid from a local dealership like Key Scales or Prestige versus using an out-of-town dealership. **Deputy City Manager (DCM) Robert Hicks** responded that each dealership has the opportunity to get on the state and the sheriff's contract. Prestige did it years ago. However, it was very difficult to get the quantity of vehicles because everybody was doing them, but the sheriff's and state contracts are the easiest way to make sure you are getting vehicles on time and at the right price, because they do not have to be negotiated out. Any local dealer is welcome to get on those contracts. **Commissioner Reisman** indicated that he was trying to support local businesses. **DCM Hicks** added that they do too, and if there is a situation where they find a single or a couple of vehicles on the lot at a better price, they will absolutely purchase them. **Mayor Burry** asked if there were any other comments or questions from the commission and the public. There were none.

The roll call vote was:

Commissioner Reisman	Yes
Commissioner Pederson	Yes
Commissioner Berry	Yes
Commissioner Connell	Yes
Mayor Burry	Yes

Five yeas, no nays, the Commission approved the purchase request.

C. RESOLUTIONS:

- 1. Resolution of the City Commission of the City of Leesburg, Florida, approving a mural sign for placement on the side of the building on a parcel owned by Star Five Properties, Inc., and operating as Checkers restaurant, and being located at 2508 Citrus Boulevard, in Section 10, Township 19 South, Range 24 East, in Leesburg, Florida; and providing an effective date. (Checkers Mural)**

TABLED RESOLUTION

Commissioner Reisman introduced the resolution to be read by title only. CC Purvis read the resolution by title only.

Commissioner Reisman made a motion to adopt the resolution and Commissioner Pederson seconded the motion.

Mayor Burry requested comments from the Commission and the audience.

Commissioner Reisman wanted further information about the exhibit in the packet. It says the exhibit shows a typical design of the sign company and that a design specific to Leesburg was anticipated. He would prefer to see the anticipated design prior to approving. He also thought all public art had to go through the review committee and this did not go through that committee; the public arts committee. We all appointed one member to that committee. If they are going to put up a mural, he would prefer something that ties into Leesburg. **Commissioner Connell** (referring to the rendering) stated this design has no business being on US 27 in Leesburg. He is all for murals, but this one is so out of character for the middle of our town, it is pitiful. The mural down by the Duke Transfer Station by Center Street is beautiful, and it fits right in. However, this one would be in the middle of our town. He did not care if it

said "We Love Leesburg", it was horrible. We should not move forward at this point. This does not need to go before the art board, it needs to be stopped now. He did not see how they could even entertain this. **Commissioner Reisman** said art is subjective. He agreed that he did not like what was provided, but he would like to see if the art board would work with the applicant to come up with a new design. **Commissioner Connell** mentioned that they could always come back with a redesign, but at this stage there was nothing in the exhibit that they could even work with. **CM Minner** wanted to provide some background about why this made the packet. Obviously, the intention there was that it would be a "We Love Leesburg". This got to his desk on Tuesday prior to the storm from the planning and zoning department. We have not had an art board meeting almost since its inception because they had an issue with the Center for the Arts. In his haste to get this moving so they could get an answer one way or another and, in preparation for the storm, he left it on this agenda. At this point, they do have a couple of options. They can instruct it to be sent to the arts board, or they can kill it now, and if they do that, we would get back with the applicant to let them know the commission did not like the picture. If they want to move forward with another concept, they would bring that to the arts board first. **Commissioner Connell** pointed out that would be what he would recommend. They need to stop this thing now and let them completely redesign it because there is nothing on there that he could even begin to work with. **Mayor Burry** said he was not an artist and he appreciates art. **Commissioner Connell** stated he appreciates art too, but this is not appropriate for this location. **Mayor Burry** commented that he would not go that far, but we do have an art board that is made up of individuals who know more about art. **Commissioner Connell** remarked that art is in the eye of the beholder, but do we really want this in the middle of town? We are trying to beautify US 27, and this does not fit into anything. **Mayor Burry** clarified that this would be located at Checkers, which is across the street from Walmart. He would rather see it kicked back to the art board because that is their job. Let them discuss it to see how they feel about it. **Commissioner Reisman** added that if the art board did not like it, it would be kicked back to the applicant. **Commissioner Connell** pointed out that one way or the other this would come back to the commission. **Mayor Burry** agreed. **Commissioner Connell** continued to say the arts board would not approve this nonsense. **CM Minner** answered no, that was incorrect because if the arts board liked it, then it would be approved. **Commissioner Connell** said they should absolutely not allow that to happen. They could not take that chance. **Commissioner Reisman** wanted to verify that even if the arts board approves it, it will still come back to the commission for final approval just like everything else does, because they are an advisory committee. **CA Watson** said for clarification the art board was set up as an advisory board. **CM Minner** stated they needed to go back and double-check. Remember this board was put together with the thought that they were going to approve murals for downtown and then, when the Center for the Arts went through their situation, we never really tested it, because it had been a number of years since they met. **Commissioner Connell** wanted to know, since it has been longer than two years ago, is anyone still on the arts board? **CM Minner** said yes, because annually the commission appoints members to this board. Even though they have not met in quite some time. **Mayor Burry** indicated that the arts board was set up like the airport board. They do not spend money, they do not go out and do things, they make suggestions, and it comes through the commission. That is what he would like to do with this. He would like to see this come through the art board, and if they do not like it, maybe they can work with Checkers to come up with something different that could be approved. **Commissioner Pederson** jokingly said that they do have a liaison to the arts committee, so maybe that should be Commissioner Connell. **Commissioner Reisman** pointed out that Commissioner Berry was the liaison. They have to remember that each member of the commission appointed an individual to that arts advisory board. **Mayor Burry** suggested that they refer this item to that board so they can get a recommendation from them. **CA Watson** agreed. They will check the code again to make sure because he thought it was an advisory board too. **Commissioner Reisman** pointed out that if the code does not state that, it needs to be changed.

Commissioner Reisman made a motion to table this until a time certain, so that the city manager can get

with the public arts board and go from there. Commissioner Pederson seconded the motion.

Commissioner Connell wanted to clarify that they were going to table this, but if we find the arts board has the authority to approve this, then he would not be for it. **Commissioner Reisman** said they just agreed that they would look into that and change it if they needed to. **Commissioner Connell** mentioned that he did not hear that as part of the motion. He then asked if there were any staff members on that board. **CM Minner** answered no. They made the Center for the Arts Director the chairperson for that board. **Commissioner Connell** asked for an update once the city manager reached out to the members because he wanted to verify if they were even active, since it had been years since we had utilized them. **CM Minner** answered yes.

The roll call vote was:

Commissioner Pederson	Yes
Commissioner Berry	Yes
Commissioner Connell	Yes
Commissioner Reisman	Yes
Mayor Burry	Yes

Five yeas, no nays, the Commission tabled the resolution.

2. **Resolution of the City Commission of the City of Leesburg, Florida, authorizing the Mayor and City Clerk to execute the Leesburg International Airport, Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Program; and providing an effective date.**

ADOPTED RESOLUTION 11,903

3. **Resolution of the City Commission of the City of Leesburg, Florida, accepting and approving a plat for Silver Lake Estates, Phase 1, a subdivision of the City of Leesburg, Florida, being a portion of Section 15, Township 19 South, Ranges 25 East, Lake County, Florida; and accepting and dedicating to the use of the public any easements or public places shown thereon as being dedicated to the public; and providing an effective date. (Silver Lake Estates Phase 1 Plat)**

ADOPTED RESOLUTION 11,904

4. **Resolution of the City Commission of the City of Leesburg, Florida, authorizing the Leesburg Police Department to apply for and, if awarded, accept an Edward Byrne Grant (JAG Local) from the U.S. Department of Justice for \$13,703.00 to defray costs associated with the purchase of department equipment; and providing an effective date.**

ADOPTED RESOLUTION 11,905

5. **Resolution of the City Commission of the City of Leesburg, Florida authorizing the designation of existing city staff to serve as the Clerk to the**

Local Hearing Officer for the School Zone Speed Enforcement program; and providing an effective date.

ADOPTED RESOLUTION 11,906

- 6. Resolution of the City Commission of the City of Leesburg, Florida, appointing one member to the Library Advisory Board to a five-year term ending September 30, 2029; and providing an effective date.**

ADOPTED RESOLUTION 11,907

- 7. Resolution of the City Commission of the City of Leesburg, Florida authorizing Corey Goepfert as the City of Leesburg Designated Representative on the Florida Gas Utility Board of Directors, and James "Jim" Williams as Alternate; and providing an effective date.**

ADOPTED RESOLUTION 11,908

- 8. Resolution of the City Commission of the City of Leesburg, Florida, appointing three members to the Leesburg Planning Commission; and providing an effective date.**

ADOPTED RESOLUTION 11,909

6. PUBLIC HEARINGS AND NON-ROUTINE ITEMS:

A. SECOND READING OF ORDINANCES

- 1. An Ordinance of the City of Leesburg, Florida; creating Section 2-8 of the City's Code of Ordinances; entitled control of access to City-Owned, controlled, and leased property; establishing a process to designate facilities as public forums, limited public forums or non-public forums; establishing trespass notice for public property; providing for severability; providing for conflicts; providing for codification; and providing for an effective date.**

ADOPTED ORDINANCE 24-61

Commissioner Reisman introduced the ordinance to be read by title only. CC Purvis read the ordinance by title only.

Commissioner Reisman made a motion to adopt the ordinance and Commissioner Pederson seconded the motion.

Mayor Burry stated they talked about this in depth at the last meeting. He asked the city attorney to provide a quick review for the public. **CA Watson** explained that this ordinance has the goal of establishing some limitations in terms of public property. There are obviously areas of city hall that are used for employee work spaces, and they are not necessarily open public forums for everyone to come to. The idea here was to get in line with what the city has been working on with the badges and setting up restrictions to access some areas of city facilities. It was to basically set that system up formally. This is a copy of what the county did with county facilities, so there is essentially no change or difference from what the county does. It also gives the city manager some authority to set up some limitations inside the buildings when public meetings are not going on. That way, people are not disrupted in their work and people can have meetings with city staff as needed. That is really what this ordinance is about. It also sets up a trespass process that would allow people to be trespassed from public property, and it gives procedures for appealing that process. They would have a process to come back and challenge anything they believe was wrongfully done in terms of removing them from any facilities. **Mayor Burry** asked if there were any questions or comments from the commission and the public. There were none.

The roll call vote was:

Commissioner Berry	Yes
Commissioner Connell	Yes
Commissioner Reisman	Yes
Commissioner Pederson	Yes
Mayor Burry	Yes

Five yeas, no nays, the Commission adopted the ordinance.

2. An Ordinance of the City of Leesburg, Florida; Amending Chapter 15, Article I "General Offenses" to create Section 15-7 Entitled "Public Camping or Sleeping" prohibiting unauthorized camping at any time within the City; providing for severability; providing for conflicts; providing for codification; and providing for an effective date.

ADOPTED ORDINANCE 24-62

Commissioner Reisman introduced the ordinance to be read by title only. CC Purvis read the ordinance by title only.

Commissioner Reisman made a motion to adopt the ordinance and Commissioner Berry seconded the motion.

Mayor Burry requested the city attorney to provide a quick overview. **CA Watson** stated as they talked during the first reading, there is a new state law that does not allow a county or a city to authorize or otherwise allow public camping or sleeping to occur on public property. The city does not currently have any prohibition against public camping or sleeping on the books, so the purpose of this ordinance was to put something in the code that would allow the city to remain compliant with the new law. This is a slightly different flavor than what they had at first reading. The difference between this version and the first reading version is that they have built in a notice warning system as a first step to try and figure out a way to deescalate the situation and resolve it without resorting to any other means. From there, it would move into a citation, and the consequences could get harsher from there. The goal was to allow the city to be compliant with the state law requirements in terms of having a mechanism to prohibit or at least not allow or otherwise authorize public camping or sleeping. It also gives law enforcement as many options as we can to try and address the situation in as humane way as we can. **Commissioner Berry** wanted to

verify if this was for both public and private property. **CA Watson** responded that it would just cover public property.

Carmen Rogers of 128 North 7th Street, Leesburg wanted to know what the city was going to do to help alleviate the people who do not have a place to live. They do not have a house, so they are going to sleep on the sidewalk in the park. She could go to the park and take a nap right now, and she does not want to go to jail for it, but she could do it because she is tired. What are we putting in place to change the situation as opposed to making more ordinances to make the state law happen? What we need to do is find a way to get the people off the street. We need to put money to good use as opposed to taking up police jail space. We are going to incarcerate individuals who are homeless. How is that helping them? The taxpayers are still paying, but we will be paying more because we will have to give them medical care, three hot meals and a cot. We will have to pay someone to turn those keys. What are we going to do to alleviate the problem, because making more ordinances is not the way to help our situation in this city? Sitting there she was trying to be nice, but we have a homeless issue that needs to be addressed. We need to get the organizations that are already out there feeding, and we have the salt trailer. They need a comprehensive program to help get people off the street. Putting them in a jail cell is not going to fix the problem, because when they get out they will come right back. Let's talk about Diane Kojowski. She took her to Orlando and put her on an Amtrak train to New York City so she could be with her family. A month later, somebody called her saying Miss Diane was back in Leesburg. She said you have got to be joking because she personally put her on the Amtrak. So, what are we going to do to help because this is not helping? **Mayor Burry** pointed out that what they are addressing with this ordinance is a state law that went into effect October 1st. We are not going out on our own saying this is how we feel about it. We are trying to comply with the State of Florida. **Ms. Rogers** said with the city complying, the city is not helping. They need to help the people. We need to give the homeless some place to live. **Mayor Burry** commented that it was a good suggestion because in Lake County we have no beds for the homeless. **Ms. Rogers** said that was her point, so what are we going to do, as opposed to making ordinances that are not helping anybody? She appreciates the city obeying the state law, but she does not appreciate the city not fixing or giving a solution. The homeless population needs a solution.

Linda Gallet stated she has spent seven years working with the homeless in the community. She has done feeding programs, showers, clothing, and they have immunized hundreds of them against hepatitis, tetanus, the flu, and covid. They have done all kinds of things with the help of Lake County. She was concerned about this law. When the governor first signed, it was to provide for help and there was supposed to be a camp site within each town for people to go to. They would be able to put up their tents, and they would provide mental health assistance, drug assistance, and they would have porta potties. They would set up a camp for the homeless to stay, and it seemed like Leesburg was tweaking the rules, and she did not know if anyone had camped with families, because when the day comes to pack up and go home it takes more than sixty minutes to put away sleeping bags, air mattresses, tents and coolers. While the homeless put their stuff away, they wonder where they can go. In that report it said that Leesburg does not have any public spaces to set up a camp-type setting for them. So, when the police come by and say they have to move, where are they going to go? There are no spaces that can be used as a camp for them. Where are they going to go? Leesburg is a big city, but where are they going to go? Not all homeless people are scary, drug addicts, freaky people. There are some really charming people out there. There are people who work hard jobs, but their spouse gets sick and they leave their job. They then lose their house and end up on the street. It is sad, but to have sixty minutes to move on to nowhere, that needs more thought.

Kimberly DeRoche said the law the city was referring to is HB 1365. It does say that the city has to provide temporary shelters that are monitored by law enforcement. Homeless shelters will require the occupants to not use drugs, and they will receive substance abuse and mental health treatment. **Mayor**

Burphy pointed out that is what it says, if the city is able to set up the shelter. It also says that as a city, if we set up a shelter, it cannot be contiguous to a neighborhood or any housing, and it cannot devalue anyone's property in the area. That is specific to the law, so those two things preclude Leesburg because we do not have unoccupied space that meets the criteria to have a camp. **Ms. DeRoche** mentioned that she has previously helped homeless people, but she also has a lot of problems with homeless people due to where she lives in the city. When they are kicked out of a place, they come and hang out at her house. She usually takes care of the problem herself, but she did have to call the police once. Also, the city wants to charge them a \$500 fine. **CA Watson** clarified that there are different enforcement mechanisms and the \$500 fine would come after they have not complied with a warning and cited. If they keep returning after that, they could be fined \$500. It does take a little bit to get to that point because it would have to be the same exact location. **Ms. DeRoche** stated they do not have the ability to pay a \$500 fine. Also, the police do not have the time to spend on this problem. She understands what has been said, but this needs to be taken to a higher level, like the county or state, because we need to figure out a proper facility so we can help and not hurt. What they are trying to do will not help anyone. She knows some businesses are having issues with the homeless and that is unacceptable, but she did not know what the solution was, but it is not pushing them outside the city and causing more problems for your residents.

Kelly Veilleux stated she worked with a guy named David. He comes to the little house every week to receive the services they provide. He is already suffering from anxiety and that is part of what is contributing to his homelessness. He told her last week that he could not sleep because he was over the top with anxiety because it was a matter of time before he has a flashlight in his face and is being told to move. However, he does not know where to go. Where do they go? It is sad that anyone has to live like that. Another man that she met was Mark, and him and his partner are going through a similar situation. He said it was interesting that they wanted him to work, but they did not want him to sleep. Put that into perspective, because if a person is trying to hold down a part-time job, where are they supposed to sleep? Where are they supposed to clean up, which is the reason why she felt the shower trailer ministry would be a great asset to the area. It is hard when they look at the whole picture, but we expect them to somehow be responsible in society, but yet we take away whatever little bit they have. They will have to pack their stuff up and leave. However, where are they going to go?

Elizabeth Vernon stated she has a ministry that tries to take care of some of the needs of the homeless. She is an animal lover, and we have provided for the animals in our county. If there is an animal in need, we do have a shelter for them. If we can do this for an animal, why can't we do this for a human being? These are human beings. We only have a small mental health clinic in our area, Life Stream. She is a retired nurse, and she has been in Life Stream, and they are overwhelmed. It is just a band-aid. We need more help for people. We need a wrap-around service where we can reach out to them, but just to close the doors of our city is not what we need. We need to care. Let it be known that Leesburg is a loving community. It is not only a beautiful community that reaches out to everyone, but it does something more than just what we are doing right now. Let's give them a safe place to go, whether it be a parking lot. Many of them work three jobs so they can buy a vehicle to live in, yet they have no place to park it because they have to keep moving it around. Think about how much you love your animals, love your human beings that are our neighbors.

Bonita Nestler of 1431 Beverly Point said she was a taxpayer. She moved here because it felt like a small community. It is beautiful and she loves the atmosphere. The homeless situation is heartbreaking. It is horrible and devastating for anyone that has that happen to them. Unfortunately, what is happening is the degradation of their lifestyle. She is in full support of what the city is doing and what Governor DeSantis has put in place. We provide so much with Life Stream. She was surprised at how much Life Stream offers. If people choose to do drugs and alcohol and not make lifestyle choices by changing their lives, she does not feel like she should be responsible for those who choose not to receive help, because we

have ministries in the city that provide help. Unfortunately, she saw someone swimming in Lake Griffin totally dazed and that person could have become alligator bait. They also leave all kinds of trash everywhere. Yes, it is a heartbreaking situation, but it is not right for the city and the taxpayers to condone this behavior. We are just feeding and providing housing, yet they are not giving them resources to change. The ministry of Jesus Christ will change their lives and that is what they need to do. **Mayor Burry** asked if there were any further comments from the public and the commission. There were none.

The roll call vote was:

Commissioner Connell	Yes
Commissioner Reisman	Yes
Commissioner Pederson	Yes
Commissioner Berry	Yes
Mayor Burry	Yes

Five yeas, no nays, the Commission adopted the ordinance.

B. FIRST READING OF ORDINANCES

1. None

C. NON-ROUTINE ITEMS

1. None

7. INFORMATIONAL REPORTS:

The following reports are provided to the Commission in accordance with the Charter/Ordinances. No action required.

A. None

8. CITY ATTORNEY ITEMS:

CA Watson had no reports this evening.

9. CITY MANAGER ITEMS:

CM Minner wanted to update the commission and the public on the efforts to recover from Hurricane Milton. In almost eleven years, since he has been working at the city, Hurricane Milton has been the biggest storm. Also, some longtime employees say Hurricane Milton was the biggest storm that they have seen in this region. The next significant impact that we had was Hurricane Irma, which was in September 2017. There is no way to underscore the storm that Milton was for Leesburg. It was clearly a five hundred year storm, because we sustained significant winds, flooding in some isolated areas, along with a lot of different issues. It came up earlier about the flooding problem in the Talladega/Alabama area. Obviously, that was a very critical area and the city previously worked in that area in the earlier part of

the 2000s. It was far before his time in Leesburg. However, we did do some initial work in that area, and we received a CDBG grant for that. When we have a storm, which is a five hundred year storm, building a drainage system for a five hundred year storm is not practical. That is why, when these types of situations arise, it becomes so catastrophic. That does not underscore the calamity that the families felt and saw or the fear or the damage that was a result of that, but in our business as a municipal government it would be impractical to build a system that would absorb damage that is received once in a great while. The speaker said earlier that they have lived here for twenty some odd years and this was the biggest storm. He asked that they please hear those words because we are all struggling with that. The first thing that we will be doing as a result of Milton is to go back to the engineers to figure out how we can make a better solution for that area. The issues did not go unseen, and the city has invested in the properties through the home grant program. We want that area to be successful, and we know it has issues. No one suspected that we would get twelve inches of rain in six hours, that we would be problem free or see damage in a particular area that was catastrophic. We heard the speaker, and they would address it. The first way of addressing that would be to get with our engineer, which we will be doing this week. The process will be to contract with Keith Riddle and if the amount is under \$50,000, it will not come before the commission because he would just approve it, but if it is over \$50,000 they will see it come for approval. Keith Riddle is our design consultant in house, and it will save time so they can get a design started. Upon completion of that design, they will be back before the commission to figure out how to pay for the improvements. At this point, we do not know what the improvements are, but his knee-jerk reaction from experience and from talking with the public works director is for some sort of expanded retention area that we would have to design. The lakes in Berry Park were typically designed to hold this type of water, as well as the lakes that are behind the trail were designed for this type of water, but they were overwhelmed with the water. They will have to go back and look at different designs and ways that we can remove massive amounts of stormwater. It may be absorbing some empty properties and turning them into retention areas. The number one job post storm is figuring out a solution to that. With other flooding around the area, in the community, it was not as significant as that. Other than that area, we would probably have a pass as far as flooding goes.

The next significant issue was seen on Facebook. They spent about an hour with a reporter last night reviewing it, but there was a situation at the Canal Treatment Plant. He also provided the commission with a detailed report on that Friday or Saturday night. Again, he could not underscore how significant Hurricane Milton was. Twelve inches of rain in a four-hour span is a lot of rain. That was a catastrophic storm. It was a five hundred year storm. A five hundred year storm means we only see it once every five hundred years. Having said that the situation at the plant was two-fold. It took on too much water too fast and the Canal Treatment Plant capacity is 3.5 million gallons a day. We typically process about 2.2 million gallons of water a day at that plant, so obviously, our operating norms and capacity are significantly under, which means the plant operates correctly during normal times. Again, Hurricane Milton was not a normal time. About midnight, the power went out, and the generator kicked on and that information was put in the report. There was a picture of how everything flowed, so water comes into the plant at the head wall, which is right off US 441, so as you drive past the plant, and you see the business that sells cemetery stones, right next to that to the west is where the head wall to the plant is. So, all the wastewater from Core Leesburg and the west side of Leesburg goes into that plant, and that is about 2.2 million gallons a day. At midnight, the power went off, and the generator kicked on, but by midnight we were receiving so much rain to where the groundwater inundated the underground electric cables and those electric cables go from the generator to the switch box, which is in the building's basement and that was where we sustained flooding. The switch gear and underground wiring sustained masses of water, so the electric current from the generator could not get to the switch. We could not switch from online power to generator power because of the inflow and infiltration (I and I). That is why the plant kicked offline. When the plant kicked offline, the water built up and breached. It was not somebody pushing or pulling a valve saying we have too much water, so let's just dump it, the water breached at a peak of

about 7.5 to 8 MGD. Let's run these numbers again. The plant took in 7.5 to 8 MGD at one point when the power was off, and we process 2.2 with a name plate capacity of 3.5. That means over three times the amount of water hit the plant at a critical junction, so wastewater spewed out. He gave credit to the wastewater folks because they were right on the issue. They were handling the situation the best they could. As the water breached out of the head walls it flooded the building, then it moved to the north into a ditch and that ditch line carried it to the east towards Lake Griffin. The guys immediately got out hoses and pumped, and they tried to pump that water back into the headworks to try and repeat it as a cycle. They wanted to pump out and back overflow and that cycle repeated. In that process, we probably saved a couple of hundred thousand gallons of wastewater from going into the lake, but unfortunately, about 1.9 million did go in. By eight o'clock in the morning, power was restored, and the breach was stopped. They cleaned up the ground, and they put out lime. With the water that went into the lake, they could not do a lot with it, but they immediately self-reported. They immediately self-reported because there are state regulations for DEP, but he does not know what the litmus test for that is, because they changed those about three or four years ago to a certain gallon for where you have to report. However, we were way above that, so it was standard operating procedure that we self-report it.

The next problem that happened was that the crew started to go out and collect wastewater and get our lift stations back online. We found some of the other lift stations do not have generation power. Again, to build to this level of storm, we already complain about price tags, so if we were to build them to a level of a five hundred year storm, your hair would really be on fire. So, long story short, we go out and rotate and part of the standard operator procedures in an emergency situation is that they go from lift station to lift station to lift station around the community, and pump them down. As far as he knows, we had no lift station spillages, so that was good because he would colloquially call it the lift station rodeo because we go around the horn to pump. We did that successfully, but as more wastewater came in it was like a delayed flooding. If you are downstream, the flood is up, and it works down to you, which is the same at the plant. We ended up getting more water, but we balanced out with a peak capacity going into the plant at 7 MGD, which we held for a couple of days. Even though the plant got back up, and we did not breach the headworks anymore, the plant continued to process wastewater. When it works that fast, we cannot get to what we call the reuse quality of the reuse water. We have what we call a reject water, so reject water is pretty close to the quality of reuse water, but it is not quite there yet. In normal times, we take that reject water and put it in a big pond, and we feed it back into the plant. It then clears it and clears out, and then we can move it off. Now, how we move it off through a reuse process, and most of it now goes to The Villages, but that is the process. In this process, because the plant had so much wastewater in it, our reject pond began to build and there is a blow off inlet that is in the pond where, when it gets to a certain level, the reject water comes up into the pond, and it goes in that inlet through another pipe into the same ditch that was mentioned earlier, and it then goes out to the west. As water continued to come in from the system to be processed, we had excess reject water. So again, we reported it to the DEP. He would argue that reject water is really equivalent to regular storm water that hits the lakes. Again, we reported that to DEP, and it was about 1,400 hours yesterday that the plant settled out and started hanging around 5 MGD. At 5 MGD we are still double what we normally do but all the breaches and issues were stopped. At that point, everything was cleaned up. Overall, we lost about 1.9 million gallons of wastewater, and we saved a couple of hundred thousands. Then we lost a couple of hundred thousand gallons of reject water that went into the lake which was reported. One of the most important questions that the media asked was if wastewater contamination was a problem. The obvious answer to that is yes, wastewater is a contamination and that is a problem which is why we treat wastewater. However, at this level, he did not anticipate that we would see any punitive damage because it was a cataclysmic storm, and it was an act of God. Really, our crews did a great job balancing the emergency while keeping it as minimal as possible, but at those levels of wastewater that went outside the plant, no, he did not think they would see any contamination. It would be equivalent to a house if you had a 2,000 square foot house, and you spilled chocolate milk on the brand-new carpet, you clean it up. That is not an issue,

because it only hit a couple of square inches of your 2,000 square feet. However, if you continue to spill chocolate milk on your carpet, then yes, you will have a problem. The lake is the same way, at small incremental levels, mother nature takes care of itself. If we were to spill 1.9 million gallons of wastewater every day for a year, that would be a problem. However, at this level, the amount of contaminant that went into the lake was not catastrophic. We estimated that Lake Griffin has 3.8 billion gallons of water, and we put in about 1.9 million gallons, so that is 0.65%. That was important to bring up, because again, the guys did a great job. There is always alarm when those types of things happen, but with the calamity of the storm it was a big deal. He did not mean to keep going on, but these were two important issues that needed to be covered properly. At the end of the day, we will work with DEP to see if we find some other areas and, hopefully, we will receive about \$19 million of funding. He was sure some of that \$19 million would be spent at the Canal Wastewater Plant. Not that it is not functioning properly, but there are always things to do. He gave a lot of credit to the guys because of the calamity of the storm. He knows he threw out a lot of numbers, but the numbers are important for reference points.

The third thing would be electric recovery. Again, with the size of this storm and what makes Hurricane Milton special in a bad way, is how many onesies and twosies we got. At about seven o'clock we were down to about one hundred and fifty customers still out. A lot of credit needs to go to the electric department for getting everything back up. They will continue to keep in touch with you. A lot of credit for some of the resources that we received from mutual aid. If you are still without power, he apologized, but being fifty-seven hours into the event, we are about ninety percent complete and that is a significant sign of a great operation. So, again, a lot of credit to the electric director and his department personnel.

Finally, with debris, we started to pick it up. We need all the debris to be put in the right of way. If there are stumps from the big trees in the backyard, please try to get them to the right of way. Some of the extremities have already been picked up. In the city extremities, are Arlington Ridge and Legacy and some of the newer subdivisions around town have been picked up in the Silver Lake area and down in South Leesburg. The focus will be Core Leesburg and out. We started those operations today, and we will get everything picked up at first pass, and we will continue to pick stuff up. He encouraged everybody to get the debris placed in the right of way. Also, keep your debris pile segregated. If you have a damaged couch to throw out, we prefer you not do that, but if you do, please keep everything segregated. He could not thank the department heads, and again we were really well prepped. The Fire Chief did an excellent job as the Emergency Management Director. He could not name everyone, but everyone did a fantastic job of recovering. He would be available to answer any questions. He did not have the numbers as far as costs yet, but he understands the president declared our area a disaster area, so the next phase will be to start working on the paperwork to get the FEMA reimbursement. He would report accordingly.

10. ROLL CALL:

Commissioner Connell had no further comment.

Commissioner Reisman echoed the city manager's comments by thanking city staff and department heads. They all did a wonderful job. He asked if there were any updates for the security upgrades to the customer services department on the first floor. **CM Minner** replied that there would be a glass wall put up. It does not go all the way up to the ceiling, but it is in the works. **Commissioner Reisman** thanked John Christian of the CDC of Leesburg, Inc. for the informative update. As a city all the way around, things can always be improved. We have so many good things happening in our city, but we can always do better with getting information out because he had no idea about some of the stuff they did. With the wish list, he believed they could get some of the things done pretty quickly. Also, there is a football game after the meeting where the city is a sponsor, so if you have availability to come at halftime, they will

recognize them, and they will be able to go out on the field to accept a plaque. Lastly, this Saturday at the college is The Walk For Freedom Walk to bring awareness to human trafficking in our country.

Commissioner Pederson thanked all the city staff for all their efforts, especially the public works and electric departments.

Commissioner Berry stated she was absent at the last meeting, September 23, and there was discussion about CRA money being owed to the electric department. She knew nothing about the subject, and it was related to district one. Having that discussion when she was absent was not the best practice. She knows this is the only opportunity she has to share her feelings, but they should not have had that discussion without other CRA members or her being there. She understands it was about a note from some time ago when they built the Resource Center. She realizes that it is important, but she did not realize it was an emergency that needed to be discussed as soon as possible. The Resource Center was built between five and seven years ago. After reading the minutes and the discussion, she did not feel it was good practice to discuss processes and means of amending the budget they just approved without giving the CRA or herself an opportunity to discuss or share the desire to develop the community. She felt it was important to share because she believes in working together, and they are a great group. However, if she did not say something, they would never know where she stood, and she cannot have this discussion one on one, so she had to bring it to a public forum. She hoped this would not happen again because she would never do it to them. If a matter was up for discussion regarding another district, she would not discuss it without their presence. She gave kudos to all department heads and staff and a special thanks to the two Corey's at the gas department for assisting her with an issue on Saturday after hours. She thanked the city manager for the updates. She talked to him on Thursday, and she probably worked his nerves, but guess what, we got it done. She received responses from residents/constituents thanking her because their power was on. She knew she did not have any control, but she was informing residents about what the city was doing along with the process of how it worked. She had never experienced this before. It was a learning process for her, and it ran pretty smoothly. **Commissioner Reisman** mentioned that it was him that brought that up at the last meeting. It was a last minute thing because we were approving the budget, and he talked to the city manager about it. He apologized that she was not at the meeting, but we did decide to table it for a future discussion with the CRA and the Commissioners. **Commissioner Berry** thanked him for his apology. **Commissioner Pederson** commented that they are allowed to discuss issues outside their district because they represent the entire city, so there is a fine line. We have a right to talk about issues that are citywide even if the commissioner is absent. **Commissioner Reisman** said he respected her opinion on that and he did see her point. **Commissioner Berry** said it was a level of respect and that was where she was coming from.

Mayor Burry had nothing to comment on.

11. ADJOURN:

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES NEEDING ASSISTANCE TO PARTICIPATE IN ANY OF THESE PROCEEDINGS SHOULD CONTACT THE HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT, ADA COORDINATOR, AT 728-9740, 48 HOURS IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING.

F.S.S. 286.0105 "If a person decides to appeal any decision made by the Commission with respect to any matter considered at this meeting, they will need a record of the proceedings, and that for such purpose they may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based." The City of Leesburg does not provide this verbatim record.

With a motion by Commissioner Reisman and a second by Commissioner Pederson, the meeting adjourned at 7:17 p.m.