

**AGENDA MINUTES
CITY COMMISSION MEETING
CITY HALL, 501 W MEADOW STREET
MONDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2024 5:30 PM**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The City of Leesburg Commission held a regular meeting on Monday, December 16, 2024, at Leesburg City Hall. Mayor Burry called the meeting to order at 6:16 p.m. with the following members present:

Commissioner Allyson Berry
Commissioner Jay Connell
Commissioner Mike Pederson
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

The invocation and pledge of allegiance were previously given at the Carver Heights/Montclair Area Community Redevelopment Agency meeting held prior to this meeting.

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

2. PROCLAMATIONS:

A. None

3. PRESENTATIONS:

A. Water Plant Fluoride Injection Project Update

CM Minner stated at the last meeting during commission comments, Commissioner Connell brought up the question about holding the contract for the fluoride injection process. Since that meeting they looked at the data, communicated with the contractor, and legal counsel. The public works director has a quick presentation and at the end of that there will be three options to consider.

Public Works Director (PWD), Cliff Kelsey said back around January 2024, they reached out to the architectural engineering firm, Dewberry to create a design for the fluoride treatment injection system. We paid about \$80,000 for that. After the design was completed, the project went out for bid in April

2024. On May 28, 2024, it was brought to the commission for a vote. That vote was to move forward and fund the project. They issued the notice to proceed to the construction contractor, Odyssey. We gave notice to proceed on August 5, 2024. That was quite some time ago, but this project includes specialized, custom-made equipment. A lot of the equipment has been manufactured and is on hand with Odyssey. However, there is still some equipment being manufactured. The period of performance is August 5, 2025, which means the contractor has until August 5, 2025, to complete the project.

Now, based on comments from the last commission meeting, there are three options they could take. They could vote to terminate or pause the contract, or proceed as planned. They broke the options down and included the pros and cons for each. When it comes to terminating the contract, he, the city attorney and the procurement department looked into the legal manners and there is a termination for convenience clause in the contract which allows them to do that. The government has the option to terminate for convenience at any time, but any cost incurred will be paid to the contractor. So, the pro would be an easy path if they choose not to fluoridate the water. There is some money that we can recoup and after talking with Al Purvis, Chief Plant Operator, even though some of equipment has been designed for the fluoride injection, we could use some of that equipment in other places of the plant. Now, with the cons; we have already spent \$80,000 on the design, and we cannot get any of that money back. The contractor has incurred about \$225,000 in overhead and construction costs.

They may also choose to pause the project, because right now the contractor is in a holding pattern waiting for equipment to be manufactured. They do not have any plans to mobilize until January 2025. So, if we paused this project to give more time to think about it, the contractor said they could delay mobilization until April without the risk of not being able to complete the project by the period of performance, which is August 5, 2025. The pro is, if there are any state or federal regulations that change over the course of the incoming administration, it will allow the commission time to deliberate. The cons are the incurred daily costs by the contractor because they have paperwork, phone calls, overhead, and administrative costs. If they choose to hit pause instead of terminating the contract, we would not have to rebid the project in the future.

If we terminate the contract and decide in the future to move forward, the city would have to rebid the contract, and there would be additional costs for that. Another potential cost of pausing, is it could open the city to a delayed claim from the contractor, depending on how long we pause. The last option is to proceed and the contractor continues with the execution of the contract. This would be the easiest path for fluoridation and the city would not lose any project costs. The cons are obviously regulations, because federal and state regulations could change over time, and we cannot recoup any money if fluoridation becomes banned or if the commission decides not to move forward with fluoridation.

Commissioner Connell said he asked for this project to be paused for discussions and based on the surgeon general's recommendation the city should not move forward with this project. We can get \$100,000 plus or minus back on the equipment already purchased. We should not spend another \$300,000 on a project when the state is basically telling us not to do it. They could debate this back and forth, but the state recommended to stop. At this point, we should terminate the contract and recoup the \$100,000. We should not go into any further debt. If we paused the contract, we may still incur additional costs. If we were to move forward we may end up spending a lot of money just to find out that we have to pull the equipment out anyway. At this time, we should terminate the contract and recover what we can. We should not move forward. With the presentation about the financial options, it should be clear that they just terminate this now and not move forward. **Commissioner Pederson** stated he supported the motion last week to table it for a week, but his intentions were not to rehash all the pros and cons of fluoridation because he supports it. It was a tough vote. He initially voted no and flipped his vote. That was the only time he had done something like that in six years. The basis for the table was because we had the Florida Surgeon General recommend against it and there was an incoming president's cabinet member being vocal about it. He thought it would be prudent to wait up to ninety days. It would be silly

to go full speed ahead and have the federal government put out a mandate to stop. He does not believe that will happen, but with the contract we could have until April. He would support a motion to pause this project for sixty to ninety days. That would get us to mid-February/March. At that point, if we do not have any direction from the federal government, then he would support it. His fear is that we spend all this money and then we are told to take it out. That troubles him a little bit, but he did not want to rehash this whole thing. **Mayor Burry** said we have a vote to pause, a vote to stop, and he would prefer to continue at full speed. We have advocates who say it is important for kids; the American Dental Association, the American Medical Association, and the American Academy of Pediatrics, all these professional organizations of health care are telling us it is a safe and effective way to prevent cavities. That is factual, and there is not a lot of debate about the levels of fluoride that improve dental health. **Commissioner Connell** stated he would not dispute that because there are obviously some major benefits, but with the state surgeon general coming out and making a statement that there are some side effects or possible side effects, the benefits may not weigh out the negatives. However, we should not be telling people what should be put in their drinking water because there are a lot of people that do not want fluoride in their water. We should not be telling them what they have to drink. It should be their choice and not ours. **Commissioner Berry** commented that early on in the discussions, they got very heated, and that seems to continue, but fluoride is a need. It has been proven to be needed and after pausing for a week she had hoped to have heard more information from the state, but that had not happened. At this point, she would prefer to move forward with this project. **Commissioner Reisman** disclosed that he was originally in favor of pausing, but legal counsel has advised that if we were to pause it, he would recommend terminating it. **CA Watson** agreed and said there may be a caveat if they were to pause the contract because we may be able to strike an agreement with the contractor. They may agree to not impose any type of delay claims for a certain period. However, at this time, we do not have the answer to that question so there is exposure if we go that direction. If it is voted to terminate the contract, the city would be clear to do that, but we would have to pay the costs that they have incurred up to this point. It would also eliminate any concerns about delayed claims that may happen during a three or four month window. However, we could potentially strike a deal with the contractor to minimize the delayed claims. **Commissioner Reisman** said he felt a bit uneasy with the new administration coming in. He would rather save the two to four hundred thousand dollars rather than building it to find out they have to scrap it. We would be out the full amount of \$600,000. **CM Minner** explained that this was a legislative decision and staff did not provide an opinion as far as fluoride. However, we did provide information on the legal and construction options. On that note, a reasonable middle ground would be to kick the can until January and that would allow us an opportunity to investigate an amendment to the contract to pause construction. The pause issues that will come up is whether they would hold their price. Most of the pricing left is personnel, and that is less changeable than equipment in the marketplace. However, people do get raises and prices do increase. The contract is guaranteed for a certain time, which is August 2025. If the delay kicks them past that we could have some type of price modification. Another pause concern would be with equipment that is already on site. It is now out of the contractors possession so if it breaks, we would have to fix it. So, if three commissioners vote to pause, he would recommend talking to the contractor about an amendment, so we are not arguing about it come June or July. **CA Watson** agreed and said that would be a good process. **CM Minner** continued to say that we would have thirty to forty-five days for that. **Commissioner Connell** wanted to know if that would cover additional costs. **CM Minner** replied no. He hoped to bring more information by the second meeting in January. The public works director could reach out tomorrow, but remember we have the holidays coming up. If we kick the can a little more, we could get more parameters for a pause. Otherwise, the commission can vote to move forward or terminate. **Commissioner Connell** believed they should just terminate. **Commissioner Pederson** remarked if they take pause off the table, he would vote to move forward. The pause is getting complicated and that troubled him. He tried to read up on this the past week, but there was nothing out there. He welcomed other commissioner comments, because there seems to be an extremely low chance that the federal government could come in and mandate it be removed. **Mayor**

Burry asked for public comments.

Alice Hoffman of 25205 Crane Circle, Leesburg said the decision was made earlier this year to put fluoride in the water based on information they were given. However, there has been new information provided since then that includes some federal court rulings. The federal court ruled that water fluoridation poses an unreasonable risk to children. She did not know about the benefits to teeth, but there are worse things like sugar. There are hundreds of recent human and animal studies that show fluoride is neurotoxic. Hundreds of studies have been done on animals and humans and it has shown to damage the brain. It has been declared unsafe. There have been many studies and one thing that it showed was lower IQ's in children. There have been Canadian studies, NIH-funded studies and national toxicology programs that documented how it lowers IQ levels between two and seven points. Right now, Leesburg is ahead of the national average because we have not been fluoridating the water. The surgeon general of Florida is against fluoridating the water. Now there are sixteen cities in the state that have banned fluoride in water, and the latest one was Naples a couple of weeks ago. While everyone else is considering taking fluoride out of the water Leesburg is considering putting it in the water. Why put fluoride in the water when clearly studies show that it is bad for our children. How many people and kids are dealing with attention deficit disorder (ADD) and other neurotoxic things. Fluoride also affects thyroid hypothyroidism and it puts us at a greater risk of hypothyroidism. There are so many medical problems with fluoride. She recommended terminating this program.

Nicole of 25822 Pinehurst Street, Sorrento stated she was a practicing registered nurse. As nurses, they are called to not only educate, but to advocate for the community. They are also tasked with providing informed consent. She asked the commission to vote no on adding fluoride to the city's public water system as more evidence has come out to verify its risks versus benefits. It had been deemed a public health hazard at a federal level after a federal court judge ruled that fluoride has been classified as a neurotoxin and that more studies should be done. They ordered the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to mitigate the known risks and to prevent municipalities from buying and adding toxic chemicals to the public water system for purposes of medicating the population. By definition, a neurotoxin is a harmful substance to the nervous system, which means repeated exposure regardless of dosing over lengthy periods of time. It can cause widespread symptoms to the central nervous system and it can cause intellectual disabilities, persistent memory impairments, bone fractures, epilepsy, and dementia, to name a few. It is called informed consent and most residents do not know what is being placed into their water and they deserve to not only know but to be informed. Fluoride, by definition, is considered a medical intervention that is prescribed by a physician, typically a dentist. It is disclosed to the public that fluoride is good for our teeth and that it can decrease tooth decay. However, more recent studies suggest that there may be more harm than good. Where chlorine is treating water, fluoride is treating people. Our next appointed HHS candidate, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., has also voiced its harmful effects and on November 22nd of this year our very own State Surgeon General, Dr. Joseph Ladapo, called on cities and municipalities to remove fluoride from the public water system. The most recent communities to remove fluoride and reject it were Perry, Collier County, Brooksville, Winter Haven, Stewart, and Naples. She wanted to make sure the community knows what is being put in their food and water because that is informed consent. She asked that they pause adding fluoride to the public water systems to see what our state and/or federal government may change.

Kyana Rubinfeld of 940 Belle Oak Drive, Leesburg said this was her first time coming to a commission meeting. She and her husband are new residents and they are expecting parents. They are due on Christmas Eve. She was happy to be a part of the community, but she was there to ask the commission to say no to adding fluoride to the water. She does not want to bring a baby into this community and have to worry about the fluoride she drinks since she does not even have teeth yet. That would be unfair for her. She asked that they opt out and allow people to make their own judgments. They could use topical uses

of fluoride as they see fit. Again, say no to fluoride.

Karen Motley of 2445 Farrington Road, Tavares said she was a registered nurse in the Leesburg area. While doing research on this she found a paper from 2012 and there is more data coming out. In the 2012 report, Paul Connett, has listed fifty reasons for why the city should not put fluoride in the water. He said fluoride was the only chemical added to water for the purpose of medical treatment. The US Food and Drug Administration classifies fluoride as a drug used to prevent and/or to mitigate disease. It is a medical treatment that they are putting in the water. Fluoridation is unethical because it is an informed consent. With the FDA calling it a drug, there is no way to differentiate how much dosage of fluoride they would be giving to an individual person who drinks the water. The dose cannot be controlled once fluoride is put in the water. It is impossible to control the dose and each individual will receive different amounts based on how much water they intake. Fluoride goes to everyone, regardless of age, health or vulnerability. People with renal problems have retention problems with water. Water fluoridation goes against leading principles of pharmacology, it is a progressive form of a steroid type of medication. People can receive fluoride from many other sources besides water, it is available in toothpaste and mouthwash. There are other sources for people to get fluoridation to prevent tooth decay without it systemically going into their body. Fluoride is not an essential nutrient. No disease, not even tooth decay, is caused by fluoride deficiency. There is even a very low level in the mother's milk. Fluoride accumulates in the body and healthy adult kidneys excrete 50-60% of the fluoride and the remainder accumulates in the body, largely calcifying tissues like the bones and penile glands. Infants and children excrete less fluoride from the kidneys and take up 80% of the ingested fluoride into their bones. Out of the 195 fluoridated countries only 25 countries actually fluoridate their water.

Wade Winker of 728 Boston Street, Leesburg said he rises in favor of fluoride. The city should continue moving forward with the project. There have been some misstatements by both commissioners and the citizens of Leesburg. Recently, a federal judge was approached by anti-fluoridation group petitioning that we should take some action about fluoridation in water supplies and in his ruling concluded with uncertainty that elevated fluoride levels could be dangerous. He ordered the director of the EPA to investigate and report back and thus far there has been no reports provided. The EPA has not had enough time to gather any new information, which has been alluded to this evening. They have not found that information nor have they brought it back. Robert Kennedy Jr., took this as a mandate to remove fluoride from the US water supplies. Mr. Kennedy does not have a position in the US government right now, but it appears that he will. However, shortly thereafter, the new Surgeon General of Florida made inflammatory comments that community water fluoridation is a public medical malpractice. That left leaders in communities across the state and country frightened about community water fluoridation initiatives and it harming the public. At the end of the day, the commission is charged in representing your constituents. However, Robert Kennedy Jr. and the Florida Surgeon General have no jurisdiction in this room, nor will they ever. A decision by the EPA could and that could come up in the future. There have been many knee-jerk reactions by several communities to act immediately and they were referenced to earlier. They are frightened, and he gets it. People tend to not make good decisions when they are frightened. Bleach and fluoride are added to community water supplies to prevent diseases. They are not medication. Just as iodine is added to salt to eliminate thyroid disease, fluoride has been safely added to water for eighty years. Fluoride in the water at the right concentration reduces dental decay by 25% with no adverse effects. All the reports presented to the judge had elevated fluoride levels. No one is refuting that because it has to be done at the right level. The discussion should be about fluoridation versus over fluoridation. Currently, community water fluoridation is in 70% of US municipalities and it is recommended by the Food and Drug Administration, the Center for Disease Control, and the US Department of Health.

Alan Hays of Umatilla stated he was a retired dentist. He also holds an active dental license because he

does charity work from time to time. He questioned why they were even having this discussion since they just recently voted to begin fluoridation of the municipal water supply. He believed that issue gained the full support of the dental community in Lake County. He wanted to know what changed during this brief time. Oh yes, a physician who has never been to dental school held a press conference and made some reckless comments about fluoridation being a public health malpractice. That statement was completely irresponsible, and he was embarrassed that any public official would speak so irresponsibly. Statements like that remind him of the person who walks into a crowded room and yells fire. It was completely irresponsible. Fluoridation has been acclaimed by internationally recognized health organizations as the greatest public health policy of the 20th Century. He began his career in dentistry fifty-seven years ago, so he knows what he is talking about. He has seen countless numbers of patients over the years and many of patients had the benefit of having fluoride in their drinking water. The difference in the incidents of decay was quite evident and he knew just by looking into their mouths. All anyone wants is to have the greatest effectiveness of any health therapy. With the administration of fluoride, the maximum effect comes from the incorporation of fluoride in the public water system. When it comes to the formation of enamel in the tooth that is a bone and with fluoride being present in the formation of enamel that makes enamel much more resistant to decay. Some people say that toothpaste and rinses are sufficient, but topical administration of fluoride on a tooth is just like makeup it is only temporary. Again, fluoride ions need to be available as a building block enhancement when the tooth is being formed. As a dentist, he would make more money if there were more decayed teeth, so it would help him if they did not put fluoride in the water, but that is not what he was there for. He was proud that his profession tries each and every day to educate patients to minimize the diseases affecting their teeth. Money was not a driving force, and we are striving for the health of their patients. This is a proven therapy. As for him, he no longer practices except for occasionally helping in charity clinics such as the First Baptist Church. He was there for the children of Leesburg who will be parents of children in the future and they deserve to have the advantage of fluoride protection in their teeth. The commission has the ability to not put fluoride in the water, but, in his opinion, that would be unkind if not irresponsible. Would they even for one moment think about removing chlorine from the water supply? He hoped not, because diseases would run rampant through the community. He could assure that too much chlorine in the water would kill people, but it is put in at the proper dosage. Referring to the periodic table he said the "F" stood for Fluoride and directly below that in the same chemical family is chlorine. Every city in America is required by law to maintain the proper levels of chlorine, and they have to report on that frequently. They would have to do the same thing for fluoride. Fluoride is a proven therapeutic advantage. Please carry forward with the addition of fluoride in the water because the children of Leesburg deserve it.

David Wollenschlaeger of 33050 Professional Drive, Leesburg, said he was disappointed because he has been trying to get this project going over the past two and a half years. However there are a couple of the commissioners that have been against it since the get-go. He asked if either one of the commissioners would want Dr. Ladapo as their personal physician after listening to him talk about some of the things he had talked about. He would not be surprised if he came out saying smoking was good for you and that you should be smoking two packs a day, because he is fairly reckless with what he says. He understands the concerns because they have invested in something that they may have to undo. He understands the pause aspect to this procedure, but he was also afraid that some of the population gets their information from the wrong sources and they never go to the actual source. If they go to the actual source and read the studies about neurotoxins, the levels of exposure to fluoride are far beyond what the American Dental Association or the CDC is recommending. They are talking about .7 parts per million and that is an intestinal amount. Now, why can't it be accomplished with toothpaste or a mouth rinse is because it needs to be incorporated into the enamel as it is being developed, which means it has to be ingested. Fluoride is a natural element and there are a lot of areas in Florida that have fluoride in the water like St. Augustine and Jacksonville. Where he grew up in Colorado Springs and fluoride was in the water naturally, and he does not have any cavities. He would also like to think that his IQ level is adequate. He does not know

what to say about that, but he hates when people use scary or fearful tactics to accomplish a goal, and that is happening here. He hoped they reconsider and not just jump to a conclusion based on administration. They are not going to undo seventy-five years of something that has worked out well for the American population. **Mayor Burry** asked if there were any other comments from the audience or the commission. There were none.

Continuing, Mayor Burry said there were three potential things that could happen; we could move forward, stop it, or pause it. The pause does come with some risk as the city attorney stated. **CA Watson** informed the commission that there maybe a fourth option. They could spend the next couple of weeks engaging with the contractor to get more clarity about striking a deal to avoid any delayed claims exposure. If no decision is made tonight, he could report back about the discussions with the contractor and if they are willing to work with the city. If they are willing to work with the city, then the pause option might become more appealing. **Commissioner Connell** asked if he was suggesting to pause until they get with the contractor and if he would report back in January. **CA Watson** agreed he could get more clarification about pausing it. Right now they do not know how the contractor will react. They need to know what the costs might be and if it is possible to pause for a period of time. At this time, we do not know if they are agreeable until we have those discussions. **Commissioner Connell** stated we have already bought the majority of the equipment, and we have the design work done, so if we terminate it and at some later date we decide to pick it back up we would already have the equipment. We would only have to put it back out for bid. **CM Minner** pointed out unless the city sells it.

Commissioner Connell made a motion to terminate moving forward on the fluoride and Commissioner Reisman seconded the motion.

The roll call vote was:

Commissioner Connell	Yes
Commissioner Reisman	Yes
Commissioner Pederson	No
Commissioner Berry	No
Mayor Burry	No

Two yeas, three nays, the Commission denied the motion.

Commissioner Pederson made a motion to continue the contract as is, and Commissioner Berry seconded the motion.

Commissioner Connell said they should not move forward on this and spend hundreds of thousands of dollars more of taxpayer money when there are other cities looking to stop it. We will be the only ones moving forward and that is craziness. We should not continue with moving forward on an issue when we have a lot of unanswered questions. Again, a lot of people in the city do not want fluoride in their water, and we should take that into consideration. We should not be telling them what they have to drink. **Commissioner Pederson** stated he was open to a pause because as he read the packet the contractor was going to start in January, and he thought we had until April to make a decision without having any contractual issues, but now it seems a little mucked up and we should not waste any more time on this. We spent a lot of time on this in 2024, and it was a tough, controversial decision, but it is time to move forward.

The roll call vote was:

Commissioner Reisman	No
Commissioner Pederson	Yes

Commissioner Berry	Yes
Commissioner Connell	No
Mayor Burry	Yes

Three yeas, two nays, the Commission approved the motion.

Mayor Burry paused the meeting to allow people to exit the meeting.

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.

There were no public comments offered.

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

Commissioner Reisman moved to adopt the Consent Agenda as presented, and Commissioner Pederson seconded the motion.

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 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 December 9, 2024

B. PURCHASING ITEMS:

1. Commission approval for Pierce Landscaping and Outdoor Services to maintain eleven (11) city sites for the amount of \$109,676.00.

C. RESOLUTIONS:

1. **Resolution of the City Commission of the City of Leesburg, Florida establishing a City Beautification Advisory Committee, specifying the procedures, duties, responsibilities, and authority of the committee; and providing an effective date.**

ADOPTED RESOLUTION 11,951

2. **Resolution of the U.S. Highway 441 / 27 Community Redevelopment Area of the City of Leesburg, Florida authorizing the Chairman and Secretary to execute a resolution approving Fiscal Year 2025 Façade Sign, and Landscape Grant Awards; and providing an effective date. (FSL Grants 27 441 2025).**

ADOPTED RESOLUTION 11,952

3. **Resolution of the City Commission of the City of Leesburg, Florida authorizing the Director of the Gas Department to approve Discounted Gas Transactions (Prepays) and associated documents under the Gas Services Agreement with Florida Gas Utility, including documents regarding extensions of the term of such transactions in accordance with the agreement; and providing an effective date.**

ADOPTED RESOLUTION 11,953

6. PUBLIC HEARINGS AND NON-ROUTINE ITEMS:

A. SECOND READING OF ORDINANCES

1. **None**

B. FIRST READING OF ORDINANCES

1. **An Ordinance of the City of Leesburg, Florida, annexing certain real property consisting of approximately 2.82 +/- acres, and being generally located east of Sleepy Hollow Road and south of Park Hill Avenue, lying in Section 29, Township 19 South, Range 25 East, Lake County, Florida; providing that said property so annexed shall be liable for its proportionate share of the existing and future indebtedness of said city; providing that such annexed property shall be subject to all laws and ordinances of said city as if all such territory had been a part of the City of Leesburg at the time of passage and approval of said laws and ordinances; providing that such annexed territory shall be placed in City Commission District 5; and providing an effective date. (Sunnyside View ANNX)**

Commissioner Reisman introduced ordinances 6.B.1, 6.B.2, and 6.B.3 to be read by title only. CC Purvis read the ordinances by title only.

Mayor Burry requested comments from the Commission and the audience.

PZD Miller stated this was an annexation, small scale comprehensive plan, and rezoning request for 2.82 plus or minus acres. It was located on the east side of Sleepy Hollow Road, south of Park Hill. The proposal is for eight single-family homes. The second case is the small scale comprehensive plan that would take it from Lake County, Urban to City of Leesburg, Sunnyside Estates, Medium Density, which allows three units per acre. The third case is rezoning, which would go from Lake County R-1, Rural Residential to City of Leesburg R-1, Low Density Residential. It would not be a PUD, it is a standard rezoning because it is very small and similar to everything else in the area. There will be eight single-family residences with 7,000 square feet as the minimum lot size. However, what is being offered is 9,000 square feet with the standard thirty-foot setbacks. There would be two off-street parking spaces for each unit. By the time this is built, the amendments will be in the code which address dark sky lighting, two trees in each yard, the grass and road standards. It will include the changes to the 2025 land development code as a result of the new comprehensive plan. This project will be on city water and wastewater, and there will be no septic. The Lake County Public Works has weighed in and said they need to donate right-of-way, so there will be enough right-of-way to provide for turning lanes. **Mayor Burry** asked if there were any questions. There were none. He stated these items would lay over.

2. **An Ordinance amending the Future Land Use Map of the Comprehensive Plan of the City of Leesburg, changing the Future Land Use Map Designation of certain property containing 2.82 +/- acres from Lake County Urban Low Density to City of Leesburg (SEM) Sunnyside Estates Medium, for a property generally located east of Sleepy Hollow Road and south of Park Hill Avenue, lying in Section 29, Township 19 South, Range 25 East, Lake County, Florida; and providing an effective date. (Sunnyside View SSCP)**
3. **An Ordinance of the City of Leesburg, Florida, changing the zoning on approximately 2.82 +/- acres from Lake County R-1 (Rural Residential) to City of Leesburg R-1 (Low Density Residential) to allow for a residential development for a property generally located east of Sleepy Hollow Road and south of Park Hill Avenue, lying in Section 29, Township 19 South, Range 25 East, Lake County, Florida; and providing an effective date. (Sunnyside View Rezoning)**
4. **An Ordinance of the City of Leesburg, Florida, annexing certain real property consisting of approximately 9.94 +/- acres; and being generally located north of Dewey Robbins Road, east of U.S. Highway 27, lying in Section 31, Township 20 South, Range 25 East, Lake County, Florida; providing that said property so annexed shall be liable for its proportionate share of the existing and future indebtedness of said city; providing that such annexed property shall be subject to all laws and ordinances of said city as if all such territory had been a part of the City of Leesburg at the time of passage and approval of said laws and ordinances; providing that**

such annexed territory shall be placed in City Commission District 3; and providing an effective date. (Cronin-Dewey Robbins ANNX)

Commissioner Reisman introduced ordinances 6.B.4, 6.B.5, and 6.B.6 to be read by title only. CC Purvis read the ordinances by title only.

Mayor Burry requested comments from the Commission and the audience.

PZD Miller stated this was the Cronin-Dewey Robbins project. The proposal was for an annexation, a small-scale comprehensive plan, and a rezoning of 9.9 plus or minus acres. The general location is on the north side of Dewey Robbins Road east of US 27. The request is for the future development of 48 attached single-family units, which are townhouses with a commercial component of 15,000 square feet. The commercial component would be limited to medical, veterinary, self-storage, personal services such as salons and assisted living. The future land use designation would go from Lake County Rural to City of Leesburg Low Density. The rezoning would go from Lake County, Agriculture to City of Leesburg, Small Planned Unit Development (SPUD). Again, there would be 48 attached single-family residential units with 15,000 square feet of commercial use. The SPUD requirements are for front setbacks at twenty-five feet. The lot depth is one hundred feet and the rear setback is eighteen feet, that is in the SPUD. With the house sizes, because they are townhouses, they will be one thousand square feet for each lot and include two off-street parking spaces for each unit. There is a two-floor maximum height. If they choose to strictly go with single-family residential, they would have to adhere to the R-1 single-family residential zoning areas that include a fifty-foot lot minimum. The architectural standards are required, 35% of open space, dark sky lighting, two trees in each yard, and a twenty-five-foot landscape buffer around the entirety of the project. St. Augustine grass is prohibited due to its water usage, fencing is required along the east and west sides of the property, and there would be a four-foot decorative or six-foot privacy fence. Sidewalks are required throughout. Access to the site will be along Dewey Robbins Road with applicable requirements for turn lanes along with acceleration and deceleration lanes per Lake County. The main access point would be a boulevard-style entrance with an eight-foot wide landscaped area in the middle with additional width for emergency vehicles to maneuver. The signage would include decorative entry features of five feet on each side. There is a small recreational space required along with the phasing/expiration clause that gives them four years for substantial commencement, or it automatically reverts to RE-1, which is one acre per unit, not one unit per acre, it would be required to break down into one acre. On November 21, 2024, the Planning Commission recommended denial based on the density and commercial uses. Representatives from LPG were in the audience to answer any questions.

Commissioner Connell questioned the current zoning and if it was agriculture. **PZD Miller** responded yes. **Commissioner Connell** wanted to know what the current zoning was for the property to the east and west of this property. **PZD Miller** replied that the zoning immediately to the east and immediately to the west are zoned agriculture. **Commissioner Connell** wanted to verify that they were proposing to pull a piece of agricultural property out and make it high density residential at forty-eight units on ten acres with agricultural property being on both sides. **PZD Miller** agreed. There would be ten acres of agriculture on both sides and the property to the north and south are zoned PUD. If they skip the ten acres to the east, it is also a PUD zone. **Commissioner Connell** inquired if Dewey Robbins Road was a two-lane road. **PZD Miller** responded yes. **Commissioner Connell** pointed out under the current zoning in the county, agriculture, that allows one unit per five acres. **PZD Miller** agreed. **Commissioner Connell** continued to say that presently, in the county, they could only build two dwelling units. **PZD Miller** concurred. **Commissioner Connell** pointed out there would be two dwelling units in the county, and they are proposing to come into the city and build forty-eight dwelling units. **PZD Miller** agreed. **Mayor Burry** asked if there were any other questions from the commission. There were none.

He asked for public comments.

Lori Brown of 6217 Dewey Robbins Road said this was located just to the east of them. They live in the country for a reason and they do not want this approved. It is currently rural, and they have cattle directly to the south of this proposal. There is cattle, orange groves, and the kids there ride around on their ATVs. Dewey Robbins Road is not a road to put commercial on. Some of them own five acres and others own forty acres. This is not the right area to do this project. She begged that the commission say no.

Matt Rayl of 6429 and 6255 Dewey Robbins Road wanted to thank the planning commission for saying no to the project. He owns the land directly to the west of the proposal. He also owns the adjoining property to the west. His property is located on one side of the proposed development and there are two estate homes located on each side of the property. These are not small farms, these are beautiful estate homes, and they want to put fifty-two townhouses and a commercial building right between two estate properties. That should not be allowed. That would be like going to the mayor's house and building fifty-two townhouses right next to him. There are no lots behind them because it is owned by the St. Johns Authority, so from the aspect this development should be on US 27. There are only four estate homes here so they need to keep this area the way it is. The city is going to develop all the way around it because it has already been planned for, it has already been annexed into the city. They understand that and there is nothing they can do about it now. However, if they could leave these estates, pristine the way that they are, it would be something else and it would remain beautiful. There are a lot of hills out there and that is why it is called Howey in the Hills. All asked that they please keep it as it is.

Joyce Graham of 6545 Dewey Robbins Road said she lives right next door to the Cronin's. They bought their property thirty-five years ago, and they were told it was a rural-protected area and that it would stay that way. They have put over thirty-five years of blood, sweat and tears into that property. If this was to go through, it would devastate them. She asked that they please say no.

Leo Dominguez said he was there on behalf of his family and neighbors. They do not believe this is the correct location for this particular project. A commercial site does not belong on Dewey Robbins Road. That should be out on US 27 where people can make better use of it. This would convert their country living into city living when it is currently zoned for agricultural. It will disturb the peace of the residents in that area with the extremely high traffic. Traffic has already increased tremendously and this would only make it a nightmare to get in and out of their homes. In addition to that, they have small children, and they love to race. They are teaching them the value of agriculture and farming. There is not enough space for a school zone in this area. He believes they are the last generation to grow up with farming and cows. When they moved to this area they fell in love with the country lifestyle. They came from the city and he does not want their way of living taken away. **Mayor Burry** asked if there were any other comments from the commission and public. There were none. He stated these items would lay over.

5. **An Ordinance amending the Future Land Use Map of the Comprehensive Plan of the City of Leesburg, changing the Future Land Use Map Designation of certain property containing 9.94 +/- acres from Lake County Rural to City of Leesburg Low Density Residential, for a property generally located north of Dewey Robbins Road, east of U.S. Highway 27, lying in Section 31, Township 20 South, Range 25 East, Lake County, Florida; and providing an effective date. (Cronin-Dewey Robbins SSCP)**
6. **An Ordinance of the City of Leesburg, Florida, changing the zoning on approximately 9.94 +/- acres from Lake County A (Agriculture) to City of**

Leesburg SPUD (Small Planned Unit Development) to allow for 48 townhomes and 15,000 square feet of commercial for a property generally located north of Dewey Robbins Road, east of U.S. Highway 27, lying in Section 31, Township 20 South, Range 25 East, Lake County, Florida; and providing an effective date. (Cronin-Dewey Robbins SPUD)

C. NON-ROUTINE ITEMS

- 1. Resolution of the City Commission of the City of Leesburg, Florida authorizing the Mayor and City Clerk to execute a Construction Services Agreement with Kingdom Construction Services, Inc., for the construction and improvements to Susan Street Sports Complex; and providing an effective date.**

ADOPTED RESOLUTION 11,954

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.

CM Minner stated this has been long awaited and the commission will decide whether to move forward or not with the Susan Street Sports Complex. Referring to slides, he explained that they were trying to refurbish the Susan Street Complex from a mixture of diamond sports and rectangle sports to just rectangle sports. In the future they will push all the diamond sport activities to Sleepy Hollow. This project seeks to build one major stadium field and four other fields. There will be rectangle fields along with parking and the main entry will come in off US 27. The concept is to have more facilities so they can host, sponsor and conduct football, rugby, soccer and lacrosse; all the rectangular sports. A major component of the project is to have the entrance come in off US 27. We solicited bids and received four bids back. They were wide-ranging, but the low bid was from Kingdom Construction and that came in at 10.56 million dollars. Obviously, it came back over the budgeted estimate and we had prepared a number of budgets for this project. Since its inception we went from three million dollars to five million dollars. In FY 24 it was budgeted at five million dollars from various sources. As we pushed into FY 25 we readjusted the budget from five million dollars to seven million dollars. He understands that the price tag was more than anticipated. On that note, staff is comfortable with this number. We have beaten this up left and right and the price is the price. Neighboring communities who are doing similar projects are seeing the same bid numbers. We cross-checked this with the construction manager form of government and their initial numbers came back at what the bids were. After receiving the initial numbers from the construction manager form of government we said no way this cannot be that expensive. However, after going out to bid, it is 10.56 million dollars is the market price to do the concept. In the public sector we hear all the time that we want creative financing, we want different sources of money and we want to accomplish projects that benefit community. This project does that. So, while the price tag is 10.6 million dollars there are several different funding sources. First, the state legislature has ranked this as a priority project and their funding is \$375,000. It may not seem like a lot but that means we have the attention of the state delegation. That means former Senator Baxley and former Representative Truenow, who will

soon be Senator Truenow, support this project. They were able to move the state legislature as well as the governor to help fund this project. While it may not be a big number it is a significant number in that the state is helping to sponsor this project and they see the merits for it. Secondly, we have the All-American Recovery Program. We had three million dollars and we allocated 2.4 million dollars for this project. Then we have the Lake County TDC funding of just under one million dollars. We had hoped it would move up to two million dollars but at this time it looks like the second portion of the TDC funding will not come through. So, while the county does capital improvement modifications and some other TDC funding at this time, they are not in a position to increase the funding of TDC dollars. With that recreation impact fees that are city funded we have \$500,000. Where we started changing allocations on this project was this fiscal year. We went to the US Highway 441/27 CRA and that brought in an additional two million dollars. That was how we got this project funded up to the seven million dollar level. Now, in order to bridge the gap between seven million dollars and 10.56 million dollars he recommended going back to that same well and use the remaining allocations of the US Highway 441/27 CRA. Now, why in the world would we have six million dollars of US Highway 441/27 CRA money sitting around. When he was hired as the city manager in 2013, one of the first issues they faced on was the upside down increment of that CRA. When the US Highway 441/27 CRA was created in 2010 we issued fifteen million dollars of debt that was done by a balloon note. That was based on growth that we anticipated the US Highway 441/27 CRA to grow. That growth would ultimately fund the balloon note. However, that did not happen because at the same time we created the US Highway 441/27 CRA and issued that fifteen million dollar balloon note the economy crashed. So, immediately our increment was negative which meant the US Highway 441/27 CRA did not generate any money. Remember with the CRA the county contributes their increment and we contribute our increment. Those two increments put together create the tax increment finance (TIF) that we use to fund projects in the district. So, one of the first things we did was to work hand over fist to get the increment modified. We were one of the only cities in the state that was able to recalibrate the increment after the increment had been created. A lot of that was due to Lake County being a home rule county. There was a lot of differences from the county commissioners but we were able to re-calibrate that note. While we recalibrated that TIF increment we were extremely concerned about the impacts of the debt that was issued on the general fund. As a result, and before he started here the city stopped the US Highway 441/27 lights project. We had already spent about 7.5 million dollars of that increment but we decided to use the other 7.5 million dollars to start paying back the debt. We also used some gas money.

When he started here we were running out of cash. We were concerned that the general fund would not be able to absorb that debt which is what normally happens. The obligation of the general fund would absorb that debt if the TIF could not do it. We were just about at that point when we recalibrated, and when we recalibrated we started seeing growth again in the increment. That growth continued to pretty much follow the trend of being able to pay off that debt, but from about 2013 to 2016 we were still extremely cautious about spending the US Highway 441/27 CRA increment even though there is a requirement to spend the increment. We were justified in doing so and essentially we pulled that cash so we could cover the debt without impacting the general fund of the city. Now, fast-forward to today, in FY 2025, the increment brings in three million dollars per year and the only obligation of the increment is the debt. That debt is about one million dollars and that debt retires in about 2033. We have about nine million dollars left on that debt with six million dollars of cash in the CRA. Now, the Susan Street project is significant with complexity and impact on the city and it could easily be absorbed by shifting cash from the US Highway 441/27 CRA into this project while still being able to cover the debt obligation and have surplus revenues into the future. Having said that, we need to be a little more creative in where the sources of money come from. In a 10.6 million dollar project the city would have about 3.6 million dollars of its own invested. This project would give us a 10.6 million project for 3.6 million dollars. Only 35% of the project would be funded by us. Referring to a chart, he showed the amount of state, federal, county, and city money. The CRA money would be six million dollars and half of that would be the county's increment. The other half would be our increment. The project for lack of better words does a

great job of using other resources from other jurisdictions to bring a quality improvement to the City of Leesburg. Having said that there are places we can look at to potentially cut costs in the project. The first thing he pointed out was the bottom number and of the 10.56 million dollars, one million dollars is contingency. That would help if there any unforeseen things arise or if we do not spend all the 10.56 million dollars, one million dollars is still the contingency. He showed a list of a couple of spots where we could look at cutting, but basically it would be bleachers in the major stadium and side fields along with the sound system. If they added those costs up they could cut about 2.7 million dollars off the top. The next area gets more problematic, but it would shift into doing the parking lot and doing the parking lot a little different. Instead of having asphalt it would be chip and mill and instead of doing some other improvements on the entryway we they could possibly lessen the entryway a little bit. We have called for an initial milling of the existing area. We could do that and then do a tar and seal. However, he would not recommend doing that, because one question in this project is that we have easements and access through that property. Today the answer is no; however, we have made significant strides. We have talked to the developer who owns the plaza, Pat Sales, and Pizza Hut and we are very close to getting perpetual easements that would allow us to build these improvements without having to pay the owners of the property any money. The argument with them was in exchange for creating and investing in their property with a massive change to the parking lot, which would help bring business to them they would let us use it. We feel confident that within the next ninety days and before significant construction starts we will have those easements wrapped up. With all of those contingencies put together it would be a 1.5 million dollar cut. Honestly, that is not a significant cut and it starts to degrade the quality of the project. If we are going to do something we need to do it right. There may be some other areas we can cut and as we get into the engineering we can adjust it so we are confident that we stay within the budget parameter of 10.65 million dollars. Our history of managing projects once construction contracts have been issued is to get to the final construction contract number which is a moving needle, but once we have that price and bid the history on all projects including the aquatic facility, Pine Street, Venetian Center, Resource Center, teen center and the 40 million dollar sewer plant was to stay on schedule and beat that number. Once we finally get to that number he felt extremely confident that it would be pretty close to where we end up. This project should not be considered any different and it would be completely remised if we did not talk about it and the critical nature of the American Recovery Act. The American Recovery Act has been a bit of a moving target since the federal government issued that 11 million dollars with what we can spend it on and when it has to be spent by. And, without being blue or red, but just straight talk with the shift in administrations coming up, the latest change that came out the latter part of the summer was that all recipients of the American Recovery Act allocations needed to be made by December 31, 2024 and the money must to be spent by December 31, 2025. So, this evening marks a critical junction because obviously 2.4 million dollars is still sitting there and we need to get this project under contract if we are going to use American Recovery Act money on it. They need to make that decision this evening and if they decide to not put this money into this project they will need to schedule a special meeting before the end of the year to reallocate that money. There is another reallocation source that we could go to and that would be the sewer plant. That was a 40 million dollars project and 10 million dollars of that is sewer fund cash and the other 30 million dollars of that was debt. The American Recovery money cannot be spent on debt, but it can be spent on the cash. So, if they do not approve this project formally by resolution tonight, they will need to go back and amend how they originally said they were going to spend the American Recovery Act money. It would have to be modified before the end of the year, to be clear on the books. They would put the remaining 2.4 million dollars into the sewer fund. On that note, we also had an issue with the marina project and we were unable to get that out to bid. Administratively, we could shift some wires around and show that we used American Recovery Act monies to purchase the Tropic building and we could use on the Tropic money on the marina and covered.

Referring to a bulleted bid sheet, he showed the cuts and where they would go. Earlier, he mentioned bleacher modifications, but what he meant to say was they could do parking lot mills instead of asphalt

and a reduction in field sizes, which could hopefully get them in the neighborhood of about \$700,000. He has talked to some of the commissioners on the phone and he said that number was half a million, so he was a little short on that. One thing he specifically learned is that rugby fields are significantly larger than regular football or soccer fields. To get the rugby part of the concept we had to go larger fields so that increased the cost by \$750,000 which it goes into turf and what goes along with turf and it also pushed us a little bit into the wetlands so we had that mitigation. About a month or two ago we did that purchase order for the \$145,000, which got us started on mitigation and if they reduce the fields that \$145,000 is a little bit in question, but if we reduce the fields we could probably get those mitigation bank credits sold. He would not be totally concerned about it. To wrap up the presentation the staff recommendation is to move forward with the project. It is a complex project and it is far-reaching as far as what it can do and it has significant multiple jurisdictional support to where we are going to get potentially a 10.6 million dollar project for about 3.8 million dollars of our money.

Commissioner Reisman stated this was a lot of money, but after having discussions with prior commissioners over the years they always regretted not fighting for the full project. They have said they should have done the projects right. However, they made cuts to funds and made adjustments to the project. They regretted it afterwards. Yes, this is a lot of money but they will have rugby size fields, and that is smart it because it will allow for room to grow. This project has been the works for a long time, and it would be really impressive for our kids and the community. The kids deserve to have this, and it will make Leesburg a much better place to live and work. He fully supports this project and recommended going with staffs recommendation. **Commissioner Connell** pointed out when this project first came up they were talking about 3 million dollars. It then jumped to 5 million dollars, then to 7 million dollars, and now we are at 10.6 million dollars. This project never stops giving and it is a tremendous amount of money. This project costs too much money for what we are going to get out of it. If they were to throw in some change orders we will be at 11 million dollars. It was a tremendous amount of money at 3 million, but 10.6 million dollars is craziness.

Commissioner Pederson remarked that from day one he supported the whole concept of triangular fields at Sleepy Hollow and rectangular fields at the Susan Street complex. He has watched the numbers grow. He grumbled and had heartburn at seven plus million dollars a few months ago and he made comments that we should cut that number back. Now, he was really struggling with 10.6 million dollars for this project. It pained him to say that because he did not want to start chipping away at it, but he may a little bit. He fully supported renovating Susan Street for the benefit of the community and kids. The reason this project has increased was because of sports tourism and he fully supported it at three, five, and seven million dollars. However, now, he was struggling with adding another three million dollars. He understands the sources and all that, but with everything going on in the city he would like to drop it back and find a way to do this project for at least half. He wanted to cut it back some, but yes, this project would clearly benefit the children. Maybe they could lay it out in a manner where down the road future commissions could add things to it, such as the stadium because 10.6 million dollars is a lot of money.

Commissioner Berry said this project was located in district one and the majority of residents have never played rugby nor do they know anything about soccer. She had never participated in any sports activities; however, this project was in existence when she came on board. Since then, she has listened and learned, she has seen the growth in the dollars. Yes, it is a lot of money, but she was looking forward to the opportunity to have this in the area and it would improve the US Highway 27/441 corridor. This project would bring in more business and she would like to see the children in the district one and the Carver Heights Montclair/Woodland Park area benefit from the opportunity. There could be summer programs to teach them how to play rugby and soccer at an early age. Yes, it is a big price, but in the long run we will have a big return with the opportunities that come behind it. **Commissioner Reisman** agreed. If this facility is anything like Sleepy Hollow the returns will be there. **Commissioner Pederson** wanted to verify that we still had money to add a few more fields at Sleepy Hollow. **CM Minner** replied at this time that funding is questionable. Part of the concept at Sleepy Hollow was that we would receive

additional TDC funding. We received the original request of TDC funds of one million dollars. We then went back and met with the TDC board where we put together an overall four to five million dollar project request with another one million dollars over subsequent years. Basically, the TDC board approved the request for funding, which is why they saw the two million dollars in the budget request and then we hoped in the out years after this facility was done that we would move over to TDC monies and other monies and we would put that towards Susan Street. Long story short, the county has put an abeyance on their funding for capital projects and if they are not county projects TDC dollars are questionable. He was not saying we would not get it, but it would not be a path. So, where the dollars come from for Sleepy Hollow in the future is a bit of a question. It would be a priority in FY 26/27 or FY 27/28 because at this time, this commission has made it clear that downtown parking and some other things are the primary obligation. However, he felt comfortable that they could cover this in the next couple of years. There could be some future discretionary sales tax dollars or they kick the can on funding Sleepy Hollow until about FY 27. **Commissioner Berry** asked if there would be opportunities in the future in other areas to extend the sports arena where they could add different projects later. **CM Minner** answered yes, but after making the improvements to Sleepy Hollow and Susan Street that pretty much taps out what those facilities can do. They would look at the diamond sports at Sleepy Hollow and some other smaller capital projects like pickle ball and skateboard parks. Those would be smaller facilities that could host different sports. As far as large projects and big acreage, the significant dollars will be spent on Susan Street and Sleepy Hollow. **Commissioner Connell** wanted to verify that they were losing four baseball fields at Susan Street and not getting the two fields at Sleepy Hollow. **CM Minner** said he understood his concern because part of the initial concept was to have more baseball fields at Sleepy Hollow. However, at this time those fields will not be added. Even without those two fields being added the city can ensure that all recreational programs will be taken care of. The recreation director not for one second believes that losing the baseball fields will be a problem. **Commissioner Connell** pointed out that we are losing four baseball fields at Susan Street and we are not getting the baseball fields at Sleepy Hollow. **CM Minner** clarified that we would not be losing any services. Currently, Susan Street has four baseball fields and we will lose those, but the recreation director believes that we can continue with the programming of city sports without losing any quality of events that we bring in. With the NCAA we are able to market that at the Sleepy Hollow complex. **Mayor Burry** agreed. **CM Minner** continued to say the additional fields at Sleepy Hollow was a bonus to expand Sleepy Hollow. It will not hurt the city as far as being able to support the programs. **Mayor Burry** stated we are gaining five surface fields at Susan Street because right now we only have one. We keep saying rugby, but that includes lacrosse too. At this time that is a girls high school sport at Leesburg High School and they have nowhere to play. That is another sport that can be played there. He has been a supporter of this project for a long time. He was no happier than anybody else with the price tag, but we have been moving towards a sports tourism type of city. We already bring in the Bass Tournaments, girls softball with the NCAA and this will enhance field sports and bring in more people. When looking at the physical location it is in the fast food corridor and with families coming in they will spend money in that area. It will be a benefit to the business owners. We talk about sports tourism dollars being important, but this facility is also important because of what it offers the kids. For years the football programs practiced on fields all over the place because there was not enough space. This gives that to our kids, it is a good spot and it is something to be proud of. He was 100% behind it as long as the city manager says we can pay for it. **Commissioner Reisman** remarked that the kids who will play there will have pride in where they play. **Mayor Burry** asked if there were any other comments. There were none.

The roll call vote was:

Commissioner Berry	Yes
Commissioner Connell	No
Commissioner Reisman	Yes
Commissioner Pederson	No

Mayor Burry

Yes

Three yeas, two nays, the Commission adopted the resolution.

2. Community Development Corporation of Leesburg, Inc. Requests

- a. Resolution of the City Commission of the City of Leesburg, Florida, approving donation of a surplus lot located at 1111 Beecher Street, Leesburg, Florida, to the Community Development Corporation of Leesburg, Inc; authorizing the Mayor and City Clerk to execute a Special Warranty Deed conveying the lot; and providing an effective date.**

DENIED RESOLUTION 11,955

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

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

Mayor Burry requested comments from the Commission and the audience.

Commissioner Pederson stated they already beat this up pretty good earlier at the Carver Heights/Montclair Area CRA meeting. He would love to see this just go to roll call. **Mayor Burry** asked if there were any questions or comments. **Commissioner Reisman** pointed out that this site was the old Dabney pool site. **Mayor Burry** agreed. **Commissioner Berry** wanted to know what the Leesburg CDC's plans were for this site.

John Christian, Chairman of the CDC of Leesburg said they were excited about the opportunity to partner with the city. If they were to drive down Harlem Avenue they would see three homes that they constructed and that would be the vision for this property. When driving down Beecher street from Griffin they would see homes on this property. They felt an active recreational spot at that location would not be good for the neighborhood. It would not be good for any neighborhood. They just heard people talking about commercial on Dewey Robbins Road and that would not be good. This is a residential neighborhood and that property should have never been an active recreational spot. At this time, the city has the opportunity to correct that. They envision at least three homes on that property and it would complete the residential neighborhood. The CDC board members were all present. When talking about Carver Heights he met with the city manager, Commissioner Berry, the city attorney, housing director, and the Deputy City manager, and they talked about the relationship between the CDC and the city. The city manager was correct in that the city has been tremendous when it comes to supporting their redevelopment goals. The city has been so supportive, and tonight they want to continue on Harlem Avenue. They have one house that they closed on and a second house should be closed on Friday. The CDC takes pride in rebuilding the community, but remember the CDC of Leesburg is not the East Leesburg CDC. They are a citywide CDC so when people say why are you on this side of town that is because they are the original CDC and they encompass the entire city. They are not demographically bound. With the CDC of Leesburg the consent decree it talks about working together with the city and that was why he met with the city manager and the city attorney. The city manager asked the city attorney to look at it to make sure they were doing what was right by the consent decree. In that meeting

he asked the city attorney if he was off base on his thinking, comments or requests, and the city attorney said no. He was well in line with what the consent decree called for. He enjoys working with the city and the CDC. The consent decree talks about the city participating in the corporate redevelopment of the CDC's comprehensive development plan. It also talks about the city backing the initiatives formulated by the CDC and the city supporting the CDC's proposed redevelopment projects and activities consistent with the comprehensive development plan. Since 2023, the city adopted the surplus lot donation policy and Sandra Wilson came and talked about the live local act in September 2023. They were there to say that they want to continue to rebuild the community. Yes, it does come with a risk, and this would not be an easy project. In fact, he just spoke with his realtor who was working on the third house on Harlem. She said they had a showing on Saturday, and after that the buyer drove through the neighborhood and decided to cancel. They are running the risk by putting their money in Carver Heights, but they believe this is the only way to rebuild and restore Carver Heights. The question comes up often about the CDC, but they feel they are doing a great job. They are good stewards about what has been given to them, but the CDC wants to do so much more. They want to continue with what they have been doing. He knows there is a cap for three lots in three years, but he would challenge that in about two years they will come back and ask to build more houses because they will see the work that is being done in the community. Drive down Harlem Avenue and take a look at the houses because that is what the plan is for these lots. It would complete a residential neighborhood and bring pride and honor back to that block. **Commissioner Berry** wanted to verify the number of homes they would be building. **Mr. Christian** replied this piece of property was not currently divided. They would have a surveyor come out to see how many homes they could build on it. However, at this time he was not sure. He hoped at least two if not three. He would work with the planning director, but he hoped to get at least three. **Commissioner Berry** asked what the plans were with the NAACP building to the left? How do they plan to construct an entrance/exit for the houses? **Mr. Christian** answered the entrances would come right off Beecher Street. The driveways would be on Beecher Street. They support the NAACP and their CDC was the one that paid for the new roof to be put on that building about five years ago. There was a hole in the roof and they paid for the new roof. They hope to assist with beautification of Beecher Street. **Mayor Burry** pointed out that the CDC does do some wonderful things. However, he had reservations about giving away a piece of property that he believes would be better served for a public purpose. This site used to be the old Dabney swimming pool, it was used for a public purpose so he was not in favor of giving this away. **Mr. Christian** stated for the record the city had another lot on Tuskegee that was a park, it was the Harlem Park so that piece of property could be used for a park. He found that out by doing a title search, so the city has another location that could be used for recreational amenities. If you look at Cutrale, yes, that was in a great spot, but it backs up to an African-American neighborhood. The same goes for RoMac that backs up to African-American neighborhood. If they had the chance to do it again they would not put industrial uses behind a resident neighborhood. If they look through the city African-American communities have been plagued by active recreation and industrial. Could you imagine living next to a skate park or a pickleball court with lights on at night? No one wants that. Having more single family homes is a part of their community redevelopment plan. He asked the commission to let them help rebuild the community the way they think it should be rebuilt. Yes, it was once a pool, but that was not the best use for that property. No one wants a city recreational facility next to their house. They have Susan Street and Sleepy Hollow. Those facilities are in places where people are accustomed to a lot of traffic. This should be completed as a neighborhood. It should be single family homes.

Randy Hepburn of 1939 Pruitt Street, Leesburg said he was born and raised in this town. He asked the commission if they knew how this property became city property. **Mayor Burry** responded no. **Mr. Hepburn** stated it was donated by a family. It was donated to build the HO Dabney swimming pool. There are reunions every year, and people come from everywhere. The first thing they ask about is the Carver Heights pool. They would be proud to say they built houses on that property. It would make people feel good. They are not trying to take anything, they just want to be fair. If everyone was fair

everything would be alright. The city should know the history and research should be done. There could be better consideration with some of the projects that they decide to do. With the background about how the city acquired that property, it was donated by a black family. He was born and raised here, and if anyone wants to know about Leesburg they should call Randy Hepburn.

Commissioner Berry pointed out at the Carver Heights/Montclair CRA meeting it was mentioned by Commissioner Alderman that this property should be a community facility in that area. She asked that they keep that in mind. **Mayor Burry** asked if there were any other comments. There were none.

The roll call vote was:

Commissioner Connell	Yes
Commissioner Reisman	No
Commissioner Pederson	Yes
Commissioner Berry	No
Mayor Burry	No

Two yeas, three nays, the Commission denied the resolution.

- b. **Resolution of the City Commission of the City of Leesburg, Florida approving the Community Development Corporation of Leesburg, Inc., funding request of \$50,000 for the Pine Street Restaurant Redevelopment; and providing an effective date.**

DENIED RESOLUTION 11,956

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

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

Mayor Burry requested comments from the Commission and the audience.

CM Minner said the way he understood the project was that the CDC has a commercial kitchen they would like to finish developing. The commercial kitchen would be shared between businesses. **Mr. Christian** clarified that it would be a restaurant. However, jumping back to the previous item on the agenda he asked the city attorney to explain and if he understood the federal consent decree because the federal consent decree says the city shall participate and support the CDC's projects. They had a project they wanted to do and they asked for a lot to build the single-family houses on, which was part of their community redevelopment plan. They also held a meeting held offline about it. He wanted to know why the city did not have to follow the federal consent decree? **CA Watson** replied that the city has to follow the federal consent decree.

Mr. Christian said he did not want to go backwards, but it says in the federal consent decree that the city will support and back the initiatives of the CDC and that the city will support the CDC's proposed redevelopment projects. We just had a redevelopment project and the city said no. From a legal perspective, how is the city supporting the CDC's redevelopment project and activities that are consistent with the comprehensive plan when they say no to a request to build single-family homes? He was confused, how is the city supporting, agreeing and abiding by the federal decree when they pick and choose when to say yes or no. **CA Watson** pointed out that the federal consent decree does not mandate

the city to agree to any particular proposal in front of them. The concept is that the city will support the CDC's projects from a general standpoint, and at the CRA meeting held earlier that was done. They donated two lots. **Mr. Christian** said he was referring to the previous agenda item. **CA Watson** stated he understood what was being discussed, but they just donated two lots at an earlier meeting tonight, which does support the projects. There were concerns stated on the previous agenda item about the lot not being suitable for single family homes since it was the old Dabney pool site. It was discussed that it may not be suitable due to the size and that particular lot was one that the city choose to hang on to. The city is listening to the requests and the city is considering the requests in good faith. However, he cannot say how the city commission is going to ultimately vote. He does not think the federal consent decree means that the city has to accept any and all applications that come before them. The city has the discretion to review what has been proposed and to decide whether or not it is acceptable. **Mr. Christian** pointed out that the city had looked at this lot and this lot was put on the list. The city determines which lots are suitable for affordable housing and this lot was on that list. So, that argument does not apply. It has been on that list for eighteen months, ever since the city has been looking at the list. That lot stayed on the list for eighteen months and when it came time to make a decision the determination was that it was not suitable. **CA Watson** responded that was not for him to determine since he does not have a vote. **Mr. Christian** stated he should not be giving legal counsel. **CM Minner** interrupted and said they were getting off track because that item had already been voted on. They voted no to donating that lot. They are now on the public hearing for a \$50,000 commercial kitchen redevelopment request. That is the motion on the floor. He wanted to make sure they were all talking about the right thing. **Mr. Christian** said he wanted to make sure the city attorney was giving proper legal counsel when the city is making these decisions and that did not take place. There was a meeting outside of the public and he thought they were all on the same page. Then he comes to this meeting and they are not on the same page. That was why he asked the city attorney if it was off base in the thinking and consideration. He was not saying the city should rubber stamp everything, but that should have been rubber stamped because it was consistent with the city's comprehensive development plan.

For the record, he wanted to read the consent decree because they were now making a \$50,000 request, and he wanted to make sure they were all on the same page. On page seven of the federal consent decree it says the city's attempt to attain funding and finance as described in paragraph 11 are subject to the availability of such finances or funding that can legally be used for stated purposes to the extent that the CDC believes that funding is available, and the city believes it is not. The city and the CDC will consult promptly in an effort to reconcile their difference in view. They are there asking for \$50,000 to complete a restaurant located at 323 Pine Street, which was Miss Rosa's restaurant. This would support the CDC and it would continue the redevelopment of Pine Street. They are requesting \$50,000 to complete the restaurant by adding the kitchen equipment. This would tag off what has been done downtown where the city set aside \$250,000 grants for developers to come in and renovate old buildings. The city has given out three of the four \$250,000 grants and most of the developers do not live in Leesburg or in the State of Florida. They are saying that the city needed to be consistent with what has been done downtown. That is why the CDC was there to request \$50,000 to complete a restaurant on Pine Street. The interior renovations have been completed along with the exterior renovations. However, they need help with the kitchen equipment at the cost of \$50,000. He gave the city manager a packet that included the equipment that was quoted at \$54,000, and that was where they got the request for \$50,000.

Commissioner Berry asked about the \$50,000 and if that was just for the kitchen area. **Mr. Christian** answered that would cover the costs for the equipment, and that list was provided to the city manager. **CM Minner** clarified that the breakdown of costs were included in the agenda packets. **Mr. Christian** continued to say that would cover the costs of equipment, and they cover the costs of installation. **CM Minner** asked that he clarify the project. **Mr. Christian** said it was for a restaurant. **Mayor Burry** wanted to know who the owner of the restaurant was. **Mr. Christian** responded the CDC owns the

restaurant. **Mayor Burry** asked about the city's return on this project. **Mr. Christian** replied it would be similar to what has been done downtown. The CDC will hire people to run a restaurant and that restaurant will complete everything on Pine Street. The city will get a new restaurant on Pine Street similar to what has been done downtown where the city gave \$250,000 to people who made an investment. Where developers came in and made a one million dollar investment and the city gave them a quarter million dollars. They have made a \$200,000 investment on Pine Street and they need \$50,000 to complete that restaurant. By doing this, the city will have a new restaurant on Pine Street. **Commissioner Berry** wanted to verify if the kitchen would be used for anyone wanting to come in and use it. **Mr. Christian** responded it would be a restaurant. **Commissioner Berry** questioned if this would be seating inside or if would be carry out? **Mr. Christian** replied sit down. The seats and tables are there. Everything is there except for the kitchen equipment. **Commissioner Berry** wanted to confirm that the request was for kitchen equipment only. **Mr. Christian** concurred. **Commissioner Berry** said she had concerns about the federal consent decree. She did not feel that just because they put in a request that they can automatically come back and say based on the decree this was what it should have been. The decree says reasonable, and they just received two lots. It states reasonable throughout the decree and about grant applications being reasonable. The decree should not be used to say this is what we requested so this is what we should get. **Mr. Christian** said honestly the CDC came before the city commission nineteen months ago and they asked for three lots to build single family homes on. The commission from their standpoint must recognize the CDC as a different type of nonprofit and that was why they asked the city manager to put them on the agenda solo, because they were being lumped in with the other six nonprofits. The federal consent decree makes them different and that was their point. For nineteen months they have been kicked down the road. The goal post was moved when they put a moratorium in place in order to create a policy about advertising, and tonight there is talk about changing the policy again. As the CDC they were asking to partner with the city per the federal consent decree. When he was on the commission there were no issues. The city manager and the commission worked well with the CDC to donate lots to the CDC. Some of those houses were in bad shape, but they are a community partner with the city per the federal consent decree. However, they are now being roped in and put in with other nonprofits like they are a typical nonprofit, which they are not. That was the point, they are not a typical nonprofit and they want to be treated as the federal consent decree says they should be treated. They are not there asking the city for anything except three lots to build houses on. They have not asked the city for anything outside of that. They have not seen him at other meetings because of the moratorium, and nineteen months is was too long for any decision to be made by the city commission especially when they have a federal consent decree. Decisions should be made in a reasonable time. Nineteen months is not reasonable, that is beyond reasonable. This request is the same concept that the city has done downtown where they asked professional business people to come in and buy a building downtown, make the improvements and the city would give them money. The CDC was simply asking for the same thing. They bought buildings on Pine Street, they spent a lot of money renovating the buildings. A lot of the buildings were old as they found out doing reconstruction. They are simply requesting some help to complete the restaurant. After this, everything on Pine Street will be open and operational. **Mayor Burry** said ultimately in the downtown we had four redevelopment grants. Three of the four have been awarded at \$250,000 a piece. Those developers came in and remodeled the entire building and they brought it up to code. So, with this building the CDC wants the city to give them \$50,000. However, he did not know who would own the building. **Mr. Christian** responded the CDC of Leesburg would own the building. **Mayor Burry** asked if they were going to rent it. **Mr. Christian** answered they would rent it or run it themselves. They are more responsible than the developers the city gave the money to downtown because they can sell it tomorrow and be gone. They are not going anywhere. They are staying in Leesburg. **Mayor Burry** questioned the tax revenues. **Mr. Christian** said they would be stay in Leesburg. They are not going anywhere. **Mayor Burry** wanted to know if the city would get any tax revenues from this. **Mr. Christian** said yes. They pay taxes on everything that is not a nonprofit. Last year they gave a presentation that showed they paid over \$30,000 in property taxes. Even

though they are a nonprofit organization anything they own that is a taxable entity they pay taxes on. They paid \$30,000 in taxes last year to the city. They are not just giving them a free building that is tax-free. They are not Beacon College. They write a check to the property appraiser and that goes back to the city. They are getting a return on the investment because there will be a restaurant that is not a non-taxable entity. They pay taxes on all their rental properties. **Commissioner Pederson** stated he and Mr. Christian go way back as commissioners and friends. They were board members before that, but he was struggling with this one. We gave the CDC \$750,000 out of the ARP money three years ago. We split the CRA money with the CDC so they get over half a million dollars a year from the CRA. With that, he was struggling with another \$50,000. He understands the decree, but he would stop on the equipment. With the lots, he knows he was frustrated because he wanted one lot for potential three homes. He would support more than three lots per year because we need to get these lots moving. They can always amend the policy down the road if they were ready to build more houses. However, they could talk about that another day. He knows these kind of ran together, so he wanted to touch on both. With this item he was struggling about donating \$50,000 for equipment based on how much money the city gives and how supportive the city has been on Pine Street and in Carver Heights. **Mr. Christian** said they have been very fortunate, but remember with the CRA if they go back and check the history the CRA has grown. They were getting \$100,000 in the CRA ten years ago and now the CRA is getting \$500,000 because tax values have increased in that area. That is what a CRA is supposed to do. They receive half of that because the federal consent decree says they have to. Could you imagine if the federal consent decree was not here? The city would not give them anything and they would be out of business in three years. **Commissioner Pederson** stated he should know better than that because the city has been very supportive. **Mr. Christian** said that was why it was important to have the federal consent decree because when commissions change, people's views change. People say they are getting too much, but the problem is when they get \$100,000 they are barely making payroll. They are helping to grow the CRA and that is what this is supposed to do. **Commissioner Pederson** agreed the CRA is working. It covers the downtown and Pine Street. It has worked beautifully and the CDC is benefiting greatly from it. **Mr. Christian** stated the CDC has worked hard. Looking at Pine Street how long has Pine Street looked the way it looks. They were the ones that bought the Aquatic Center property and they sold it to the city with the expectations of expanding the CRA because that was the deal with the city. **Commissioner Pederson** pointed out that he fully supported the pool in its entirety. When they were going to put the pool there the city said they would have to redo Pine Street. Also, remember there were commissioners upset that they sold that land to the city after the city gave the CDC land. **Mr. Christian** said his board was upset that they sold that property to the city. **Commissioner Pederson** clarified that the argument was that the city gives them lots but when the city asked for one lot we were told to buy it. That was the point. **Mr. Christian** said yes, the city has given them a lot of lots, but the city owns three acres of land. **Commissioner Pederson** questioned the amount that the city paid for the pool property. **Mr. Christian** responded it was about \$350,000. **Commissioner Pederson** confirmed it was \$300,000. **Mr. Christian** said it was the appraised value. **Commissioner Pederson** said he could see his point. However, they have done a great job and the city has been very supportive. **Mr. Christian** agreed. Yes, the city has been very supportive, but over the last couple years the city has not been as supportive as they have been in the past. Over the last two years the city has not been that supportive and that was why they were there. The support has weaned a lot. They are there with a request and they were not there to belligerent the city because they have been great partners to the CDC. Their request is to help a restaurant and that is not out of the norm. If they are going to say no then the city should have that same tenor for other people who come and ask for special donations. That was all they were saying. This is a very easy ask because the city has the funding and the city just approved ten million dollars for the Susan Street project. He supports that project, but as a city they have to look at the entire city and not just certain aspects of the city.

Commissioner Berry asked that he explain why they were not using CDC money that was allotted it to

do the rehabbing of the kitchen. **Mr. Christian** answered when he came a few months ago to do his presentation there were several projects they were working on. The Floyd Lane project costs almost \$600,000. They are doing a quadplex which is two duplexes. They have a line of buildings on Main Street that they just redid at \$100,000 plus. They just built three new houses and that was over a one million dollar investment in Carver Heights. The CDC is not just a \$50,000 CDC. They have payroll, apartments, and buildings that they take care of for insurance purposes. They also have three staff members. They were not saying they were a broke CDC. They were just saying they needed the city to assist them to accelerate what they do in the city. They do a great job just as other nonprofits who come in and help build the capacity of those nonprofits. He thought the presentation showed the work that the CDC had done over the last three years. They have done extensive work throughout the city.

Commissioner Berry said there was no question about the work that has been done. That was not what she asked for. It was not about what they have done and what they stand for because she was all in support. She was asking why would this not be included in the CDC's money that they receive. Also, are the constituents on that side of town supportive of this? Are they buying in on the concept or are they moving forward based on their board recommendations? **Mr. Christian** questioned what she meant by buy in. **Commissioner Berry** clarified that she was asking about the support from the constituents that live on the side of town. Yes, it would be great to have another restaurant but is there support from the people that live in that area? **Mr. Christian** said Cotton's Kitchen was a true testament of what the CDC has done as far as restaurants. They support Cotton's Kitchen and that building is owned by the CDC. They rent it to them. During the construction of Pine Street they subsidized their rent and their rent is still lower than any other restaurant in Leesburg. All five buildings are pretty much occupied except for maybe three spots. The support of the community has been tremendous and they have no issues nor have they had to evict anybody. The people are doing the best they can. Again, a second restaurant would be a tremendous asset to downtown Leesburg and Pine Street. If the city does not see that vision, he cannot make them see it. He can only say what the needs are of the CDC at this moment and that money would accelerate what they do. They have big plans. They will be starting construction on two new houses within the next two months with the lots they just received. He would be remised to see other nonprofits come in and do what they do. They invest in the whole Carver Heights area. He was not there to tell the city anything that they do not already know. They can see what they have done. Their simple ask was for \$50,000 to complete a restaurant on Pine Street. **Commissioner Berry** commented that she really wanted an answer regarding the support of the constituents. She was trying to lean towards being supportive because it looks really nice. However, is there anything else that can be done? Can they put this project on hold until a later date or do something less expensive? **Mr. Christian** said they already purchased the chairs and tables. Everything is done except for the kitchen equipment. **Commissioner Berry** wanted to confirm that the restaurant was ready except for the kitchen. **Mr. Christian** agreed. Everything was done except for the kitchen. They have the numbers. They did not want to say to their contractor to not put in the refrigerator or ice machine. As a board they wondered if they should get an ice machine, but they need ice. Do they want to have fountain drinks or just have pitchers? Do they just put soda in refrigerator. They did all that. They came to the city with the expectation that they would get that support from the city so they could build it to the standard that was presented. If not, they would downsize it to a smaller scale. It will happen, but it may not be a \$50,000 kitchen. **Commissioner Berry** wanted to know what type of restaurant it would be. **Mr. Christian** said they would build a restaurant and give an entrepreneur in the city a chance to come in. **Commissioner Berry** wanted to know what type of restaurant they anticipated? Would it be for a family at the pool or a family after church. What type of restaurant? **Mr. Christian** answered the restaurant would not compete with Cotton's Kitchen because they are a soul food restaurant. Their vision was for something that would compliment the swimming pool as well as some late night activities at the Pine Street Lounge. It would be someone who has extended hours and night hours as well as summertime hours for the pool constituents. He knows everyone was tired so he did not want to belittle the point because he knows some commissioners already have their minds made up. He hoped they would consider the CDC and the work that they have already done. He knows the city has the

money in their piggybank and they could support this at some level.

Mr. Hepburn stated about the history and the reason they were back to talk about the consent decree was because his family was one that was discriminated against. He was a recipient of funds from his mom who prevailed against the City of Leesburg. His mom had a restaurant on Pine Street and the city along with the hospital came and closed it. They filed a lawsuit and won so he knows the history and pain. His mom had to shut her door. She could not make another dime off of Pine Street because the City of Leesburg and the hospital closed her down along with several other restaurants. It hurt him because that was his heart. He was born and raised right there. He played in that dirt. That was his heart and they are as an organization trying to build it back up. With everything they are talking about he knows. It was not read out of a magazine. He wished the city would do a little more when considering stuff and have some kind of compassion for the needs of a few people.

Mayor Burry asked if there were any further comments from the commission. **Commissioner Berry** said as the commissioner for district one not only does she have compassion she is willing to support. However, when making requests if there is no agreement they cannot always push the decree. She asked that they understand that because that was not what the decree was set up for. It was not meant to say that every time you do not get your way the answer is to push the decree and that the city has to do it. She wants to be supportive as much as possible in all ways. She was very supportive of the decree, but she wanted to make sure everyone understood. She was very proud of what the Leesburg CDC has done. However, with this request she did not think it should be considered.

Dr. Erika Jasper asked Commissioner Berry if she understood the consent decree and if she had read it in its entirety? **Commissioner Berry** replied yes. **Commissioner Pederson** closed by saying the city spent eight million dollars between Pine Street and the pool and he was glad to know it was so appreciated. **Mayor Burry** asked if there were any further comments. There were none.

The roll call vote was:

Commissioner Reisman	No
Commissioner Pederson	No
Commissioner Berry	No
Commissioner Connell	No
Mayor Burry	No

No yeas, Five nays, the Commission denied the resolution.

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 commented that the Frostinburg sale closed on Friday and he gave the check to the city. That parcel has officially been closed. It was for a parcel near the downtown and it was a \$50,000 deal. That was officially closed and wrapped up before the new year. He hoped everyone has an enjoyable holiday season with friends and family. He enjoyed another year and appreciated another year being with

everyone. He wished them all best in the new year.

9. CITY MANAGER ITEMS:

CM Minner wished everyone a happy holidays. He would be out on vacation the week of Christmas. Also, in the back of the commission chambers he pointed out that the city added more pictures to the city accomplishment Hall of Fame.

10. ROLL CALL:

Commissioner Connell had nothing to comment on.

Commissioner Reisman wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. It has been an exciting fun year. He hoped to see everyone on Thursday at the Chamber Breakfast at 7 am. He then thanked Pam Hester, in the city manager's office for updating the back wall and highlighting all the good that we do in our city. Now, everyone can see what has been done. We can only improve on how we promote and highlight things that Leesburg does because we do a lot of good things in our city.

Commissioner Pederson wished everyone a Merry Christmas. Stay safe over the holidays.

Commissioner Berry thanked the city for allowing her to attend the Florida League of Cities that was held December 4th through December 6th. She was sure everyone read the list of items that will be going to the legislative branch. She asked that they read through and provide comments because she would like to know where everyone stands. She was enjoying being on the board and learning municipal operations. It was very exciting and there is a lot to learn. She wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. She was looking forward to another year.

Mayor Burry said he would defer back to Commission Reisman for a moment. **Commissioner Reisman** said he forgot to say one thing earlier. We approved the committee for the beautification committee, so if anyone knows anyone who wants to be on that get with the city manager or city clerk so they can fill out the application. That way they can appoint people to that board. **CM Minner** said that would be done at their organizational meeting. **Mayor Burry** said that was going to be a committee much like the arts board where they will each have an appointed member. **Commissioner Reisman** questioned if they would each appoint a member. **CM Minner** responded no, it was collective. **Commissioner Reisman** continued to say if anyone knows anyone who wants to be on that board to let them know. **Mayor Burry** said it has been a wonderful two years sitting as the mayor. He has enjoyed the time and everyone makes his job easy because they talk about it all and he got to referee. It has been a good thing. He also thanked the staff because they make it happen and easy for them. There is not a lot of questions nor are there a lot of hanging Chads out there. We have the best staff in Lake County. He hoped the new year was good for everyone. It has been a pleasure being the mayor. **Commissioner Pederson** stated he has been a great mayor. **CC Purvis** informed the commission of the organizational meeting scheduled for January 6, 2025.

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 from Commissioner Reisman and a second by Commissioner Pederson, the meeting adjourned at 8:35 pm.