

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE STUART CITY COMMISSION
FEBRUARY 23, 2026
AT 5:30 PM
COMMISSION CHAMBERS
121 SW FLAGLER AVE.
STUART, FLORIDA 34994

CITY COMMISSION

Mayor Christopher Collins
Vice Mayor Sean Reed
Commissioner Eula R. Clarke
Commissioner Laura Giobbi
Commissioner Campbell Rich

ADMINISTRATIVE

Interim City Manager, Roz Johnson Strong
City Attorney, Lee J. Baggett
City Clerk, Mary R. Kindel

ROLL CALL

5:31 PM

PRESENT: Mayor Collins, Vice Mayor Reed, Commissioner Clarke, Commissioner Giobbi, and Commissioner Rich

INVOCATION

Pastor James Brocious, Stuart Alliance Church, gave the Invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

COMMENTS BY CITY COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Rich

- Provided a brief update on the Florida Legislature and the Florida League of Cities position on the ad valorem property tax elimination, Senate Bill 840, Infill Redevelopment Act SB 1435, and House Bill 833.
- Commented on an article dated February 16, 2026, in the Stuart News regarding the resignation of the former finance director. Proposed a motion for an investigation.

5:40 PM MOTION: To instruct the City Attorney to hire an outside firm to conduct an investigation of the veracity of the comments made by Mr. Boglioli, and to determine if there were any criminal, illegal, or violations of the Code of Conduct by any Commissioner or Commissioners.

MOVED BY: Campbell Rich

SECONDED BY: None

MOTION FAILED, DIED FOR LACK OF SECOND.

Mayor Collins reported on the occurrences and is interested in knowing what illegal or unethical directions were given. Requested the Interim City Manager provide information on the staff.

Roz Johnson Strong, Interim City Manager, noted the three recent resignations in the Finance Department and noted that the City has brought on a temporary finance manager to assist with tasks: timekeeping, ADP software implementation, audits, and reconciliations. Recruitment is ongoing for a Finance Director and Senior Accountant and the shift in that department has been from a remote, part-time setup to having local, highly qualified team members.

Commissioner's comments continued:

Commissioner Clarke

- Discussed the plans for a Florida Emancipation Day program that will be held on May 20th to celebrate the end of slavery in Florida in 1865. Asked for approval from the board to plan and organize the event in the City.

5:50 PM Motion: Approval from the board to plan and organize the Florida Emancipation Day program for the 2026 event in the City of Stuart.

MOVED BY: Eula Clarke

SECONDED BY: Laura Giobbi

Motion approved unanimously.

Vice Mayor Reed

- Commented that he received an email on Martin Arts High School but will wait to see if it comes before the board.
- Commented on the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) of Martin County's agenda item that involved a sidewalk project in Jensen Beach, despite multiple petitions from residents opposing the project, the motion was passed. Felt the residents' concerns were ignored and issues such as non-conforming residential houses blocking sidewalks will cause code enforcement problems.
- Commented that he would like to see resolve of the ongoing issues in the City such as with the Ridges, Janine Alexander, the Hamiltons, and the Leonard Property.
- Suggested a Resolution come before them on allowing backyard chickens.

Mayor Collins

- Asked the Interim City Manager about the letter to the County for union negotiations.
- Requested a D&D on half-cent sales tax priorities for the next Commission Meeting.

- Commented on the School Board Meeting comments in reference to the Arts Council property and this goal is to prevent the property from being developed and to preserve it as a green space.
- Requested having Brightline implications on the next agenda as a formal presentation on current parking arrangements and potential issues for parking lot expansion.
- Requested having a D&D on the ongoing cost, grant timeline and correspondence timeline related to the FEC leases. [Vice-Mayor Reed suggested an FEC representative attend the meeting.]
- Requested at the March 23rd meeting, a D&D on the cost-of-living rate being separated out in the budget for transparency, with a separate presentation and approval process.
- Requested at the March 23rd meeting to mention a potential resolution regarding the current City Hall site, with plans for a public conversation and a possible workshop, guided by input from staff and polling data along with Candace Callahan of Stuart Main Street, to offer up what could be done on the current City Hall site.
- Commented on the backyard chickens and that he supports the idea of allowing chickens in backyards (without roosters) and requested a Resolution to be drafted on the issue.

COMMENTS BY CITY MANAGER

Interim City Manager Johnson Strong

- Requested support for funding tickets to the upcoming Environmental Stewardship Awards Banquet on April 30th at Willoughby Golf Club, where the City will be recognized for several environmental initiatives. The total cost for City officials to attend is \$1,110.00 and funds are budgeted. The City will receive awards for projects such as the Gateway Signage Project, Utility Box Wraps, the Stormwater Calendar, and Vertical Oyster Gardens. Requested Commissioner's availability. [Commissioner consensus of approval.]
- Highlighted employee achievement's and detailed "What's Good?" in the City; Devin Paine (Utilities and Engineering) earned a Class A Distribution System Operator License, Brad Livecchi (Utilities and Engineering) moved up from Utility Service Worker to a full operator and earned his Class B license, Debbie Smith (HR) earned a professional certification in payroll, and the City Clerk's Office processed 169 public records requests in just 32 business days.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

6:11 PM MOTION: Approve.

MOVED BY: Eula Clarke

SECONDED BY: Laura Giobbi

Motion approved unanimously.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC (Non-Agenda Related) (3 Minutes Max.)

1. William Rudge - Stuart; Commented on his past inquiries and demanded an investigation pertaining to Mike Mortell.
2. Janine Alexander - Gainesville; Reviewed timeline of her case. Provided a handout for the Commission.

3. Mr. Kim Coffey - Riviera Beach; friend of Janine Alexander, spoke on her behalf and reviewed the events of the case.
4. Gwendolyn Hall-Brinkley - Stuart; Commented on the last Commission Meeting and the disrespect the Commissioners showed each other on the dais; mentioned a Facebook post of mockery, feels an investigation should be done because the City has gone too far and the City deserves better representation.
5. Caryn Hall (Yost-Rudge) - Stuart; Commented on an email to Mike Mortell after he was let go and stated she felt strongly he should have been let go with cause.
6. Nancy Turrell - Stuart; Executive Director for the Martin County Arts Council, related to Mayor's comments, requested an opportunity to lease with an option to purchase with deed restriction to keep for public use. Happy to present or meet with Commissioners.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT CALENDAR

1. APPROVAL OF 02/09/2026 CCM MINUTES (RC)

2. AWARD OF ITB 2026-101 - YARD WASTE PROCESSING AND DISPOSAL (RC):

RESOLUTION No. 14-2026; A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF STUART, FLORIDA, APPROVING THE AWARD OF INVITATION TO BID NO. 2026-101, CITY OF STUART YARD WASTE PROCESSING AND DISPOSAL, TO SOUTH EAST MOWING, LLC, THE LOWEST, MOST RESPONSIVE AND RESPONSIBLE BIDDER WITH A UNIT PRICE OF \$9.50 PER CUBIC YARD; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

END OF CONSENT CALENDAR

6:29 PM MOTION: Approve.
MOVED BY: Eula Clarke
SECONDED BY: Campbell Rich
Motion approved unanimously.

ORDINANCE FIRST READING

3. 400 S.E. OSCEOLA STREET REZONE TO COMMERCIAL PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT (CPUD) (QUASI-JUDICIAL) (RC):

ORDINANCE No. 2549-2026; AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF STUART, FLORIDA, REZONING A +/-0.45 ACRE PARCEL LOCATED AT 400 S.E. OSCEOLA STREET WITHIN THE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AREA SPECIAL DISTRICT, FOR PROPERTY LEGALLY DESCRIBED AS LOTS 23, 24 AND 25, BLOCK 1, STYPMANN'S SUBDIVISION, FROM R-3 – RESIDENTIAL MULTI-FAMILY/OFFICE ZONING DESIGNATION TO COMMERCIAL PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT DESIGNATION AND ADDING BARBERSHOP, BEAUTY SALONS, AND SPECIALTY SALONS AS ALLOWABLE USES; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Mayor Collins recused himself from this agenda item due to his personal friendship and professional relationship with Mr. Benedetti, whom is his business landlord. The Mayor acknowledged that this does not create a conflict of interest, but he chose to recuse himself to avoid any appearance of impropriety, following the City Attorney's legal advice and Florida Statute.

Lee Baggett, City Attorney, confirmed that, under Florida Statute 286.012, the Mayor may abstain from voting in a quasi-judicial proceeding to ensure fairness, even though it is not legally required. The Mayor seeks board approval for his recusal and suggests that if the board prefers, he will fully recuse himself and leave the room.

Vice Mayor Reed questioned the practice, expressing that over the past ten years, he felt previously elected officials with similar personal ties did not recuse themselves. Commissioner Clarke commented that there have been Commissioner voting conflicts and the proper procedures were followed; noted the City Clerk to investigate it. Vice Mayor Reed inquired with the City Attorney a hypothetical scenario in which a quorum could not be met based on voting conflicts. City Attorney Baggett noted he would get back to him with an answer.

Hearing began; City Attorney Baggett swore in two (2) people; Jodi Kugler, Development Director, and Michael Beneditti, Owner/Applicant.

Jodi Kugler, Development Director, presented the proposed project.

Michael Beneditti, Applicant, presented his proposed plan, the conformation to the area, and the aesthetics.

Commissioner discussion included the zoning requirements.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

1. Paige Benedetti - Stuart; Commented on the ideas behind their request, to encourage small businesses.

6:53 PM MOTION: Move Ordinance No. 2549-2026 to second reading and ask that the Interim City Manager meet with staff to discuss a reimbursement of a portion of the fees paid by the applicant.

6:57 PM AMENDED MOTION: Move this to the next reading.

MOVED BY: Laura Giobbi

SECONDED BY: Sean Reed

VOTE: Motion passed 4/0.

YES: Eula Clarke, Campbell Rich, Laura Giobbi, Sean Reed

ABSTAIN: Christopher Collins

4. AVONLEA COMMERCIAL CORNERS EAST MAJOR AMENDMENT TO THE NEW AVONLEA PUD FOR PARCEL D (LOT 11)

ORDINANCE No. 2550-2026; AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF STUART, FLORIDA, PROVIDING FOR THE THIRD AMENDMENT OF THE "NEW AVONLEA PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT" CONSISTING OF

12.40 ACRES ZONED RESIDENTIAL PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT, 16.24 ACRES ZONED COMMERCIAL PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT, AND 20.4 ACRES OF WETLAND/UPLAND PRESERVE ZONED RESIDENTIAL PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT, BEING GENERALLY LOCATED BETWEEN NE DIXIE HIGHWAY TO THE SOUTH, LAND ON BOTH SIDES OF GREEN RIVER PARKWAY ON THE WEST, LAND ON BOTH SIDES OF CARDINAL AVENUE ON THE EAST AND THE CITY BOUNDARY TO THE NORTH, FOR PROPERTY LEGALLY DESCRIBED BY EXHIBIT "A" ATTACHED; AMENDING THE COMMERCIAL PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT TO PROVIDE FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE MASTER PARCEL SITE PLAN FOR THE AVONLEA COMMERCIAL EAST PARCEL D (LOT 11) TO BE IDENTIFIED AS AVONLEA COMMERCIAL CORNERS EAST; PROVIDING FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE MASTER SITE OFF-SITE INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN FOR THE ENTIRE PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT; PROVIDING FOR REVISED AND NEW DEVELOPMENT CONDITIONS APPROVAL FOR PARCEL D (LOT 11); PROVIDING FOR AMENDED AND NEW TIMETABLES FOR DEVELOPMENT; DECLARING THE PLAN TO BE CONSISTENT WITH THE CITY'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN; PROVIDING DIRECTIONS TO THE CITY CLERK; PROVIDING FOR REPEAL OF ALL ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Three (3) people sworn; Jodi Kugler, Development Director, Nik Schroth, Avonlea Applicant, and George Missimer, Colteur and Hearing, Landscape Architects, Land Planners, & Environmental Consultants.

Jodi Kugler presented the project including the notice requirements, location, future land use, master parcel plan, and proposed site and landscape plans on Lot 11.

George Missimer and Nik Schroth presented the history of the PUD.

Commission discussion included the extension of dates for PUD or master plan related to property development, specifically, to Parcel 10 and Parcel 11. Overall, the administrative details regarding the extension, technicalities in the plans, and environmental concerns related to the land.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

1. Emily Lanthier - Stuart; Opposed to the project; commented on concerns such as traffic, flooding, potential runoff, and environmental effects on neighboring wetlands and birds in the area.

**7:47 PM MOTION: Move Ordinance No. 2550-2026 to Second Reading.
MOVED BY: Eula Clarke
SECONDED BY: Campbell Rich
Motion approved unanimously.**

DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION

ADJOURNMENT

7:50 PM

Mary R. Kindel, City Clerk

Christopher Collins, Mayor

Minutes to be approved at the Regular Commission Meeting this 9th day of March, 2026.