

CITY OF GREEN COVE SPRINGS CITY COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION

321 WALNUT STREET, GREEN COVE SPRINGS, FLORIDA
TUESDAY, JULY 15, 2025 – 6:00 PM



MINUTES

Invocation & Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag - **Chaplain Marshall MacClellan, GCSPD**

Roll Call

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Matt Johnson, Vice Mayor Ed Gaw, Council Member Glee Glisson, Council Member Darren Stutts

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: L.J. Arnold, III, City Attorney, Steve Kennedy, City Manager, Mike Null, Assistant City Manager, Kimberly Thomas, Executive Assistant

Mayor to call on members of the audience wishing to address the Council on matters not on the Agenda.

1. Diane Whiteman 723 N. Magnolia Ave. GCS spoke about her concerns of false rumors and negativity circulating in the community, including accusations of slush funds, employee misconduct, financial mismanagement, and personal attacks and inappropriate comments about employees. She urged the community to stop spreading harmful and unfounded rumors.
2. Larianne Stutts 25 S. Palmetto Ave. GCS thanked city staff for their support in organizing local events such as the VIA grandmother's camp and the annual Fun in the Sun event. The Fun in the Sun event has grown significantly, reaching 500–600 children this year, and the park looked beautiful filled with families. She shared that many parents and grandparents expressed appreciation for the city's involvement in creating memorable experiences for local children.
3. Christina Bonner 814 Cove St. GCS advised she would like to set an appointment to meet with the Mayor.

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

1. Police Department Swearing-In *Chief Hines*
Chief Hines swears-in Officer Gann

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Assistant City Manager Mike Null invited Development Services Director Mike Daniels to the front where he spoke about Mr. Daniels' time with the City of Green Cove Springs. Mr. Null presents Mr. Daniels with a golden clicker that was purchased by city staff.

Mr. Daniels spoke with gratitude for his six years in Green Cove Springs. He thanked Mr. Kennedy for his exceptional leadership and personal support, praised Mike Null, and recognized his hardworking, dedicated staff. He also thanked the city council, planning and zoning, and the public for making his experience memorable and positive.

2. First reading of Ordinance No. O-09-2025, review of request for a future land use amendment for property located on Cooks Lane for parcel 016562-000-00. Future Land Use Amendment From: Mixed-Use To: Industrial **Michael Daniels**

City Attorney Arnold reads Ordinance No. O-09-2025 by title.

Development Services Director Michael Daniels advised his presentation is on items 2, 3, and 4. He advised the proposed ordinances change the land use from mixed use to industrial, the rezoning from R3 to M1, and adding site-specific conditions, including buffers, landscaping, no Cooks Lane access, tree mitigation, and a utility easement. If approved, the amendment will be sent to the state for review before final adoption.

Mayor Johnson opens the public hearing.

Janice Fleet 11557 Hidden Harbor Way Jacksonville advised she appreciated working with Mike Daniels, agreed to all conditions, and supported shifting the property's use from multifamily housing to light industrial warehouses, believing it better aligns with the city's vision and benefits the community.

Diane Whiteman 723 N. Magnolia Ave. GCS spoke about her concerns with traffic, insisting all access be via Energy Cove Court, as Cooks Lane is overcrowded and unsuitable for additional traffic, especially during peak hours.

Following no further comments, Mayor Johnson closed the public hearing.

Council Member Glisson asked Mr. Daniels about the buffers he spoke about.

Mr. Daniels advised the site will have a 20-foot landscaped buffer along Cooks Lane, using a mix of existing and new trees, with a continuous hedgerow and small trees every 25 feet as required by code. On the west side, there will be a 25-foot landscape buffer with similar planting requirements.

Council Member Stutts asked what the plan as far as what type of business would go there?

Mr. Daniels advised they're proposing M1 light industrial. So typically, light manufacturing, warehousing, wholesale type development, very similar to what is currently there.

Vice Mayor Gaw asked about a previous discussion that was had about moving some of the utility easements to straighten the road.

Assistant City Manager Mike Null advised there was discussion about widening or improving the road, but the narrow section is maintained by the county, which has indicated the city can make improvements, although the county itself has other priorities and projects.

Vice Mayor Gaw questioned there now being two separate parcels: the one currently up for a vote and another to the south. Previously, there were plans for a single large (50,000 sq ft) warehouse on the site, but now the properties have been split and are being developed separately.

Joe Wiggins 91 Branscomb Rd. Suite 17 GCS advised the property purchased was 8.8 acres for multifamily use, later planned a 48,000 sq ft warehouse. After selling the front parcel to a heavy equipment leasing company, we moved the warehouse to the back with a common Energy Cove Court easement and 3,000 sq ft bays for local business rentals.

Mr. Daniels advised the text amendment includes specific requirements that must be addressed during site plan approval, ensuring these conditions apply to the property no matter who owns it in the future.

Ms. Fleet stated that major site plan changes require council approval. The text amendment mandates a recorded cross-access easement before site plan approval, with the layout finalized after engineering is complete.

Motion to approve for form and legality the first reading of ordinance O-09-2025 and approve transmittal to the Florida Department of Commerce to amend the Future Land Use Designation from Mixed-Use to Industrial for approximately 5.08 acres for parcel #: 016562-000-00.

Motion made by Council Member Stutts, Seconded by Vice Mayor Gaw.

Voting Yea: Mayor Johnson, Vice Mayor Gaw, Council Member Glisson, Council Member Stutts

3. First reading of Ordinance No. O-10-2025, to review of Large-Scale Future Land Use Text Amendment for property located on Cooks Ln for approximately 5.08 acres of parcel #016562-000-00. *Michael Daniels*

City Attorney Arnold reads Ordinance No. O-10-2025 by title.

Development Services Director Mike Daniels advised staff recommends approval subject to the factual support provided in the staff report.

Mayor Johnson opens the public hearing.

Following no comments, Mayor Johnson closed the public hearing.

Motion to approve for form and legality the first reading of ordinance O-10-2025 and approve transmittal to the Florida Department of Commerce to add development restrictions regarding a site-specific text amendment relating to the Future Land Use Map amendment set forth in Ordinance O-09-2025, for approximately 5.08 acres for parcel 016562-000-00.

Motion made by Council Member Stutts, Seconded by Vice Mayor Gaw.

Voting Yea: Mayor Johnson, Vice Mayor Gaw, Council Member Glisson, Council Member Stutts

4. First reading of Ordinance No. O-11-2025, review of request for a zoning amendment for property located on Cooks Lane for parcel 016562-000-00. Zoning Amendment From: R-3, Residential High Density To: M-1, Light Industrial *Michael Daniels*
City Attorney Arnold reads Ordinance No. O-11-2025 by title.

Development Services Director Mike Daniels advised staff recommends approval subject to the factual support provided in the staff report.

Mayor Johnson opens the public hearing.

Following no comments, Mayor Johnson closed the public hearing.

Motion to approve for form and legality the first reading of Ordinance O-11-2025, to amend the zoning of Parcel ID 016562-000-00 from R-3, Residential High Density to M-1, Light Industrial.

Motion made by Council Member Stutts, Seconded by Vice Mayor Gaw.

Voting Yea: Mayor Johnson, Vice Mayor Gaw, Council Member Glisson, Council Member Stutts

CONSENT AGENDA

All matters under the consent agenda are considered to be routine by the city council and will be enacted by one motion in the form listed below. There will be no separate discussion on these items. If discussion is desired, that item will be removed from the consent agenda and will be considered separately. Backup documentation and staff recommendations have been previously submitted to the city council on these items.

Mayor Johnson pulled item 9 due to having a blue card for public comment.

Motion to approve Consent Agenda items 5 through 10 minus 9.

Motion made by Vice Mayor Gaw, Seconded by Council Member Stutts.

Voting Yea: Mayor Johnson, Vice Mayor Gaw, Council Member Glisson, Council Member Stutts

5. City Council approval of the Sawcross (Tender Contractor) Pay Request #14, in the amount of \$413,725.00, and authorization for the mayor to execute Disbursement Request # 26 (to follow), for construction of the Harbor Road Advanced Wastewater Treatment Facility (HRAWWTF), as part of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), State Revolving Fund (SRF), Harbor Road Water Reclamation Facility (WRF) Expansion, Phase 2, SRF Agreement No. WW1000420. **Scott Schultz**
6. City Council approval of Minutes. **Erin West**
Regular Session: 5/20/2025
7. City Council approval of CPH (formerly Mittauer) Invoice # 168264 in the amount of \$178,090, and authorization for the mayor to execute Disbursement Request #7 (to follow) for permitting and design services for the Magnolia Point Reclaimed Water System & Potable Water System Improvements. **Scott Schultz**
8. City Council review and approval of a temporary street closure for a portion of Walnut Street abutting Spring Park for the Keller Williams End of Summer Event at Spring Park. **Michael Daniels**
9. City Council consider adoption of Resolution No. R-15-2025, a Resolution estimating the cost of Stormwater Management Services provided by the City, determining certain tax parcels will be benefited thereby and related issues, including setting a Public Hearing for Final Proposed Stormwater Assessments. **L. J. Arnold III**
Mike Kelter 630 Myrtle Ave. GCS raised concerns about an incorrect map and requested that assessment data be made available in a downloadable format (like CSV) for easier access. He also asked for clear documentation in ordinances or resolutions explaining how stormwater fees are assessed, noting inconsistencies and the need for future clarity.

Motion to approve Consent Agenda item 9.

Motion made by Vice Mayor Gaw, Seconded by Council Member Stutts.

Voting Yea: Mayor Johnson, Vice Mayor Gaw, Council Member Glisson, Council Member Stutts

10. City Council consider adoption of Resolution No. R-14-2025, a Resolution relating to collection of Solid Waste and Recyclable Material within the Magnolia West Subdivision, including setting a Public Hearing for Final Proposed Solid Waste Service Assessments. ***L. J. Arnold III***

COUNCIL BUSINESS

11. City Council designation of Voting Delegate for the Annual Florida League of Cities Conference in Orlando, Florida on August 14-16, 2025. ***Erin West / Kimberly Thomas***

Mayor Johnson advised that Council Member Stutts will be the only one available during the meeting on Saturday as the delegate.

Motion to approve Darren Stutts as the voting delegate.

Motion made by Council Member Glisson, Seconded by Vice Mayor Gaw.

Voting Yea: Mayor Johnson, Vice Mayor Gaw, Council Member Glisson, Council Member Stutts

12. City Council discussion and approval for staff to submit a Request for Inclusion (RFI) to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (SRF) for funding in the amount of \$5,346,000 for Phase I / Harbor Road WTP of the Potable Water System Improvements Project. ***Scott Schultz***

Assistant Water Utilities Director Scott Schultz explained the need to submit a request for funding improvements to the Harbor Road water treatment plant. The city has two interconnected water plants, both needing upgrades, but the focus is on Harbor Road due to high costs and uncertainty at the Reynolds plant. Upgrades are needed to improve water pressure, which costs the city \$120,000–\$150,000 annually. The improvements could eliminate this expense. The city is seeking grants and loans through the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's State Revolving Fund, but eligibility for grants will soon end as the city's population surpasses 10,000. This request is just to apply for funding; any final decisions will come back to the council for approval.

Mike Kelter 630 Myrtle Ave. GCS urged adding a third ground storage to the water project. He advised that upcoming projects will be very expensive and could significantly increase local water and wastewater bills.

Council Member Stutts verifies that this is just to get the process started.

Mr. Schultz explained that the competitive SRF (State Revolving Fund) program bases funding on income, property values, and population. Green Cove currently qualifies well, but growth may reduce eligibility. Applying now secures potential low-interest loans or grants without committing to the project.

Motion to approve staff to submit a Request for Inclusion (RFI) to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (SRF) for funding in the amount of \$5,346,000 for Phase I / Harbor Road WTP of the Potable Water System Improvements Project.

Motion made by Council Member Stutts, Seconded by Council Member Glisson.

Voting Yea: Mayor Johnson, Vice Mayor Gaw, Council Member Glisson, Council Member Stutts

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13. City Council discussion and approval for staff to submit three Requests for Inclusion (RFI) to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) Clean Water State Revolving Fund (SRF) for funding in the following amounts / projects.

\$4,537,000 for the Harbor Road WWTF Phase III (Pine Avenue Force Main – mothball of the South WWTF).

\$24,245,000 for construction of the Magnolia Point Reclaimed Water System

\$27,646,000.00 (combined) for construction of the Magnolia Point Reclaimed Water System and Harbor Road WWTF Phase III. **Scott Schultz**

Assistant Water Utilities Director Scott Schultz outlined two projects: Phase 3 of the Harbor Road Wastewater Treatment Plant expansion (\$4.54M), which would centralize wastewater treatment, mothball the South Plant, and support reclaimed water use under Senate Bill 64; and the Magnolia Point Reclaimed Water Distribution System (~\$24M), the city's main option to comply with the 2032 surface water discharge ban, though complex due to existing underground utilities. Together, they total \$27M, with \$20M in grants needed for Magnolia Point. Applications have been submitted to SRF and Alternative Water Supply programs. Without major grants, only Phase 3 will proceed, while alternative compliance options, including regional partnerships, are being explored.

Assistant City Manager Mike Null advised Mr. Schultz is submitting three separate funding requests (RFIs) for wastewater and clean water projects. He has discussed this with DEP staff, who understand that the city is not expecting all three projects to be funded at once. The city will apply now to keep options open, but there's no obligation to accept any funding or contracts.

Mr. Schultz advised that the SRF staff advised the city to combine both the wastewater and reclaimed water projects into a single funding request. While they have suggested there may be significant grant funds available, it likely won't cover all costs. The city is mainly seeking permission to apply and explore funding options.

Mr. Schultz discussed Senate Bill 64, which allows up to 10% of treated sewage to be discharged into surface waters, advising that not all reclaimed water can be used during rainy periods. Currently, the new plant sends all water to Magnolia Point pond, and reclaimed water service will soon reach 280 homes in Black Creek Village and Edgewater Landing. Although the law takes effect in 2032, the city is on track to potentially reclaiming 60% of its water by then and has met all planning and design deadlines.

Council Member Stutts advised a citizen inquiry about reclaimed water for gardening and whether there is an opt out option.

Mr. Schultz explained that reclaimed water is clean, low in salts, and nutrient-rich, making it safe for irrigation. Its use is common statewide and conserves 80 million gallons of drinking water annually, offering environmental and cost benefits.

Council Member Glisson questioned if Clay County Utility Authority has been contacted.

Mr. Schultz advised that while Clay County Utility Authority could potentially use the city's reclaimed water, logistical and responsibility issues exist. Staff-level discussions have continued for three years but have not yet reached CCUA's leadership or board for consideration.

Vice Mayor Gaw stated the city is nearing reclaimed water service for Edgewater and White Creek and questioned if any outreach to homeowner's associations has been completed.

Mr. Schultz advised the city has begun outreach to Edgewater and White Creek by sending information to their homeowner's associations and plans to let the communities help guide the rollout of reclaimed water. Based on similar experiences in other neighborhoods, there has been little resistance. The city expects that education and communication will minimize concerns.

Mike Kelter 630 Myrtle Ave. GCS advised that future SRF loan rates of 2.5–3% could add \$173,000 annually to the city's \$27M project, with existing SRF debt over \$1.4M. By 2032, the wastewater plant may treat 1.5 million gallons daily, with 554,200 gallons available for reclaimed water. He suggested exploring a partnership with CCUA to reuse treated effluent, like Orange Park, as a lower-cost, lower-risk alternative to the \$25M Magnolia Point system, and could gain DEP support.

Motion to approve staff to submit three Requests for Inclusion (RFI) to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) Clean Water State Revolving Fund (SRF) for funding the Harbor Road WWTF Phase III and / or construction of the Magnolia Point Reclaimed Water System.

Motion made by Mayor Johnson, Seconded by Council Member Stutts.

Voting Yea: Mayor Johnson, Vice Mayor Gaw, Council Member Glisson, Council Member Stutts

14. Discussion of the garage and carport ordinances. *Michael Daniels*

Development Services Director Michael Daniels advised that at the July 1 meeting, Councilman Stutz requested a review of the city's garage, residential provider, and carport requirements. He reported that the city's 2016 ordinance, updated in 2025 for affordable housing, requires single- and two-family homes to have enclosed garages and generally prohibits new carports, with some exceptions.

Council Member Glisson spoke about her concerns about requiring garages on new homes, advising that it increases costs and limits homeowner flexibility.

Council Member Stutts advised the garage requirement is too restrictive and even caused issues for affordable housing, which led to an exemption.

Vice Mayor Gaw advised this is the third or fourth discussion on garage and carport requirements and recommended starting any review with the Planning and Zoning Board and Citizens Advisory Council (CAC). He observed there have been no past complaints but acknowledged that ADU discussions may prompt updates.

Mr. Daniels advised that changes to garage or carport requirements require the public hearing process, including Planning and Zoning review. The current ordinance, aimed at preventing junk in carports, allows existing carports to remain but mandates garages for new construction unless revised.

Vice Mayor Gaw questioned special exceptions.

Mr. Daniels advised that under the current ordinance, special exceptions are for specific uses, not for waiving garage requirements. Property owners could apply for a variance if they can prove a true hardship (not self-created), but this is difficult unless it's for affordable housing, which is already exempt.

Vice Mayor Gaw recommended going through the process, as discussion only, with the CAC and the Planning and Zoning Board.

City Manager Steve Kennedy advised that past ordinance changes often solved one problem but caused others. He recommended a comprehensive review and modernization of garage/carport rules with advisory committees and community input to address current needs before the council takes action.

Felicia Hampshire 508 Franklin St. GCS advised she an advocate for affordable housing and stated that garages have enhanced her neighborhood's appearance and support affordable housing. She urged maintaining strong code enforcement to preserve community pride and curb appeal.

Mayor Johnson explained that the garage ordinance was originally meant to prevent junk in carports and improve neighborhood appearance. He now views the issue as primarily one of code enforcement and recommends that the CAC reviews the continued need for garage requirements.

Mr. Kennedy stated that staff will continue reviewing the garage/carport ordinance, beginning with the CAC, before returning the issue to the council for further consideration.

15. City Manager & City Attorney Reports / Correspondence

The City Manager and City Attorney made comments regarding various city activities, events, operations, and projects.

City Manager Steve Kennedy requested council approval to hire NV5 (formerly CHW) on a temporary, as-needed basis to provide planning, zoning, and development services support for the city, filling the gap left by Mike Daniels's departure. This arrangement would be short-term, with costs based on actual hours worked, and is needed to ensure continuity in city operations.

Emergency motion to accept NV5 six months is what they six to the limit of six months for the purpose of assisting with planning and zoning and all the functions there with

Motion made by Vice Mayor Gaw, Seconded by Council Member Glisson.

Voting Yea: Mayor Johnson, Vice Mayor Gaw, Council Member Glisson, Council Member Stutts

16. City Council Reports / Correspondence

The City Council made comments regarding various city activities, events, operations, and projects.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the City Council, the meeting was adjourned at 8:54 p.m.

CITY OF GREEN COVE SPRINGS, FLORIDA

Daniel M. Johnson, Mayor

Attest:

Erin West, City Clerk