

# **City of Gainesville**

*City Hall  
200 East University Avenue  
Gainesville, Florida 32601*



## **Meeting Agenda**

**October 17, 2011**

**6:00 PM**

**City Commission Special Meeting**

**City Hall Auditorium**

## **City Commission**

*Mayor Craig Lowe (At Large)*

*Mayor-Commissioner Pro Tem Thomas Hawkins (At Large)*

*Commissioner Scherwin Henry (District 1)*

*Commissioner Todd Chase (District 2)*

*Commissioner Susan Bottcher (District 3)*

*Commissioner Randy Wells (District 4)*

*Commissioner Jeanna Mastrodicasa (At Large)*

*Persons with disabilities who require assistance to participate in this meeting are requested to notify the Office of Equal Opportunity at 334-5051 or call the TDD phone*

## ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

### AGENDA STATEMENT

*"Citizens are encouraged to participate in City of Gainesville meetings. In general, speakers will be limited to 3 (three) minutes per agenda item. Additional time may be granted by the Mayor or by the City Commission as directed. The City of Gainesville encourages civility in public discourse and requests that speakers limit their comments to specific motions and direct their comments to the Chair. Signs or Props are not permitted in the meeting room. Citizens are encouraged to provide comments in writing to the Clerk of the Commission before meetings and/or during meetings for inclusion into the public record. Citizens may also provide input to individual commissioners via office visits, phone calls, letters and e-Mail, that will become public record. In some instances, i.e., Quasi-Judicial Hearings, these particular contacts may be prohibited.*

### ROLL CALL

### CITY MANAGER

#### 110374.

#### **Proposed Relocation of the Alachua County Fairgrounds to the City of Newberry and Proposed Use of Alachua County Tourism Development Tax Funds for Projects in the Cities of Newberry and Alachua (B)**

*Explanation: BACKGROUND*

*The City Commission discussed the proposed relocation of the Alachua County Fairgrounds to the City of Newberry and the proposed use of tourism development tax funds in the cities of Newberry and Alachua at the September 15, 2011 and October 6, 2011 City Commission meetings. In addition, Commissioner Scherwin Henry hosted a community meeting attended by approximately 100 people on the proposed relocation of the Fairgrounds on October 10, 2011 at the Martin Luther King Jr. Multipurpose Center. Attendees were provided with a presentation on: 1) Background on Fairgrounds & Tourism Development Tax, 2) Proposed Relocation Fairgrounds, 3) County Solicitation of Projects for Potential Funding, 5) What Can Concerned Citizens Do?, and 6) Citizen Comment.*

*Attendees were nearly unanimous in their opposition to the proposed relocation of the Fairgrounds. Objections were expressed about taking a key economic driver from East Gainesville and moving it to another part of the County as inconsistent with the County's commitment to Plan East Gainesville. There were also comments on the need to proceed with development of the new Fairgrounds at the Weseman property off Waldo Road purchased by the County for this purpose after an extensive site selection process.*

#### **REQUEST FOR LETTERS OF INTEREST - CAPITAL PROJECTS THAT PROMOTE TOURISM**

*Alachua County released a Request for Letters of Interest for Capital Projects that Promote Tourism with a submittal deadline of October 28, 2011. There currently are no available tourism development tax funds available for allocation. Of the additional 2% tourism development tax approved by the County Commission in 2010, 1% has been committed to the City of Newberry for the Nations Park project for up to 20 years and 1% has been allocated for the Alachua County Fairgrounds. The County Commission also allocated \$600,000 for the Cade Museum from the Fairgrounds allocation. It appears the only way to create available funding would be to shift or reduce the funding allocated to the Fairgrounds.*

*City staff is concerned about uncertainties as to the County's submittal and review process. City staff believes that all proposals, including those from the cities of Alachua and Newberry, for use of tourism development tax funding should be treated equally and be subject to the same submittal requirements, deadlines and evaluation process and they should all be handled on the same schedule.*

*In 2010, the City Commission submitted three projects to the County for consideration in no order of priority including: 1) Expansion of the Martin Luther King Jr. Sports Complex, 2) Downtown Hotel and Conference Center, and 3) Cade Museum. Staff is seeking Commission direction on what projects, if any, to submit for County consideration by the October 28, 2011 deadline. The Request for Letters of Interest indicates that "If the proposed project is a resubmission of an earlier project, it must show substantial changes to the previously submitted letter of interest or business plan." City staff does not anticipate any significant changes in the plans for the Expansion of the Martin Luther King Jr. Sports Complex or the Downtown Hotel and Conference Center projects. The CRA recently received an update on the Cade Museum showing phased development of the project. City staff has inquired but is unclear as to whether previously submitted projects will be considered by the County or only those resubmitted due to substantial changes.*

#### *NEW ALACHUA COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS*

*City staff believes it is important for any comparison of costs for construction of a new Alachua County Fairgrounds versus a relocation of the Fairgrounds to the City of Newberry be based on a fair "apples to apples" comparison. From the information available, City staff does not believe that comparing the existing Phase I Fairgrounds estimate for the Waldo Road site of \$22 million to the Canterbury proposal is a fair comparison.*

*City staff believes the County should prepare an updated development plan and phasing schedule for the new Fairgrounds. This should be based on the essential facilities needed to replace the existing Fairgrounds, updated costs estimates (construction costs have continued to decline) and funding of \$10 million or more that could be financed with the tourism development tax.*

*CITY COMMISSION OPTIONS*

*Option A - Support the existing allocation of 1% of the tourism development tax to the Fairgrounds and ask the County Commission to prepare an updated development plan and phasing schedule for the new Fairgrounds on Waldo Road based on a Phase 1 that replaces essential facilities allowing for replacement of the existing Fairgrounds, updated cost estimates and financing for development of Phase 1 of the new Fairgrounds on Waldo Road based on the tourism development tax.*

*Option B - In addition to Option A, choose which City project(s) from among the three previously submitted including: 1) Expansion of the Martin Luther King Jr. Sports Complex, 2) Downtown Hotel and Conference Center, and 3) Cade Museum, to resubmit with updates to the County by the October 28, 2011 deadline. This would provide an additional option for County Commission consideration should they decide to shift or reduce the current allocation of tourism development tax funding for the Fairgrounds and seek to fund other projects.*

*Fiscal Note: A relocation of the new Alachua County Fairgrounds to the City of Newberry would negatively impact the City of Gainesville and particularly East Gainesville and Eastern Alachua County due to reduced economic activity. Additionally, County projections estimate that the new Fairgrounds would provide an economic impact to the local economy of approximately \$25 million. In terms of tourism development tax revenue, each 1% of the tourism development tax generates approximately \$650,000 annually. It is likely that this revenue would shift to the City of Newberry if the new Fairgrounds is relocated there.*

*When added to the tourism development tax funding committed to the Nations Ballpark project, the City of Newberry would then be receiving almost all of the additional 2% tourism development tax approved by the County Commission in 2010. Alachua County currently levies a 5% tourism development tax. Approximately 69% of the Tourism Development Tax is generated in the City of Gainesville. A relocation of the Fairgrounds would also negatively impact existing City of Gainesville events such as the Hogtown Medieval Faire as well as Agricultural events and programs needing the larger space.*

**RECOMMENDATION**

*The City Commission: 1) select Option B; 2) select one project for submission to the County; 3) direct staff to prepare and submit the project by the October 28, 2011 deadline; and 4) authorize the Mayor to write a letter to the Alachua County Board of County Commissioners conveying the City Commission's position.*

*Alternative Recommendation*

*The City Commission: 1) select Option A; and 2) authorize the Mayor to write a letter to the Alachua County Board of County Commissioners conveying the City Commission's position.*

Legislative History

10/6/11 City Commission Approved as shown above (See Motion) (7 - 0)

110374A\_MOD Email re 9-20 BOCC Special Meeting\_20111006.pdf  
110374B\_MOD Mayor Letter re Tourist Development Tax\_20111006.pdf  
110374C\_MOD Excerpts from County Manager FY12 Budget Message\_20111006.pdf  
110374D\_MOD Fairgrounds Business Plan\_20111006.pdf  
110374E\_MOD FY10 RFP Score Sheet\_20111006.pdf  
110374F\_MOD Scoring for Proposals\_20111006.pdf  
110374G\_MOD TDC Member Comments on Capital Project RFP\_20111006.pdf  
110374H\_MOD Fairgrounds Event Calendar Sept 2010 to Dec 2011\_20111006.pdf  
110374I\_MOD Downtown Conference Center-Hotel Business Plan\_20111006.pdf  
110374J\_MOD Cade Museum Business Plan\_20111006.pdf  
110374K\_MOD MLK Business Plan\_20111006.pdf  
110374A\_Oct 10 Meeting Materials\_20111017.pdf  
110374B\_County Request for Letters of Interest\_20111017.pdf

**ADJOURNMENT**