



Legislation Text

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Report for the Community Workshop on Meal Services and Food Distribution (B)

This item involves hearing a presentation from City Staff on a Community Workshop on Meal Services that was held on June 29, 2010 at the Alachua County Health Department.

On February 18, 2010, the Gainesville City Commission directed City Staff to hold a Community Workshop to discuss meal services and the distribution of food within the City of Gainesville and Alachua County. The workshop was held on June 29, 2010 at the Alachua County Health Department, and was jointly sponsored by the City of Gainesville and Alachua County. Ms. Marilyn Crotty, Director of the Florida Institute of Government at the University of Central Florida facilitated the workshop and prepared the summary report. More than 50 community members and stakeholders participated in the workshop.

At the workshop, the participants heard presentations from City of Gainesville Planning Manager Ralph Hilliard, Program Administrator for Food Stamps/Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Policy at the Florida Department of Children and Families, Eileen Schilling, and Keynote Speaker Barbara Green, who is the Director of the Homeless Emergency Project in Clearwater, Florida. In addition to the presentations, the participants were randomly divided into small groups for breakout sessions to discuss specific questions and related areas of concern. The four questions were:

1. How can we provide a safe environment for participants in the meal programs and for the community?
2. How can we allow for the distribution of prepared bag meals?
3. Explore the potential for increased meal services at new or existing sites.
4. How do we increase the participation levels and utilization of the food stamp program?

The small breakout groups discussed the four questions and reported their findings and recommendations to the general body at the end of the workshop. There was some consensus of some items and no consensus on other items. The summary report has been attached to the agenda for the Mayor and the City Commission review (Attachment A).

In addition, the Planning and Development Services Department will be working with Planning Works, a private consultant, to review the City's Land Development Regulations (LDR) which includes meal services to destitute people. The finding and recommendations on the LDR will be presented to the Community Development Committee for further review and discussion with a recommendation (s) back to the City Commission.

At this time no additional financial impacts have been identified. Other costs may be associated with the report if the City Commission wishes to implement any of the recommendations.

The City Commission: 1) hear a presentation from staff on the June 29, 2010 Community Workshop on Meal Services; 2) receive the summary report on the Workshop and breakout group discussions and recommendations; and 3) provide specific direction to City staff if the City Commission wishes to implement any of the recommendations contained in the report.