



# Ocala

## East Ocala Redevelopment Advisory Committee

### Minutes

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**Tuesday, January 27, 2026**

**4:00 PM**

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1. Call To Order

a. Roll Call

**Present**

Vice Chair Van Akin  
Board Member Greg Blair  
Board Member Tito Comas  
Board Member John Gamache  
Chairman Rachel Perez

2. Public Notice

The public notice for the East Ocala CRA Advisory Committee was posted on January 20, 2026.

3. Approval of Minutes

a. None

4. Grants/Applications

a. None

5. Project Updates

Economic Development Project Coordinator, Charlita Whitehead reported that grant application CRA25-0035 was approved under the Commercial Property Improvement Grant Program. The funded mural project has been completed. The artist worked on the project for approximately one month. The project has received positive community feedback. Updated photos will be provided upon completion of payment processing.

Ms. Whitehead reviewed grant approvals from the January 20, 2026 CRA Board meeting. Residential property grants totaling \$87,764 were approved, along with commercial property grants totaling \$100,000 and two historic building grants totaling \$50,549. One commercial project spans two fiscal years, with payment expected in the next fiscal year. Total approved funding across all East Ocala CRA grant programs was \$258,313. Staff noted continued community interest and stated that outreach efforts will continue.

Senior Transportation Project Administrator, Eric Smith provided updates on several long-term projects. Potential land acquisition parcels have been identified and negotiations will begin in Fiscal Year 2026. Sidewalk assessments are pending right-of-way verification, after which gaps and maintenance needs will be prioritized with engineering. The 8th Avenue project remains on

track for a 2027 start, with the 6th Street connection to follow, both tied to the upcoming Tusawilla area master plan. The Skate Park is ahead of schedule, with construction expected to complete around February 6-7 and a grand opening targeted for March 28, 2026.

6. Other Business

None

7. Public Comments

None

8. Staff Comments

**a.** Conflict of Interest

Economic Development Manager, Robert Ellis presented proposed changes to the CRA advisory committee structure at the direction of the CRA Board. The changes aim to streamline processes and address recurring issues including conflict of interest and project delays caused by canceled meetings.

No formal Bylaws or procedures currently exist for advisory committees. The proposed document would establish a uniform framework covering membership, terms, roles, meeting structure, conflict of interest, and the grant approval process, applicable to all CRA advisory committees.

The attendance policy would be modified to issue a written notice after two consecutive unexcused absences, with removal upon a third. Canceled meetings have caused grant application delays of up to four months, and proposed changes to the grant review process are intended to reduce those delays.

**b.** Grant Review Process

Mr. Ellis stated Several changes to the grant review process were proposed. Advisory committees would have flexibility to determine their own meeting frequency. For standard grants, a single site visit conducted by a rotating advisory committee member would satisfy the committee review requirement, after which the application would proceed directly to the CRA Board at the next available meeting, reducing processing time. Applications would shift from set deadlines to a rolling submission process, allowing immediate processing upon receipt. Catalytic grants would retain the full advisory committee scoring and recommendation requirements. Grant status reports would continue to be presented at advisory committee meetings.

9. Board Comments

None

10. Next Meeting Date: February 25, 2026

11. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.