



Ocala

110 SE Watula Avenue
Ocala, FL 34471

www.ocalafl.gov

Downtown Ocala Redevelopment Advisory Committee

Minutes

Tuesday, October 28, 2025

10:00 AM

1. Call To Order

a. Roll Call

Present

Vice Chair Rhella Murdaugh, Kendall Drake, TaMara York,
Chairman Ted Schatt, and Brad Harper

Excused

Summer Gill

2. Public Notice

The public notice for the East Ocala CRA Advisory Committee was published on October 13, 2025.

3. Approval of Minutes

August 26, 2025

Attachments: [Downtown Ocala CRA 8.26.25 - Minutes DRAFT](#)

RESULT: APPROVED

MOVER: Kendall Drake

SECONDER: Rhella Murdaugh

4. Grants/Applications

None

5. Project Updates

Eric Smith, Senior Transportation Project Administrator for Growth Management, provided a brief update on key projects. The Downtown Parking Garage is progressing well with infrastructure largely complete and vertical construction expected soon. The 800-space garage has an \$18.5 million budget and is scheduled for completion in July 2026.

The Brick City Lofts project on SE 1st Ave includes 22 residential units along with sidewalk, streetscape. A temporary construction easement was secured to allow work to begin while the final agreement moves toward City Council.

Several projects are in design, including a small pocket park next to the Marion Theatre that will convert an unused parking area into a public space with landscaping, seating, and a walking path. Parking Lot 7 is also nearing final design for resurfacing, improved striping, and a new compactor area. In addition, the City is redesigning and replacing lighting on 1st Ave after

inspections found aging and unsafe poles.

Intersection improvement, plans were briefly discussed and noted as temporarily delayed. While the City still intends to move forward and funding remains available, the project has been placed on a backburner due to Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) concerns about changes to intersection colors and the need for greater standardization. The City is waiting for clarification on what will be permitted before proceeding. The project is still planned for the future but does not currently have a confirmed timeline.

An update was provided on Downtown lighting improvements. After receiving concerns about poor lighting at night, staff conducted a nighttime review and found that more than half of the Downtown lights were not functioning. Those lights have since been replaced, resulting in a noticeably brighter Downtown area.

Several projects currently in progress were reviewed. The Water Tank Mural has been well received and the next phase will include lighting and signage. Plans call for 32 color-changing LED fixtures around the base of the tower, along with a new electrical panel. Staff are also exploring adding sidewalks and limited seating to improve pedestrian connectivity to the nearby market, while being mindful of space constraints near the school.

The East Ocala Skate Park project, with a budget of \$973,000, has resumed after contractor issues and is now back on track. Site clearing is underway, and the anticipated opening is around February 1, pending no further delays.

Lastly, a proposed historic marker at the corner of Osceola Ave and State Road 40 was discussed. The marker would recognize Tom Petty's childhood visit to Ocala and his meeting with Elvis Presley during the filming of *Follow Your Dreams*, an event he credited with inspiring his music career. The sign is currently under review by Ocala Historic Preservation Advisory Board (OHPAB) and is scheduled for consideration on November 6.

6. Other Business

None

7. Public Comments

Jessica Fieldhouse, Executive Director of Ocala Main Street, supported the Marion Theatre pocket park concept and suggested revisiting earlier ideas for activating the space, such as a vendor or open bar associated with the theatre. She recommended considering a mixed-use approach to enhance the area's use.

8. Staff Comments

Economic Development Manager Roberto Ellis , reported that the CRA Board will meet on November 4 to review the proposed Hotel Marion redevelopment agreement. The project involves an estimated \$28 million private investment, with a request for up to 10% in City incentives through CRA grants, TIF funding, parking assistance, and roadway improvements along North Magnolia Ave. The estimated payback period for the City's investment is approximately five years. The Board will also vote to fill one vacant CRA Board position from four applicants.

A public safety meeting related to the 2023 Safe Streets for all grant will be held on November 5 at the IHMC building. The meeting will address pedestrian safety, speed management, traffic calming, and the local road safety plan.

In December, staff plans to consider extending the dates of the Downtown, North Magnolia, West Ocala, and East Ocala CRAs. The Downtown CRA currently has 13 years remaining and could be extended to 2048. December will also begin CRA budget and CIP planning discussions.

9. Board Comments

A board member raised concerns about Downtown parking and pedestrian safety, noting issues with meters, restricted valet spaces, accessibility, and unclear crosswalk right-of-way near Ivy House. Staff noted a Downtown shuttle is in progress, operating on a limited 15-minute loop, with plans to expand service next year.

10. Next Meeting Date: December 18, 2025

11. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:41 a.m.