



**CITY COMMISSION MEETING HAINES CITY, FLORIDA**  
**MINUTES**

**May 1, 2025, 7:00 p.m.**  
**City Hall Commission Chambers**  
**620 E. Main Street, Haines City, FL 33844**  
**Phone: 863-421-9921   Web: hainescity.com**

**Present:** Commissioner, Anne Huffman  
Commissioner Morris West  
Vice-Mayor, Omar Arroyo  
Commissioner, Vernel Smith  
Commissioner, Kim Downing

**Staff in Attendance:** City Manager, James Elensky  
City Attorney, Fred Reilly  
City Clerk, Sharon Lauther

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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Mayor called the City Commission Meeting to order at TIME on DATE in the City Commission Chambers, located at 620 E Main Street, Haines City, FL.

**2. INVOCATION**

Rev. Bill McConnell, Senior Minister with First Christian Church of Haines City led the invocation.

**3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Mayor led the pledge of allegiance.

**4. SWEARING IN OF COMMISSIONER SEAT #5**

City Clerk Lauther administered the Oath of Office to Anne Huffman, City Commissioner Seat #5.

**5. REORGANIZATION OF CITY COMMISSION**

**5.a Reorganization of The City Commission- Mayor**

Commissioner Smith made the motion to nominate Morris West to preside as the new Mayor, seconded by Commissioner Smith. All voted yes. Motion passed unanimously.

**5.b Reorganization of the City Commissioner-Vice Mayor**

Commissioner Downing made the motion to nominate Vernel Smith to preside as the new Vice-Mayor, seconded by Commissioner West. All voted yes. The motion passed 3-2

At this time a public hearing was opened. No one came forward and the public hearing was closed.

A roll call vote was taken at this time

Commissioner Downing- Yea

Commissioner West- Yea

Commissioner Smith- Yea

Commissioner Arroyo- Nay

Commissioner Huffman- Nay

## **6. PRESENTATIONS AND PROCLAMATIONS**

### **6.a Special Thanks to Outgoing Mayor**

City Clerk Lauther presented outgoing Mayor Arroyo a gavel, acknowledging his time as mayor of the city for the 2024-2025 year.

### **6.b Municipal Clerks Week**

City Clerk Lauther read the proclamation into the record recognizing Municipal Clerks Week.

## **7. CONSENT AGENDA**

Mayor West asked if there were any questions regarding items on the consent agenda. There were no questions from the dias. At this time, a public hearing was opened regarding only items on the consent agenda. No one came forward, and the public hearing was closed. Mayor West asked for a motion to accept the items presented on the consent agenda.

**Moved by** Vernel Smith

**Seconded by** Kim Downing

Approve consent as a whole.

**Carried Unanimously**

### **7.a Addendum 1 to Pennoni Agreement for the 6th Street Water Line Improvements -Carryover Project**

Staff recommends approval of Addendum 1 to the 6<sup>th</sup> Street Water Line Improvements agreement with Pennoni.

### **7.b Cemetery Deeds**

### **7.c Approval of Minutes**

## **8. OLD BUSINESS**

### **8.a Ordinance No. 25-2104 – Amending Chapter 24, Sec. 24-117 Code of Ordinances and Ordinance No. 22-2015 regarding Multi Modal Transportation Impact Fees – Second Reading**

Richard Greenwood, Development Services Director presented Ordinance No. 25-2104 for second and final reading. There were no changes to the ordinance since first reading. Commissioner Downing inquired if the business owners came in to speak regarding the impact fees. Mayor West stated that none of the business owners were not notified. Discussion took place to table the ordinance to have the business owners to participate. Commissioner Huffman stated that she had concerns about the communication to the builders that would be affected by the increase. The mayor opened the public hearing. No one came forward and the public hearing was close. This item will be moved to the second meeting in June.

**Moved by** Omar Arroyo

**Seconded by** Anne Huffman

Staff recommends adoption of Ordinance No. 25-2104 Amending Chapter 24, Sec. 24-117, Code of Ordinances and Ordinance No. 22-2015, regarding Multi-Modal Transportation Impact Fees on Second Reading.

**Carried Unanimously**

## **9. NEW BUSINESS**

### **9.a Ordinance No. 25-2101 – Minor Modification to the Sand Hill Shores RPUD – First Reading**

Richard Greenwood, Development Services Director, presented the minor modification to the Sand Hill Shores RPUD for first reading. Discussion took place. The mayor opened the public hearing. No one came forward, and the public hearing was closed. Commissioner Downing introduced Ord No. 25-2101. Attorney Reilly read the ordinance into the record.

**Moved by** Omar Arroyo

**Seconded by** Kim Downing

Staff recommends approval of Ordinance No. 25-2101, on First Reading, regarding a minor modification to the Sand Hill Shores RPUD, regarding a reconfiguration of the lot layout, and an increase of parking areas for additional parking and to deter on-street parking, with the following conditions:

1. Street trees shall not be removed and shall be stated in the Association documents and any other Association documents of the development

2. A Non-binding School Concurrency letter needs to be received prior to Site Construction Plan approval.

3. 6' high capped masonry wall, measured from the crown of the road, shall be installed along Sand Hill Road and FDC Grove Road.

4. The final approval of the traffic study from Polk County, regarding any off-site improvements that may be required on Sand Hill Road and/or FDC Grove Road, shall be received in writing and reviewed by City Staff prior to the Site Construction Plans being approved and/or released.

5. All other requirements set forth in Ordinance No. 22-2014, Ordinance No. 24-2070 and the LDRs shall be made part of this Ordinance No. 25-2101

**Carried Unanimously**

9.b Ordinance No. 25-2106– Bridgemohan Property Voluntary Annexation – First Reading

Richard Greenwood, Development Services Director, presented the Bridgemohan Property Voluntary Annexation for first reading. Discussion took place. Mayor West opened the public hearing. No one came forward, and the public hearing was closed. Commissioner Arroyo introduced Ord. No. 25-2106. Attorney Reilly read the ordinance into the record.

**Moved by** Anne Huffman

**Seconded by** Vernel Smith

Staff recommends approval of Ordinance No. 25-2106, regarding the voluntary annexation of property located at 5283 Johnson Avenue East, owned by Dayaram Bridgemohan on first reading.

**Carried Unanimously**

9.c Ordinance No. 25-2107 – Voluntary Annexation of Joel Massey Property – First Reading

Richard Greenwood, Development Services Director, presented the Voluntary Annexation of the Joel Massey Property for first reading. Discussion took place. Mayor West opened the public hearing. No one came forward, and the public

hearing was closed. Vice-Mayor/Commissioner Smith introduced Ord No. 25-2107. Attorney Reilly read the ordinance into the record.

**Moved by** Vernel Smith

**Seconded by** Omar Arroyo

Staff recommends approval of Ordinance No. 25-2107 regarding the voluntary annexation of property located at 64 & 68 Joel Massey Road, owned by Ford Family Trust, on first reading.

**Carried Unanimously**

- 9.d Ordinance No. 25-2110 Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Budget Amendment No 2 – First Reading

Omar DeJesus, Finance Director, CPA presented the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Budget Amendment No. 2 for first reading. Discussion took place. Mayor West opened the public hearing. No one came forward and the public hearing was closed. Commissioner Downing introduced Ord 25-2110. Attorney Reilly read the ordinance into the record.

**Moved by** Anne Huffman

**Seconded by** Vernel Smith

Staff recommends adoption of the Ordinance on first reading for the purposes of reallocating and re-appropriating monies for the Fiscal Year 2024-25 budget.

**Carried Unanimously**

## **10. PUBLIC COMMENTS - REGARDING ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA**

**Cameia Manning**- 1411 Valencia Court, Haines City- sustained damage to her vehicle from paving done.

**Erma Loretta Cox**- 801 N. 6th Street, Haines City- states that a turning light is needed at the bank (Wells Fargo) off of 6th Street. The stop sign near Bethune Academy is not in a good place. The stop should be at Avenue N. A four way stop on Martin Luther King is needed to help with speeding.

**Tomeko Bennett**- 1113 Avenue K, Haines City- issued congratulations to Commissioner Huffman and to the new Mayor and Vice-Mayor. Ms. Bennett stated that employees at

the gym (Boys and Girls Club) were antagonizing, degrading and name calling being done particularly to her son. Ms Bennett stated that children with disabilities should not be made fun of or be ignored. Commissioner Huffman states the action of any employees do not reflect the city's values. Commissioner Downing apologized for what occurred and assured Ms. Bennett that the situation can be discussed again with Director Griffin.

Mayor West would like public comments moved to the beginning of the meeting. Mayor West asked for a consensus. Commissioner Arroyo is in favor. Commissioner Downing is in favor. Vice-Mayor Smith is also in favor. Commissioner Huffman is in favor.

**11. CITY MANAGER'S REPORT**

City Manager Elensky commended Finance Director DeJesus for a clean audit. Congratulations to Commissioner Huffman on her re-election.

**12. CITY CLERK'S REPORT**

City Clerk Lauther asked for a consensus of the Commission regarding minutes. The consensus of the Commission is to have action minutes. City Clerk Lauther congratulated Commissioner Huffman on her win.

**13. CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT**

**14. COMMISSION COMMENTS**

**Commissioner Arroyo**-Autism Awareness for the first week in April- Discussion took place regarding having a resolution to be placed on the next agenda.

**Commissioner Downing**- congratulations to Commissioner Huffman on her re-election, Vice-Mayor Smith and Mayor West for his 5th time as a mayor and Commissioner Arroyo for his service as mayor. It is one year since she has begun serving as a commissioner and is looking forward to continue serving the residents.

**Commissioner Huffman**- thanked everyone to all for the the well wishes she received on her third (3rd term). Congratulations to the newly appointed Mayor and Vice-Mayor. Commissioner Huffman inquired about automatic payment to be set up online for utility bills. Commissioner Huffman would like to see the vegetable market revitalized downtown. There is a concern about water pressure throughout the city especially on Johnson on Powerline. City Manager Elensky stated that he is aware of the issue, and he is working with Deputy City Manager James Keene on the issue. Mayor West stated there is little to no water pressure in the Hammocks Reserve development. Commissioner

Huffman states we need to address the issues publicly. The lift station by the Boys and Girls Club smells terribly. There were sewage issues on Lakeshore Drive.

**Vice-Mayor Smith-** gave an update on the TPO - FDOT is currently conducting a study for the Florida SunRail. There is also a study being done for the Polk Parkway Central East that will be coming over to 17/92. There will be additional meetings throughout the year. There is an initiative call Zero Polk County to help eliminate traffic fatalities. Vice-Mayor also congratulated Commissioner Huffman on her re-election and to Mayor West for his appointment as mayor. Special thanks given to Commissioner Arroyo for his service as Mayor for 24/25

**Mayor West-** would like the Clerk to get more information for two dance teams that have won championships. Mayor West would like the Commissioner and the clerk and directors to take a tour of their city as it is growing. Mayor West encouraged everyone for their service.

**City Manager Elensky-** reminded the Directors to pay attention to what is discussed at the dais regarding concerns raised. Continue with proper follow-up. There were over 100 signs taken down throughout the city and disposed.

## **15. ADJOURNMENT**

Without any further business the meeting was adjourned at 8:53 PM

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Morris West, Mayor

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Sharon Lauther, MMC, City Clerk