

The Marion County Land Development Regulation Commission met on January 21, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. in the Growth Services Main Training Room, 2710 E Silver Springs Blvd, Ocala, Florida.

Audience remarks may be present in the audio recording and may have partially muffled the discussion, resulting in reduced audibility in some segments.

CALL TO ORDER

Due to technical difficulties, Vice Chairman Gene Losito called the meeting to order at 5:47 p.m.

ROLL CALL & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Kimberly Lamb called roll, and the quorum was confirmed.

Board members present were Vice-Chairman Gene Losito, Richard Busche, Christopher Howson, and Robert Stepp.

Staff members present were Assistant County Attorney Linda Blackburn, Growth Services Director Chuck Varadin, Growth Services Deputy Director Ken Weyrauch, Development Review Coordinator Elizabeth Madeloni, Parks & Recreation Director Jim Couillard, Parks & Recreation Project Coordinator Susan Heyen, Administrative Manager Autumn Williams, and Staff Assistant IV Kimberly Lamb.

Vice-Chairman Gene Losito led the Pledge of Allegiance.

There were members of the public present.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF PROOF OF PUBLICATION

Kimberly Lamb read the Proof of Publication and advised that the meeting was properly advertised.

1. ADOPT THE FOLLOWING MINUTES

Growth Services Director, Chuck Varadin, presented an updated draft of the January 7, 2026, Workshop meeting minutes and asked the Board to review the revised version for approval. He noted a scrivener's error in the final paragraph of item 2.1, which incorrectly stated that the item would return to another workshop. He clarified that this was incorrect and that the item had been finalized at the January 7, 2026, meeting and forwarded to a future public hearing.

LDRC Board Member Robert Stepp made a motion to adopt the amended minutes from the January 7, 2026, meeting. The motion was seconded by Board Member Richard Busche. The motion passed unanimously (4-0).

2. SCHEDULED ITEMS

2.1 Discussion for Proposed Marion County Land Development Code (LDC) Amendments to Review and Update Article 4 to Add New Section 4.3.29 - Private Airports

Chuck Varadin, Growth Services Director, and Ken Weyrauch, Growth Services Deputy Director, opened the discussion regarding this item.

LDRC Board Members voiced their recommendations and comments regarding the current language.

These updates will finalize the board's recommendations, and this item will be moved to a public hearing on February 4, 2026, at 5:30 pm. LDRC Board Member Rick Busche made a motion to adopt the changes and to proceed to a public hearing. Motion was seconded by Board Member Chris Howson. Motion passed unanimously (4-0).

2.2 Discussion for Proposed Marion County Land Development Code (LDC) Amendments to Review and Update Article 1, Division 2, Definitions

Jim Couillard, Parks & Recreation Director, opened the discussion regarding this item.

LDRC Board Members voiced their recommendations and comments regarding the current language.

LDRC Board Member Rick Busche made a motion to move this item to public hearing on March 4, 2026, at 5:30 pm. The motion was seconded by Board Member Robert Stepp. The motion passed unanimously (4-0).

2.3. Discussion for Proposed Marion County Land Development Code (LDC) Amendments to Review and Update Article 6, Division 7 Tree Protection and Replacement

Jim Couillard, Parks & Recreation Director, opened the discussion regarding this item.

LDRC Board Members voiced their recommendations and comments regarding the current language.

The Board agreed that more discussion on the language was needed and will bring the item back to a future workshop on February 18, 2026.

2.4. Discussion for Proposed Marion County Land Development Code (LDC) Amendments to Review and Update Section 6.8 Landscape

Due to time constraints, this item was not addressed and is postponed to a future meeting.

3. NEW BUSINESS

3.1 The next LDRC Public Hearing/Workshop will be on February 4, 2026, at the McPherson Governmental Campus Auditorium

Chuck Varadin, Growth Services Director, reminded the board of the upcoming LDRC meeting and emphasized the importance of their attendance to ensure a quorum.

3.2 Election of Vice-Chairman

Chuck Varadin, Growth Services Director, addressed the Board to formally confirm and appoint Gene Losito as Vice-Chairman. LDRC Board Member Chris Howson made a motion to elect Gene Losito as Vice-Chairman. The motion was seconded by Board Member Robert Stepp. The motion passed unanimously (4-0).

3.3 Process and Procedures at Workshops

Growth Services Director Chuck Varadin addressed the Board and members of the public, noting that recent workshop meetings have deviated from standard Board of County Commissioners procedures. He emphasized that while the public is welcome to attend workshops, public comment is not taken during these meetings and will not be taken at further workshops. He also reminded attendees to remain orderly and cautioned that side conversations are captured on the recording, making it difficult for staff to accurately document the proceedings.

Mr. Varadin also spoke to the board regarding the timeline for approximately 17 items that must be completed by year's-end. He further explained that three public hearings will be held for all proposed changes, ensuring ample opportunity for public input, and noted that one-on-one meetings remain available for anyone seeking additional clarification.

ADJOURNMENT

The workshop adjourned at 6:59 p.m.

Attest:

Gene Losito, Vice Chairman

Kimberly Lamb, Staff Assistant IV