

**City of Dunnellon City Council  
Zoom Meeting**

<https://dunnellon.zoom.us/j/96168125293?pwd=S2xYeEZMUWxLUW5DbzhPMmY0RHpHZz09>

Webinar ID: 961 6812 5293

Date: May 10, 2021

Time: 5:30 p.m.

Place: City Hall, with Social Distancing Modifications  
20750 River Dr., Dunnellon, FL 34431

**Dunnellon City Council meeting held with Social Distancing Modifications.**

Anyone who wished to provide public comment was be able to do so by participating in the City Council meeting in person, or via the Zoom "AUDIO ONLY" platform and/or telephone, by speaking during public comment portions of the meeting when recognized per the instructions below or by submitting written comments, evidence and/or written testimony in advance of the meeting via email to the City Clerk at [mroberts@dunnellon.org](mailto:mroberts@dunnellon.org)

Members of the public who would like to have participated were encouraged to register in advance by Noon on Monday, April 12<sup>th</sup>. Public input on non-agenda items were heard at the beginning of the meeting. A three (3) minute time limit was strictly administered.

**Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance**

Mayor White called the meeting to order at approximately 5:35 PM and led the Council in the Pledge of Allegiance. He invited a citizen to volunteer and open with a prayer. Mary Ann Hilton provided the invocation.

Mayor White called upon the City Clerk to call roll.

**Roll Call**

Bill White, Mayor, Seat 1

Louise Kenny, Councilwoman, Seat 2

Anita Williams, Councilwoman, Seat 3

Valerie Hanchar, Vice-Mayor, Seat 4

Jan Cabbage - **Absent**

**Staff Present**

Mandy Roberts, City Clerk

Troy Slattery, Public Works Department

Jan Smith, Finance Department

Julie Danowski, Clerk's Department

Chief Mike McQuaig, Police Department

Lt. Shane Yox, Police Department

Michelle Leonard, Assistant City Clerk

**Absent**

Teresa Malmberg, Community Development

**Legal Counsel**

Andrew Hand,  
Shepard, Smith, Kohlmyer & Hand, P.A.

**Proof of Publication**

Ms. Roberts announced for the record the agenda for this meeting was posted on the City's website and City Hall bulletin board on Thursday, May 6, 2021. An amended agenda was posted on May 7, 2021 to add backup documents to item #12.

Mayor White explained the public speaking portion and sign-up sheet. He said this is a recorded meeting with video, audio and closed captioning. This meeting proceeds under the Roberts Rules of Order and Chair conducts the meeting. Council should wait for Chair to acknowledge them.

**Mayor White called for Council comments regarding agenda.**

Mayor White said for Items 5 & 6 of the consent agenda he will show some photos during council comments that go along with those items. There were no other comments.

**Mayor White called for public comments on non-agenda items – 3 minute time limit.**

Juliane Mendonca, 11894 E. Blue Cove Dr., said she would like a motion made for the initiation of citizen involvement regarding the hiring of all professional and managerial positions. She said she is hopeful the Council will respond promptly and accept the collaboration for the hiring process.

Faith Obrien, 29 Elm St., said she lives in Dunnellon Square Mobile Home Park and they had been awoken at 4:30 a.m. every Wednesday and Saturday by Ace Hardware's restocking efforts. Mayor White reported he spoke with all the shops in the center and now there is no noise until 7:00 a.m. She thanked Mayor White for his efforts.

Nancy Piestrop, 20235 The Granada, said she has been walking to Blue Run Park to put in tubes and then getting out at City Beach for about 5 years. For the first time she said she was told she could no longer get out at City Beach. She said she is a pass holder and would like to know why the policy changed. Mayor White responded and said the Council would look into this and let her know soon.

**Consent Agenda**

**1. City Council Minutes**

March 08, 2021 City Council Meeting

March 17, 2021 Special Joint City Council and Planning Commission Workshop

March 22, 2021 Special City Council Meeting

**2. Authorize Expenditure Of Up To \$5,000 To Support The Dunnellon Little League Program, Serving A Public Purpose**

**3. Approve Public Works Request To Purchase A Ford F350 1-Ton Work Truck With Utility Body, Tow Package And Hazard Lighting As Presented At The May 5, 2021 Workshop**

- 4. Authorize Mayor To Sign Agreement #AGR2021-13 Between The City Of Dunnellon And DemandStar Corp.**
- 5. Authorize Mayor To Sign A Letter To The Marion County Board Of County Commissions Supporting The Construction Of A Restroom Facility And Weather Shelter At Blue Run Of Dunnellon Park**
- 6. Authorize Staff To Move Forward With Dan Ryan Construction For The Design And Construction Of A Shade Shelter At Chaplin A. Dinkins Park As Presented At The May 5, 2021 City Council Workshop**
- 7. Authorize Mayor To Sign Congratulatory Letter To Hailey Constable Of The Girl Scouts Of West Central Florida**

Mayor White explained the consent agenda process and called for public comments. There were none.

Vice-Mayor Hanchar moved the consent agenda be approved as presented. Councilwoman Kenny seconded the motion. All members were in favor. The vote was 4-0.

## **Regular Agenda**

### **Agenda Item No. 8 – Presentation to Hailey Constable, Girl Scouts of West Central Florida**

Ms. Dawn Pudlo said she is the local troop leader with girls ranging in age from kindergarteners through seniors. Ms. Pudlo received the presentation on behalf of Hailey Constable who was unable to attend the meeting.

Ms. Roberts read the letter drafted to Ms. Constable.

“Hailey Constable  
Girl Scouts of West Central Florida

Project Name: Guiding Light Disaster Relief Program  
RE: 2021 Gold Award

Dear Ms. Constable:

The Dunnellon City Council would like to congratulate you on your outstanding achievement on your “Take Action” project, which resulted in your being recognized by the Girl Scout Council of West Central Florida in receiving the highest honor a Girl Scout can achieve in the Gold Award.

The Council is so very proud to see exceptional Girl Scouts recognized and appreciated by the community. Your excellent service to your community reflects very positively on the Girl Scouts program and we thank you wholeheartedly for your efforts.”

At Vice-Mayor Hanchar’s request, Ms. Pudlo explained the program and how Ms. Constable helped a family who lost their home to fire.

**Agenda Item No. 9 – Dunnellon High School Principal, Wade Martin – Update On 2021 School Year**

Principal Martin brought Kevin Carmona Figueroa, who placed 6<sup>th</sup> in the State Championship for weight lifting, and Colby Smith, who became the first State Champion Dunnellon High School has had in 16 years. He provided a brief overview of the DHS year; they created a virtual open house for the freshmen, school opened at 60% capacity, football had a great season, academically they did well with a graduation rate of 92%, they are currently in the midst of testing season, they celebrated two home comings with dress up days and they will have prom this weekend, May 15th, at the Hilton in Ocala. He said their graduation ceremony will be June 6th at 6 p.m. at the World Equestrian Center.

The Council offered appreciation and thanks along with questions regarding student attendance levels and if there would be any drama presentations.

**Agenda Item No. 10 – Community Liaison Program Presentation – Christine Mills for The Granada**

Christine Mills, 20420 The Granada, said she didn't have a presentation; she just wanted to introduce herself as the new liaison for The Granada.

**Agenda Item No. 11 – Quasi-Judicial Hearing Special Exception SPX2021-01 Development Order #DOR2021-01, Dunnellon Solar Farm, To Construct A 75-Megawatt Solar Farm At Parcels 40701-000-00, SEC 01 TWP 17 RGE 18; 40713-001-00, 40714-003-00, 40715-001-00, 40716-000-00, 40717-000-00, 40719-001-00, SEC 06 TWP 17 REG 19 (Notice Of Quasi Hearing To Property Owner On 04/21/2021)**

Ms. Roberts read the following statement into record:

All witnesses addressing City Council in these Quasi-Judicial hearings will be asked to limit their comments to the specific subject being addressed. Witnesses should disclose any personal interest or relationship; and any business, professional, or financial interests with any individual, group, project or proposal regarding the subject matter under review. Witnesses should always err on the side of more public disclosure, not less, in order to provide integrity to the public process.

Testimony will be limited to 3 minutes per witness unless the applicant, staff, or affected person requests an extension of time. A request for extension of time will be considered by the Council to assure all parties have a full and fair opportunity to participate without undue repetition and delay.

Public input is valued by the Council. However, in order to foster mutual respect, personal comments should not be directed toward Council members, or staff. Members of the public shall refrain from interrupting the speaker at the podium.

At the conclusion of this hearing, the City Council of the City of Dunnellon will make a decision whether to approve the applicants' request.

All witnesses will be sworn in and will testify under oath. All persons presenting evidence will state their name and residence address for the record. All documentary evidence will be marked as an exhibit and maintained as a part of the record if accepted by Council.

After each witness testifies, any Council member may question witness. The owner is entitled to cross-examine each witness after his or her testimony and shall do so by asking questions of the witness, or can rebut the witness's testimony by presenting contrary testimony or documents after a witness testifies.

Mayor White gaveled down and said it is now 6:12 p.m. and I close the regular meeting and open this quasi-judicial hearing to discuss: Special Exception SPX2021-01 Development Order #DOR2021-01, Dunnellon Solar Farm, To Construct A 75-Megawatt Solar Farm At Parcels 40701-000-00, SEC 01 TWP 17 RGE 18; 40713-001-00, 40714-003-00, 40715-001-00, 40716-000-00, 40717-000-00, 40719-001-00, SEC 06 TWP 17 REG 19 (Notice Of Quasi Hearing To Property Owner On 04/21/2021)

Mayor White said "Will the City Attorney now swear in the witnesses."

Attorney Hand said "Anyone who plans to present evidence tonight please rise and raise your right hand". Three individuals stood and were sworn in by Attorney Hand.

Mayor White and Attorney Hand conducted disclosure of contacts, ex-parte communications or other evidence gathered by decision-making body. There were none.

John Patterson stepped to the podium and announced for the record he is the AICP Planner II, contract planner with the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council representing the City of Dunnellon. He made a request to the Planning Commission for a recommendation to the City Council for a special exception on the 75 megawatt solar farm on portions of property totaling approximately 82 acres located on the south end of Bridges Road adjacent to the Withlacoochee River. He said it's a portion of a much larger agricultural parcel with 437 acres in total but the conservation area is not part of the project. He said the property has A-1 zoning-agricultural, the applicant is John Taylor and is represented by Kimley-Horn.

Mr. Patterson showed a zoning map and described areas that were agricultural, preserved and public. He talked about the initial concerns due to the narrow road, residential access and ball field access but said they were worked through. He said the applicant is working with the State and the County regarding traffic conditions during construction and there should be no additional traffic issues after completion. Mr. Patterson said the applicant worked with him to come to satisfactory solutions for going around the wetlands. He said water can still percolate and animals can move through the area by going under panels.

He said the farm should not cause a substantial depreciation of property values, and the applicant moved the projected location of the fencing and solar panels out of the river corridor protection area. Mr. Patterson said the Army Corps of Engineers has jurisdiction on the wetlands of the property and the Southwest Florida Water Management Department (SFWMD) had no issues. He said the applicant is working on an environmental resource permit through SFWMD that would have to be approved before a site plan comes through.

Staff is recommending approval to the special exception subject to the following conditions:

1. The applicant will be required to work with the State to mitigate any damage to Bridges Road or impacts on nearby residents or property users during construction due to its vehicles in a

timely manner. They will also be required to do the same with the County regarding the intersection of Bridges Road with CR 484.

2. The applicant shall be responsible for coordinating with the County and State and paying for any improvements needed to Bridges Road and/or its intersection with C.R. 484 related to this project.
3. The applicant shall cooperate with the County and State regarding any traffic control measures deemed necessary for the project.
4. At the time of development review, surety shall be posted to ensure removal of equipment at the time the solar farm seeks to operate.
5. Turbidity screens shall be kept up perpetually along all wetlands within 50 feet of development as defined in Florida Statutes, including, but not limited to, the gravel pathways.
6. The applicant shall comply with the standards of Section 74-66(a)-(j) of the City's Code and all applicable state statutes regarding tree removal.
7. The applicant shall continue to demonstrate compliance with all federal and state statutes or regulations governing solar farms. The applicant shall obtain any additional applicable licenses and/or permits from such federal and state agencies should any become necessary.

Chairwoman D'Arville, Planning Commission Chair, said they vetted the entire issue of the solar farms quite thoroughly. She said they were all satisfied and it is a good project which will enhance our community.

Council discussion followed with questions regarding animals, gopher turtles and permanent screens to keep the dust and debris out of the wetlands. They also talked about the condition of Bridges Road and concerns over truckers going through residential areas. Mayor White said the beauty of the river at that section is pristine and wanted to be sure the buffer installed would completely block the solar farm from spoiling the view. All issues were discussed thoroughly and came to a favorable conclusion.

The applicant John Taylor with Renewable Management Services, 1160 Island Rd, Riviera Beach, said this location was chosen because of the available capacity on the grid. He said Florida is the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest state providing solar energy and there are approximately 20 projects under construction. When they presented the project 2 years ago they took into consideration the needs and strove to limit impact to the area as much as possible. He said even though they have 1100 acres they chose to utilize only 400 so as not to overlap any wetlands or create impact to any species. He said they have done a full wetland evaluation and the Army Corps of Engineers came back with a zero impact rate. However, he said they did find gopher tortoises and will relocate them. Mr. Taylor said they checked for native artifacts in the area and the State Historical Society said there are no impacts to the historical value of the area. He said 2/3rds of the project falls in the County and they have acquired a special use permit from them already. He said they will donate 20 acres to the Florida Greenways program and have been working with FDEP and Greenways to create a 55' bike trail which will join the existing bike trails. He pointed out another benefit to the community is the hundreds of thousands of dollars in annual tax revenue that is going to be generated. He said it will power 15,000 homes with clean energy utilizing modules which are quiet, low to the ground and made from silicate providing no negative impact to the environment. He said no cement will be used and it is their obligation to return the land to its original condition after the life cycle of the farm is complete. He said it will take between 9 and 12 months to build with 6 of the months creating traffic issues. However, once operational the level of traffic would equate to a residential household. He said construction is planned to begin the first of the next year.

Council discussion followed and Mr. Taylor answered various questions regarding herbicides, substation utilization, holes in the fencing to allow animals to pass through, wildlife impacts, relocating tortoises, wind speeds (max 125mph), storms, pre-road prep for heavy equipment, battery storage, wiring and inverters and estimated completion date of 2023. Attorney Hand explained the meaning behind "Presentation of evidence from the public in support or opposition".

**Public Comment:**

Christine Mills, 20420 The Granada, said there is a very big pit in the area they are considering installing the bike trail. She said it is very deep and is a safety issue. Mr. Taylor said the usable solar area will be enclosed by fencing to protect the value of the equipment inside. Therefore, the bike trail will be outside the fencing and will be given to FDEP to manage.

Mayor White Gaveled Down and said "It is now 6:59 p.m. I close this quasi-judicial hearing, and now reopen the May 10, 2021 City Council Meeting."

**Agenda Item No. 12 – Consideration Of Resolution #RES2021-04 Special Exception Development Order #DOR2021-01/SPX2021-01 John Taylor Representing Kingston Properties, LLC**

**Public Comments:**

There were none.

Vice-Mayor Hanchar moved the Resolution #RES2021-04 be read by title only and Councilwoman Kenny seconded. A vote was taken and passed 4-0.

Ms. Roberts read the resolution title.

**"A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DUNNELLON, FLORIDA, GRANTING APPROVAL OF A SPECIAL EXCEPTION TO ALLOW A 75-MEGAWATT SOLAR FARM ON PORTIONS OF PROPERTIES TOTAL ± 82 ACRES (TOTAL PARCELS 437 ACRES) WITH AGRICULTURAL (A-1) ZONING AND CONSERVATION (REMAINDER OF PARCELS) FUTURE LAND USES PURSUANT TO THE LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS OF THE CITY OF DUNNELLON, FLORIDA; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS, SEVERABILITY AND; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE."**

Vice-Mayor Hanchar moved Resolution #RES2021-04 be approved and authorize Mayor to sign Special Exception Development Order #DOR2021-01. Councilwoman Williams seconded the motion.

There were no public comments.

A vote was taken and passed 4-0.

**Agenda Item No. 13 – Change Orders For Parking Projects, Ernie Mills And Short Tower Way**

Mr. Slattery said he received two change orders which are a necessity to keep the project moving. He said change order #3 is for the Short Tower Way parking lot. He explained they discovered an abandoned unsalvageable culvert which needs replacing for an additional \$3,339.24.

Mr. Slattery said change order #4 pertains to Ernie Mills and was expected. He said they planned on recycling the fencing and later found they couldn't. The change order is for installing new fencing and upgrading to the color green to match the fence around the basketball court for an additional \$8,900.70. He said the old salvagable material will be recycled and used elsewhere in the City. He said even with the changes he is still within budget.

Mayor White called for public comment and there was none.

Councilwoman Kenny moved to authorize the Mayor to execute Pave-Rite Change Orders #3 – Short Tower Way in the amount of \$3,339.24 and #4 – Ernie Mills Park in the amount of \$8,900.70 and Councilwoman Williams seconded the motion.

There was a short discussion between Vice-Mayor Hanchar and staff regarding contingency fund usage.

A vote was taken and all in were in favor. The vote passed 4-0.

**Agenda Item No. 14 – FY2020-2021 Second Quarter General Fund Budget Update**

Mrs. Smith reviewed general fund revenues. She said the City is at 50% of budget as of March 31st. She said with licenses and permits the City's revenue will be roughly \$31,000 over budget due to new buildings; both homes and commercial properties. She said miscellaneous revenue projection is coming in \$15,000 over budget due to an increase of cemetery lot sales. Over all, she projects a \$47,000 increase and this is only 6 months into the year.

Mrs. Smith covered expenditures next. She said we are 38% of budget. She said the executive department has a decrease of \$17,000 due to the job vacancy and the City Clerk had an overage of \$33,000 due to the increase in salary and added position of Assistant City Clerk. She said there is a \$10,000 increase in anticipated legal expenses and a \$17,000 decrease in expenses for information technology due to the Community Development vacancy. She said there is \$16,000 more in expenses projected but overall she projects a small surplus of about \$31,000.

Mrs. Smith moved to Reserves and talked about the checking account. She said as of March 31st the City has \$813,000 uncommitted but it will change as the months go on. She said she feels the City should always have a minimum of \$500,000 in the bank, and this is due to the need to begin spending in our new budget before the revenues start coming in. She said the total of all reserves the City has on hand is \$5,567,866.36.

Mrs. Smith explained the debt service and said the City started out the year with \$2,143,750.00 and is currently at \$2,056,250.00. She said the City has made two debt service payments this year and will have two more.

Council thanked Mrs. Smith for her presentation and Mayor White said it is important for the public to realize we still have a \$2,000,000 debt due to Greenlight and we should be a model for the rest of the world because we are doing a pretty good job at stretching money.

**Agenda Item No. 15 – Council Liaison Reports And Comments**

Vice-Mayor Hanchar gave the report for TPO and said Ms. Roberts scheduled a meeting at 1:30 p.m. tomorrow on WebEx to discuss the bike trail project. Attorney Hand confirmed it was okay for Ms. Roberts to provide the update to Council.

Mayor White presented photos of shelters planned for the City beach. He also showed photos of City signage in poor condition and said these are some of the things the City needs to replace along with the beautification project. He said he attended a “meet and greet” at the County and while he was there he brought up the Blue Run Park issue. He stressed its importance for the people exiting the river without shelter. He also shared a letter he wrote the County outlining the number of incidences within and around the park where a person needed medical attention.

**Agenda Item No. 16 – Department Reports**

Ms. Roberts reported staff created a new application for volunteers she would like to bring to the next workshop. She stated she spoke with Ken Metcalf and they would like to do a final presentation of the Historic District Enhancement Plan at a special workshop on June 9th at 3:30 p.m. and follow with the regular workshop at 5:30 p.m. on the same day. The Council agreed.

**Walk On -**

Mrs. Smith said she would like to amend the grant that Ken Metcalf is working on to shift money between the two deliverables. She said it does not change the total amount and we need Mayor White to sign the amendment.

There were no public comments.

Vice-Mayor Hanchar moved to accept Mrs. Smith’s recommendation as presented and authorize the Mayor to sign the amendment. Councilwoman Williams seconded. A vote was taken and all were in favor. The vote was 4-0.

Mrs. Smith said the auditors have completed the field work and an annual report will be presented at the Council meeting in June. The DEO grant application for the roads and streets master plan is due May 18th and will require Mayor White’s signature.

Mr. Slattery said they are ready to lay the asphalt for the parking lot project; however, the subcontractor is having difficulty finding the red brick. He said he stopped by Duval Ford in Jacksonville and is pleased to work with them. Mr. Slattery has begun working with a contractor for the shade pavilion for City Beach. He also said Kathy Dunn is very excited about the replacement of the signs and is creating a permanent GPS location of all the City owned signs.

Ms. Roberts shared the meeting schedule and gave an update of staff vacations. Mrs. Smith added a budget workshop is planned for June 23rd at 3:00 p.m. Mrs. Smith also said the meeting in July is when they need to submit their proposed millage rate and staff is looking to balance the budget at no higher than 6.5 mills.

Vice-Mayor Hanchar said she spoke with the fire department inspector and they gave a huge compliment to Teresa Malmberg for being an amazing person with a wealth of knowledge. She felt it important for everyone to know that the City staff is thought of with such high regard.

There was lengthy discussion about the rules and regulations of city beach with regard to a citizen who had an issue with getting out with her kayak there. It was decided to add this to the June workshop.

Chief McQuaig said this Thursday, 9:00 a.m. at the McPherson Complex he has the honor of being MC for the Fallen Officers Memorial.

**Agenda Item No. 17 – City Attorney's Report**

Attorney Hand said the erosion of home rule continues. He said a solar energy bill has passed but has not yet been signed by the Governor. He said it would limit local government regulations on solar facilities, but it would not be relevant to our situation because the bill will become active after the application was made. He said with regard to Mr. Caton's issues, there is a good amount of space on the western side of the parcel which would allow for the construction of a driveway. He said there may be some setbacks, but an application for a variance would be appropriate for consideration.

**Agenda Item No. 18 – Adjourn**

At approximately 8:07 p.m., Vice-Mayor Hanchar motioned to adjourn and Councilwoman Williams seconded. A vote was taken and all members were in favor. The motion passed 4-0.

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Penned Signature of  
Amanda Roberts, CMC  
City Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Penned Signature of  
William P. White, Mayor