



**Board of Commissioners Citizen's Forum Minutes
Thursday, September 18, 2025, at 6:00 PM
City Hall**

1. Call to Order

Mayor Winecoff called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

Attendance:

Mayor Jeff Winecoff
Commissioner David Mammay
City Manager Gordon Hargrove
Tanya Shannon, City Clerk
Kevin Smith, Police Chief
Brandon Stevens, Finance Director
Sara Goodwin, Parks and Recreation Director

2. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Mayor Winecoff said that he was on an anniversary cruise last week, but he remained in contact with Representative Miller, urging him to continue pushing on Dam Safety. Upon his return, he reached out to Representative Miller again to inquire about the status of the process. Throughout his absence and since his return, he has maintained constant communication with the City Manager and other representatives to expedite progress. He said that Dam Safety has finally responded with the first phase of the project and has sent the information to the engineer. We should expect an update by the end of next week.

Additionally, Mayor Winecoff stated that they have contacted Senator Budd's team regarding FEMA's slow response in providing the funds requested for city projects, and he indicated that there is finally some progress being made on that front.

Manager Hargrove provided an update on the ongoing projects. He mentioned that several of the road washouts caused by Tropical Cyclone #8 have already been addressed, but these projects are generally of lower priority. However, more significant roads—such as Drayton, Queens Road, Pine Lake, South Shore Drive, Fairway, West Boiling Spring Lake, and Sunset Road—are still pending. He noted that South Shore Drive and Fairway have now entered the mitigation process.

Mr. Hargrove pointed out that the areas affected by washouts during Tropical Cyclone #8 also experienced similar damage during Hurricane Florence. To prevent future incidents, the team is

taking measures to mitigate these issues. He shared that there was a meeting with FEMA this week and that progress is being made quite rapidly. Currently, he believes we are working with the fourth or fifth FEMA manager. He explained that most experienced FEMA project managers have been dispatched to Western North Carolina, while the managers assigned to the coastal areas are reservists with less experience than the usual emergency program managers.

Additionally, Mr. Hargrove mentioned that outreach has been made to Congressman Rouzer's office and Senator Budd's office to help expedite the process. FEMA has responded to these contacts, and it appears that progress has accelerated. However, he cautioned that even once funding is secured, there is still significant work to be done to restore the roads properly. The current patches are only temporary solutions to facilitate public travel, and the permanent repairs will look quite different from their present state.

3. Public Comment & Questions

1. Joan Kenney, 793 S. Shore Dr., shared that she moved to the area in 1984 and used to be the AVON lady for the north side of the lake. While she is familiar with the region, she admitted she is not well-acquainted with Drayton Rd. She described it as being out in the boonies. Over the years, she noted that during storms, there were problems on Boiling Spring Rd., which forced people to use Drayton Rd. However, it was just a dirt and sand road and was in terrible condition. She commended the Board for having the foresight to pave Drayton Rd., highlighting that it was particularly commendable that the city didn't have to pay for it with tax dollars. She expressed that many people do not realize how fortunate they are to have the improved road compared to what it was like before.

Mayor Winecoff stated that they are continuously working to secure more grant funding for stormwater retention and other related projects. Manager Hargrove emphasized that flooding can happen even without a hurricane. Currently, one of our main evacuation routes, until E. Boiling Spring Rd. reopens, is Pine Lake Rd., which also experiences significant flooding. He stated that since hiring our stormwater engineer, one of the top priorities has been to find a solution to mitigate flooding in that area. He mentioned that there were concerns about the criteria set by the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). But he got word today that we will not have to jump through hoops to get the project moving forward. He said that we will be repiping under the road, which hopefully will eliminate some of the standing water that occurs after a flood.

2. Mr. Paul Brosseau, 1811 Pinehurst Rd., expressed his ongoing concerns about finances and the future use of the golf course/clubhouse property. He inquired whether the overall costs for the project, from start to finish, had been calculated. Commissioner Mammay responded that the Board had discussed the property purchase back in 2018. He mentioned that the property is equivalent to about seven lots and, when the lake is refilled, it will be valued at approximately \$1.2 million. The city had initially purchased the property for \$550,000.

Commissioner Mammay shared that the vision is to create something significant for the city that would also generate revenue, helping to alleviate the tax burden. He emphasized that the property could host various events and play a role in preserving the city's history and heritage, noting that the city was founded around a golf course and a lake. He stressed the importance of maintaining a connection to the city's origins. Commissioner Mammay confirmed that the financial figures had been reviewed. He stated that the exact costs would depend on the finalized vision for the venue.

He reiterated that this project is seen more as a vision and an investment for the city. Additionally, he mentioned that they are exploring recreational grants and other funding opportunities.

Mr. Brosseau followed up by asking if these grants would require matching funds. Mayor Winecoff responded that he is seeking options with no matching funding required.

Manager Hargrove emphasized the importance of maintaining strong relationships with state officials and representatives. He mentioned that the funding for the renovation of the old police department does not come from taxpayers, but rather from appropriations provided by Senator Bill Rabon to remodel the building. Mr. Hargrove highlighted that these relationships are beneficial for guiding the future and preserving the quality of life in the city.

Mr. Brosseau inquired about the property off Highway 87 that is currently being worked on. Mr. Hargrove responded that a stop-work order has been issued for the project as of today. He explained that there are several requirements that need to be addressed to ensure compliance with the city's regulations. Mr. Brosseau pointed out that they are approaching the 24-month deadline for submitting a site plan. Mr. Hargrove confirmed that they still have approximately eight months remaining.

Mr. Brosseau asked about the Pine Lake dam issue. Mr. Hargrove responded that the city believes the design engineers should assume responsibility for the error at no additional cost. He pointed out that the provided data was over 65 years old, meaning conditions may have changed, and emphasized the engineers' duty to conduct due diligence. He also mentioned that the engineers had reference points for other locations but none for the Pine Lake Dam, relying instead on outdated historical data.

3. Rodney Lemasters, 101 N. High Point, questioned whether the pipe underneath S. Shore near Mama C's will be replaced when the money from FEMA arrives. Mr. Hargrove confirmed that FEMA's position is that the pipe has been dislodged from its original location and must be assumed to be damaged. Therefore, he stated that the pipe will be replaced. Mr. Lemasters mentioned that the front area also needs to be cleared to prevent blockages. Mr. Hargrove responded that this work will not be funded by FEMA; instead, it will be carried out by the city's stormwater team. Additionally, Mr. Lemasters noted that the section between Fairway and South Shore during TC#8 was extremely clogged.

Mr. Hargrove stated that we are currently collaborating with Dominion and Logan Builders to lower some pipes on Golf View by 1.5 feet. The city's stormwater crew has cleaned out the cross ditches and is maintaining the front ditches. He emphasized that this is not only an obligation to the Highlands but also part of the maintenance of all the ditches in the city. Mr. Hargrove explained that Dominion and Logan Builders are responsible for lowering the tile and cleaning the ditch from the outfall all the way down through the golf course. He mentioned that the Highlands HOA is responsible for the rear ditch lines in that area.

Mayor Winecoff stated that all the ditches in the Highlands were confirmed to have been engineered by the developer before any approvals were granted. He explained that it would not make sense for the city to redesign the ditches that have already been engineered. The mayor reminded everyone that the Highlands has a Homeowners Association (HOA) established by the developers. He noted that most cities typically interact with the HOA rather than directly with

homeowners, and he mentioned that the city has not received any complaints from the Highlands HOA.

If the HOA encounters an issue and reaches out to the city, the city will investigate the problem. The mayor emphasized that the Highlands HOA is fully aware of all activities involving the city and the developers. He suggested that homeowners should contact the HOA if issues persist. Additionally, he mentioned that for Phase 2, there will be a development agreement between the city and the developer.

4. A resident questioned the plan for ditches that run across private property between the streets. Mr. Hargrove explained that the city is attempting to secure easements to manage those ditches. He indicated that it is a challenging situation. There are areas on South Shore Drive where the city would like to obtain easements, but the ditches must be cleaned first. This is necessary because the cost of cleaning them would amount to thousands of dollars for the taxpayers.

He mentioned that if the property owner chooses to clean the ditch and then grants the city the easement, the city would take care of ongoing maintenance thereafter. Typically, when a ditch runs through private property, the city approaches the homeowner about granting a maintenance easement for that ditch.

- Mr. Brosseau inquired about any updates regarding the turn lane project at Fifty Lakes Drive. Mayor Winecoff responded that the funding for this project was included in the request made to Representative Miller and Senator Rabon for the installation of turn lanes at the intersection of Fifty Lakes Drive and Highway 87. He mentioned that he also serves on the Board of the transportation department, where adding more turn lanes is a high priority in the long-term plan (over the next ten years). Additionally, he noted that the long-term plan includes developing pedestrian walkways connecting City Hall to the Recreation Center and from there to Fifty Lakes Drive. Mr. Hargrove pointed out that the Board has been consistently collaborating with our representatives to secure funding for these projects, and importantly, this initiative will not cost taxpayers any money.
- 5. Laura Dean, 842 Trevino Rd., inquired about the possibility of the city installing speed bumps. Commissioner Mammay explained that speed bumps cannot be added indiscriminately because they significantly impact emergency services. Ms. Dean stressed the need for a solution to slow down speeding vehicles. She frequently observes drivers failing to stop at stop signs while sitting on her porch on Trevino, facing Palmer. Mayor Winecoff assured her that the Police Department is aware of the issue and is doing their best to address it. He noted that officers consistently write tickets and often monitor various intersections. Ms. Dean also mentioned that some trucks are extremely loud. Unfortunately, the police cannot be present at all locations simultaneously. Mr. Hargrove advised residents to call City Hall's front desk to report any concerns as they arise. The front desk will forward the message to him, and he will then contact the Police Department.
- Mr. Lemasters inquired about a dirt mound located near Charlotte Road, noting that a large amount of material surrounds it. He assumed this was related to upcoming work on Drayton Road. Mr. Hargrove confirmed that the mound is situated on the edge of town, on the other side of the railroad tracks. Mr. Lemasters expressed concern that many people walk in that area and mentioned that it becomes very muddy after rain. He requested whether this area could be

cleaned up. Mr. Hargrove stated that he would discuss the issue with the Public Services Department.

As there were no further questions or comments, Mayor Winecoff adjourned the meeting.

Adjournment– 7:00 PM.

Jeff Winecoff, Mayor

Tanya Shannon, City Clerk