




Welcome Neighbor!






Neighbor's Guide to City Meetings
Regular City Commission Meetings (1st & 3rd Thursdays)

City Commission Meeting Overview

 = Opportunity to share a comment. Please note that the structure of the meeting is subject to change.

Morning Session | 10:00 am – 12 noon






This session may include business discussion, ordinances and resolutions.

- Agenda Statement
- Roll Call
- Invocation
-  Adoption of Agenda
-  Early Public Comment *on Business Items*
-  Discussion of Business Items
-  Resolutions
-  Ordinances (2nd readings, adoption readings, 1st readings)
- Commission Comment

Lunch Break | 12:00 noon – 1:00 pm

Afternoon Session | 1:00 pm – 4:30 pm






This session may include business discussion, ordinances and resolutions.

-  Early Public Comment *on Business Items*
-  General Public Comment *on Business Items not on the Agenda*
-  Discussion of Business Items
-  Resolutions
-  Ordinances (2nd readings, adoption readings, 1st readings)
- Commission Comment

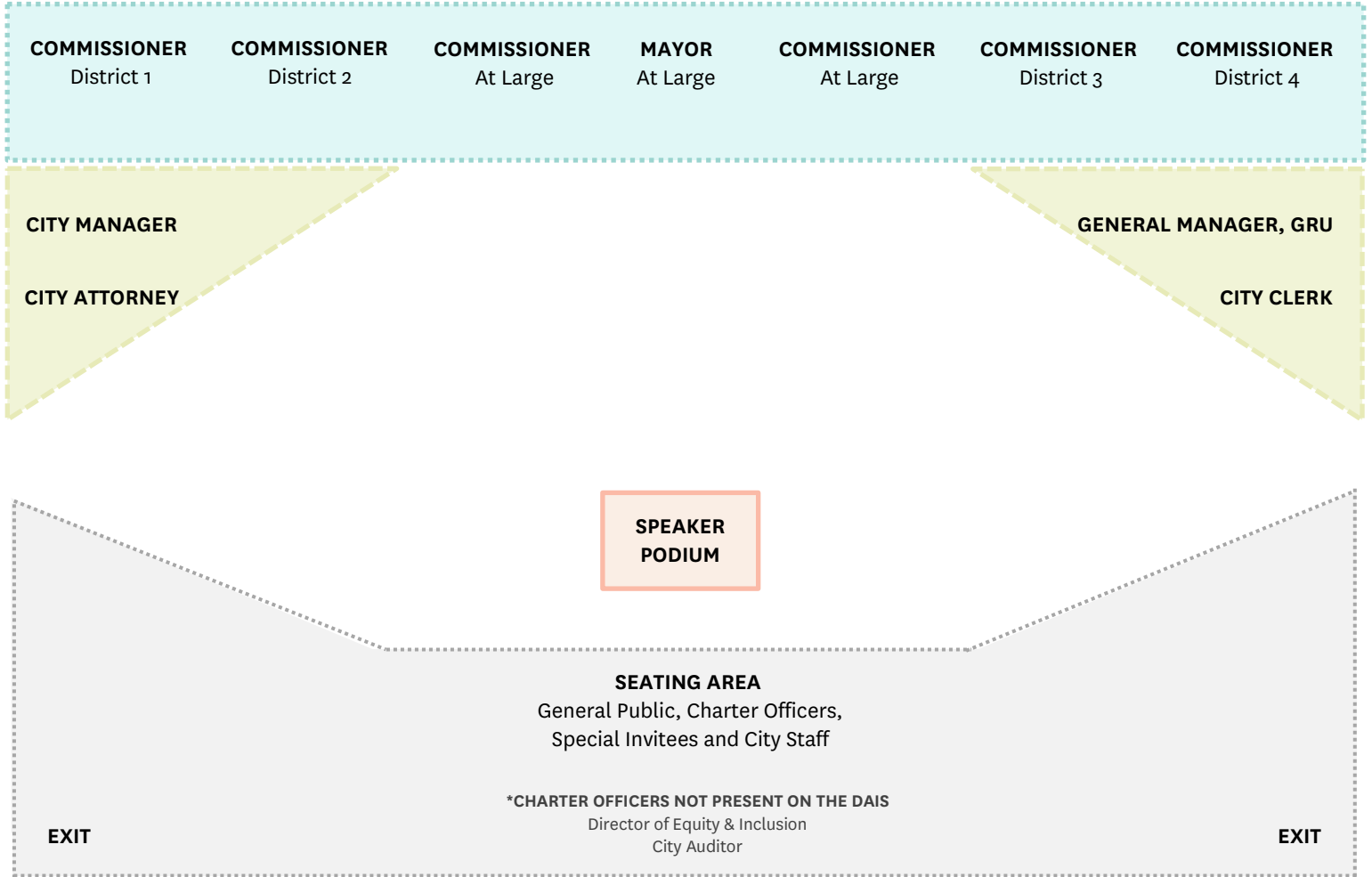
Dinner Break | 4:30 pm – 5:30 pm

Evening Session | 5:30 pm – 10:00 pm or earlier

This session may include discussions, ordinances, resolutions mandated by the state to occur in the evening.

- Pledge of Allegiance
- Proclamations & Special Recognitions
-  Early Public Comment *on Business Items*
-  Resolutions
-  Discussion of Business Items
-  Public Hearings (including Planning Petitions)
-  Ordinances (2nd readings, adoption readings, 1st readings)
- Commission Comment
- Adjournment



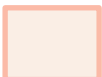
A QUICK OVERVIEW OF THE ROOM



Purpose

The Purpose of a City Commission Meeting is for the Commission to make policies and conduct the city’s business in an open and transparent forum.

Role

-  **City Commission** – Make policy decisions & manage Charters.
-  **Charter Officers** – Implement policies & manage City workforce.
-  **General Public & Special Invitees** – Improve quality of policies by expressing opinions and sharing expertise.

How to Engage with the City Commission



Make an Appointment

Make an appointment to speak privately with a City Commissioner. You can request in-person or phone appointments. Go to www.cityofgainesville.org > City Commission > Request an Appointment with a Commissioner.



Send an Email

Email Commissioners individually or email the full Commission at: citycomm@cityofgainesville.org. Please note that all emails to Commissioners are public record and will be published for public view. Please do not share private information over email.



Attend a Community Meeting

Attend Community Meetings and Work Groups. The City of Gainesville is committed to engaging our neighbors throughout projects. Sign up for the city newsletter to be told about upcoming events. Go to www.cityofgainesville.com > Get Connected > E-Newsletters.



Join an Advisory Board

Join an Advisory Board or Committee to have a bigger impact on topics you care about most. Find available member openings here: www.cityofgainesville.org > Government > Boards & Committees.



Leave an eComment

Can't attend the meeting in person or don't want to speak publicly? Send a written 'eComment' on upcoming agenda items. Visit www.cityofgainesville.org and go to the "Agendas & Minutes" tab at the top. Click on the "eComment" link to the right of the meeting to enter a comment. Your comment will be shared with the Commission and added to the official public record.



Speak at a Meeting

The public is always invited to share comments with the Commission during City Commission meetings. To sign up to speak in advance, go to www.cityofgainesville.org > Agenda & Minutes > eComment. Choose 'Sign In to Speak' on an agenda item. You may also sign up in person on the meeting day by filling out a Speaker Card when you arrive at City Hall.

FAQs for City Commission Meetings



What can I comment on at a meeting?

There are two types of Public Comment during City Commission Meetings

Business Items on the Agenda

- **Early Public Comment:** If you are unable to wait to make a public comment on an agenda item, you may speak during Early Public Comment at the beginning of a session. Neighbors may speak for three (3) minutes on one item from the agenda, or for five (5) minutes on two of more items. Speaking early means that you give up your chance to comment when the Commission discusses the item.
- **During Discussion of an Item:** Neighbors have three (3) minutes to speak about a business item on the agenda. The Commission will make a decision on the matter after hearing public comments.

Topics or issues not on the Agenda

Neighbors are invited to speak to the Commission for three (3) minutes about anything that is not on the Agenda. This is an opportunity to bring up new ideas or issues to the Commission. This section is called *General Public Comment*.

General Public Comment takes place at the start of the Afternoon Session (1 pm to 4:30 pm). There is a 30 minute time limit for General Public Comment so please sign up early to reserve a spot.



What are the rules for comments?

Remember

- Public comments are taken once during an item.
- Comments may not be taken on every motion during an item.
- Comments are not taken during procedural and administrative votes.

Do's

- Start your public comment by stating your name for the record.
- Address the Chair.
- Speak for 3 minutes.

Don'ts

- No signs, props, food, drinks, cheering, or booing.
- No vulgar language or gestures.
- No discourteous, disrespectful, or disparaging conduct.



How to sign up to speak?

Sign up online in advance:

- Visit www.cityofgainesville.org> [Agenda & Minutes](#)
- Find the next scheduled regular City Commission meeting
- Click on the 'eComment' link for the meeting > 'register to Speak' button > 'I agree, Register Me' button.
- Sign in with your email address or create a new user account (first-time visitors).

Sign up in person at the meeting:

- Take and fill out a speaker card upon your arrival to the meeting.
- The Clerk's office staff will collect cards before each agenda item.
- The Mayor will call out each speaker.
- Language translation will be offered if the speaker registers in advance.



When can I speak?

- Listen for your name. The Clerk will call speakers to the podium in the order in which they signed up.
- Speakers who have not signed up will be invited to the podium after registered speakers.



Where do I stand?

- When it is your time to speak, please stand at the podium in the middle of the auditorium.
- There are 3 lights on the podium that will guide you. The light will start green. At one minute left, it will turn yellow. Please start your concluding remarks. At three minutes, the light will turn red and you will be thanked for your input.



Who do I talk to?

- Speak to the chair of the meeting (the Mayor or the Mayor Pro-Tem).
- Please do not direct comments to individual commissioners, chart officers, staff or audience members.



How long can I talk?

- Adoption of the Agenda – 3 minutes
- Early Public Comment - 3 minutes for 1 item, 5 minutes for two or more items
- General Public Comment – 3 minutes
- Each Business Item – 3 minutes

Frequently Used Terms

(B): The (B) after an item's title means that there are supporting materials, called Backup.

(NB): The (NB) after an item's title means that there are no supporting materials (i.e no Backup).

1st Reading: Indicates that this is the first time that the ordinance is being read for public notice. The law requires that an ordinance be read twice for public notice before the Commission votes on it.

2nd Reading: Indicates that this is the second time that the ordinance is being read for public notice. As per law the Commission can vote on an ordinance after it has been read twice for public notice.

Adjournment: A motion by the City Commission to officially close a meeting.

Business Discussion Items: Business Discussion Items are each considered and voted upon by the Commission. The Commission may choose to hear items not on the agenda at any time during the meeting.

Commission Comment: An opportunity for the City Commission members to raise topics or questions for discussion by the full body.

Consent Agenda: These items are not expected to require review or discussion at this meeting. The Commission will vote on all items in one motion, though they may decide to move an item to the Regular Agenda if further consideration or discussion is needed.

Early Public Comment: If a person cannot wait for an agenda item to be heard, they may speak during Early Public Comment at the beginning of the meeting. Speakers may have the customary three (3) minutes to speak to one agenda item, or a total of five (5) minutes to speak to multiple items. Speakers at Early Public Comment waive their time to speak later in the meeting.

General Policy Committee (GPC): Regular meetings of the City Commission to discuss referrals made during the regularly scheduled City Commission meetings.

General Public Comment: Three General Public Comment periods are available during each regular Commission meeting. Members of the public may speak about any topic except items scheduled elsewhere on the agenda. The Commission will not discuss or make decisions on items presented during this time. Comments may be referred to City staff for follow up.

Meeting Agenda: The agenda is the schedule of business items before the City Commission for action.

Motion: A proposal at a meeting that certain action be taken or certain views about a subject be expressed by the assembly (or Commission).

Ordinance: Municipal law that can be amended or repealed by adoption of another ordinance.

Public Comment on Agenda Items: The Commission may request public comment on specific agenda items during discussion. Comments must stay focused on the agenda topic at hand.

Resolution: An expression of a governing body concerning matters of administration, an expression of a temporary character, or a provision for the disposition of a particular item of the administrative business of the governing body.


Referred to GPC: When items are referred to GPC it means they will be scheduled for further discussion during a work session of the General Policy Committee. The Commission customarily sits as the General Policy Committee on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of every month. (They sit as the City Commission on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of every month).

Sunshine Law: Refers to the 'Government in the Sunshine Act'. This open government law dictates how meetings and other activities must be open and available to the public.

Are we missing something? Let us know in the Feedback Form attached with this guide!

New To Public Comments?

Here are some tips to help plan a Public Comment.

Start


I am _____ (full name) * required

I am a _____ (resident, profession, student, representative)

I am from _____ (district, location, organization)

I am here to comment on _____ (agenda item or topic)

I would like to share my _____ (support, concern, ideas, expertise).

Point 1

1:00
Minute

Point 2

2:00
Minutes


Point 3

In conclusion, I _____ (support / oppose) this agenda item.

As next steps I propose

3:00
Minutes

Thank you.



Think about...

Introduction

- How do you want to introduce yourself?
- Who are you and where do you come from?
- What unique perspective can you contribute to the conversation today?

Body

- What do you want to share with the Commission?
- Do you need to set the stage or give background information?
- Do you have multiple things to say? Write out your thoughts in bullet points.
- Use facts and data whenever possible.
- Stay away from personal attacks.
- Remember each person only has 3 minutes. Try to be brief but thorough.

Conclusion

- Finish your remarks with a clear call to action.
- What concrete steps do you recommend?
- When the red light turns on, you will be thanked for your comments and the next speaker will be invited to the podium.

We'd Love to Hear Your Feedback!

Here are four easy ways to share your feedback with us:

1. Write down your feedback on this form and drop it off at the feedback collection tray located on the reception desk.
2. Take your time to write down your feedback on this form. Click a picture of the form and email it to designgnv@cityofgainesville.org
3. Share your feedback online by visiting <https://tinyurl.com/w5ctzlp>
4. Scan the following QR code to directly access the survey. Open your smartphone's camera and place it over the code. Click on the link that pops up to open the survey.



First we'd like to learn a little bit about you.

1. How familiar are you with local government?
Please rate on a scale of 1 (being 'not familiar') - 10 (being 'very familiar')

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

2. How many City Commission meetings have you attended?

0	1-3	4-9	10-20	20+

3. How comfortable are you attending City Commission meetings?
Please rate on a scale of 1 (being 'least comfortable') - 10 (being 'very comfortable')

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

4. How can we improve City Commission meetings?

Some feedback for the Neighbor’s Guide to City Meetings

5. Please rate the Guide on a scale of 1 (being least helpful) – 10 (being most helpful)?

Question	Survey Scale: 1 (being least helpful) – 10 (being most helpful)									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How helpful would the Neighbor’s Guide be if this was your first meeting?										
How helpful is the Neighbor’s Guide for you personally?										

6. What questions did the Guide help answer?

7. What questions do you still have?

8. How would you rate the following sections on a scale of 1 (being least helpful) – 10 (being most helpful)?

Page Number(s)	Section Name	Survey Scale: 1 (being least helpful) – 10 (being most helpful)									
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2	City Commission Meeting Overview										
3	A Quick Overview of The Room										
4	How To Engage With The City Commission										
5	FAQ for Attending a City Commission Meeting										
6 and 7	Frequently Used Terms										
8	New To Public Comment?										

9. Is there anything else that you would like to share with us?