



DeSoto County

Economic Development Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes - Draft

Thursday, November 13, 2025

8:30 AM

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Wertz called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

DeSoto County Assistant County Administrator Justin Smith and Public Information Officer Victoria Hays sat in on the meeting.

Present: Mandy Hines, Debbie Wertz, Lynn Shelfer, Andrew Neuhofer, Addison Reesor and Akos Jankura

Absent: Robert Womack, Asena Mott, Jacqueline Wolcott, Janet Harvin, Eric Bautista and Beth Carsten

MINUTES APPROVAL

Minutes for September 25, 2025

Economic Development Advisory Committee members reviewed the minutes. Vice Chair Neuhofer made a motion to approve the minutes, Ms. Shelfer seconded. All approved.

REGULAR BUSINESS

Development Update

County Administrator Mandy Hines stated that there were over “80-something” applications involving development and grouped by project with multiple steps possible.

Some of those development listings in planning included rezone, special exception, variance, plat/plot split, planned unit development, parcel details, commercial/residential, unit counts, and whether approval is administrative or if it requires a public hearing.

Ms. Hines added that building activity and permit reports are available online.

It was added that marketing efforts are planned going forward, including videos and/or social media efforts by the County's Public Information Officer to increase public awareness.

An ongoing development, Osceola Organics, was also discussed. The DeSoto Board of County Commissioners previously denied Osceola Organics. The applicant filed a Florida Land Use Dispute Resolution Act (FLUEDRA) claim. Mediation was conducted with a special magistrate and a settlement agreement was prepared addressing major concerns. Commissioners consideration is scheduled for November 18 with an agenda that includes settlement and a resolution to approve if accepted. If the settlement is denied, the matter proceeds to a special magistrate hearing;

FLUEDRA precedes potential litigation.

DeSoto County Comprehensive Plan Update

Ms. Hines provided an update on the County's Comprehensive Plan. The County seeks a rewrite and/or overhaul of the comprehensive plan. Previous major updates date back to 2007 and 2016. The current plan has inconsistencies and potential untracked changes, which can be difficult for staff to implement.

The County has received a \$75,000 Technical Assistance Planning Grant via Florida Commerce. The County is estimating a five-month timeline that will include workshops and stakeholder engagement. The planning grant was not yet approved. The state agreement can take up to six months and does not extend that grant time, which can create schedule risk.

The work includes data analysis and a Future Land Use Assessment Report.

Ms. Hines added that a presentation is scheduled for December 16 to seek permission from the County Commissioners to move forward under grant funding. The timeline and scope must align with legislative limits, state review, and legal risk management.

Mr. Jankura discussed the need for industrial-zoned land, stating that industrial land is in short supply and that businesses seek ready-to-occupy facilities.

DeSotoBOCC.com and GoDeSotoFl.com discussion

DeSoto County Public Information Officer Victoria Hays discussed the availability of information on the DeSotoBOCC.com website. Those upgrades included public communication tools such as a regular newsletter, an up-to-date meeting portal, a DeSoto Connect app, and multiple QR codes available at public spaces to boost adoption of these services.

GoDeSotoFL.com was also discussed. Committee members also encouraged the importance of keeping the site and news updated, as well as adding prominent local businesses to the site, and to integrate the "What's Going Up" blog post into County newsletters.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

n/a

COMMITTEE COMMENTS

EDAC members expressed concern about rapid residential growth without corresponding local employment opportunities. They expressed a need to ensure sufficient commercial and industrial zoning to attract employers and to support residents.

STAFF COMMENTS

Ms. Guffey discussed EDAC member requirements, noting resignation and attendance issues. The EDAC ordinance update involves automatic removal thresholds -- three consecutive absences or 50% missed meetings in the year -- with committee discretion to excuse absences.

A formal process was proposed with a letter of interest, committee review, recommendation to BOCC via resolution and a cap of 13 members.

The Board of County Commissioner appointee slot was proposed to be Taylor Jones (DeSoto County Chamber) and it was suggested to continue publishing legal ads for openings.

Ms. Guffey also discussed an upcoming presentation by producers for a television series based on "A Land Remembered." The presentation is scheduled for the December 16 County

Commissioners meeting.

ADJOURN

Vice Chair Neuhofer made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:07 a.m., Ms. Shelfer seconded. All approved.

NOTE: For quasi-judicial matters, any party desiring a verbatim record of the proceeding of this hearing for the purpose of an appeal is advised to make private arrangements for the production of a

record and anyone wishing to present documents or other written evidence to the Board must provide

eight (8) copies of the written material. If special accommodations are required in accordance with

the Americans with Disabilities Act, individuals should contact the County Administrator's Office by

calling 863-993-4800 at least forty-eight hours prior to the hearing.