



Standard Agenda Item Cover Sheet

Agenda Item N^o. _____

Meeting Date: November 12, 2025

☒ Consent Section

☐ Regular Section

☐ Public Hearing

Requires Chair Signature? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Includes a Technology Component? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Subject: Reappointment of Susan M. Finch and appointment of Steven K. Luce as Land Use Hearing Officers.

Department Name: Development Services

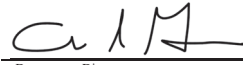
Contact Person: Adam Gormly

Contact Phone: 813-276-8422

Sign-Off Approvals:

Assistant County Administrator

Date


Department Director

Date

11/4/2025

Management and Budget – Approved as to Financial Impact Accuracy

Date

County Attorney – Approved as to Legal Sufficiency

Date

Staff's Recommended Board Motion:

- a) Approve the reappointment of Susan M. Finch as a Hillsborough County Land Use Hearing Officer effective November 20, 2025, for a term of three (3) years at a cost not to exceed \$100,000 per year.
 - b) Approve the appointment of Steven K. Luce as a Hillsborough County Land Use Hearing Officer effective November 12, 2025, for a term of two (2) years at a cost not to exceed \$100,000 per year.
- Approval of this item will not increase or decrease any County departmental budgets.

Financial Impact Statement:

Approval of this item will not increase or decrease any County departmental budgets.

Background:

The Hillsborough County Land Development Code (LDC) provides for the appointment of Land Use Hearing Officers by the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners. The Land Use Hearing Officers are appointed to conduct public hearings, administer oaths and take testimony and evidence regarding land use matters regulated by the LDC, and to enter written orders or provide written recommendations to the Board in these matters.

Ms. Finch is a professional land use planner with over 35 years of experience in both the public and private sectors and currently serves as a Hillsborough County Land Use Hearing Officer with over ten (10) years of experience.

Mr. Luce is also a professional land use planner with over 35 years of experience in both the public and private sectors and served as a Hillsborough County Land Use Hearing Officer from 2012 to 2017.

List Attachments: Susan M. Finch Resume and Agreement for Services, Steven K. Luce Resume and Agreement for Services

SUSAN M. FINCH, AICP

2608 South Dundee Street, Tampa, FL
susan@stevenfinch.com (813) 785-7315

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Hillsborough County Land Use Hearing Officer / Zoning Hearing Master, Tampa FL

- February 2015 to Present
- Conducts hearings and renders recommendations and decisions for parcels within Unincorporated Hillsborough County regarding rezoning, variances, special uses, vested rights, appeals of administrative decisions and related matters.

Finch Planning Group, LLC, Tampa, FL

- Principal
- July 2014 to Present
- Land use planning consulting regarding comprehensive plan amendments, rezonings, special exceptions, variances, vested rights and code enforcement issues. Additionally, expert witness testimony, assistance with impact fee negotiations, municipal code drafting and eminent domain support. Clients include homeowners, governmental entities and land developers of property in the Tampa Bay area excluding Unincorporated Hillsborough County.

Adams and Reese, LLP, Tampa, FL

- Land Use Planner
- March 2010 to June 2014
- Represented clients at land use hearings in numerous jurisdictions on the West Coast of Florida. Assisted in the preparation and negotiation of rezoning applications, comprehensive plan land use amendments, site plan review and impact fee analyses.

Ruden, McCloskey, Smith, Schuster & Russell, Tampa, FL

- Land Use Planner
- March 2005 to February 2010
- Represented clients at land use hearings in numerous jurisdictions on the West Coast of Florida. Assisted the Ruden Land Use team in preparation and negotiation of rezoning applications, comprehensive plan land use amendments, site plan review and impact fee analyses.

Hillsborough County, Tampa, FL

- Impact Fee Manager
- 1998 to March 2005
- Responsible for a fifty-five million dollar program which resulted in the purchase and construction of Hillsborough County infrastructure such as roads, parks, school sites and fire stations. Responsibilities included, but were not limited to, negotiations with County staff and developers to build needed capital improvements, administration of County programs such as the No Fee Zones, Time Payment of Impacts Fees, contractual obligations for repayment to developments for the construction of improvements, presentation to the Board of County Commissioners and supervision of staff.

Engelhardt, Hammer and Associates, Tampa, FL

- Urban Planner
- 1993 to 1998
- Part of a team of urban planners that provided land use consulting services to developers, attorneys and governmental entities. Services included rezoning of property including Development of Regional Impact applications, alcoholic beverage requests, site development, eminent domain and appraisal support. Supervised the creation of zoning presentation materials as well as trial graphics.

Hillsborough County, Tampa, FL

- 1992 to 1993
- Senior Planner
- Highest ranking land use planner on the zoning staff. Presented and authored hundreds of zoning reports to the Zoning Hearing Master.

Hillsborough County, Tampa, FL

- 1990 to 1992
- Community Planner I
- Lowest ranking land use planner on the zoning staff. Reviewed all Personal Appearance applications as well as conducting phosphate application reviews.

Hillsborough County, Tampa, FL

- 1989 to 1990
- Planning Technician
- Created a tracking system for a 4-COP-RX alcoholic beverage licenses in Hillsborough County. Assisted technical staff with graphic presentations and all else to increase my skill set.

EDUCATION

University of South Florida, Tampa, FL

Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science, 1988

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS AND BOARDS

American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP)

American Planning Association

National Impact Fee Roundtable (Speaker)

Former City of Tampa Code Enforcement Board Member

REFERENCES

Available Upon Request

**AGREEMENT FOR SERVICES
LAND USE HEARING OFFICER**

THIS AGREEMENT, made and entered into this _____ day of _____, 20____, by and between HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, FLORIDA, a political subdivision of the State of Florida, hereinafter referred to as COUNTY; and SUSAN M. FINCH, hereinafter referred to as a LAND USE HEARING OFFICER (“LUHO”).

WITNESSETH:

1. The LUHO shall faithfully perform the duties set forth in Sec. 9.02.01 of the Hillsborough County Land Development Code (“LDC”).

2. As compensation in full for the services rendered, the LUHO shall be paid at the rate of ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS (\$100.00) DOLLARS per hour for actual hearing time, and for each hour of research, report writing, and field visits pertinent to the public hearing matter and any other duties required to the performance of said services pursuant to this Agreement. Additionally, the COUNTY will reimburse the LUHO for any and all necessary expenses incurred relative to the performance of all duties required by this Agreement; provided further, however, said duties shall be so performed annually by the LUHO at an annual cost to the COUNTY not greater than the annual sum indicated by the provisions of paragraph 3 of this Agreement.

3. Prior to receiving monthly payment or reimbursement relative to all earned compensation or expenses, the LUHO shall, on a monthly basis, submit to the Clerk of the Board of County Commissioners a valid itemized invoice detailing the number of hours of service provided; together with a listing of any necessary expenses incurred, as evidenced by mileage logs and receipts. Such payment or reimbursement due the LUHO shall be paid by the COUNTY within thirty (30) days of receipt of said invoice and documentation. Pursuant to and in consideration of all the provisions of the Agreement relative to the required performance of the LUHO, the COUNTY shall pay an annual sum to the LUHO not greater than ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$100,000.00).

4. The LUHO is hereby appointed to serve a term of three (3) years beginning November 20, 2025. Should the LUHO desire to resign said appointment, notice of same shall be provided, in writing to the Chair of the Board of County Commissioners at least sixty (60) days prior to the effective date of said resignation. A LUHO shall be removed for violations of this agreement or in accordance with the LDC, as amended. In the event annual budgetary funds required to finance this Agreement become unavailable, the COUNTY may terminate this Agreement upon no less than fifteen (15) days notice in writing to the LUHO. Said notice shall be delivered by the U.S. Postal authorities to the LUHO by certified mail, return receipt requested; or in person. The COUNTY shall be the final authority as to the annual availability of funds.

5. The COUNTY reserves the right to renew this Agreement for two (2) successive one year periods under the terms and conditions stated herein upon mutual consent of the COUNTY and the LUHO.

6. Upon executing the Agreement, the LUHO acknowledges and accepts the appointment by the COUNTY and shall perform the duties of the LUHO in accordance with Sec. 9.02.01 of the LDC.

7. During the term of this appointment:

- a. The LUHO shall not hold any other employment or contractual relationship whatsoever with Hillsborough County, or hold other appointive or elective office or position in government during his/her term.
- b. The LUHO shall not act as an agent or attorney in any proceeding, application or matter in the area of zoning or land use planning before any governmental authority of Hillsborough County, involving property which is the subject of an application during the time the LUHO is in office.

8. The LUHO, and any firm with which he or she is or may become associated, is, for a period of one (1) year from the date of termination of said employment, expressly prohibited from acting as agent or attorney in any proceeding, application or matter before any commission, board, agent or other office of Hillsborough County government, involving property which was the subject of any application during the time the LUHO was in office.

9. The LUHO shall be subject to the provisions of Sec. 112.3145, Florida Statutes, insofar as they relate to local officers. Such financial disclosure shall be filed with the Hillsborough County Supervisor of Elections. The failure to comply with the provisions of this subsection shall constitute just cause for removal of the LUHO from office.

10. The LUHO shall disqualify himself/herself from a particular case when it reasonably appears that he or she has a conflict of interest. When the LUHO disqualifies himself or herself, the case shall be randomly assigned to another LUHO, if available. The Board of County Commissioners may request the County Attorney to provide an attorney otherwise qualified to sit as a LUHO for an individual case in the event that all Land Use Hearing Officers disqualify themselves.

11. The LUHO shall comply with Hillsborough County, Florida – Code of Ordinances and Laws, Part A, Chapter 30, Article II (Hillsborough County Human Rights Ordinance) as amended, which prohibits illegal discrimination on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression, in employment, public accommodations,

real estate transactions and practices, County contracting and procurement activities, and credit extension practices. The LUHO shall also comply with the requirements of all applicable federal, state and local laws, rules, regulations, ordinances and executive orders prohibiting and/or relating to discrimination, as amended and supplemented. All of the aforementioned laws, rules, regulations, ordinances and executive orders are incorporated herein by reference.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have executed this Agreement as of the date first above written.

ATTEST:

VICTOR D. CRIST
CLERK OF CIRCUIT COURT

COUNTY: HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY,
FLORIDA

By: _____
Deputy Clerk

By: _____
Chair, Board of County
Commissioners

APPROVED BY COUNTY ATTORNEY

By: _____
Approved as to Form and Legal Sufficiency

LAND USE HEARING OFFICER

By: _____

Printed Name of Person Signing

Steven K. Luce
3325 Bayshore Boulevard
Tampa, FL
33629

Resume

Summary:

Over 38 years of professional land use planning experience in Hillsborough County in both the public and private sectors. Expertise in land development, due diligence, site plan design, rezoning and comprehensive plan amendment matters.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Executive Planner - Hillsborough County Development Services Department 1987-1998

Team Leader. Development of Regional Impact Coordinator. Reviewed regionally significant large scale development applications, met with applicants, review agencies, neighbors, attended neighborhood meetings, drafted conditions of approval/Development Orders, presented staff positions at public hearings.

Senior Project Manager - URS Corporation, Tampa 1998-2003

Met with clients/applicants, provided initial opinions as to the feasibility/viability of development proposals. Prepared site development plans, providing estimated unit/square footage yields. Prepared zoning applications, met with local government staff/review agencies/neighbors, presented applications at public hearings.

Senior Project Manager - Wilson Miller, Tampa 2003-2009

Team leader. Business development. Assigned projects to staff. Met with clients/applicants, provided initial opinions as to the feasibility/viability of development proposals. Prepared site development plans, providing estimated unit/square footage yields. Prepared zoning applications, met with local government staff/review agencies/neighbors, presented applications at public hearings.

President/Owner - Luce Planning Group, Tampa 2009-2017

Established a planning firm in 2009. Handled business development, marketing, budgeting, accounting, invoicing. Focus was rezoning applications and comprehensive plan amendments. Prepared, submitted, negotiated positions/conditions, and presented applications at public hearings. Conducted due diligence services for clients. Represented both private and public clients.

Zoning Hearing Master - Hillsborough County 2012-2017

Recommended by staff and appointed by the Hillsborough County BOCC as a Zoning Hearing Master. Conducted both Zoning and Variance public hearings.

Director of Entitlements - Lennar Corporation, Tampa 2017-2020

Team leader. Supervised group responsible for conducting due diligence assessments of proposed new development sites. Evaluated land use compatibility issues, environmental constraints, soils/geo-tech concerns, obtained estimates of the cost to develop property. Hired and directed land use counsel/land development consultants to pursue entitlement approvals as needed.

Director of Entitlements - EPG Inc., Tampa 2000-2025

Responsible for conducting due diligence assessments of proposed new development sites. Evaluated land use compatibility issues, environmental constraints, soils/geo-tech concerns, obtained estimates of the cost to develop property. Hired and directed land use counsel/land development consultants to pursue entitlement approvals as needed.

Education:

Cornell University – Bachelor of Science – 1982 – area of study: environmental sciences

Oklahoma State University – Masters of Science – 1986 – area of study: geography

**AGREEMENT FOR SERVICES
LAND USE HEARING OFFICER**

THIS AGREEMENT, made and entered into this _____ day of _____, 20____, by and between HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, FLORIDA, a political subdivision of the State of Florida, hereinafter referred to as COUNTY; and STEVEN K LUCE, hereinafter referred to as a LAND USE HEARING OFFICER (“LUHO”).

WITNESSETH:

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2. As compensation in full for the services rendered, the LUHO shall be paid at the rate of ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS (\$100.00) DOLLARS per hour for actual hearing time, and for each hour of research, report writing, and field visits pertinent to the public hearing matter and any other duties required to the performance of said services pursuant to this Agreement. Additionally, the COUNTY will reimburse the LUHO for any and all necessary expenses incurred relative to the performance of all duties required by this Agreement; provided further, however, said duties shall be so performed annually by the LUHO at an annual cost to the COUNTY not greater than the annual sum indicated by the provisions of paragraph 3 of this Agreement.

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real estate transactions and practices, County contracting and procurement activities, and credit extension practices. The LUHO shall also comply with the requirements of all applicable federal, state and local laws, rules, regulations, ordinances and executive orders prohibiting and/or relating to discrimination, as amended and supplemented. All of the aforementioned laws, rules, regulations, ordinances and executive orders are incorporated herein by reference.

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VICTOR D. CRIST
CLERK OF CIRCUIT COURT

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FLORIDA

By: _____
Deputy Clerk

By: _____
Chair, Board of County
Commissioners

APPROVED BY COUNTY ATTORNEY

By: _____
Approved as to Form and Legal Sufficiency

LAND USE HEARING OFFICER

By: _____

Printed Name of Person Signing