



CANDIDATE FOR OFFICE

**Guide for effective
leadership for the City of
Deltona, Florida.**

PART I: Historic Problem.

Subject I: Road Map to a Functional Deltona: A Governance Stabilization Initiative.

Deltona Citizens United, Inc.

I. Purpose of This Initiative

Deltona Citizens United, Inc. (DCU) launches the Road Map to a Functional Deltona to address recurring governance instability observed over multiple administrations. This document identifies systemic leadership failure patterns and their measurable effects on the community, then outlines structured, lawful resident-driven solutions.

This initiative is rooted in Florida law, municipal governance standards, and the belief that institutional stability—not personality conflict—builds strong cities.

II. Identified Governance Problems

Cause → **Effect** to Community Framework

1. Commission–Manager Role Breakdown

Leadership Cause

Elected officials cross into administrative functions or use managerial oversight as a political tool.

Relevant Florida Law

Fla. Stat. § 166.021 – Municipal home rule powers

Fla. Stat. § 166.041 – Procedures for adoption of ordinances and governance authority

Council-Manager structure principles under municipal best practices

Effect to Community

- Frequent city manager turnover
- Administrative instability
- Staff attrition
- Reduced long-term planning capacity
- Public perception of “chaos at City Hall”

When executive stability declines, service delivery and economic confidence decline with it.

2. Sunshine & Procedural Legitimacy Failures

Leadership Cause

Improper coordination, unclear quorum discipline, informal communications regarding city business.

Relevant Florida Law

Fla. Stat. § 286.011 – Florida Government in the Sunshine Law

Fla. Stat. § 119.01 – Public Records Law

Fla. Stat. § 112.313 – Standards of conduct for public officers

Effect to Community

- Litigation risk
- Legal defense costs
- Erosion of public trust
- Media narratives centered on legality rather than policy

When procedural integrity is questioned, democratic legitimacy weakens.

3. Land-Use Conflict as Political Weaponization

Leadership Cause

Inconsistent application of comprehensive planning or emotional framing of zoning disputes.

Relevant Florida Law

Fla. Stat. § 163.3161–163.3215 – Community Planning Act

Fla. Stat. § 163.3194 – Consistency with adopted comprehensive plan

Fla. Stat. § 166.041(3)(c) – Notice requirements for zoning changes

Effect to Community

- Development lawsuits
- Property value uncertainty
- Investor hesitation
- Neighborhood division

Predictability in land-use governance is essential to economic stability.

4. Financial Transparency & Oversight Gaps

Leadership Cause

Delayed audits, unclear financial communication, reactive oversight culture.

Relevant Florida Law

Fla. Stat. § 218.39 – Annual financial audit of local governmental entities

Fla. Stat. § 218.503 – Determination of financial emergency

Fla. Stat. § 166.241 – Municipal budgets

Effect to Community

- Suspicion about tax use
- Public polarization
- Decreased civic participation
- Defensive political posturing

Transparent financial reporting prevents distrust cycles.

5. Personality-Driven Governance Culture

Leadership Cause

Factionalism and political rivalry overpower institutional norms.

Relevant Florida Law

Fla. Stat. § 112.311 – Legislative intent regarding public trust

Florida Commission on Ethics standards

Effect to Community

- “Us vs. Them” civic environment
- Social media hostility

- Civic burnout
- Repeated election volatility

Institutional strength must outweigh individual conflict.

6. Civic Communication Breakdown

Leadership Cause

Reactive messaging instead of structured civic education.

Relevant Florida Law

Fla. Stat. § 286.0114 – Public participation at meetings

Fla. Stat. § 119.07 – Inspection and copying of public records

Effect to Community

- Misinformation spread
- Emotion-driven meeting participation
- Low policy literacy
- Escalating distrust

An uninformed public becomes vulnerable to narrative manipulation.

III. Pattern Diagnosis

Across decades, Deltona demonstrates a recurring loop:

- ✓ Leadership conflict
- ✓ Procedural dispute
- ✓ Legal or media escalation
- ✓ Administrative turnover
- ✓ Community distrust
- ✓ Political reset without structural reform

Without guardrails, the cycle repeats.

IV. DCU Solutions Overview

Resident-Driven Structural Stabilization

Solution 1: Civic Governance Accountability Initiative

Purpose: Increase measurable standards for elected performance.

Key Actions:

- Publish quarterly governance report cards
- Track Sunshine compliance best practices
- Public candidate governance pledges
- Annual “State of Civic Governance” forum
- Intended Community Outcome:
- Professionalized leadership culture
- Reduced manager turnover
- Greater procedural discipline

Solution 2: Civic Education & Transparency Program

Purpose: Reduce misinformation and improve resident literacy in municipal law.

Key Actions:

- Plain-language guides to Sunshine Law and zoning
- “Before the Vote” policy briefings
- Quarterly civic literacy workshops

- Public records request training sessions
- Intended Community Outcome:
- Informed participation
- Lower emotional escalation
- Increased trust in process

Solution 3: Community Stability Coalition

Purpose: **Shift civic culture from factionalism to institutional stability.**

Key Actions:

- Unite business, faith, HOA, and nonprofit leaders
- Publish a 5-Year Stability Agenda
- Promote stability-based voting criteria
- Advocate consistent application of the Comprehensive Plan
- Intended Community Outcome:
- Lower political volatility
- Increased economic confidence
- Stronger community cohesion

V. Guiding Principle of This Initiative

Deltona Citizens United, Inc. affirms:

“Strong institutions outlast strong personalities.”

This initiative is not about opposing individuals. It is about strengthening the system that serves every resident.

VI. Implementation Commitment

DCU commits to:

Fact-based reporting

Statutory compliance

Nonpartisan civic engagement

Transparent funding practices

Civil discourse standards

VII. Long-Term Impact Goal

If implemented consistently over 3–5 years, this initiative aims to:

- ✓ Reduce legal exposure

- ✓ Stabilize executive leadership
- ✓ Increase public trust
- ✓ Improve economic predictability
- ✓ Transform Deltona's governance reputation

Part 2: Residents Concerns

Key Themes from Past Resident Feedback

Transparency and Trust

Residents repeatedly raise issues about how the City conducts meetings and public engagement — including being heard and meeting procedures respected — culminating in a civil lawsuit in 2026.

Infrastructure & Quality of Life

Concerns about flooding and stormwater management persist, with residents linking development patterns to worsening water issues.

Growth & Planning Tensions

The moratorium debate shows residents at odds about how and whether Deltona should manage new development in the context of infrastructure strain.

Accountability in Communications

Some community voices believe misuse of city-style communications erodes civic trust and may cross ethical or charter boundaries.

Part 3: How your office can help

1) Build Trust Through Institutional Stability

- Resident Concern Addressed:
- Governance process confusion
- Sunshine/meeting transparency lawsuits
- Feeling “locked out” of civic process

Commissioner Actions:

A.) Respect the Commission–Manager Boundary

Support the Manager’s operational responsibilities while reserving policy authority for the commission.

Legal Basis: Deltona City Charter (commission–manager framework) & Fla. Stat. § 166.021 (municipal home-rule powers).

Avoid micromanaging city staff or directly instructing department directors.

Goal: **Stabilize administration and reduce turnover.**

B.) Champion Sunshine Law Compliance

Work with the City Attorney and City Clerk to refine public meeting procedures.

Legal Basis: Fla. Stat. § 286.011 (Government in the Sunshine Law) & City Charter meeting rules.

Proactively confirm meeting notices and public access protocols.

Goal: Eliminate procedural uncertainties fueling lawsuits and distrust.

2) Strengthen Transparency & Resident Engagement

Resident Concern Addressed:

- Sunshine Law lawsuit
- Public feeling excluded from planning process
- Communications misuse concerns

Commissioner Actions:

A.) Partner on Advance Public Notices

Work with the city manager and clerk to ensure timely, clear meeting notices reach the public — including agendas, minutes, and budget materials.

Legal Basis:

Fla. Stat. § 286.011 (notice requirements)

City Charter § on public meetings

B.) Expand Live Streaming + Archives

Encourage enhanced digital accessibility of commission meetings, including archived video and searchable minutes.

Goal: **Demonstrate transparency and rebuild trust.**

C.) Co-Sponsor Public Participation Rules

Collaborate with state and county leaders to host civic communication workshops explaining:

- Sunshine Law basics
- Public records rights
- Meeting participation etiquette

Partners & Statutory Foundations:

Fla. Stat. § 119.01 (Public Records Law)

Volusia County communication offices

Local libraries or civic organizations

Goal: **Empower residents with the skills to participate constructively.**

3) Coordinate on Infrastructure & Land-Use Planning

- Resident Concern Addressed:
- Flooding and drainage issues
- Rapid growth stress on services
- Development moratorium divides

Commissioner Actions:

A.) Joint Planning with County/State Agencies

Invite Volusia County Public Works, SR 415/SR 44 corridor planners, and SE Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) to commission hearings on stormwater and drainage strategy.

Applicable Authorities:

Florida Community Planning Act: Fla. Stat. § 163.3161–163.3215

Local Stormwater Master Plan (City of Deltona)

County intergovernmental coordination agreements

Goal: **Align city and county flood infrastructure investments.**

B.) Comprehensive Plan Consistency

Ensure zoning decisions align with the City’s Comprehensive Plan and statutory notice requirements to reduce litigation risk.

Legal Authority:

Fla. Stat. § 163.3194 – Comprehensive plan consistency

City Charter planning provisions

Goal: **Predictability fosters resident confidence and business investment.**

C. Balanced Development Strategy

Work with planning staff and the manager to craft development guidelines that:

Tie approvals to infrastructure needs

Use data, not emotion, in growth decisions

Outcome: Mitigate fear of uncontrolled growth while avoiding legal challenges tied to moratoriums.

4) Increase Financial Transparency & Accountability

Resident Concern Addressed:

- Lack of trust regarding tax dollar use
- Calls for audits
- Concern about governance integrity

Commissioner Actions:

A.) Advocate for Timely Independent Audits

Support audit timetables in alignment with Fla. Stat. § 218.39 (annual audits).

Present audit findings in plain language to the public.

Goal: Build objective accounting credibility.

B.) Promote Budget Dashboards & Public Briefings

Work with the City Manager and Finance Director to:

- Publish easy-to-use online budget dashboards
- Host quarterly “Budget 101” town halls
- Outcome: Reduces rumors, increases accountability.

C.) Collaborate with County on Shared Services

Explore cost-sharing and service alignment with Volusia County (e.g., public safety, infrastructure maintenance) to optimize tax dollars.

Legal Basis:

Interlocal Agreement Act (Fla. Stat. § 163.01–163.24)

Goal: Deliver better services at lower cost.

5) Model Professional and Respectful Conduct

- Resident Concern Addressed:
- Personality-driven conflict
- Perceptions of misuse of communications
- Factionalism

Commissioner Actions:

A.) Adopt a Civility Pledge

Co-sponsor a formal civility pledge for all candidates and elected officials to sign — reinforcing respect, fact-based debate, and institutional focus.

B. Coordinate with City Manager on Public Messaging

Establish an agreed communication protocol with the city manager and communications officers so that:

Official city announcements are vetted

Political statements are clearly separated from administrative releases

Goal: Protect institutional credibility.

C. Build Alliances with County & State Leaders

Regularly meet with:

Volusia County Council members

Florida legislators (especially south Volusia delegation)

Regional planning councils (e.g., East Central Florida Regional Planning Council)

Purpose: Align local priorities with higher level support.

6) Establish Cross-Sector Citizen Engagement Structures

Resident Concern Addressed:

- Disconnect from civic process

- Lack of constructive resident influence on policy

Commissioner Actions:

A.) Reinstate or Enhance Citizen Advisory Boards

Reform or expand civic advisory committees that:

Focus on planning, budget, infrastructure, communications

Include residents with relevant expertise

Legal Basis:

City Charter provisions for boards and committees

Sunshine Law compliance requirements

B.) Partner with Academia & Nonprofits

Connect with local universities (UCF, Embry-Riddle) and civic organizations to bring technical expertise into briefings and workgroups.

Goal: Elevate evidence-based policymaking.

Summary: A Functional Leadership Playbook

A Deltona commissioner who adopts this approach will:

- Strategic Focus-Key Actions-Legal Compliance & Transparency-Strong Sunshine practices-upfront public participation

- Institutional Stability Respect commission–manager roles, protect administrative coherence
- Resident Trust & Engagement Civic education, accessible budgets, clear communication norms
- Infrastructure & Planning Align with county/state partners, use data in zoning
- Fiscal Accountability Support audits, transparent financial dashboards
- Professionalism & Respect Civility pledges, joint messaging protocols

Key Legal Frameworks & Citations

| Legal Framework | Statutory Source |
|---|---|
| Municipal Home Rule & Governance Powers | Fla. Stat. § 166.021 |
| Commission–Manager System | Deltona City Charter (governance structure) |
| Government in the Sunshine Law | Fla. Stat. § 286.011–.012 |
| Public Records | Fla. Stat. § 119.01–.15 |
| Role of Planning & Comprehensive Plan | Fla. Stat. § 163.3161–.3215 & § 163.3194 |
| Annual Audits | Fla. Stat. § 218.39 |
| Interlocal Cooperation | Fla. Stat. § 163.01–.24 |

Conclusion:

By aligning with the letter and spirit of applicable statutes, partnering constructively with the city manager, and engaging county/state leaders where appropriate, a Deltona commissioner can transform resident concerns into durable governance solutions — not just temporary conflicts.