

City Commission Floodplain Workshop

October 10, 2023

12:00 p.m.

ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT:

Adrian Petrilu, Mayor

Mark Grill, Vice Mayor, Commissioner, District 2

Chris Graus, Commissioner, District 1

Ward Friszolowski, Commissioner, District 3

ELECTED OFFICIALS ABSENT:

Chris Marone, Commissioner, District 4

STAFF PRESENT:

Matthew McConnell, Assistant City Attorney

Wayne Saunders, City Manager

Amber LaRowe, City Clerk

Julie Anderson, Building Division Manager

Mark Vasquez, Building Official and Floodplain Manager

Mayor Petrilu called the workshop to order at 12:00 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. DISCUSSION:

a. Floodplain Ordinance Discussion

Julie Anderson, Building Manager, said the City undergoes an audit every three years to evaluate and provide the Community Rating Score (CRS), a voluntary incentive program that provides discounts to the property owners of the City. Ms. Anderson explained that the discounts will not be seen by the property owners until about 2 years after the audit and rating is complete. A copy of the CRS Detailed Report is made a part of the record.

Ms. Anderson made a presentation to the Commission that included the following:

- Recent hurricanes
- Reasons to strengthen the City's floodplain ordinance.
- Sea level rise and consequences
- Current permit statistics
 - 19 permits for new FEMA conforming structures since July 1, 2021
 - 214 permits for FEMA renovations to non-conforming structures since July 1, 2021
- Adaptation strategies to address resiliency through floodplain regulations.
- Proposed technical amendments which include some of the following (grammatical and semantical changes are not mentioned below but can be seen on the presentation as made a part of the record):
 - Addition of Section R322.2.3 from the Florida Building Code
 - Add louvers as an additional breakaway wall option below the design flood elevation.
 - Addition of the floodplain administrator's responsibilities
 - Various modifications to Section 98-35 to include:
 - Lower the 50% rule to 49% to gain extra points on the City's CRS rating; Pinellas County has done this.
 - Removal of (3), (a), (b), and (c)

The Commission discussed this Section and commented heavily on the 50 percent "rule" being reduced to 49

percent, the effects, and what is covered by this rule.

Building Official Mark Vasquez commented on the removal of the four articles of the Section, explaining that these are not compliant with FEMA.

- Clarification to Section 98-122.4
- Additional definitions to Section 98-128.4
- Rewrite Section 98-131.1.1 to make it clear, add more verbiage, and remove Section 98-131.1.2 and combine it into this Section

Resiliency measures were discussed to include seawalls and fill. Seawall height, elevation, and compliance were mentioned. Concerns were conveyed about the cost to residents making these resiliency changes to their houses and the impact on the real estate market.

- Include R322.2.1 from the Florida Building Code residential elevation requirements.
- Addition to Section 98-121.3

Lisa Foster, Pinellas County Floodplain Manager, gave a presentation to the Commission that included the following:

- Sea level rise and storm surge assessment from 2021
- FEMA data versus the vulnerability assessment
- The new Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) update for Pinellas County 2021
- Elevation options

Mrs. Foster stated that there is a flood mitigation grant program that the County is looking to participate in. These are reimbursement grants by FEMA; every community must do it on their own, so the City would need to opt in.

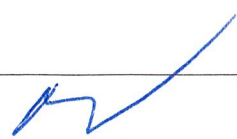
Exemptions from substantial improvements were discussed. Certain exemptions are to be determined by the floodplain administrator such as air conditioner replacement. Ms. Anderson stated that a warning letter is drafted to the property owner to ensure that they do not exceed the substantial improvement percentage and that they are aware of where they are in the process. If the City puts any exemptions into the substantial improvement, then it will not get the points in the CRS; Ms. Anderson will clarify this with the CRS auditor and ask what total number of points the City would get for this section of the scoring.

Ms. Anderson encouraged the Commission to think about the information provided and to submit questions to her and the Clerk. City Manager Saunders stated that staff will bring this forward as a discussion item at a regular Commission meeting and then move forward with the ordinance process.

Mayor Petrila adjourned the meeting at 2:13 p.m.

MINUTES APPROVED: OCTOBER 24, 2023


AMBER LAROWE
CITY CLERK


ADRIAN PETRILA
MAYOR