

City Commission Meeting
November 4, 2024
6:00 p.m.

ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT:

Adrian Petrilă, Mayor
Joe Moholland, Vice Mayor, Commissioner, District 4
Karen Marriott, Commissioner, District 1
Lisa Robinson, Commissioner, District 2
Betty Rzewnicki, Commissioner, District 3

STAFF PRESENT:

Ralf Brookes, Interim City Attorney
Frances Robustelli, City Manager
Amber LaRowe, City Clerk
Brandon Berry, Senior Planner
Andrew Laflin, Interim Finance Director
Camden Mills, City Engineer/Assistant Public Works Director
Adam Poirrier, Interim Assistant City Manager
Denise Sanderson, Community Development Director

Mayor Petrilă called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. PRESENTATIONS

a. Recognition of Employee of the Fourth Quarter

City Manager Robustelli recognized the following individuals who their peers nominated for Employee of the Fourth Quarter:

- Luke Jacobsen, Public Works Department
- Vanesa Sanchez, Finance Department
- Alexa Sawyer, Library
- Sam Bathon, Fire Department
- Patrick Hawk, Community Development Department
- Eileen Torres, Facilities Department

Mrs. Robustelli commented on Alexa Sawyer's nomination, acknowledging her contributions to the Library and her recent involvement in sharing resources during the storms. Alexa Sawyer's selection as Employee of the Fourth Quarter was well deserved.

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

City Clerk LaRowe addressed an email that she received from a resident regarding the October 22nd City Commission minutes, specifically discussion item g. What was captured in the minutes at 4:41:09 regarding permit fees may need to be modified at another meeting and documented during that meeting; these meeting minutes cannot be changed.

Vice Mayor Moholland requested item j of the Consent Agenda be moved for further discussion; this item was moved to item 6.e.

Motion: **Commissioner Marriott moved, Vice Mayor Moholland seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to approve the November 4, 2024, City Commission Agenda with one modification.**

3. HELENE AND MILTON RECOVERY EFFORTS – STANDING AGENDA ITEM

City Manager Robustelli introduced this item and explained that it would be a standing item on the agenda going forward, providing updates and communication on what the City is doing and any necessary direction from the Commission.

City Clerk LaRowe informed the Commission that members of the public are present tonight and have comments to make about this item.

Denise Sanderson, Interim Community Development Director, gave a presentation on various topics including:

- Substantial Damage Determinations Process
 - Residential and Commercial
 - Definitions
 - Documentation
- Plans Examination and Permit Fees
- Community Development Operations Update
- Other Items
 - Hurricane Related Webpages
 - Long Term Housing Recovery Resources
 - Small Business Recovery

A copy of the presentation is made a part of the record.

Discussion followed the presentation. Ms. Sanderson advised that the public should proceed with filling out the FEMA packet ahead of the substantial damage determination letter. She touched on the substantial damage letter. Ms. Sanderson corrected a statement at the last meeting, stating that permit fees are not included in the FEMA packet calculations.

The historic designation and historic districts were elaborated on by Ms. Sanderson.

Brandon Berry, Senior Planner, gave a presentation on substantial improvement and damage options and the FEMA lookback period. Topics covered included:

- Scenarios
 - No lookback period
 - One-year lookback period with current exceptions
 - One-year lookback period without current exceptions
- Financial impacts of each scenario
- Impacts of each scenario
- Guidance requested

A copy of the presentation is made a part of the record.

Discussion followed the presentation. Mr. Berry stated that the Florida Department of Emergency Management (FDEM) does not recommend a no-lookback period with exceptions.

Mr. Berry was asked to verify if utility lines are an exception or are expected to be included in the FEMA calculation and to provide more information on the number of open permits pre-storm.

The City Manager explained the City's position on Code Enforcement fines. Code Enforcement is to warn a resident who is found to be making repairs without a permit and allow them 3 business days to apply for a permit; courtesy notices are provided. If a contractor performs work in the City without a permit, they will receive an immediate stop work order and a \$100 fine; they are also reported to the State Licensing Board and are subject to a hearing in front of the Special Magistrate if they do not comply.

The Mayor opened public comment.

Resident Grant Izzi favored the no-lookback period and commented on the CRS points.

Resident and general contractor Wayne Cassity would like to see the City reduce or waive permit fees related to storm recovery. He also provided a copy of a letter from Treasure Island, which is included in the record.

Resident Sigue Webb read from an email she submitted earlier today, which discusses her opinions on the lookback period and permit fees; a copy of the email is included in the record.

Resident Kathy Garchow commented on the CRS rating and supported the 1-year look back with exceptions.

Robin Miller, Tampa Bay Beaches Chamber of Commerce President and CEO, touched on the webinar she attended today with Linda Chaney and other municipalities. She discussed the waiver of permit fees and requested that the City share information on the process with some identification showing what is related to commercial and what is not.

Resident Ed Schwind asked questions on information shared in the presentations and expressed his opinions on permit fees.

Resident and general contractor Sam Angelides favored the no-lookback period.

Mayor Petrila clarified that permit fees are not a revenue or profit-generating mechanism; the fees assist with covering the expenses incurred for providing the service to the public.

The Commission discussed waiving permit fees versus reducing them by a percentage.

The Mayor would prefer that the City waive permit fees for storm-related permits and keep the reserve to \$2M until January 14, 2025; the waiver of permit fees would be retroactive to October 1, 2024. The Commission agreed.

The Commission discussed the lookback period, permits, and the number of individuals each scenario would possibly affect.

Staff was directed to prepare two ordinances, one with no lookback period and one with a 1-year lookback period with exceptions, and present them to FDEM. They would also like the ordinances to include a retroactive date effective prior to Hurricane Helene.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Resident Dana Richardson asked specific questions regarding the permit to permit for the lookback period and her situation after the storm.

5. CONSENT

- a. Approval of October 22, 2024, City Commission Meeting Minutes
- b. Ratify Resolution 2024-23: Renewal of State of Local Emergency – Hurricane Milton
- c. Ratify Resolution 2024-24: Renewal of State of Local Emergency – Hurricane Helene
- d. Adopt Resolution 2024-25: Renewal of State of Local Emergency – Hurricane Milton
- e. Adopt Resolution 2024-26: Renewal of State of Local Emergency – Hurricane Helene
- f. Authorize the City Manager to enter into an amended agreement for the upgraded services package with iWorq Community Development Software in the amount of \$25,375.00 per year.
- g. Reappointment of Trustee to the General Pension Board
- h. Ratification of Appointment of the Fifth Trustee to the General Pension Board
- i. Authorize the City Manager to enter into an agreement with Baker and Taylor, Inc. for the amount of \$30,000 for the purchase of printed materials at the Library
- j. ~~Authorize the City Manager to enter into an agreement with Christmas Designers of Florida in the amount of \$76,621.00 for City-wide holiday decorations moved to item 6.e.~~

Motion: Vice Mayor Moholland moved, Commissioner Marriott seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to approve the November 4, 2024, City Commission Consent Agenda.

6. ORDINANCES

a. Public Hearing to Adopt Ordinance 2024-10: Change to Chapter 34 Emergency Management

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF ST. PETE BEACH, FLORIDA, AMENDING THE CODE OF ORDINANCES, CHAPTER 34 – CIVIL EMERGENCIES, ARTICLE II – EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, SECTION 34-31 – DEFINITIONS; SECTION 34-33 – LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY; SECTION 34-37 – EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE; SECTION 34-38 – DECLARATION OF STATE OF EMERGENCY; SECTION 34-40 – SUSPENSION OF LOCAL BUILDING REGULATIONS; SECTION 34-41 – TERMINATION OF STATE OF EMERGENCY; SECTION 34-42 – COMMISSION AUTHORITY LIMITATIONS; SECTION 34-44 – CONFLICTS; SECTION 34-45 – AUTHORITY IN EVACUATION ZONES; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; CONFLICTS; SEVERABILITY; CORRECTION OF SCRIVENER’S ERROR; PUBLICATION; AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Motion: Commissioner Marriott moved, Vice Mayor Moholland seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to adopt Ordinance 2024-10.

b. First Reading of Ordinance 2024-12: FY 2024 Budget Amendment #1

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF ST. PETE BEACH, FLORIDA PROVIDING FOR AN AMENDMENT TO THE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024 BY INCREASING APPROPRIATIONS FOR EXPENDITURE IN THE GENERAL FUND, RECLAIMED WATER FUND, AND ARPA FUND; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; CONFLICTS; SEVERABILITY; CORRECTION OF SCRIVENER’S ERROR; PUBLICATION; AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Andrew Laflin, Interim Finance Director, briefed the Commission on the reasons for this budget amendment. He reviewed the attachments outlining the specific funds for appropriations.

Motion: Vice Mayor Moholland moved, Commissioner Marriott seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to approve the first reading of Ordinance 2024-12.

c. Public Hearing to Adopt Emergency Ordinance 2024-11: Permitting Elevation of Nonconforming Residential Structures

AN EMERGENCY ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF ST. PETE BEACH, FLORIDA AMENDING FOR SIXTY DAYS THE CITY'S LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE DIVISION 3 – ADMINISTRATION OF THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE, SECTION 3.10 – VESTED RIGHTS AND NONCONFORMITIES; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; CONFLICTS; SEVERABILITY; CORRECTION OF SCRIVENER'S ERROR; CONSTRUCTION; PUBLICATION; AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Based on the last two discussions, Mr. Berry reviewed the changes made to this Ordinance. This Ordinance provides for the conversion of the existing living standard of the structure to parking, storage, and access as allowed for the property's flood zone. Reconstruction of the residing level(s) of the structure above in the same footprint and floor height, provided that the overall height of the structure does not exceed the height allowable for the zoning district and allows for minimal staircase encroachment into the front yard when the applicant demonstrates a need.

Resident Beth Cole favored adopting this Ordinance and looks forward to researching it for her home.

Motion: Commissioner Marriott moved, Vice Mayor Moholland seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to adopt Ordinance 2024-11.

d. Public Hearing to Adopt Ordinance 2024-14: Amending Emergency Ordinance 2024-09 to Address Florida Building Code Equipment Elevation Requirements

AN EMERGENCY ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF ST. PETE BEACH, FLORIDA AMENDING ORDINANCE 2024-09 PERTAINING TO DIVISION 6 – SUPPLEMENTAL REGULATIONS, SECTION 6.14. – ENCROACHMENT OF CERTAIN SPECIFIED ANCILLARY RESIDENTIAL EQUIPMENT INTO REQUIRED YARDS; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; CONFLICTS; SEVERABILITY; CORRECTION OF SCRIVENER'S ERROR; CONSTRUCTION; PUBLICATION; AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Mr. Berry explained that on October 23rd, the Pinellas County Construction Licensing Board (PCCLB) ruled that equipment damaged by flood must be elevated above the floodplain when replaced, regardless of whether the home has sustained substantial damage. This Ordinance makes modifications to allow for in-place or marginally offset elevation of equipment to expedite recovery and habitation efforts.

Motion: Commissioner Marriott moved, Vice Mayor Moholland seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to adopt Ordinance 2024-14.

e. Authorize the City Manager to enter into an agreement with Christmas Designers of Florida in the amount of \$76,621.00 for City-wide holiday decorations moved from Consent

Vice Mayor Moholland expressed hesitation in approving this and opined the funds might be better utilized towards disaster recovery.

Commissioner Robinson questioned whether the vendor would be amenable to reducing the amount or if the City could work with the vendor to remove some decorations.

Resident Travis Irwin favored keeping the decorations and lights to help give the City some sense of normalcy.

Motion: Commissioner Rzewnicki moved, Commissioner Marriott seconded, and the motion carried

3-2 to authorize the City Manager to enter into an agreement with Christmas Designers of Florida in the amount of \$76,621.00 for City-wide holiday decorations. Vice Mayor Moholland and Commissioner Robinson voted no.

7. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

None.

8. CITY CLERK, CITY MANAGER, CITY ATTORNEY, AND CITY COMMISSION REPORTS

Amber LaRowe, City Clerk – announced that the qualification period for District 2 and District 4 opened today at noon and closes on Friday, November 15th at noon. She reminded the Commission and the public that the City Hall Commission Chambers is a voting location for tomorrow's 5th election, from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. If you usually vote at Warren Webster, please continue to use that as your voting location.

She mentioned that the 3rd quarter lobbyist reporting information was placed on the dais for the Commissioners' information.

Mrs. LaRowe discussed a beach steward who wishes to attend virtually. She reminded the Commission of a discussion during the June 25th meeting in which a Planning Board member was denied attendance virtually. She prefers that board members do not attend virtually or that the City create a policy or standard to give her the authority to grant such attendance.

Motion: **Commissioner Rzewnicki moved, Commissioner Robinson seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to extend the City Commission meeting [to 10:05 p.m.].**

Mrs. LaRowe stated that board members have a chance to review the meeting calendar for the next year before adoption and encouraged them to request adjustments before adoption so that schedules do not conflict with meetings. She understands this beach steward is not unavailable due to extenuating circumstances [as identified in Attorney General Opinions as a 'reason' for virtual attendance]. The Commission agreed with the City Clerk and gave her the authority to deny virtual attendance unless emergency circumstances are found for this board member.

Frances Robustelli, City Manager -- mentioned that she would like to reschedule the half-day priority work session that was canceled due to the hurricanes; the City Clerk will reach out to schedule it.

She announced that the Community Center pool will reopen tomorrow. It will be open as a non-heated lap pool from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Mrs. Robustelli touched on the \$2M Job Growth Grant from the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (FDEO) awarded to the City in October 2023 for master pump station 1. The FDEO has expressed concerns to the City about the lack of progress on this project and has removed their funding. Staff are working with the FDEO to submit documents showing what the City has done to date; she will keep the Commission apprised of this situation.

Vice Mayor Moholland -- thanked Camden Mills, Denise Sanderson, and Luke Curtis for responding to his emails and questions.

Mr. Moholland mentioned the National Guard and debris collection. There was an issue with debris pickup in Pass-A-Grille due to a lack of flaggers. Flaggers are on their way, and he has been told that debris removal should begin shortly in the District.

He shared that more information would come regarding the Pass-A-Grille Beach walkovers and replacement garbage cans.

Vice Mayor Moholland announced the Beach Stewardship Committee Meeting is next week, November 13th, at 9:00 a.m.

Commissioner Rzewnicki – announced two community association meetings: Belle Vista will be on November 7th at 6:30 p.m., and the Don CeSar Property Owner's Corporation (DCPOC) will have their meeting on November 13th at 6:00 p.m. in the Commission Chambers.

She thanked all the volunteers who had come out to help remove the debris from the beaches.

Commissioner Robinson – commented on the debris removal in District 2.

She will speak with residents at the Library on November 13th from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Commissioner Marriott – enjoyed visiting the Sunday Market on Corey Avenue this weekend.

She mentioned that the Hurricane Recovery Event at the Library on Thursday begins at 10:00 a.m., and she plans to attend.

Mayor Petrila -- reiterated that voting will be at the City Hall Commission Chambers instead of the Community Center tomorrow.

He announced the Town Hall on Wednesday from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. and encouraged the public to submit questions by filling out the form on the City's website no later than 3:00 p.m. tomorrow. He also mentioned the Library Hurricane event on Thursday.

Mayor Petrila adjourned the meeting at 10:06 p.m.

MINUTES APPROVED: NOVEMBER 19, 2024



AMBER LAROWE
CITY CLERK



ADRIAN PETRILA
MAYOR