

City Commission Meeting
December 3, 2024
6:00 p.m.

ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT:

Adrian Petrila, 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:

Becky Vose, Interim City Attorney

Frances Robustelli, City Manager

Amber LaRowe, City Clerk

Mandy Edmunds, Interim Parks and Recreation Director

Denise Sanderson, Interim Community Development Director

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

1. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Commissioner Robinson requested the addition of the following discussion items with possible action:

- After the fact permits with or without penalties
- Adding a force majeure clause “act of God” to all contracts
- Freebee

City Manager Frances Robustelli removed item 4.f. from the Agenda; it does not require Commission approval because it is conducted on private property without road closures.

Commissioner Rzewnicki requested that item 4.e. be moved to action items for further discussion, and she added a discussion item on resiliency.

Motion: Commissioner Marriott moved, Commissioner Rzewnicki seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to approve the [December 3, 2024, City Commission Agenda] with amendments.

2. HELENE AND MILTON RECOVERY EFFORTS – STANDING AGENDA ITEM

Denise Sanderson, Interim Community Development Director, gave a presentation to the Commission. Topics covered in the presentation included:

- Substantial damage determinations
- Policy recommendation & exploration of new policy
 - Exploring policy on a pathway to permit for full repair while waiting for the substantial damage determination
 - The consensus of the Commission was to accommodate the policy recommendation.
 - Exploring policy to accommodate repair work while the permit is in review
- New substantial improvement/substantial damage package – coming soon
 - Will include sample document with tips/tricks
- Permit status update
- Permit intake hours
 - New hours effective 12/09/2024: 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Monday through Friday

- Staffing update by job type and activity
- Minimal repair permits
 - 12 permits issued
 - Discussed primary challenges
- Historic preservation applications
 - 33 applications, with 10 approved by the Historic Preservation Board on 11/19/2024 and 11 will be presented to the Board on 12/12/2024
- Miscellaneous updates
 - Final pass of private residential storm debris pickup starts 12/5/2024 & the last day is 12/23/2024
 - Commercial properties to remove debris by 12/23/2024
 - Code Enforcement issuing notice of violations starting 12/4/2024
 - Street sign repairs and replacements are underway
 - Hurricane related webpages
 - Long-term housing recovery resources
 - Small business recovery

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

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

John Kurzman, a resident, commented on his flood insurance policy and continued to express his opinions and understandings of insurance companies, FEMA regulations, substantial inspections, etc.

Deborah Schechner, a resident, displayed a picture of the mattress near her property that she sent to Code Enforcement. She expressed concerns about donated funds, FEMA trailers, and debris pickup.

Gary V., a resident, commented on substantial determination letters and the expected timeframe for delivery, an example of the letter being distributed, certified mail being forwarded, no appeal form, how long the appeal process will take, and elevation certificates.

John Henry, a resident, thanked the Commission for their hard work. He mentioned the debris removal process from commercial property (he lives in a condo), how that works, and a problem with others dumping their debris in the condo's piles.

4. CONSENT

- a. November 19, 2024, and November 25, 2024, City Commission Meeting Minutes
- b. Proclamations - Renewal State of Local Emergency – Hurricane Helene Ratify Extension 9 and Approval of Extension 10
- c. Proclamations - Ratification of Renewal State of Local Emergency - Hurricane Milton Extensions 7 and 8
- d. Purchase Broyhill Load and Pack Trash Truck
- e. ~~Pass A-Grille Community Association Bonfire Event Permit~~ moved to action item b
- f. ~~5000 Gulf Special Event Permit~~ removed

Motion: Vice Mayor Moholland moved, Commissioner Marriott seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to approve the December 3, 2024, City Commission Consent Agenda.

5. ACTION ITEMS

a. Recovery Task Force Committee

City Clerk LaRowe mentioned the notice on the City's website soliciting applicants from the business community or business owners in the City of St. Pete Beach and for a resident who is also part of an environmental/wildlife advocacy group. The applications received are part of the agenda packet.

Discussion ensued on the Task Force and the applications received. The City Clerk was asked to readvertise this to solicit applicants who own a business in the City and anyone (who does not have to be a resident) who is part of a wildlife/environmental advocacy group that volunteers there. Applications will need to be received by December 31st.

It was mentioned that the Task Force is expected to sunset on or before June 1, 2025.

This item will come before the Commission on January 14, 2025.

b. Pass-A-Grille Community Association Bonfire Event Permit (moved from Consent)

Commissioner Rzewnicki requested information on applicable insurance and asked if the applicant is expected to pay for the needed fire and EMS services.

Mandy Edmunds, Interim Parks and Recreation Director, stated that the information shared in the agenda and the two documents placed on the dais (also made a part of the record) is the same information that had been provided to the Commission years prior when this event was approved. No insurance has been provided, and the applicant is not paying for fire and EMS services.

She informed the Commission that she and other staff are working to improve the City's special event process.

Motion: Vice Mayor Moholland moved, Commissioner Rzewnicki seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to approve the Pass-A-Grille Association Bonfire Event Permit.

6. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

a. Aging Seawalls and New Dunes

Vice Mayor Moholland would like to see the City take small steps toward seawall repairs to assist with resiliency efforts. He discussed creating a nexus between properties permitted to do extensive renovation work and a requirement to bring their seawall to Code. Mr. Moholland mentioned Florida Statutes that may limit the City's ability to coordinate a renovation permit with a seawall permit.

Commissioner Rzewnicki mentioned that Code Enforcement is an option for property owners affected by a neighboring property's defective seawall. She expressed several opinions regarding the Vice Mayor's suggestion.

Mayor Petrila opined that it is not unreasonable to require a property owner who is making substantial improvements to address their seawall then.

Commissioners Robinson and Marriott agreed it is worth looking into; Commissioner Marriott suggested the City propose incentives for addressing the seawall in coordination with improvement permits (such as reduced permit fees, no permit fees, etc.).

Vice Mayor Moholland spoke about the new dunes along the City's beaches. He wants to see Code Enforcement

issue a no-warning policy enforcing the prohibition of walking on the dunes. He requested the City Attorney prepare an ordinance linking Code Enforcement violations with the Land Development Code section prohibiting walking on dunes. Mr. Moholland suggested that the dunes be roped off with an environmentally friendly rope and pole fence on the seaward side and the north and south sides; this suggestion would also be presented to the Beach Stewardship Committee before being installed.

The Commission agreed with Mr. Moholland's suggestions. Mayor Petrila suggested that the City may need to consider creating a beach task force to focus on beach violations and create a relationship to educate beachgoers about the rules and expectations.

Vice Mayor Moholland addressed the expected shortage of sea grapes and sea oat sprouts and requested that the City Manager work with the County to ensure the City receives them in the spring.

b. After the Fact Permit with/without Penalties (added)

Commissioner Robinson mentioned what other municipalities are doing to get their residents back into their homes. She opined that allowing residents to perform work on their homes and then receive a permit after the fact will assist with speeding up the process for some of the more straightforward repairs.

This topic was discussed, and there was a consensus that the current minimal repair process accomplishes what was mentioned. Ms. Sanderson asked Commissioner Robinson for copies of other municipalities' actions to see if the City can learn from them.

c. Adding a Force Majeure Clause "Act of God" to Contracts Going Forward (added)

Commissioner Robinson requested legal to review the City's current contracts to ensure that an appropriate and enforceable force majeure clause is inserted.

d. Freebee (added)

Commissioner Robinson commented on the Freebee service operating when business is low and fewer residents are present. She opined that the funds to deploy this service could be better utilized for disaster recovery. City Manager Robustelli acknowledged what was said and informed the Commission that a representative from Freebee will attend the January 14, 2025, City Commission meeting.

e. Resiliency & Mitigation Funds for Resiliency (added)

Commissioner Rzewnicki commented on the necessary resiliency efforts in the City and opined that this should be a top priority. She questioned if the City should consider hiring a full-time staff member to search for available funds to improve resiliency.

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

Frances Robustelli, City Manager – stated that the Christmas Tree is up at Horan Park in time for the tree-lighting ceremony and that holiday lights are being installed around the City.

She reminded everyone of the priority work session this Saturday, December 7th, at 1:00 p.m.

Vice Mayor Moholland— announced the "Light up the Museum" event on 10th Avenue on December 8th starting at 6:00 p.m.

He stated that the sand is being removed and should be complete within the next few weeks.

Mr. Moholland said Duke Energy is working on the Pass-A-Grille street light repair/installation; no timeline has been established.

He is looking forward to the CIP discussion as part of the priority work session on Saturday.

Commissioner Rzewnicki – is attending the Florida League of Cities legislative conference this week.

Commissioner Marriott – stated that residents in her District are slowly returning and living in campers and trailers on their property while making repairs.

She commented on the success of the Sunday Market.

Mayor Petrila – announced the Christmas Tree Lighting ceremony on Friday at Horan Park with a movie showing after that.

Mayor Petrila adjourned the meeting at 9:27 p.m.

MINUTES APPROVED: DECEMBER 10, 2024



AMBER LAROWE
CITY CLERK



ADRIAN PETRILA
MAYOR