City Commission Meeting
February 25, 2025
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:
Ralf Brookes, Interim City Attorney
Frances Robustelli, City Manager
Amber LaRowe, City Clerk
Jim Kilpatrick, Fire Chief
Adam Poirrier, Interim Assistant City Manager
Jill Sassone, Human Resources Director

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

1. PRESENTATIONS

a. **Discussion and Listening Session on Proposed Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan's Land Use Designations for the Town Center (TC-1 & TC-2) and Large Resort (LR) Area, led by Calvin, Giordano, and Associations (CGA)**

Luis Serna of CGA and Eric Liff of Lambert Advisory (via Zoom) led a listening session with the City Commission following the presentation. Topics in the presentation, as published in the agenda, included:

- Project Scope
- Each phase (4) of the project scope and what that entails
- Deliverables
- Community Engagement
  - Approach
- Lambert Advisory's Role
- Process and Timing
- Comments and Insights

A comment session followed with each elected official providing their thoughts, concerns, and expectations. These comments included:

- A mailed survey coupled with an online survey for those who may not be here during the public outreach period – ensuring that those who do not have an online presence can participate.
- Intensity and density focus
- Outreach methods and virtual participation
- Grant programs

Mr. Serna stated that it is expected to have a two to three-month community engagement and feedback period.

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Vice Mayor Moholland requested that consent item f. be removed for further discussion; it will now be action item c.

Commissioner Robinson requested the addition of the following discussion items: sod bond, the status of the forensic audit, and accountability for Tidal Basin; these will be discussion items b., c., and d. respectively.

Motion: **Vice Mayor Moholland moved, Commissioner Robinson seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to approve the amended February 25, 2025, City Commission Meeting Agenda.**

3. HELENE AND MILTON RECOVERY EFFORTS – STANDING AGENDA ITEM

Frances Robustelli, City Manager, introduced Laura Canary, the new Community Development Director who started yesterday.

City Manager Robustelli reviewed the presentation as included in the agenda. Topics included:

- Permit Processing
    - Preferred vs. Alternate Approach
- Permit Status
    - 2,922 applications submitted
    - 75 building inspections averaged daily
- Substantial and Non-Substantial Damage Determinations
    - 2,883 assessments completed (99%)
- 515 appeals submitted with no denials
- The Elevate Florida portal has been launched
- Volunteer program overview

A brief question-and-answer session followed. City Manager Robustelli will bring back information about closing permits and why the actual cash value (ACV) data provided in the information given to the City by Tidal Basin cannot be used in correlation with the substantial improvement/damage assessment and determination.

Mrs. Robustelli will present the Commission with a staffing plan using the current state-funded staff in Community Development.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Resident Lauren Mones commented on the 5G tower that was recently installed in Hurley Park. She expressed her displeasure with the location and opinions on the health consequences of these towers. Ms. Mones provided the City Clerk with a list of petition signatures opposing the 5G tower; this is part of the record.

Attorney Ralf Brookes discussed the State law that preempts local governments from allowing these towers in the City's right-of-way and cannot charge a fee. The city can do a few things and discuss them with the tower companies, such as design, color, existing poles, and limiting pole height to those in the Statute. They were asked to move their towers voluntarily, but those requests were rejected. He will conduct further reviews and provide feedback to the Commission.

Resident Ronald Vigneault commented on the 5G tower that was recently installed in Hurley Park.

Resident Reza Razavi commented on the 5G tower located in Pass-A-Grille.

Resident Tiffany Margaritondo mentioned her hardships with the City regarding the substantial damage process and permitting.

Resident Nancy Lurker commented on the 5G tower in Pass-A-Grille and is looking for ways for the residents to partner with the City to lobby the State Legislature about the current Statute that preempts local municipalities.

Resident Vincent Tormenia echoed other residents' concerns about the existing 5G towers. He commented on an ethics complaint to Ashley Moody's Office and thanked the Commission for their hard work during the hurricanes.

Mayor Petrila requested an update on infrastructure maintenance plans before the next storm season at the next City Commission meeting.

Resident Mia Hartley commented on the last meeting's discussion of the noise ordinance and shared her opinions on how we got there.

Resident Rich Lorenzen thanked City staff for their hard work and thanked the Vice Mayor for removing the demolition of Fire Station 22 from the Consent Agenda for further discussion. He shared his opinions on various behaviors and acts of the elected officials.

Resident Jill Mederos shared her roadblocks in the permitting process.

Resident John Kurzman shared information regarding distancing and height for 5G towers. He expressed comments regarding the leaking of reclaimed water and non-repair issues. He announced the Beach Stewardship meeting tomorrow morning in the Chambers and shared comments regarding the beach ordinance.

Resident Grant Izzi commented on the permitting process and opined expedited permits are a way to get some property owners into their homes. He shared a picture of drywall to demonstrate how a photo/video inspection would be helpful.

Business Owner Lee Pons commented on the noise ordinance and decibel versus audible to allow for enforcement.

5. CONSENT

a. Approval of the February 11, 2025, City Commission Meeting Minutes
b. Proclamations - Renewal State of Local Emergency - Hurricane Helene Approval of Extensions 22 and 23
c. Proclamations – Renewal State of Local Emergency – Hurricane Milton Ratify Extension 20 and Approval of Extension 21
d. Move to approve the purchase of an E350 utility truck from Walker Ford in the amount of $66,873.50 for the Public Services Facilities Division and authorize the City Manager to execute the agreement.
e. Approval of Preliminary Plat No. 24098: 3511 Gulf Boulevard
f. ~~Adopt Resolution 2025-03: Demolition of Fire Station 22~~ – *moved to Action Items*
g. Motion to approve the contract with PAW in the amount of $35,835.00 for the demolition of Fire Station 22 and authorize the City Manager to execute the same.

Motion: Vice Mayor Moholland moved, Commissioner Marriott seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to approve the February 25, 2025, City Commission Consent Agenda.

6. Action Items

a. Adopt Resolution 2025-02: Pay Compression Adjustments

b. Adopt Resolution 2025-04: Amendment to the Personnel Rules and Regulations

Jill Sassone, Human Resources Director, presented resolutions 2025-02 and 2025-04 together. Ms. Sassone identified the reasons for both resolutions to help with the pay compression of current employees and to assist with fair and consistent hiring practices for both internal and external candidates.

Motion: Commissioner Marriott moved, Commissioner Rzewnicki seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to adopt Resolution 2025-02.

Motion: Vice Mayor Moholland moved, Commissioner Marriott seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to adopt Resolution 2025-04.

c. Authorize the City Manager to enter into an agreement with Dixon Resources Unlimited in the amount of $99,000.00 to conduct a Comprehensive Parking Management Study

Assistant City Manager Poirrier stated that in January 2025, a request for proposals was issued for the Comprehensive Parking Management Study. The review committee chose Dixon Parking Management as the winning proposal in the review process. The Comprehensive Parking Management Study will examine the residential permit parking program, number of spaces, types of spaces, rates, and viability of increasing parking within the City of St. Pete Beach. The study will be completed in phases by the end of June 2025.

Mayor Petrila would like to know about the deliverables and how they will result in a possible return on investment.

Motion: Vice Mayor Moholland moved, Commissioner Marriott seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to authorize the City Manager to enter into an agreement in the amount of $99,000 with Dixon Parking Management to conduct a Parking Study to look at residential permit parking, number of spaces, types of spaces, rates and viability of increasing existing City-wide parking.

d. Adopt Resolution 2025-03: Demolition of Fire Station 22 (*moved from the Consent Agenda*)

Vice Mayor Moholland would like more information on the feasibility of building on top of the current structure, which could reduce the cost of $12M to construct a new fire station.

Fire Chief Kilpatrick informed the Commission that as an essential facility, the Fire Station is held to the highest standards of the Building Code and must be back in service immediately following a disaster. He addressed concerns with the existing structure, which does not meet the current Code. Therefore, the current structure would have to be brought up to the current Building Code and then built on top of it.

Motion: Commissioner Rzewnicki moved, Commissioner Marriott seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to adopt Resolution 2025-03.

7. Items for Discussion

a. Social Media Policy

Mayor Petrila shared some questions he has received about elected officials' use of social media. He stated that some residents have expressed concerns with Commissioner Rzewnicki's role as a moderator on NextDoor.

Commissioner Rzewnicki clarified that she is considered a "lead" on NextDoor, who established the Don CeSar Place neighborhood on the Platform. In that position, the lead receives notification regarding derogatory posts and answers a survey about that post to NextDoor. She stated that she has not removed any posts from NextDoor and is hardly on the platform. Mrs. Rzewnicki shared her opinions on the harmful use of NextDoor.

Mayor Petrila reviewed NextDoor guidelines that outline what a lead is, which is why this discussion was brought up tonight. He requested the City Attorney review the appropriateness of an elected official being a lead on social media.

Attorney Brookes touched on a recent policy he drafted for Kenneth City, reading some key takeaways. He suggested that the elected officials use a disclaimer identifying that the views expressed are personal and unrelated to their role with the City.

Commissioner Rzewnicki would like the City Attorney to work on writing a social media policy for the City.

Mayor Petrila requested that the City Manager review the current website with staff to determine what organizations should be mentioned and share guidelines/recommendations on how non-city groups are placed on the City's website. The Commission agreed.

Resident Ruta Hance agreed that the City needs a social media policy. She read from the Statute regarding free speech and shared a post made by a Commissioner. Ms. Hance opined that an ordinance should be drafted to prohibit an elected official from being a moderator or lead on social media.

Resident Grant Izzi shared his opinions on elected officials using their official titles on their social media accounts. He opined that an ethical complaint process should coincide with the policy when someone feels that it is being violated.

b. Sod Bond (*added*)

Commissioner Robinson said that the sod bond is outlined in the City Code and can be changed.

The City Manager recommended that the Commission allow staff to identify the ins and outs and whys of this Code at the next meeting. Mayor Petrila requested that an emergency ordinance be prepared regarding this Code and that fees be paused for a certain period. This ordinance can be retroactive to the storm date so that the City can issue refunds, and it should only be confined to demolition due to the storm.

c. Status of Forensic Audit (*added*)

Attorney Brookes cannot comment at this time.

d. Accountability for Tidal Basin (*added*)

Commissioner Robinson requested information about how Tidal Basin is accountable to the community.

Attorney Brookes will share some information from Tidal Basin's contract with the City Manager for her meeting with State Representative Chaney this week.

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

Amber LaRowe, City Clerk, reminded everyone that the next Commission Meeting is on Monday, March 10th, at 6:00 p.m. The District 2 Commissioner Election will be held here, in the Commission Chambers, on March 11th from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Frances Robustelli, City Manager, announced Adam Poirrier's appointment as Interim Assistant City Manager until the end of the year. She announced that the new Finance Director, Devon Schmidt, will be introduced at the next City Commission meeting; her first day is March 3rd.

City Manager Robustelli is working with the Montessori School on an MOU to contribute to installing a playground at Hurley Park. The MOU will be presented to the Commission at an upcoming meeting.

Federal Lobbyist services will be presented on March 10th for Commission approval for the firm selected.

Attorney Ralf Brookes announced the request for an executive session on Monday, March 10th, at 4:30 p.m. in these Chambers per Section 286.011(8)(a) Florida Statutes. The executive session concerns Red, White & Booze, LLC, a Florida limited liability company, Charles L. Collom and Helen Collom v. City of St. Pete Beach, Florida, Middle District of Florida, Tampa Division, Federal Case No. 8:23-cv-2704-KKM-AAS.

Vice Mayor Moholland clarified his comments from the last meeting regarding endless meetings, etc., which were not directed at current City staff.

Commissioner Rzewnicki thanked the volunteers for assisting in disaster recovery. She stated that the Don CeSar Place Property Owners Corporation had its annual meeting on 2/24 and announced its 100th anniversary.

Commissioner Robinson looks forward to working with the new Community Development Director and advancing the volunteer program.

Commissioner Marriott has been talking with contractors and builders working in the City to understand how the permitting process works for them. She has also compiled information/data to share with the City Manager and the new Community Development Director. She encouraged everyone to patronize local businesses.

Mayor Petrila announced the Recovery Task Force meeting on 3/5 at 8:30 a.m. in Chambers. The Mayor mentioned the two letters from Pinellas County mayors sent to the White House regarding FEMA and dune restoration.

Mayor Petrila adjourned the meeting at 9:17 p.m.

MINUTES APPROVED: MARCH 10, 2025

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AMBER LAROWE
CITY CLERK

ADRIAN PETRILA
MAYOR