

## PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES

September 15, 2025 4:00PM

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** David Hubbard, Chair  
Sam Angelides, Jr., Vice Chair  
Terri Grocott, Member  
Cindy Perry, Member  
Shawn Rae, Member

**STAFF PRESENT:** Brandon Berry, Senior Planner  
Ralf Brookes, City Attorney  
Ginny Bodkin, Deputy City Clerk  
Kristin Coman, Senior Planner

Chair Hubbard called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Approval of the Agenda –

Member Grocott requested to add an update on the Corey Landings project. Member Perry requested an update on the Dolphin Village CVS.

**Motion: Member Rae moved, and Vice Chair Angelides seconded, to approve the September 15, 2025 agenda as amended; the motion carried unanimously.**

2. Audience Comments – There were no comments.

3. Approval of Minutes – August 18, 2025 meeting minutes.

**Motion: Member Grocott moved, and Member Perry seconded, to approve the August 18, 2025 minutes as presented; the motion carried unanimously.**

4. Action Items – None.

5. Discussion Items

a. Density pool unit valuation study

Senior Planner Brandon Berry introduced the revised scope of the Density Pool Unit Valuation Study, prepared by the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council (TBRPC). A newer version, received September 9th, was provided to members at the meeting and is part of the record. The city currently has four density pools subject to quasi-judicial conditional use permit (CUP) review. Recent cases include the Miramar project, approved in January with density allocation beyond the base 50 units/acre, up to 70 units/acre, and the Windward Pass project, which was denied by the City Commission but underwent the same review process.

Density pools were activated approximately five years ago through the Land Development Code (LDC), which outlined potential public benefits that may be considered in exchange for additional density. Examples include beach access, enhanced landscaping, green building standards, and public art integration.

Currently, there is no established valuation range for density pool units, making benefit assessments inconsistent across projects. The study scope would include two phases - Phase 1 will be a research study comparing other communities with density pools or density bonuses to establish a valuation range for use as a non-binding reference in decision-making. A draft report is expected for review at the next Planning Board meeting. Phase 2 will include a more robust real estate analysis and net fiscal impact evaluation, to be conducted by TBRPC as part of the city's membership benefits.

Board discussion followed. One member expressed concern that CUP-related economic impact analyses are typically applicant-provided and do not address net fiscal impact. Staff confirmed Phase 2 will address this through TBRPC's evaluations. Questions were raised regarding the purpose of establishing a per-unit value. Staff clarified that the valuation would serve only as an anchor or guideline, not as a codified requirement, and would allow consistent weighing of proposed public benefits. Concerns included the possibility of creating a perception of "pay-for-play," potential fluctuation in valuation if pool capacity changes, and whether establishing values could expose the city to risk. Staff emphasized that the study is non-binding and purely for reference. Questions regarding funding were raised. Staff confirmed that the Phase 1 research study will be a one-time \$5,000 expense, a future real estate valuation would also be a one-time cost, and ongoing fiscal impact analyses are included in the city's TBRPC membership and will not incur additional costs.

No formal action was taken. Staff will provide draft results of the Phase 1 study for Planning Board review at the next meeting.

b. Front yard stair encroachment for elevated-in-place homes

Mr. Berry explained that the prior week, the Commission requested staff to review front yard stair setback requirements for homes being elevated in place or converted above an at-grade living level. This doesn't apply to new redevelopment from the ground up.

Prior to this year, the City averaged one elevation/conversion permit annually. Since January 1st, 35 requests have been received, with more anticipated. Under the current LDC (amended late 2024), all additions (including stairs) must meet district setbacks. Homes elevated in place may remain at existing non-conforming setbacks, but stairs must comply with the 17-foot open stair setback, even when the house itself does not. Many homeowners seeking to add front stairs must pursue variances, even when stairs align with the existing building footprint.

As part of his presentation, Mr. Berry reviewed some proposed standards for consideration (with examples), including allowing open stairs to encroach to the existing non-conforming front setback of a home elevated in place, establishing a minimum front setback (e.g., 10 feet) for stairs, allowing modest jogs or landings where height requires longer runs, limiting landing width to prevent out-of-

scale massing, while still meeting Florida Building Code minimums, prohibiting independent stair coverings (but roof overhangs from the primary structure may cover stairs) and considering whether secondary exterior front stairs should be permitted when interior access is already provided.

Other proposed code updates included allowing for in-place elevation of non-conforming ancillary equipment (AC units, generators) within side setbacks, increasing allowable shed size from 80 sq. ft. to 120 sq. ft. (height limited to 8 ft)., and allowing a one-time exemption for pool cages, gazebos, and deck covers to remain non-conforming when the principal home is elevated or substantially improved.

Board discussion followed. General support was expressed for allowing stairs to align with existing non-conforming front setbacks, particularly where front entries would otherwise lack access. Several members emphasized the importance of controlling massing of stair structures to avoid bulky or out-of-character designs. Concerns were raised about parking impacts if stair placement reduced driveway capacity. Questions were asked about Florida Building Code requirements (e.g., breakaway stairs in flood zones, landing sizes, door width requirements). Staff confirmed building code compliance would still apply. Some members expressed concern about allowing non-conforming structures (gazebos and deck covers) to remain, citing visual encroachment on neighboring properties. Others felt one-time exemptions were reasonable given the cost of compliance. Opinions were mixed regarding sheds - some opposed larger sheds due to storm debris risks; others supported the change, noting small lot sizes and limited storage in the community. Members generally supported allowing generators and HVAC equipment to be elevated in place, citing cost and feasibility concerns. Members discussed whether a second front stair should be allowed when interior stairs exist. Some supported this for aesthetic, functional, and safety (fire access) reasons. Some members suggested that unusually shaped lots may justify flexibility in stair placement within setbacks.

The general directions to staff included:

- Support for drafting an ordinance to allow stair encroachments to the existing non-conforming front setback when homes are elevated in place.
- Explore setting a minimum setback (approx. 10 feet) for stairs.
- Develop standards limiting landing size and ensuring stair massing remains in scale with the structure and neighborhood.
- Further evaluate allowance for secondary exterior stairs when interior stairs are provided.
- Incorporate proposed updates on ancillary equipment and shed size into the draft ordinance for further review.
- Reconsider the scope of exemptions for pool cages/gazebos to balance homeowner relief with neighborhood compatibility.

Staff will prepare a draft ordinance for Planning Board review in October or November, prior to returning to the City Commission.

c. Community Redevelopment Area update

Staff provided an update on the Finding of Necessity (FON) process, which forms the basis for establishing a Community Redevelopment Area (CRA). Staff expects to share results in the near future.

This initiative, directed by the City Commission, focuses on the Town Center 2 – Coquina West District and is connected to redevelopment considerations for the Corey Circle / Corey Landings property. The Corey Landings property now encompasses all of the east side of the TC2 land use district. The City supports property consolidation with the west side of TC2, however, the area presents unique redevelopment challenges, including significant storm damage to residential homes, a high number of non-conforming uses (especially standalone single-family homes). Current zoning prohibits rebuilding or substantial improvements of single-family residences; if elevated, homes must convert the ground level to parking/storage with upper living space. As a result, property owners must either redevelop into multifamily/mixed-use or standalone commercial/office use. Many property owners have expressed concerns about these limitations and requested City review.

A Community Forum will be held on October 9<sup>th</sup> from 5:30–7:00 PM in Commission Chambers; it will be an open forum to hear from property owners and community members about redevelopment challenges and preferences. A recently completed Corey Area Historic Survey will be presented at the forum. The survey was informational and does not impose zoning or land use changes. Staff will report back to the Planning Board following the forum.

d. Limitation on fill update

Mr. Berry reported that staff have not had an opportunity to meet with the state. They will be meeting with FDEM to evaluate the floodplain ordinance and will bring that up and report back at the next meeting.

Member Perry raised concerns regarding the City's existing code provisions related to the use of land fill in flood-prone areas and their implications for resiliency and redevelopment. Sec. 106-54 (Flood Control) limits structural fill to no more than 16 inches above the crown of the road. Concern was expressed that the road crown varies significantly by location, creating inconsistent outcomes for allowable fill. Sec. 98-131.1.1 (Flood Hazard Areas): Permits structural fill in certain zoning districts (e.g., hotel, commercial, activity centers) but not in residential districts. Why do residents have stricter limitations? Current standards disadvantage lower-lying residential areas where more fill is needed; reliance on the "crown of the road" as a reference point is problematic, as the lowest properties often have the least ability to add fill. Property levels should instead be evaluated relative to seawall elevation and adjacent properties.

Member Perry also raised resiliency concerns - during recent hurricanes, many residents lost vehicles stored in ground-level garages. Alternative approaches, such as stem walls to elevate garage floors, could have prevented damage without creating drainage impacts for neighbors. Current permitting guidance does not always present homeowners with these options. The City Commission requested staff to move quickly on potential code revisions, but homeowners currently rebuilding may make investments that do not maximize long-term resiliency. Also, minimum seawall height is currently 5 feet, but elevation standards must be evaluated in relation to adjacent homes, type of fill, and floor levels (garage vs. main living). Existing seawall elevation worksheets consider neighboring conditions but are not tied to fill regulations.

Staff will raise the matter with City management, including the possibility of convening a workshop with cross-departmental and professional input.

e. Update on Corey Landings (added)

Mr. Berry reported that an earlier version of the CUP application was for mixed-use to include two transient lodging units, however, the applicant chose to remove those and make those units also residential. Fully residential mixed-use projects do not come before the Planning Board but go directly to the City Commission.

f. CVS Dolphin Village (added)

Mr. Berry reported that CVS has withdrawn their request for a temporary pharmacy trailer; that is not moving forward. There are no updates currently on reconstruction at Dolphin Village; he will report to the board if and when anything develops.

6. Adjournment - Next meeting October 20, 2025.

There being no further business, Chair Hubbard adjourned the meeting at 5:01 PM.

*These minutes were approved at the October 20, 2025 meeting of the Planning Board.*