

BEACH STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

November 19, 2025 - 9:00 A.M.

PRESENT: Jon Stevens, Chair
John Kurzman, Vice Chair
Natalie Looney, Member
Dan Rothenberger, Member
Bill Thompson, Member

STAFF PRESENT: Brian Peckins, Assistant Public Services Director; Ralf Brookes, City Attorney; Ginny Bodkin, Deputy City Clerk; Brandon Berry, Senior Planner

Chair Stevens called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

1. Presentations – Beach Activity Report 2025 Q3

Brian Peckins, Assistant Public Services Director of Public Services, and new committee staff liaison, reviewed the report, which was included in the meeting packet. He reviewed the list of public meetings and special events in addition to the 30 weddings that were held. Seven Keep Pinellas Beautiful events were held with 112 volunteers working 236 hours and removing 211 lbs. of trash from the beach. He reviewed the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office violation report.

Members expressed that for special events reporting, it would be more useful to receive forward-looking information about upcoming events rather than only retrospective summaries, especially since the current report arrives months after events have ended. They also requested more detailed data from the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office—specifically the breakdown of violations such as dog issues, littering, dune violations, and other activities, similar to what had been provided in past reports. Additionally, they asked that future reports clarify whether trespass incidents on private property are included. Staff agreed to incorporate these improvements for the next meeting.

2. Approval of the Agenda –

Vice Chair Kurzman asked to add a discussion item on beach sign issues as 4.c.

Motion: Member Thompson moved and Vice Chair Kurzman seconded to approve the amended November 19, 2025 agenda; the motion carried 5-0.

3. Audience Comments

Chris Hollands of Pass-A-Grille commented on Warren Webster transferring a private property ownership deed to the City of Pass-A-Grille in the past. Private property rights related to a recent Federal Court decision in Walton County found that the closing of the beach for three months was a taking.

4. Action Items

a. **Approval of Minutes - August 20, 2025, September 16, 2025, and October 23, 2025**

Vice Chair Kurzman requested to add “in a trespass case” to “to use to shield” in the August 20, 2025 minutes on page 12. The Clerk will make the change.

Motion: Vice Chair Kurzman moved and Member Rothenberger seconded to approve the amended August 20, 2025 minutes. The motion carried 5-0.

Motion: Member Looney moved and Member Thompson seconded to approve the September 16 and October 23, 2025 minutes as presented; the motion carried 4-1 with Vice Chair Kurzman voting no, because he relied on the video and transcript in lieu of reading.

b. Review and Approval 2026 Meeting Dates

The committee discussed the proposed dates, and it was suggested to move the February meeting to the 25th.

Motion: Member Thompson moved and Member Rothenberger seconded to approve the 2026 meeting dates with the amendment to February 25th. The motion carried 5-0.

c. Added beach signs (Added)

City Attorney Ralf Brookes briefed the committee on a property-rights and signage dispute involving the Undertow, where the owner installed six “no trespassing” signs along the dry sand, including some located in wet sand and sometimes underwater. The signs stemmed from an incident in which the property owner called the Sheriff’s Office to remove an unruly beachgoer; confusion over trespass requirements led the owner and his attorney to believe that posted signage was necessary for enforcement. After meeting with the owner, the owner’s attorney, and several deputies, the Sheriff’s Office clarified that signs at all four corners are not required and that deputies can exercise judgment in determining whether someone is clearly within private dry sand. They emphasized they can enforce trespass when someone sets up tents, coolers, drinking alcohol, or effectively “sets up camp” on private property, but not simply for walking or sitting near the mean high-water line.

The City, Sheriff’s Office, and property owner discussed a pilot approach in which the two signs closest to the water would be removed, and deputies would instead respond to trespass calls based on circumstances rather than signage placement. The city is also reviewing updates to its sign ordinance—separate from the beach ordinance—to prevent sign proliferation on the beach while staying content-neutral under First Amendment law. This may include rules about sign placement within the beach preservation zone. Members raised concerns about avoiding situations like Walton County’s customary-use litigation, ensuring turtle-nest and dune-protection signs remain permissible, and preventing a future where every beachfront parcel posts private-property signs along the shoreline. Overall, the goal is to balance private property rights, business concerns (including liability and alcohol licensing), public customary use, and the aesthetic and safety impacts of beach signage.

d. Recommendation of Ordinance 2025-02 to the City Commission and Local Planning Agency: Creating Code of Ordinances Chapter 95. BEACHES, and creating and consolidating beach-related ordinances pertaining to conduct, behavior, operations, development, permitting, and maintenance of the City's beaches

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF ST. PETE BEACH, FLORIDA FOR THE PURPOSE OF 2 ADOPTING A BEACH ORDINANCE; CREATING CHAPTER 95. BEACHES, SECTIONS 95-1 THROUGH 95-22; RELOCATING, RENAMING AND AMENDING SECTIONS IN CODE OF ORDINANCES DIVISIONS 6, 14, 58, 62, 74 AND 94; AND RELOCATING AND AMENDING

SECTIONS IN LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE DIVISION 25 AND 44; PROVIDING A CONSOLIDATED ORDINANCE PERTAINING TO CONDUCT, BEHAVIOR, OPERATIONS, DEVELOPMENT, PERMITTING, AND MAINTENANCE ON THE CITY'S BEACHES; SPECIFYING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; CONFLICTS; SEVERABILITY; CORRECTION OF SCRIVENER'S ERROR; CONSTRUCTION; PUBLICATION; AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE

Senior Planner Brandon Berry had included in the meeting packet the proposed changes to the Code of Ordinances that the committee had discussed during their two special meetings. The Committee requested that Mr. Berry review only the highlighted amended sections (including strikeouts and underlining for additions), adding that Vice Chair Kurzman could add comments on sections as he was unable to attend the two special meetings. The review included:

Sec. 58-26 – Prohibited activities in city parks and beaches.

(2b) Construct any hut, shanty, or other shelter, except by special permit issued by the department in association with a special event, or as authorized by Section 95-4;

(8h) Place or use any polystyrene product.

Regarding state laws governing polystyrene and single-use plastic regulation, the City Attorney explained that although the Legislature has debated expanding local authority in recent years, no new bills have passed; the law remains as it has since 2016. Cities may regulate or prohibit polystyrene only on public property, including public portions of the beach, but cannot restrict its use on private property. A new bill, Senate Bill 240, which would broaden the ability of cities to regulate single-use plastics more widely, has recently moved to the Senate Environmental and Natural Resources Committee, though the outcome of that hearing is not yet known. If SB 240 passes while the city's ordinance is advancing to the Commission, staff will adjust the ordinance language accordingly.

Sec. 74-91 - Definitions

Micromobility device definition added (also changed in State statute).

Sec. ~~94-70~~58-32. – Sleeping during nighttime prohibited.

Mr. Berry will add reference to Beach Chapter 58-26 indicating no sleeping on beaches.

(7) The beaches beginning at 30th Avenue and running north to the north boundary of block "M," Don Ce Sar Subdivision, and beginning at the south boundary line of block "N," Don Ce Sar Subdivision, and running north to 37th Avenue, are gulfward of residential property. Sleeping on the beach in these areas is contrary to the health and safety of the public.

Mr. Berry noted that this paragraph was previously stricken possibly accidentally or due to ongoing litigation. Chair Stevens clarified that the southern boundary of the area in question is likely Cabrillo, not 30th Street, with additional reference to nearby public beach access at 32nd Street. A question was raised about why the private beach area had been added back into the document; it was explained that the language had originally been included years ago to prevent people from sleeping on the beach, reflecting neighborhood concerns. Although the area is private, it was confirmed that the city can enforce regulations there this year.

Chapter 95. Beaches.

Sec. 95-2. – Definitions.

Micromobility device shall have the same meaning as in section 74-91.

Service animal shall have the same meaning as in F.S. § 413.08.

A brief discussion followed on *smoking* and vaping being together in the definitions; the City Attorney explained that although the definition section only defines terms, in the substantive parts of the ordinance vaping is intended to fall under smoking, subject to certain state preemptions. The earlier amendment was meant to ensure vaping was also referenced in section 95.10. The distinction in the definition section is intentional and simply defines the terms.

Sec. ~~94-6895-4~~. Chairs, tables, benches, cabanas, and umbrellas.

a) It shall be unlawful for any person to place upon the public beach any chair, bench, table or umbrella that alone or in combination with a group of chairs, benches, tables or umbrellas, which is in a location or is of a size which would interfere with the use of the public access beach by the general public.

(c) Any operation from a franchise to set up chairs, tables, umbrellas, or cabanas on or upon the beach shall register with the city. Franchises authorized, as of the date of this ordinance, to operate on any private beach through an issued business tax receipt shall be exempt from this requirement. However, upon the expansion of any existing operation or creation of any new operation on any private beach, or upon business tax receipt renewal for the upland entity, any franchise operating on any private beach shall be subject to this registration requirement.

Member Kurzman raised concerns over the terms public or private beach. These terms carry legal significance, particularly regarding customary use rights, and he recommended consistently using the phrases *public beach land* and *private beach land* to avoid unintentionally implying that the city recognizes certain areas as exclusively private beaches. The City Attorney confirmed that customary use doctrine exists independently of city ordinances and that the ordinance should not undermine those rights. It was noted that the term “public access beach” appears in section 95.4 as leftover wording from an older draft, is not defined, and no longer serves a clear purpose. The group agreed it could be removed or replaced with “public beach land” for clarity and consistency.

(d) It shall be considered a violation of this ordinance for a franchise to operate on any private beach without permission of the landowner.

No additional comments.

Sec. ~~94-6995-5~~. Picnics, ~~and~~ food consumption, and fire pits.

(a) Picnics may be allowed on the beach subject to the regulations in subsection (b). Consumption of alcohol may be allowed on the beach subject to the regulations in section 95-10.(a)

(b) Picnics and the consumption of food and nonalcoholic beverages shall be permitted on the ~~city~~ beaches of ~~Pass-a-Grille and Upham Beach~~, provided that:

(1) Those persons having picnics or consuming food or nonalcoholic beverages within the area shall be responsible for cleaning up and removing from the beach all of the food, papers, cartons, bottles and other refuse, litter or debris which may shall remain or be left from the consumption of such food or beverage. Depositing of refuse, litter or debris on the beach shall only be within a lawfully-provided container as authorized by the city.

(3) Glass containers or bottles associated with the consumption of food or ~~nonalcoholic~~ beverages shall be prohibited.

(4) The use and possession of polystyrene products associated with any picnic or any food or beverage consumption on any public beach is prohibited. The use and possession of plastic straws associated with any picnic or any food or beverage consumption on any beach is prohibited.

(c) Notwithstanding subsection (b)(2) of this section, the city commission, the city manager, or their designee shall be entitled to issue a permit to authorize the building of a temporary beach fire pit, ~~with~~ This authorization may contain conditions and such requirements as the deemed appropriate by the city commission or city manager's designee, that considering the advice of the fire department, the considerations of the rights of nearby property owners and the best interests of the city and its residents and visitors, such a temporary beach fire is deems appropriate. Any person receiving authorization to build a fire shall agree in writing to comply fully with all requirements imposed by the city commission and/or city manager or designee. Absent such an authorization, open and/or uncontrolled flames on the beach shall be prohibited.

Signs may be posted notifying the public of the prohibitions and penalties for violating this section at beach ends, city parks, or other appropriate locations. Signs shall contain language referencing the penalties for consumption of food, drinks, and creation of fires in violation of this section. Anyone convicted of violating this section shall pay a fine of not less than \$100.00 or more than \$500.00. Signs shall be posted notifying the public of the penalty for violating this section.

Discussion followed on glass containers on the beach and plastic straws. A member suggested prohibiting all glass containers and bottles on the beach, not just those associated with food or beverage consumption. After clarifying misread language, the group confirmed that the ordinance currently bans only glass tied to food or drink. Members agreed that a broader, simpler prohibition—“no glass containers or bottles on the beach”—would better address safety concerns. The committee supported removing the “associated with the consumption of food or beverages” qualifier.

Regarding plastic straws, pending state bill (Senate Bill 240) may require a medical-use exemption. The City Attorney advised waiting until state legislation is finalized before modifying the ordinance. Members noted that banning plastic straws does not ban all straws, since paper, metal, and biodegradable options remain available. They agreed that medical needs can be addressed once state guidance is certain.

Regarding fire pit permits and sign-posting language, a member pointed out outdated wording referencing “penalties for consumption of food or drink,” which no longer fits the ordinance; the attorney agreed to revise it for accuracy.

Sec. 25.98. - Permit required.

(b) *Other non-exempt activities.* All other non-exempt activities, including construction, excavation, fill placement, repair of shore protection structures, and other activities seaward of the coastal construction setback line and activities that would alter the topography or disturb the vegetation of the beach/dune system, including vehicular traffic relating thereto, are required to obtain a permit from both the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the city. Maintenance of a dune, including trimming, planting, and removal of vegetation within, shall require a permit from the city even in cases where the Florida Department of Environmental Protection waives or exempts such a requirement. With the authorization of the City Manager or designee, a continuing agreement for maintenance and/or replacement of dune vegetation may be implemented for a property owner or authorized entity of the property owner when not contrary to any requirement of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

No additional comments.

Sec. ~~94-7395-8~~ – Vehicle permits.

Vice Chair Kurzman advocated for allowing bikes on the beach on quiet days, noting past agreements allowing bicycles with a permit, and that restrictions could be limited to turtle season (May–Oct) with a 10-mph speed limit and distance rules from people, preserving recreational opportunities while balancing safety.

Other members opposed bicycles on the beach, citing safety concerns, citizen complaints about near-misses with bikes and e-bikes, and potential disruption to wildlife, such as birds being startled. They noted enforcement difficulties with conditional rules like “only on quiet days” or maintaining a certain distance from people.

The discussion acknowledged consensus at a previous special meeting to prohibit bikes and e-bikes on the beach, while still allowing them under special event permits for organized activities. Additional notes included tying mechanical beach-cleaning permits to seabird nesting season (ending October 31) and considering the maintenance of dunes. Committee consensus was to maintain the prohibition on bikes and e-bikes, with limited exemptions under special events.

Sec. ~~94-101.95-9~~ – Requirements Beach maintenance regulations.

(5) Additional requirements apply to the maintenance of dunes as found in Land Development Code Division 25.

(4)d. Any mechanical beach cleaning during the period of February 15 ~~May 1~~ through October 31 (covering shorebird and turtle nesting season), except seaward of the prior day's high-tide mark or debris line or where authorized by a permit from the state department of environmental protection, division of beaches and shores.

No additional comments.

Sec. 95-10. – Smoking, starting of fires, depositing of litter and waste, and use of alcohol on the beach.

(d) Pursuant to F.S. 386.209, smoking and vaping (except for unfiltered cigars) is

(f) Discharge or deposit of human wastes is prohibited on the beach except within an approved water closet, lavatory, or urinal.

(g) Dumping of any litter as defined in F.S. 403.413 on the beach is prohibited, except within a container approved for such a purpose.

(d) Pursuant to F.S. 386.209, smoking and vaping (except for unfiltered cigars) is prohibited and unlawful within the boundaries of any public park or public beach within the city and further restrict smoking within the boundaries of public beaches and public parks that are within its jurisdiction but are owned by the county, unless such restriction conflicts with a county ordinance. A violation of this provision may be enforced by citation by any law enforcement officer or by any code enforcement officer.)

Concerns were raised regarding vaping, but following committee discussion, consensus was to keep vaping included.

Code of Ordinances Section 95-10.(i) is created as follows:

Discussion regarding alcohol on the beach, which consolidates multiple existing code sections. Alcohol service is permitted only within designated “wet zones” (formerly cabana zones). Hotels are responsible for serving within these areas and posting signs. If guests leave the area with alcohol, the individuals—not the hotel—would be cited, provided the hotel gave proper notice and followed the rules. Clarification of this distinction in the ordinance language was suggested.

Committee members emphasized focusing enforcement on *behavior* (e.g., visible drinking or drunkenness) rather than merely the presence of alcohol. Concerns were raised about visible drinking in public and potential conflicts with hotel licensing if guests leave the designated area. Some cities have seasonal restrictions (e.g., spring break) to prevent the beach from attracting excessive drinking. The discussion noted that violations outside the designated service areas are the responsibility of the individual, not the lodging facility.

Current language was reviewed to ensure that penalties apply correctly to individual violations under subsection H and not inadvertently to hotels. Formatting and clarity improvements were suggested to reflect the intended allocation of responsibility.

Sec. 95-13. – Fishing on the beach.

(b) It shall be unlawful to chum the water when fishing for any species from the beach or when wade fishing in waters adjacent to a beach.

No additional comments.

Sec. 95-15. – Fireworks prohibited on the beach.

It shall be unlawful to possess or use any fireworks, including but not limited to sparklers, firecrackers, propellants, explosives, or any of the fireworks defined in F.S. § 791.01(4), on or over any beach of the City.

Vice Chair Kurzman voiced his disagreement except during turtle season.

Sec. 95-16. – Micromobility devices, including bicycles, prohibited on the beach.

The riding of any micromobility device as defined in this Chapter shall be prohibited upon any beach within the City or any area as designated by the City where notice is posted.

Mr. Berry will amend for special event exceptions.

Sec. 95-17. – Vending on public beaches.

This section will be cross referenced in Chapter 62.

Sec. ~~62-93~~95-18.

(~~e~~) Solicitation shall be confined to privately owned property, and solicitation shall not occur upon the public access beaches. At all times a solicitor shall be required to wear his their city-issued solicitor's card on the outside of his their clothing.

Section (e) will be stricken.

Sec. ~~44.3~~95-19. – Prohibition of activities disruptive to marine turtles.

(e) When preparing to leave the beach, beachgoers shall fill in any holes, remove beach chairs, umbrellas, towels, beach toys, sand sculptures, and any other objects created or placed by the beachgoer that could interfere with transit of nesting turtles or turtle hatchlings.

Staff will add Reference in 44.3 LDC.

Existing Land Development Code Section 25.9. is transferred to create Section 95-20 and amended as follows, with remaining subsequent sections renumbered:

Sec. 25-9.95-20. – Permit or registration required.

(b) Other non-exempt activities. All other non-exempt activities, including construction, excavation, fill placement, repair of shore protection structures, and other activities seaward of the coastal construction setback line and activities that would alter the topography or disturb the vegetation of the beach/dune system, including vehicular traffic relating thereto, are required to obtain a permit from both the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the city. All maintenance activities, including trimming, shall require a permit from the City irrespective of whether the Florida Department of Environmental Protection requires a permit.

(c) Recreational Activities. Any organized recreational or entertainment activity, including but not limited to beach volleyball tournaments, skimboarding or surfing contests, or concerts, conducted on the beach shall be required to obtain the necessary special event permits and any other required permits through the city manager.

(d) Commercial operations not occurring under a Business Tax Receipt or Special Event Permit. When a business operates from or offers a service or event that involves use of the public beach, other than the placement of chairs, tables, cabanas and umbrellas as regulated in section 95-4, or those events authorized by and operated in compliance with the conditions of a city-issued special event permit, such event shall be registered with the city. Registration shall occur prior to each event for irregularly-scheduled or one-time events, or prior to the first event for regularly-scheduled events. By way of examples, these events shall include but not be limited to beach exercise excursions, photography sessions containing changing tents or lighting setups, yoga classes, catered dinners, and similar business-operated events.

Staff will add cross reference to Dunes 25.7 in LDC.

A discussion followed on permissions for activities on private or upland beach property, using yoga classes as an example. Individuals conducting activities (like yoga) on private property must obtain authorization from the property owner to avoid liability, especially for potential injuries and medical claims. The ordinance includes standards for such authorization. Questions were raised about why some sections refer to “upland property owner” versus “property owner.” Upland property owners are relevant primarily for cabana or wet service areas tied to resorts, extending their commercial operations. For other private beach areas, simply referencing the “private beach land owner” would be clearer and more consistent. The intent is to protect both property owners and participants by ensuring consent is obtained before activities occur on private land. These clarifications should be applied consistently throughout the ordinance. All major changes for ordinance 2025-02 were noted as covered.

Sec. 95-21. –Special events on the beach.

Vice Chair Kurzman suggested that the number of people involved in an event should be considered.

Chair Stevens called an intermission at 10:59 and reconvened at 11:02 AM.

Public Comment –

Chris Hollands of 401 Gulf Way thanked the committee and mentioned drones as an upcoming consideration on the beach.

Leslie Price of 650 Sunset Way commented that children’s juice pouches have small straws and cautioned that tent size is going to become harder to enforce based upon observations.

Chair Stevens asked the committee how they would like to proceed – either asking staff to return with the ordinance incorporating today’s changes or approving staff to move the ordinance forward to the City Commission with the changes.

Motion: Member Thompson moved to recommend approval of Ordinance 2025-02 to the City Commission with the changes discussed today; seconded by Member Rothenberger. The motion carried 4-1 with Vice Chair Kurzman voting no.

e. Recommendation of Ordinance 2025-16 to the City Commission and Local Planning Agency: Modifying Land Development Code Division 44 to update and clarify standards for new and existing beachfront lighting, enforcement, and reporting, and reorienting the division title and content toward protection standards for all coastal wildlife

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF ST. PETE BEACH, FLORIDA FOR THE PURPOSE OF RENAMING LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE DIVISION 44 – MARINE TURTLE PROTECTION TO DIVISION 44 - MARINE TURTLE AND COASTAL WILDLIFE PROTECTIONS; AMENDING SECTIONS 44.1. THROUGH 44.9., AND ADOPTING SECTIONS 44.10 THROUGH 44.13., TO UPDATE TECHNICAL STANDARDS, CLARIFY REQUIREMENTS FOR NEW AND EXISTING DEVELOPMENT AND SPECIAL EVENTS, MODIFY PENALTIES, COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT MEASURES, SPECIFY RESPONSIBLE PARTIES, AND UPDATE DEFINITIONS, TO BETTER SERVE THE PURPOSE AND INTENT OF THE DIVISION AND ALIGN WITH FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION BEST PRACTICES; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; CONFLICTS; SEVERABILITY; CORRECTION OF SCRIVENER’S ERROR; CONSTRUCTION; PUBLICATION; AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Senior Planner Brandon Berry reviewed the highlighted changes as included in the meeting packet.

Sec. 44.2. Definitions.

Bollards means lighting consisting of short posts that incorporate a lighting element, including temporary staked lighting and other such structures that are installed low to the ground and typically used to illuminate a pathway.

No additional comments.

Section 44.5. Classification of new coastal construction and existing lighting.

3) Any replacement of any existing window or door, or remodel or repair of, or addition to, any building which:

a. Introduces a new or replaces an existing exterior light source;

b. Replaces any existing window or door visible from the beach;

Discussion focused on clarifying the application of new lighting standards to buildings and structures visible from the beach, including window and door replacements, remodels, additions, and new construction. The goal is to ensure compliance with turtle- and coastal wildlife-friendly lighting standards. Any replacement of an existing window or door visible from the beach must use compliant glass or apply appropriate tinting. These replacements are not eligible for the previous “close the blinds” or “turn off the light” exceptions used for existing lighting. The ordinance distinguishes between substantial improvements/new construction (where the entire building must comply) and minor renovations or additions (where only the altered portion must comply).

Under SB 180, the definition of development excludes routine maintenance and minor repairs. Replacing a window or door is considered a repair or remodel, not new development, but the ordinance requires compliance with new lighting standards for any visible changes. Substantial improvements, such as redevelopment of a primary structure, trigger full compliance for the entire building.

Some members expressed concern that requiring full replacement with turtle-compliant glass may be costly and overly restrictive, especially for hotels where room lighting and guest experience are considerations. Alternatives, such as automated curtain-closing devices, were suggested to achieve compliance without extensive window replacements. Enforcement could focus on behavioral compliance, e.g., closing blinds or curtains at sunset, with random checks to ensure adherence.

Long-wavelength, wildlife-friendly lighting is recommended for walkovers, cut-throughs, and other beach access points, consistent with prior approvals and best practices. This measure helps reduce light pollution while maintaining compliance for newly developed or altered areas.

The ordinance clarifies the trigger points for compliance (new construction, substantial improvement, window/door replacement) and differentiates between full building compliance versus compliance limited to altered portions. The committee emphasized balancing environmental protection with practical implementation and flexible enforcement measures.

Sec. 44.46. Standards for new beachfront lighting.

(e) Only ~~low-intensity~~long wavelength recessed or louvered lighting, or other appropriate ~~low intensity~~long wavelength lighting, shall be used on dune crossovers, walkovers, cut-throughs, and other means of access where permissible. All light fixtures on dune crosswalks must utilize ~~low wattage Bug Type Bulbs, low pressure sodium vapor (LPS) bulbs, Red or Amber Light Emitting Diodes (LED) or True Neon~~long wavelength light sources. Dune crosswalk lighting seaward of the primary dune, or on the beach in areas where the primary dune no longer exists, shall not be used.

(f) To the extent this regulation is not adverse to applicable state and federal public safety laws, pools, spas, and their accessory decks shall utilize long-wavelength and fully shielded bulbs and fixtures. Underwater lighting shall be mounted horizontally, long wavelength and not be directly or indirectly visible from the beach.

Sec. 44.57. Standards for existing beachfront lighting.

(8) Plant or improve Floridan native or Florida friendly vegetation buffers between the light source and the beach to screen light from the beach. All dune plantings shall be those listed in the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) *Recommended Florida Native Beach and Dune Plants for Beachfront Properties and Dune Restoration* guide, or an approved alternative, and shall be planted only upon issuance of a permit from the City of St. Pete Beach and FDEP, as applicable;

The committee discussed how non-compliant visible lighting could be screened using vegetation. The original proposal allowed Florida-friendly or Florida-native plants as buffers, but clarification was needed regarding placement relative to the coastal construction control line (CCCL) and dunes. Dune plantings must use Florida-native species to protect the ecosystem. Florida-friendly plants could be used landward of the CCCL (e.g., on paved areas like pool decks), but there was concern that non-native plants might spread into the dunes. The members preferred all screening to use Florida-native plants to avoid ecological risks. There was agreement to emphasize native plantings for screening, and Section 44.8 was noted to reference the sunrise-to-sunset definition from Chapter 95.

Sec 44.9. Special events utilizing light and use of fireworks during turtle season.

Lighting associated with a special event that may directly, indirectly, or cumulatively be visible from any portion of the beach shall not be authorized at nighttime during sea turtle nesting season. This prohibition shall be inclusive of any transient lighting associated with the special event, whether installed in a temporary manner or otherwise utilized as a feature of the special event such as through handheld use. The use of fireworks, including sparklers, firecrackers, propellants, explosives, or any of the fireworks defined in F.S. § 791.01(4), on or over any beach of the City, shall be prohibited during turtle nesting season.

Mr. Berry explained that Section 44.9 includes a fallback restriction that if the Commission does not support a year-round fireworks prohibition on or over the beach, the ordinance would instead prohibit fireworks during sea turtle nesting season. A member recommended adding shorebird nesting season as an additional protected period if the year-round ban is not adopted. The committee agreed, and staff will revise the language accordingly.

A concern was raised about the prohibition on flashlights, cellphone flashes, and other transient lighting outside of turtle nesting season. It was noted that requiring special wildlife-friendly flashlights in non-nesting months (e.g., January) is burdensome, particularly for tourists. The committee expressed support for limiting such restrictions only to the nesting season. Staff clarified that in Section 95-19, transient lighting prohibitions already apply only during nighttime hours in turtle nesting season.

Sec. 44.913. Monitoring and reporting guidance.

The following information should be compiled by the city or qualified wildlife protection program partner on an annual basis and submitted to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Marine Turtle Protection Program, with report made available to the City Commission and Beach Stewardship Committee

Motion: Member Thompson moved to recommend approval of the changes to Ordinance 2025-16 as discussed today and move forward to the City Commission; seconded by Member Rothenberger. The motion carried 4-1 with Vice Chair Kurzman voting no.

5. Items for Discussion – There were no discussion items.

6. Adjournment – Next meeting is scheduled for February 25, 2026.

There being no further business, Member Rothenberger moved, Member Thompson seconded, and the motion carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 11:28 AM.

These minutes were approved at the February 25, 2026, Beach Stewardship Committee meeting.