

## PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES

February 26, 2026 - 4:00PM

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** David Hubbard, Chair  
Sam Angelides, Jr., Vice Chair  
Grant Izzi, Member  
Rich Lorenzen, Member  
Cindy Perry, Member

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

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

1. Approval of the Agenda –

Senior Planner Brandon Berry requested to add a discussion item, 5b., for a CRA update.

**Motion: Member Lorenzen moved, and Member Perry seconded, to approve the February 26, 2026 agenda as amended; the motion carried unanimously.**

2. Audience Comments – No one came forward to comment.

3. Approval of Minutes – Minutes January 26, 2026

**Motion: Vice Chair Angelides moved and Member Perry seconded, to approve the January 26, 2025 minutes as presented; the motion carried unanimously.**

4. Action Items – There were no action items.

5. Discussion Items -

a. TC-2 Town Center Coquina West Zoning & Land Use Amendments

Mr. Berry opened his presentation by explaining that there are three major use modifications that are being proposed under this cover, which were reviewed and given authority to proceed by the City Commission: TC-2 Coquina West use modifications (standalone multifamily residential, standalone lodging uses, and reduced land area for mixed-use multifamily and commercial), appropriate residential development standards (height, density, living square footage), and temporary lodging and mixed-use development standard modifications.

He explained the unique challenges post-storm in this district - preservation and redevelopment of existing horizontal use mix, the large numbers of property owners complicating full-block mixed-use redevelopment, and the varying character and densities, partially Avenue-to-Avenue. Staff was directed to generate solutions that do not increase density or intensity, allow for reasonable restoration that is not adverse to the district purpose and intent, and do not preclude more visionary, Community Redevelopment District-focused solutions later in time. The goals are for a narrow focus (allowing limited development and redevelopment of multifamily and lodging uses, preserving density, intensity, scale and mass of the area, and be efficient to implement.

Mr. Berry continued to explain the proposed use amendments for standalone residential use, standalone lodging, and the reduced threshold for mixed-use development. Development height requirements were reviewed including the varied flood zones and general grade range. The expected minimum living floor elevation required is 6.5 to 9.5 feet above grade. Most small-lot residences in St. Pete Beach are limited to 30-35 feet in height above base flood elevation plus one foot. Height options in this range would allow 30 feet (36-39 feet above grade) which is likely two living stories or 35 feet (41-44 feet above grade), likely three living stories.

There is immense variation in density in the TC-2 district, from single-family homes on single lots to multifamily development on single or multiple lots. There is no way to make whole every residential and lodging property in this district without 1) increasing density, 2) drafting standards that allow existing residences to redevelop with existing density, or 3) allocating units from the residential density pool. Options 1) and 2) would have unintended Live Local Act impacts and are outside the scope of what staff has been directed to address. Staff proposed standalone residential redevelopment density at 18 units/acre. Standalone multifamily development would be eligible to request units from the residential density pool, subject to availability and City Commission approval. Redevelopment of the entire TC-2 Coquina West District's residential stock would require 37 units from the residential density pool, fewer than one-third the number of units returned by the Corey Landings revision approved in 2025. Density pool availability was reviewed. TC-2 Coquina West Redevelopment has 37 residential units with 113 remaining and 16 temporary lodging units allocated with 245 remaining.

Mr. Berry continued to a summary of average existing living area per unit, with the smallest at 367 sq. ft and the largest at 2,100 sq. ft., with a mean of 622 sq. ft. per unit. The 2023 American Housing Survey data for Florida showed a median unit size of 1,380 sq. ft. for a townhouse, 1,100 sq. ft. for two-bedroom units, 750 sq. ft. for one-bedroom units, and 500 sq. ft. for studios. Per the Pinellas County Property Appraiser data for building between 2020 and 2026, barrier island apartments with under 50 occupants averaged 1,916 sq. ft. per unit, and condos at 2,208 sq. ft. For comparison, the recent Barracks by the Sea proposes six new units (two existing) at 714 sq. ft. of living area (excluding stairs and wall interior), a total site density of 28.6 units/acre and three stories in height: 28 feet above DFE.

The presentation continued to a TC-2 Coquina West buildability assessment which concluded that of the average platted lot of 5,375 sq. ft., approximately 2,630 sq. ft. is buildable after removing the permeability requirement and 25% articulation and parking requirement. Roughly 50% of a lot can support a building, when meeting other development requirements. A three-unit, two-living story building could have a realistic gross floor area of 1,750 sq. ft. Staff's initial recommendation was to limit living square footage per unit to existing living square footage plus 20%, or 800 square feet, whichever is greater. This provides redevelopment parity for most existing residential buildings and preserves a partial incentive to consolidate properties into mixed-use projects, by allowing for larger residences only on consolidated developments.

There is no requirement to limit floor area for residential. Other dimensional requirements (height/impervious surface/setbacks) can serve as an indirect limitation. Floor area limitations can be used to incentivize certain types of development (e.g. single-bedroom apartments). Setting a floor area standard too low can disincentivize redevelopment.

In summary, Mr. Berry explained that staff were seeking input on the proposed residential density of 8 units per acre (with the ability to request from the density pool, the proposed allowable height of 30-35 feet (2-3 living stories), and the proposed 800 sq. ft. per unit floor area limitation. Staff would draft content based on Planning Board feedback for presentation in March or April and propose a workshop or hybrid public forum to allow for meeting focus to be on drafted content and public input.

The Board's primary feedback centered on process and vision. Members expressed concern that they were being asked to provide input on development standards without a clearly articulated long-term vision for the area or a clear explanation of the policy objective. Several members emphasized the need to better define the "why" behind the proposal—whether the goal is storm recovery, revitalization, increasing housing supply, or supporting commercial activity—before finalizing standards.

Substantively, the Board generally supported allowing standalone multifamily redevelopment as an additional option, particularly given redevelopment challenges under the current requirement for full-block consolidation. Members acknowledged that the proposal would not increase overall allowable district density and could actually reduce potential units compared to existing entitlements.

Key recommendations and consensus points included:

- Remove the 800-square-foot maximum unit size cap. Several members felt it could unnecessarily limit design flexibility and quality and preferred allowing the market to determine appropriate unit sizes within height and setback limits.
- Allow reasonable building height, with general agreement that up to 30 feet (consistent with or slightly above existing commercial height limits of 28 feet) would be appropriate.
- Maintain parking requirements and existing development controls such as setbacks and lot coverage to manage scale and impacts.
- Continue community engagement and more clearly articulate how the proposal aligns with the City's Comprehensive Plan and long-term redevelopment vision.

Overall, while members supported the concept and did not raise major objections to the direction, they urged clearer policy framing, stronger linkage to long-term planning goals, and refinement of standards to avoid unnecessary constraints.

b. SB 180 (2025) & SB 840 (2026) Discussion

The Chair had requested an update on HB 180/SB 840 to determine whether the City should begin preparing potential Comprehensive Plan or Land Development Code amendments in case a limited window opens to make changes that have been restricted for the past three years. The City should be ready to act quickly given the risk of future storms that could restart restrictions.

Attorney Brookes reported that Florida SB 840 passed the full Senate unanimously (38–0) and has been sent to the House, but there is currently no House companion bill. If the House does not take it up, the bill will die. Other related bills were mentioned, but none would provide relief to the City. If adopted in its current form, the bill would maintain a one-year post-storm moratorium but would be less restrictive overall. The City could still amend its Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code, including making regulations more restrictive. However, it could not extend permit issuance timeframes and generally could not prevent property owners from repairing storm-damaged structures, except in limited cases (e.g., sewer or stormwater moratoria). Attorney Brookes noted that procedural changes, such as requiring additional board review (e.g., Historic Preservation Board

review where it was not previously required) could still raise legal concerns about being more procedurally burdensome.

c. Artificial Turf Preemption

The Board discussed the status of local artificial turf regulations following state preemption under Florida SB 712, which prohibits cities from regulating synthetic turf on single-family residential properties under one acre. As a result, the City's previously drafted ordinance was put on hold.

A new rule from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection is expected to take effect soon. It still prohibits turf in certain areas (e.g., swales, within tree drip lines unless certified safe, dunes, and within 10 feet of the MHWL without a seawall) and maintains permeability requirements. However, most single-family properties in the city will be eligible to install turf, including historic properties. The rule leaves limited authority to local governments, including regulating subgrade permeability (up to 10 inches per hour) and allowable infill materials. Staff recommended keeping existing restrictions for multifamily and commercial properties (currently limiting turf to 20% of required permeable area) and asked for Board input on whether to regulate irrigation over turf or set permeability standards.

Board members expressed a preference to wait until the state rule is finalized - especially in case of revisions or legal challenges - before making local adjustments, though concerns were raised about heat, plastic runoff, and irrigation use. Mr. Berry added that the quality and permeability standards previously developed by the Planning Board could still be implemented and adopted, even after State Bill 180, but because the state preemption applies only to single-family residential properties, those standards would primarily be applicable to commercial and multifamily properties.

d. CRA (Added)

Mr. Berry provided this informational item, reporting that this week the City Commission accepted the Finding of Necessity (FON) that the city is potentially an eligible Community Redevelopment Area; the vote passed by a 5-0. He reviewed the required steps that follow in the CRA process: Issuance of an RFP and selection of a consultant, community engagement and outreach with stakeholders, coordination with the County, City Commission adoption of the Plan, County approval of TIF (Tax Increment Financing) contribution & terms, and a county resolution and ordinance. The process will continue now that the initial step has been completed.

6. Adjournment - Next meeting March 23, 2026.

There being no further business, Chair Hubbard adjourned the meeting at 5:09 PM.

*These were approved at the April 20, 2026 meeting of the Planning Board.*