

PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES

June 22, 2026 - 4:00PM

MEMBERS PRESENT: David Hubbard, Chair
Sam Angelides, Jr., Vice Chair
Grant Izzi, Member
Mark Kanak, Member
Cindy Perry, Member

STAFF PRESENT: Brandon Berry, Senior Planner
Ralf Brookes, City Attorney
Ginny Bodkin, Deputy City Clerk
Laura Canary, Community Development Director

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

1. Approval of the Agenda –

Motion: Member Izzi moved, and Vice Chair Angelides seconded, to approve the June 22, 2026 agenda as presented; the motion carried unanimously.

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

3. Approval of Minutes – Minutes May 18, 2026

Motion: Member Perry moved and Member Izzi seconded, to approve the May 18, 2026 minutes as presented; the motion carried unanimously.

4. Action Items – None.

5. Discussion Items -

- a. Energy and environmental design requirements for new developments in the Special Planning Area

Senior Planner Brandon Berry opened his presentation by explaining that since 2008, the City's Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code (LDC) have required all development and major renovation projects in the Special Planning Area (formerly CRD) to obtain two energy and environmental design certifications – one development focused (LEED and FGBC programs), and one operations focused (FDEP Florida Green Lodging Program - FGL). As of 2026, the FDEP has phased out the FGL Program. The Miramar Resort is currently under development, with expected completion in late 2026, and was approved to pursue FGL and FGBC certifications. He also explained that massive changes in minimum/points-awarding standards have occurred between 2008 and 2026. His presentation is part of the meeting record. Mr. Berry explained that the Comp Plan substantially supports energy efficiency, water conservation, and general sustainability and provided examples from its Future Land Use and Coastal and Conservation Elements. He described what the LEED and FGBC programs accomplish in terms of energy, sustainability, and resiliency.

Staff's immediate focus is on allowing the existing Miramar Resort project to open, without losing

the intent of the certification requirement, and in the medium-term, Staff wants to ensure that this two-certification requirement addresses the intent of the Comp Plan and the new certifications that may better address local goals, objectives and priorities. Requiring two certifications, without specifying achievement level, may undercut intent. Staff were seeking Board input including on flexibility for some of the least impactful projects - potentially exempting single-and two-family homes from the requirement (would require Comp Plan modification) or counting compliance with the Florida Energy Conservation Code as one standard. Mr. Berry reviewed some potential alternative programs such as Florida Water Star, Green Globes, and the FWC model lighting ordinance.

Staff's proposal was that standards for single-and two-family developments on single zoning lots need only comply with the Florida Energy Conservation Code and any one of the other standards. For all other developments they proposed the standard requirement of one LEED Certified or FGBC Bronze. Both LEED Certified and FGBC Bronze could be achieved and count together as the two required standards (current standard). One other standard could be selected or proposed; however, the points awarded under the second standard could overlap the minimum points needed to achieve minimum LEED or FGBC certification. Staff requested Board input on the proposed programs and certification reconsiderations. If accepted, Staff would prepare a draft ordinance for consideration at a future meeting.

Board discussion focused on proposed sustainability updates for commercial and residential development within the Special Planning Area. Members reviewed certification programs, including LEED and the Florida Green Building Coalition, and questioned whether higher certification levels provided benefits beyond marketing, reduced operating costs, and utility savings. Staff explained that the proposal does not include additional incentives for higher certification tiers and stated that minimum certification standards have generally been achievable without conflicting with hurricane resilience and flood protection objectives. Staff also noted that the Florida Green Building Coalition incorporates Florida-specific resilience measures, including native landscaping, dune restoration, and hurricane preparedness.

The Board agreed that previously approved commercial projects, including the Miramar, should not be penalized and supported grandfathering projects that complied with the original requirements. Members also questioned the value of requiring third-party sustainability certifications for single-family and two-family homes, noting that current building codes already mandate significant energy-efficiency measures. Consensus emerged that these residential projects should be exempt from the certification requirements and treated consistently with similar homes citywide.

For commercial development, members supported retaining sustainability requirements but encouraged staff to focus on meaningful sustainability outcomes rather than requiring certifications for their own sake. Suggestions included incorporating specific sustainability standards directly into the ordinance and recognizing higher-tier certifications, such as LEED Gold, as an alternative to multiple minimum-level certifications. The board agreed that higher-tier certifications represent a more significant sustainability achievement and directed staff to return with a Comprehensive Plan amendment exempting single-family and two-family residential projects, along with revised commercial standards that preserve the City's sustainability objectives while addressing the loss of discontinued certification programs.

b. Status of expanded sidewalks in the Special Planning Area

Mr. Berry provided an update on the City's long-standing requirement for 10-foot-wide sidewalks

within the Special Planning Area along Gulf Boulevard, Blind Pass Road, and the Town Center Core Area. He explained that sidewalk installation is triggered by redevelopment projects and highlighted several major developments that will be required to install sidewalks along their entire frontage as redevelopment proceeds. Implementation has generally occurred through new development projects rather than existing properties. He also discussed challenges associated with the requirement, particularly for smaller change-of-use projects. His presentation is part of the meeting record.

Members supported expanding pedestrian infrastructure but questioned whether a 10-foot paved sidewalk was always the best solution and suggested incorporating landscaped buffers between the roadway and sidewalk, similar to designs used in downtown St. Pete and Pass-a-Grille, to improve pedestrian safety, provide shade, reduce impervious surfaces, enhance aesthetics, and create a more comfortable walking environment. Other pedestrian safety concerns along Gulf Blvd. were discussed including narrow sidewalks, utility poles, curb-cut conflicts, jaywalking, and heavy tourist pedestrian traffic. Staff agreed to explore the concept of landscaped buffers and coordinate with FDOT regarding potential design alternatives for future sidewalk projects. The discussion concluded with general support for evaluating ways to improve both the safety and appearance of the City's pedestrian network as redevelopment continues.

6. Adjournment - Next meeting July 20, 2026.

There being no further business, Chair Hubbard adjourned the meeting at 5:12 PM.

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