



Fort Myers Beach Town Council

**Town Hall Council Chambers
6231 Estero Boulevard
Fort Myers Beach, FL 33931**

Minutes**Monday, March 16, 2026****9:00 AM**

ORDER OF BUSINESS

I. CALL TO ORDER

Members Present: Mayor Dan Allers, Vice Mayor Scott Safford, Council Members John King, Rebecca Link, and John McLean.

II. INVOCATION

Town Clerk Baker.

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

IV. APPROVAL OF FINAL AGENDA

Council Member King moved to approve the final agenda, seconded by Council Member McLean.

The motion carried unanimously.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

Prior to Public Comment, Town Manager McKannay thanked Town Clerk Baker for acknowledging the two recovering staff members during the Invocation. He also thanked and commended the Fort Myers Beach Fire District, Lee County Sheriff's Department, and all staff who responded to one of the incidents. Similarly, he commended on the staff's quick reaction when one of the Rangers felt ill. He asked for all to keep the two staff members in their prayers.

Lori Webster, a resident, reminded Council to keep an open mind and to represent the community that they serve. She acknowledged the immense responsibility that Council members take on. She trusted that the body would hear, and not just listen to, the testimony presented. She asked that the Council act on facts rather than rumors. She thanked the Council for their time and service to the community.

Cher Lownie spoke on behalf of the Wyndham property across the street from Estero Cove. She and her husband own a unit there and have been on the board for years. She stated that instead of selling the property after Hurricane Ian and earning interest from the sale, the Pohlmann family held on and paid their taxes and construction crews.

She believed that the town government is now unfairly inconveniencing the owners in their attempts to build onto their property and further attract individuals to the south end of the island. She noted that there were not that many options in terms of places for long-term residents to eat and socialize.

Dave Garney introduced himself as an owner at Estero Cove. He requested that the Council expedite the opening of Bert's Beach Bar and other restaurants on the south end of the island. He noted that before Hurricane Ian, there was an abundance of restaurants. However, he believes now that such places are few and controlled by Santini Plaza and their rental fees. Mr. Garney stated that he checked the website for restaurant planning and emailed staff and the town with questions on plans for additional restaurants. He would like to see a five-year plan and learn why good restaurants are not opening businesses in this area.

Patrick Vanasse, speaking on behalf of Wyndham Property, requested that another speaker representing the Pohlmann family, John Callis, speak first before he addressed permitting issues. He also requested that the individual representing the contractor who has worked and is currently working on the project to speak before him. Mayor Allers approved the request.

Mr. Callis introduced himself as the representative of his family, who had owned the property since the late 1990s. He stated that the property first operated as a Holiday Inn before becoming the Wyndham property. He believed that he and his family have been good neighbors and acted in ways that were courteous to the neighborhood, such as by keeping the noise down. He plans to continue to keep it this way. When the building was destroyed by Hurricane Ian, he allowed for a triage center and property use by the city to stage the beach re-nourishment. He also said that he gave the go-ahead to staff for staging infrastructure projects. He provided that last week, he agreed to seaweed removal and placing dumpsters on the property. Mr. Callis believed that he has worked with the town as much as possible to make the town better. He noted the family's desire to keep the property in their hands and to open a bar and restaurant. He stated that they were currently in the permitting process and are looking to install a wave mitigation wall, which he believed everyone in the town would want. Because engineering is not finished yet, he is requesting that a special event permit be approved so that the family can open quickly and begin to use the infrastructure that is currently housed on another property. He thanked the Council for their time and thanked everyone for their support.

Lee Selton, who is with the contractor, noted that they have been working closely with Mr. Callis on getting the property cleaned and ready. He stated that once they receive approval, they would be able to clean up and be ready within 30 days. He does not believe that there would be any issues and noted that underground utilities already exist. He announced that most of the work would be reconnecting. Patrick Vanasse provided that there were multiple individuals in attendance from the surrounding condominium associations willing to yield their time to him, if allowed. Mayor Allers noted that four individuals were willing to cede their time. Mr. Vanasse stated that the property owners are currently working on a development agreement to add improvements to the property, a large tiki structure with a bar and restaurant with some trailers. He said that Mr. Callis wishes to open this year.

They looked into ways to expedite the process and went down the path of the ETPP permit, which they now realize is not viable due to the need for a pre-existing temporary permit. They are currently on Plan C for a reoccurring special event permit. He stated that they reviewed the code and did not find any restrictions on duration. He believed that it would be a creative solution until they can return to Council in the form of a public hearing. He expressed confidence that they have met all the criteria for the permit. He announced their plans to submit the application this week and requested that Council direct staff to add a hearing for a special events permit to the Council meeting on April 6, 2026. Mr. Vanasse noted that the Pohlmann family was a local family and that the property originally had two restaurants, a bar space, and consumption and entertainment on premises. They wish to bring back these uses. He also acknowledged Mr. Callis' desire to potentially create a wave mitigation wall and that the owner is in talks with the contractor. He asserted that this wall would serve as an eventual substitute for the trailers and would align with the town's wishes for more brick and mortar structure and improvements. He lastly requested Council's approval for the contractor to move forward on the LDO with onsite improvements. He stated that they can act very efficiently and quickly on these improvements. He noted that, regardless of the temporary use approval, they want to move forward with improvements and continue investing in the property.

Barbara Puffer stated that she and her husband have lived on Estero Boulevard since 1991. She is representing her condominium as well as a year-old advocacy group of eleven condo associations that involves 600 units. She requested a speedy process for the Wyndham property. She has provided a petition and copies of the appeal to Town Clerk Amy. Ms. Puffer thanked Town Manager McKannay for recommending that they come and speak at the public comment session. She also expressed her appreciation to the Council for focusing on the facts rather than internet vitriol. She noted that the Pohlmann family has allowed the community to access the beach across their property without any charge. She said that the family has been a good partner with the town. She was grateful for the family's decision to consider phased-in developments and installing permitted underground utilities. She also mentioned the community's desire to protect beach access and property values.

Susan Bookman introduced herself as a resident in Estero Cove on Estero Boulevard. She wanted to acknowledge that the Pohlmann family have been exceptional neighbors. The family has provided her and those on the east side of Estero Boulevard with beach access. She also noted that they have allowed their property to be used for emergency services after Hurricane Ian. The property also hosted sand sculpting events and provided the community with a place to gather, eat, drink and listen to music. She said that she never noticed any problems with traffic caused by those entering or exiting the parking lot. She also had not observed any disturbances, and that those who visited and used the property were mainly families with young children and senior citizens. She asserted that they needed a place that was nice and quiet like the Wyndham property.

Joy Sullivan, a full-time resident of Fort Myers Beach, announced that the FMB Community Foundation and Bay Oaks are holding a pickleball tournament this Saturday at the Bay Oaks Gym. She extended an invitation to attend and noted that there were still some spots open for both the morning and afternoon periods. The groups are raising money for charities, including the public library, Estero Island Historic Society, and more. She encouraged registration for the event. She stated that the Mayor and Town Manager will be participating in a match. She will be offering raffle tickets for a Gearbox pickleball paddle.

As the Membership Vice President of the Woman's Club, Ms. Sullivan asked for a "yes" vote to the organization's request.

Howie Hoffman, a resident of Fort Myers Beach for 27 years, voiced his appreciation for the Woman's Club. He requested that Council listen to the club's wishes.

VI. LOCAL ACHIEVEMENTS AND RECOGNITIONS

Council Member McLean stated that he wished he was able to experience the St. Patrick's Day Parade hosted by the Woman's Club. He, however, saw the pictures and commented that he was sure it was a wonderful event. He extended his congratulations.

Council Member Link agreed with Council Member McLean's remarks. She also wanted to extend her congratulations to the Lions Club.

Council Member King congratulated Council Member McLean's daughter on her engagement. He thanked town staff for their work and noted that he was glad to hear that the two town employees are doing well. He also acknowledged Vice Mayor Safford and fellow councilors for their work on the Lee County Metropolitan Planning Organization Survey. He noted that this was the only government entity with full participation. He stated that the state government did add additional requests but wanted to extend his thanks for the work done so far.

Vice Mayor Safford recognized both town staff and the Lee County Sheriff's Department for their excellent job on crowd control during spring break. He stated that there were not that many incidents and attributed the success to their good planning and execution.

Mayor Allers also congratulated Council Member McLean and his daughter. He thanked town staff and the Lee County Sheriff's Department for their work. He recognized the Woman's Club and the Lion's Club.

VII. ADVISORY COMMITTEES ITEMS / REPORTS / APPOINTMENTS

- A. Approve the appointment of members to the Public Safety Committee (PSC).
Approve the appointment of members to the Public Safety Committee (PSC).

Mayor Allers announced that there was one applicant, Robert Luke Williams. Town Clerk Baker noted that Mr. Williams was not in attendance but does have a message in case of appointment.

Vice Mayor Safford voted for Mr. Williams. Council Member King voted for Mr. Williams. Mayor Allers voted for Mr. Williams. Council Member Link voted for Mr. Williams.

Council Member McLean voted for Mr. Williams. All votes have been verified by all members of Council.

Council Member McLean moved to appoint Robert Luke Williams to the public open seat for the Public Safety Committee, seconded by Council Member King.

The motion carried unanimously.

Town Clerk Baker read the message that Mr. Williams provided following the appointment. He wrote that he was excited and honored to serve this position for the community. He is grateful to the Town Council for their trust in him. He looked forward to working with other community members, staff and residents. He recognizes the importance of public safety and is committed to approaching the tasks ahead with an open mind and what would be beneficial for everyone. He wanted to thank those who supported him along the way and encouraged all to contact him with ideas, thoughts, or concerns.

VIII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Town Clerk Baker noted that the office had lost their long-time transcriptionist and secured a new one. She stated that the Council should receive a package of minutes at their next meeting.

IX. CONSENT AGENDA

X. PUBLIC HEARINGS

Mayor Allers provided that the next three items are public hearings for review of land use requests. Town Attorney Stuparich noted that there is a variance request, a special exception request, and a rezoning request. She provided a summary of the quasi-judicial process. She asked Town Clerk Baker if all items have been properly noticed. Town Clerk Baker responded affirmatively. There were no conflicts of interest. Mayor Allers reiterated that his wife is a member of one of the applicant's organizations. The Town Attorney confirmed that this was not enough to warrant a conflict of interest to prevent him from voting, as his wife did not receive anything of monetary value. Town Clerk Baker swore in those providing testimony.

A. Resolution 26-020, VAR20250220- 173 Gulf Island Drive

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF FORT MYERS BEACH APPROVING/ APPROVING WITH CONDITIONS/ DENYING VARIANCE 20250220, REQUESTING A VARIANCE FROM SECTION 34-638(d)(6)b.3 OF THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE TO REDUCE THE REQUIRED 20-FOOT SIDE STREET SETBACK BY 11.9 FEET TO ALLOW A 232-SQUARE-FOOT DECK FOR THE EXISTING SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENCE IN THE RS ZONING DISTRICT, FOR THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 173 GULF ISLAND DRIVE, GENERALLY REFERRED TO AS STRAP NUMBER: 29-46-24-W2-0050C.0120 IN FORT MYERS BEACH; AND PROVIDING FOR OTHER CLARIFICATIONS AS NECESSARY; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS OF LAW, SCRIVENER'S ERRORS, SEVERABILITY AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Mayor Allers read the title of the resolution. Ex parte Communications: Council Member McLean heard this specific resolution as a member of the Local Planning Agency. Council Member Link received an email on February 12, 2026 from a Fort Myers resident, Robin Gornto, who advised her that the multi-generational neighborhood of single family homes wants to protect their quiet neighborhood. The resident was opposed to the variance and felt that there would be too much noise. Council Member Link thanked her for her comments and gave no promises that Council would listen. Vice Mayor Safford had a brief conversation with Mark Tagley, a neighbor, regarding this item.

Mr. Green has been recognized as an expert in his field. Mayor Allers asked the property owner if he had seen a copy of the back-up agenda materials from staff. The owner responded that he believed so.

Jason Green of Community Development Services reviewed the background of the request as stated on the blue sheet. He presented staff's recommendation to deny the variance request and noted that the Local Planning Agency voted unanimously to recommend denial. He also submitted the criteria that staff used for the Council's reference.

Mr. John Prinz, the owner of the property, stated that he bought the property three months before Hurricane Ian and then expanded his house after the hurricane. He planned to retire full-time on the property and currently spends around sixty days per year. He said that this was his family's destination house. In the interim, he noted that the property currently has monthly rentals, around four to six a year. The deck is the main form of access to the house and is about fifty years old. He views the structure as an eyesore. He spoke with neighbors but did not personally receive any signs of resistance to his plans.

Council Member McLean noted that, at the LPA hearing, neighbors did testify that the property was rented more frequently than monthly and expressed concerns about the noise, believing that this expansion would make the property more attractive to shorter-term rentals. Mr. Prinz responded that there were rumors that he was trying to make the property into a duplex with a party deck, and he does not understand how that came about. He said that he had a five-day rental from December to January, a rental in February, and a rental in March. He confirmed with his management company that there was a maximum of one rental per thirty-day period. He asserted that the company complied with this rule. He had received a permit from the village to operate monthly rentals, and he noted that the property manager is informed to keep the noise down. He acknowledged that there was one neighbor, who does not reside in a property in the direct line of sight, who expressed concerns about noise. He asserted that he will do all that he can to make sure there are no noise issues.

Council Member Link echoed Council Member McLean's concerns. She asked Mr. Prinz if the property and rentals are fully compliant. The owner responded affirmatively.

Vice Mayor Safford requested the name of the management company. Mr. Prinz answered that it was Sun Palace.

Mayor Allers asked staff if there were any open-code violations for this property in terms of short-term rentals. Mr. Green responded that there were none that he knew of at this time.

Mayor Allers questioned why the owner did not wish to build back the deck to what it was before the hurricane. Mr. Prinz said that the deck is noncompliant as-is and that the stairs went into the door. He wished for enough space to sit out on the deck. He also stated he was open to any adjustments, as needed.

Public Comment:

Susan Crawford, a resident of the town for over 30 years, stated that she lived directly next to the property. She believed that the 20-foot rule is there for a reason. She asserted that the violation was about 12 feet and set back just eight feet from the road. She thought that the violation was extreme and argued that other properties built around the area have been able to comply. She said that she and others have spoken at the town meetings in January and February.

Public comment closed.

Council Member McLean stated that he saw testimony on the record from residents who are opposed. While he heard the applicant has neighbor support, he stated that he did not see any evidence today. He provided that we all live with the benefit of extra land because of our right-of-ways, which sometimes can be significant. He noted that land rights go to the right-of-way line. He recognized that this property is already non-conforming and that the variance would make it even more so.

Council Member King moved to deny the resolution, seconded by Council Member Link.

Vice Mayor Safford noted that he has a difficult time going against the LPA's recommendation, and he concurs with that recommendation to deny.

Mayor Allers mentioned the potential neighbor support and the opposition during public comment. He stated that the town has always been open to individuals building back what was already there, especially in cases where there is a safety concern. He does not know how the property's neighbors would feel about this but did note the possibility of returning to Council. Town Attorney Stuparich stated that he would need to ask the maker and seconder of the motion if they would be willing to accept an amendment that would allow for continuance, or for the property owner to come back. Mayor Allers asked both Council Member King and Council Member Link. The property owner stated he would be happy to reapply and get some letters from neighbors for support.

Council Member McLean inquired if Council could deny the request without prejudice and allow for the item to come back. Town Attorney Stuparich responded affirmatively. Council Member King consented to the modification. Council Member McLean expressed his belief that this would be the right procedural path for the body.

Council Member Link asked for clarity on what the applicant could bring back in this case. Town Attorney Stuparich responded that the owner would have additional flexibility to bring up whatever would work. She read the relevant rule. Mr. Prinz asked if he would be able to ask for continuance. The Town Attorney noted that continuance would allow for the public hearing to resume and would not go back to the LPA for review.

Mayor Allers asked Council Member King if he wished to further modify so that there would be a continuance. Council Member King stated he would like to leave the motion as it was originally amended.

The motion to deny the resolution without prejudice carried unanimously by roll call vote.

B. Resolution 26-015, SEZ20250271, 166/168 Coconut Drive

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF FORT MYERS BEACH, FLORIDA APPROVING/ APPROVING WITH CONDITIONS/DENYING SPECIAL EXCEPTION SEZ20250271, A REQUEST TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF BEDROOMS IN A TWO-FAMILY RESIDENCE WHILE UTILIZING THE POST-DISASTER BUILDBACK CODE OF THE LDC SECTION 34-3238(2)(E)(4)(A), FOR THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 166/168 COCONUT DRIVE, GENERALLY REFERRED TO AS STRAP NUMBER: 29-46-24-W2-0070A.0160 IN FORT MYERS BEACH; PROVIDING FOR SCRIVENER'S ERRORS, SEVERABILITY, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Mayor Allers read the title of the resolution. Council Member McLean noted that he heard this resolution as a member of the LPA. Council Member Link noted that she had a brief interaction in regards to this item.

Mr. Green has been certified as an expert in his field. Mike Martell, the owner and contractor, made a request to be qualified as an expert witness. He noted that he is in the hurricane restoration business and has experience with FEMA compliance. Council Member King moved to accept the applicant as an expert witness for this quasi-judicial hearing, seconded by Mayor Allers.

The motion carried unanimously.

Jason Green of Community Development Services reviewed the background of the request as stated in the blue sheet. He reported that staff recommended approval of the special exception with the following conditions:

1) that three parking spaces be provided on-side and that the applicant would be responsible to ensure that vehicles have access to stabilized parking spaces and that no on-street parking would occur; 2) special exception approval does not equate to an undeniable right to permit approval and that such property must comply with requirements in the Fort Myers Beach Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code; and

3) that failure to comply with the above conditions would render the approval null and void. He also noted that the Building Code would also apply to the second condition. Council Member McLean asked if there was evidence that this property was originally a five-bedroom house. Mr. Green stated that, based on the best information available, the property was a two-family duplex with a total of five bedrooms and three bathrooms.

Vice Mayor Safford asked if the build-back would still be two units. Mr. Green responded affirmatively.

Mayor Allers requested the location of the fifth bathroom within the drawings. The owner indicated that there were only four bathrooms. Mr. Green noted that this adjustment could be made with the approval. Mr. Martell stated that his family will be living on the upper floor and the middle, or second, floor will be rented out. He is requesting the additional bedroom for his family residing on the property. He confirmed that he agrees to the stipulations provided by the town staff.

Council Member McLean asked if there are any parking changes requested and if there would be anything underneath the building that would inhibit parking. Mr. Martell answered that there would be one additional space and that there's currently space for six trucks and 300 feet of storage, as allowed by FEMA.

No public comment.

Council Member Link moved to approve Resolution 26-015 SEZ20250271 for 166/168 Coconut Drive as-is, seconded by Mayor Allers.

The motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

- C. Ordinance 25-20; CPD2025-0203, 175 Sterling Ave. (FMB Womans Club)
This quasi-judicial agenda item is a Second Reading and Final Public Hearing on proposed Ordinance 25-20.

AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF FORT MYERS BEACH, FLORIDA, APPROVING/APPROVING WITH CONDITIONS/ DENYING A REZONING TO A COMMERCIAL PLANNED DEVELOPMENT (CPD) FOR THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 175 STERLING AVENUE, A PARCEL GENERALLY IDENTIFIED AS STRAP NUMBER 33-46-24-W2-00004.0000 TOWN OF FORT MYERS BEACH FROM INSTITUTIONAL TO ALLOW FOR THE REDEVELOPMENT OF THE PROPERTY FOR THE FORT MYERS BEACH WOMANS CLUB; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT OF LAW, SCRIVENER'S ERRORS AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Mayor Allers read the title of the ordinance. Ex parte Communications: Council Member McLean disclosed that he had spoken with two neighbors and two members of the Woman's Club. Council Member Link provided the following disclosures: 1) February 6th, an e-mail requesting to limit member organization and recreational uses for this property to non-profit organizations with support for parking lot uses; 2) February 11th, a phone call communicating a preference for institutional zoning and special exception in lieu of rezoning;

3) February 20th, a meeting with two individuals of the Woman's Club where the Council Member noted that she would and did step out of the room once this topic was brought up; 4) her conversation with one of the two Woman's Club members who let her know that the club had no intention of selling; 5) March 4th, the same individual from the fourth disclosure approached her; 6) March 15th, an e-mail from Cyndi Hawkins of the Women of Irish Heritage of Southwest Florida spoke of the benefits of their collaboration with the Woman's Club and expressed her support; and 7) an e-mail from Beth Burwinkel who is in support of the new project. She noted that she never promises any guarantees to those who reach out to her. Both Council Member King and Vice Mayor Safford stated that they had received the same emails as Council Member Link and also had discussions with individuals from both sides. Mayor Allers stated that he did converse with some individuals during the Saint Patrick's Day Parade but that the topics revolved around the organization, the building, and donations.

Mr. Green has been certified as an expert in his field.

James Ink presented a background on the property. The building was destroyed by Hurricane Ian, and he was onboarded for this project. They had a pre-application meeting with town staff where they discussed how the Woman's Club building does not fit the cultural facility category. Instead, they agreed that public service would better match the organization and its purpose. He also noted that they did want to allow for consumption on-site, which would require a special exception and a public hearing. They discussed and revised the schedule of uses, which is incorporated into the new master concept plan. The application, with the plan and schedule of uses, was submitted. The town staff came back with minor requested changes, and those were completed. The staff created a report and presented to the LPA, who had minimal comments. He did note that there was one member of the public who had concerns about what would happen if the Woman's Club goes away. The LPA voted unanimously. The first Council meeting was in January. The item passed unanimously. In the second reading, there was an issue with the advertising sign. This issue was resolved, and they completed the necessary tasks with Town Clerk Baker. There was also a neighborhood meeting that did get contentious. He also added some comments on the current code and any potential future updates.

Mari Torgerson, a member of the Woman's Club, detailed the progress the organization made since she joined in 2017. After Hurricane Ian, the board voted to approve an emergency deviation in their mission statement to assist the residents of Fort Myers Beach. The organization raised funds that went to those directly affected. During pre-application discussions, she stated that she was shocked that alcohol was not allowed for institutional zoning. She expressed her opinions against adding non-profit use to the CPD. She provided a summary of the discussions with staff on the specific category for use. She also noted that the organization incorporated a bylaws provision on dissolution because they needed a plan in case something did happen.

She emphasized that the organization does not have any plans to sell the property.

Mr. Ink summarized their requests and asked for time following public comment for rebuttal.

Public Comment:

Deb Nelson, a board member of the Woman's Club, noted that the organization helped her find her people. She noted that the club centers around the importance of helping others and commitment. She provided that the bylaws provision on dissolution helps to strengthen the organization and that there are no plans to sell or leave. Donna Marie Rich noted that she joined shortly after Hurricane Ian. She praised the organization and its members for their kindness and energy. She stated that the club is committed to service, education, and collaboration. She believed that rebuilding the property would allow for restoration of a gathering place for community, service, education and partnership.

Kathy Nash, also a member of the Woman's Club, praised the club's work for the community. She stated that the organization is staying and growing.

Dawn Thomas, a past president and co-chair of the Capital Campaign for the Fort Myers Beach Woman's Club, emphasized the organization's commitment to transparency in the rebuilding process. She stated that they were approached by two buyers but noted that the organization had no intention of selling. While she understands the public's concerns and desire to restrict the sale of this property to another non-profit organization, she noted that such a restriction would diminish property value.

Greg S. expressed his deep appreciation for the organization, especially for their assistance following Hurricane Ian. He stated that this was one of the reasons that he joined the club. He stressed that the organization is transparent in its request and believed that the development is appropriate for the island.

Barbara Mezeske, President of the Woman's Club, said that the group has worked diligently and tirelessly to rebuild the property. She noted the organization's intention to restore a building that everyone can enjoy.

Anita Cereceda, a member of the LPA and former Council Member, asked that Council approve the request. She stressed the importance of facts over passion, especially for zoning issues. She believed that there was no reason to not approve.

Ron Benack voiced his support for the request. He acknowledged that while there is some miscommunication regarding the rebuilding, he believed that the community wants the Woman's Club back in the neighborhood.

Kristin Carrington, co-founder of the FMB Tip Jar, praised the work and contributions of the Woman's Club and showed her support for the request.

Peter Andis, representing Snug Harbor Restaurant and Wahoo Willies, acknowledged the Woman's Club, and the men and women that make up its membership, for their contributions to the community. He noted that businesses and individuals alike benefit from the actions of the club. He believed that volunteers are a part of Fort Myer Beach's identity.

Lori Webster, a resident and member of the Woman's Club, stated that the club made a huge impact on her and many others in the community. She praised the club's work and planning, referring to some recent and upcoming events as examples. She does not understand where the concerns for selling are coming from and stressed that the club has no plans on moving.

Cole Stinson focused on Fort Myer Beach's strong sense of community. He stated that he valued his time more than his money and that his (and many other vendors') choice to assist the Woman's Club shows how much the club means to this community. He voiced his support for this rebuild.

Ellen Vaughn, a member of the Woman's Club and a Fort Myers Beach resident, emphasized the importance of focusing on the facts rather than feelings. She believed in the club and its ability to pivot and thrive in the face of change.

Nan Williams, a member and past Treasurer, Vice President, and board member, noted the hard work that she and the rest of the club have done. She cited the St. Patrick's Day Parade as an example. She voiced her support for the request.

Howie praised the Woman's Club and asked Council to approve their wishes.

Three members of the public ceded their time to Patrick Vanasse. Mr.

Vanasse wished to address the misunderstandings that he and others were in opposition to the rebuilding. He noted that they only wished for guardrails to be set in place. He expressed his concerns about what could happen in the future, should the Woman's Club wish to sell. He believed that the property would be very attractive to those who wish to build a private club at that location. He stated that he would like to see protection against these situations. He proposed three options, which he outlined in a handout that was distributed to the Council: 1) retain institutionalized zoning; 2) include an annotation to the usage for non-profits only; and 3) define the organization using the categories offered by Lee County.

Tom Torgerson noted that while guardrails are beneficial in some cases, they can be counterproductive in others. He believes that any restrictions on the rebuilding will fall in the latter of the two situations. He stated such guardrails would lower property value and collateral, which would impact the club's financing options. He asserts that all will benefit from this rebuilding.

Angie Deers, a board member of the Woman's Club, found friendships, purpose, and community in the club. She described the organization's work after Hurricane Ian and stated that those actions truly showed what the group represented. She voiced her support for the request.

Randy Weck, a Fort Myers resident, praised the club's work after Hurricane Ian. He asserted that they need structures like the one in this request and showed his support for the rebuilding.

Albert Dambrose, architect of Studio AD and future resident, acknowledged the club's work following Hurricane Ian and expressed his commitment to assist the organization as an architect. He voiced his request that the Council allow for the rebuild to move forward.

Mr. Ink provided his closing remarks. He noted the four conditions: 1) development of the property must comply with all requirements of the Fort Myers Beach Comprehensive Plan and LDC in effect at the time of permit approval, except as specifically modified herein; 2) the development order must be substantially with the master concept plan exhibit and building elevation renderings in this case DCI20250203; 3) these elevations are deemed consistent with the land development code Division 7 Commercial Design Standards; 4) All state and local permits including but not limited to right-of-way and storm water permits, must be applied for and received prior to commencement of site development; and 5) all landscaping must meet the visibility vehicle at intersection requirements found in 34-3131 of the land development code. He provided that they were not in support of any other conditions provided by Mr. Vanasse.

Public comment closed.

Council Member McLean noted that the four conditions that Mr. Ink provided were more comprehensive than the staff recommendation. He wished to ensure that the master concept plan and that the missing condition be included. Mr. Ink confirmed that they are binded to the plan and the elevations. Council Member Link wished to know if the CPD is protecting the neighborhood by having clear and specific uses and if it limits the development standards. Mr. Ink responded affirmatively and also noted it limits the elevations. She then asked if institutional zoning with special exemption would afford more flexibility but would mean going back to the start of the process. He responded yes to both.

Council Member King inquired as to how the staff came to the conclusion that the rebuilding would not have an adverse effect. Mr. Greene responded that this was a standard statement when a small-scale property already exists and had a similar use.

Following the closing of the public hearing, Council Member King began the discussion by pointing out his disappointment in the staff for forcing applicants to choose between options they may not necessarily want. He voiced his support for the Woman's Club and said that he did not like to devalue property.

Vice Mayor Safford wished that a deal could have been worked out. He noted again his deference to the LPA decision (especially when unanimous and accompanied by staff approval).

Mayor Allers spoke in favor of the Woman's Club and emphasized that residents are not entitled to the right to choose their own neighbors.

Town Attorney Stuparich noted there was only one substantive change with the additional condition. There were also minor wording modifications between the conditions identified by Mr. Ink and the ones provided. She believes that staff does not have any concerns and that there are no deviations from the uses.

She listed them as follows: a membership organization as the principal use, the administrative offices, the on-premise consumption of alcoholic beverages, an ATM, temporary uses, and commercial accessory uses. These are contingent on the design attached as part of Exhibit C. She provided a summary of the following exhibits: 1) Exhibit A, the master concept plan; 2) Exhibit B, the schedule of uses; 3) Exhibit C, the architectural rendering; and 4) Exhibit D, the conditions of approval.

Council Member McLean moved to approve Ordinance 26-06; CPD2025-0203, 175 Sterling Ave. (FMB Womans Club) and to do so with the conditions as listed and the additional conditions that are included by the applicant as far as the elevation drawings and the master concept plan being included as part of the conditions, seconded by Council Member Link.

The motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

The Council took a recess for 15 minutes.

D. Ordinance 26-06, Purchasing Ordinance Amendments

This legislative agenda item is a Second Reading and Public Hearing on proposed Ordinance 26-06.

AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF FORT MYERS BEACH, FLORIDA, AMENDING DIVISION 1 PURCHASING OF GOODS AND SERVICES POLICIES AND PROCEDURES OF ARTICLE V FINANCE OF THE TOWN OF FORT MYERS BEACH CODE OF ORDINANCES TO 1) CLARIFY AND STREAMLINE EXISTING REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES; 2) INCORPORATE BY REFERENCE STATUTORY MANDATORY TERMS AND CONDITIONS AND STATE AND FEDERAL GRANT REQUIREMENTS; AND 3) IMPLEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS PROVIDED TO THE TOWN BASED ON THE DISASTER READINESS ASSESSMENT PREPARED BY THE FLORIDA DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT OF LAW, SCRIVENER'S ERRORS AND SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Mayor Allers read the title of the Ordinance. Jason Freeman, Deputy Town Clerk and Legislative Liaison, was available to answer questions. No public comment.

Council Member King moved to approve Ordinance 26-06, seconded by Council Member Link.

The motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

XI. ADMINISTRATIVE AGENDA**A. Resolution 26-057; Mooring Field Office Lease**

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF FORT MYERS BEACH, FLORIDA, APPROVING A COMMERCIAL LEASE WITH FMB MATANZAS LLC FOR DOCK SPACE, UPLAND RESTROOM FACILITIES, AND OFFICE SPACE FOR THE MATANZAS PASS MOORING FIELD AND NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES OPERATIONS; AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO EXECUTE THE COMMERCIAL LEASE ON BEHALF OF THE TOWN; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Mayor Allers read the title of the resolution. Town Manager McKannay acknowledged the Harbor Master and the Matanzas Pass Bayside Resort for working together. Curtis Ludwig, Harbor Master, asserted that this new contract and office space would help the Mooring Field. He believed it would allow for more opportunities for amenities that they can charge their customers. There is now a physical address to allow customers to have packages delivered, for a charge. There are also mailboxes, which can be rented.

Council Member King noted that there was good negotiation based on the difference between the current and past agreement.

Vice Mayor Safford inquired about the revenue outlook. Mr. Ludwig noticed that the numbers are slightly higher than last year, and they are hoping to close near the \$300,000 mark. He said that the increase was approximately ten percent.

Council Member McLean acknowledged the good job and is excited that there will be proper facilities for guests. Mayor Allers wished to confirm that the lease would be paid from funds from the Mooring Field and not directly from the taxpayer fund. Community Development Director Frankie Kropacek stated that it is a combination of funds from the Mooring Field and Community Services from Tom Yozzo's side. Mr. Ludwig also noted that the rangers and code officers would also be able to use the office space.

Council Member King moved to approve the resolution, seconded by Mayor Allers.

The motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

XII. FINAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Anita Cereceda addressed some of her remarks from the beginning of the meeting. She wished to explain her intent during the discussions on the Wyndham property. She noted the slippery slope that recurring special event permits can cause. She stated that these types of permits were originally used for bands or farmer's markets that occur once or twice a week. She stated that businesses who operate six to seven days a week should not be considered recurring. She thanked the Council for their vote. She expressed her wishes to see development in the south end of the island but wants improvements to be done properly. She identified zoning cases as extensions of permissions and not as transactions.

She requested the Council open this to further public discourse rather than simply give their approval.

Patrick Vanasse expressed his disagreement with Ms. Cereceda's remarks. He believes in following the process and noted that he conferred with staff and then made his request. He asserts that the special events permit does offer flexibility and that Council should be able to use this as a creative solution to allow a business to move forward more quickly.

XIII. TOWN MANAGER'S ITEMS

A. Update on Strategic Planning Session and April M&P dates

Town Manager McKannay called up Tracy Kohler for an update on the Strategic Planning Session. She reported that the staff has been working on finalizing the objections, key actions, and measurable KPIs to submit to USF, Angela Christ, and the Daily Institute for consideration. There is currently a draft version that Angela will be editing to better meet the Council's expectations. They expect to come before the Council on Thursday, May 7, 2026.

Information will be published prior to that date for public comment and the Council's review.

B. Follow-Up: Lowe's Community Bucket-List Project Ideas

Town Manager McKannay also followed-up on the Lowe's community grant opportunity. He noted that they will be asking for assistance in constructing an elevated storm resilience recovery operations base. The application will request funds for covering the currently unprotected space. He also expressed their wishes to be able to use the area for maintenance and office space. He stated that the project would cost around \$500,000.

XIV. TOWN ATTORNEY'S ITEMS

Town Attorney Stuparich noted her plans to work with Town Manager McKannay on the special events issue.

XV. COUNCILMEMBERS ITEMS AND REPORTS

Council Member McLean noted that the Mound House was hosting some interesting events.

Council Member Link requested to learn more about how items are ultimately placed on the agenda.

Vice Mayor Safford wished to address an e-mail he received about the bridge closure on the first weekend and Estero Boulevard closure on the second weekend. He believed that the town may wish to look into pushing out more information ahead of major closures. Town Manager McKannay is confident that notifications were made but noted that he also received similar feedback. He will look into the processes and find ways to improve. Mayor Allers also noted that news stations provided the information. Vice Mayor Safford stated that some of the information was inconsistent, and Council Member King echoed his remarks.

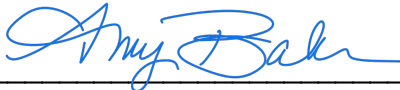
Vice Mayor Safford requested that Council discuss a path where businesses can, during construction, move next door and generate buzz for commercial enterprise. Mayor Allers noted that he believed Council agreed not to issue any new temporary permits and that the plan was that, once the development order is approved, the business could come back before Council to ask for such use. Vice Mayor Safford requested time at a future Management & Planning Session to discuss paths that businesses can utilize as they are growing their brick-and-mortar operations. Mayor Allers suggested that the applicants come back and provide updates on their permits, infrastructure, and development order. He also provided his consent but noted some potential complications in creating a new path. Town Attorney Stuparich noted that this could potentially be done on individual projects by the Council but that specificity is essential. She also provided that by allowing one project to go through without final approval, there is detrimental reliance. This would expose the town to legal liability. She emphasized that Council must proceed very carefully. Town Manager McKannay also expressed caution.

XVI. ADJOURNMENT

Council Member King moved to adjourn. There were no objections.
The meeting adjourned at 12:57 p.m.

Minutes adopted as presented, April 6, 2026. Motion by Council Member McLean and seconded by Council Member King.

Passed 5-0



Amy Baker, Town Clerk