

MINUTES
CITY COMMISSION MEETING
JULY 21, 2025
7:00 P.M.

This Commission Meeting was conducted utilizing Communications Media Technology. Some Staff members were present in the Commission Chambers while others were present via the Zoom application.

ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT IN CHAMBERS:

Dan West, Mayor
Brian Williams, Vice-Mayor/ Commissioner Ward 3
Tamara Cornwell, Commissioner-at-Large 2
Sunshine Joiner, Commissioner, Ward 2
Harold Smith, Commissioner Ward 1 (Not Present)
Scott Whitaker, Commissioner-at-Large 1

STAFF PRESENT IN CHAMBERS:

Jim Freeman, City Clerk
Marisa Powers, City Attorney
Mohammed Rayan, Public Works Director
Scott Tyler, Chief of Police
Rowena Young-Gopie, CRA Director (Not Present)
Cassi Bailey, Assistant City Clerk
Jake Bibler, City Planner
Annie Jones, Executive Assistant

STAFF PRESENT ELECTRONICALLY:

Todd Williams, Information Technology (IT) Consultant

1. Mayor West called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance, and Commissioner Sunshine Joiner, gave the prayer for tonight's meeting.

All persons intending to address the City Commission were duly sworn.

2. CITY COMMISSION AGENDA APPROVAL

MOTION: Commissioner Joiner moved, Commissioner Cornwell seconded, and the motion carried 4-0 to approve the July 21, 2025 City Commission Agenda.

Chief Tyler presented four new officers and two promotions. The new officers were Officer Izazier Whitfield, Officer Zachary Stackhouse, Officer Timothy Downey Jr., and Officer Jordan Caouette. Sargeant Schlabach and Corporal Moriarty both received promotions this year.

3. ~~VEOLIA REBATE CHECK PRESENTATION~~

This has been postponed to August 4th.

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4. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Minutes: 5/19/25, 6/2/25, 6/16/25
- b. Special Function Permit: Unity in the Community Gateway
- c. Special Function Permit: Veteran's Day Parade
- d. DEP Request for Inclusion on the Drinking Water Priority List
- e. DEP Request for Inclusion on the Clean Water Priority List
- f. Resolution 2025-12 Half Cent Infrastructure FY2025 Budget Adjustment

MOTION: Commissioner Cornwell moved, Commissioner Joiner seconded, and the motion carried 4-0 to approve items 5a., 5b., and 5c. from the Consent Agenda as presented by staff.

Commissioner Cornwell pulled items 5d. and 5e. and asked for clarification on the projects accompanying the applications. Mr. Rayan answered by reading from the point papers included in the agenda.

Commissioner Cornwell pulled item 5f. and asked for clarification. Mr. Freeman explained the budget adjustment to the transportation section.

Commissioner Williams questioned the alley listed on the list for item 5f. Commissioner Williams doesn't think we should spend money on alleys. He asked if the CRA could pay for it. Mr. Rayan responded that he can't get anything paid for by the CRA.

Commissioner Whitaker confirmed with Mr. Rayan that these streets are chosen systematically.

MOTION: Commissioner Cornwell moved, Commissioner Joiner seconded, and the motion carried 4-0 for items 5d., 5e., and 5f.

6. FISCAL YEAR 2026 PROPOSED AGGREGATE MILLAGE RATE AND DATES FOR TENTATIVE AND FINAL BUDGET HEARINGS (J.FREEMAN)

Mr. Freeman provided a recap and led a discussion on potential budget dates.

Commissioner Williams expressed support for proposing an increase to the preliminary millage rate at this stage, noting that it could be lowered later if needed. Commissioner Cornwell stated that the current millage rate is one that could remain steady. Commissioner Joiner indicated that while she is not in favor of raising the rate, she is open to doing so for the purposes of discussion. Commissioner Whitaker agreed to support raising the preliminary millage rate for discussion but emphasized not exceeding that rate unless absolutely necessary.

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Mr. Freeman noted that even maintaining the current millage rate would result in a tax increase due to rising property values. Commissioner Williams agreed.

Commissioner Williams wants to increase the preliminary millage rate by a quarter of a mill, which would be \$6.2171.

MOTION: Commissioner Williams moved, Commissioner Joiner seconded, and the motion carried 3-1 to approve a proposed aggregate millage rate of \$6.2171 for FY 2026 and to schedule the tentative budget hearing for September 8, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. or as soon thereafter as same can be heard in these Chambers and a final budget hearing on September 23, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. or as soon thereafter as same can be heard in these Chambers. (Commissioner Cornwell voted nay.)

7. FIRST READING ORDINANCE 2025-06: SIGN CODE CHANGES

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF PALMETTO, FLORIDA, AMENDING CHAPTER 3, ARTICLE III, SECTION 3-62 TO AMEND LANGUAGE RELATING TO SPECIFIC APPROVALS AND REMOVE PROVISIONS RELOCATED TO ANOTHER SECTION; SECTION 3-63 TO REMOVE PROVISION RELOCATED TO ANOTHER SECTION; SECTION 3-65 TO CORRECT A SCRIVENER'S ERROR AND ADD RELOCATED SECTION RELATING TO PROHIBITED SIGNS AND VEHICLE AND TRAILER SIGNS; SECTION 3-66 TO AMEND LANGUAGE RELATING TO SANDWICH BOARDS AND ADD ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS RELATING TO SIGNS EXEMPT FROM PERMIT REQUIREMENTS; SECTION 3-67 TO AMEND LANGUAGE RELATING TO TEMPORARY SIGNS BY PERMIT AND TO REMOVE PROVISIONS RELOCATED TO ANOTHER SECTION; SECTION 3-68 TO AMEND LANGUAGE RELATING TO WALL SIGN SETBACKS AND TO ADD A TABLE RELATING TO SETBACK REQUIREMENTS; SECTION 3-73 TO REMOVE LANGUAGE RELATING TO RETURNING SIGNS REMOVED BY THE CITY; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR REPEAL OF ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Jake Bibler introduced the agenda item, noting that it had been previously discussed on February 24th and June 2nd. The only change since the last discussion was the addition of a definition for the term "vulgar." The item is currently scheduled for a public hearing on August 4th. Mr. Bibler informed the Commission that he will not be available on that date. If his presence is requested, the hearing will need to be rescheduled to August 25th.

Commissioner Williams raised several questions regarding the redlined draft:

- On Page 2, he questioned the change in approval authority from the Planning and Zoning Board to the City Commission, as well as the lack of a lead-in to the listed criteria under subsection (a).
- On Page 8 – Section 3-65(4), it was noted that "vulgar" is now defined in subsection (j).
- Section 3-65(5) regarding business vehicles on City streets was discussed. Commissioner Whitaker suggested clarifying "right-of-way" to include streets, but it was decided to keep the language as written.
- Section 3-66(7) on sandwich board signs was reviewed. The 5-foot clearance requirement, already in the code, was questioned by Commissioner Williams as overly restrictive. Mr. Rayan clarified this is an ADA minimum requirement.

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- Flagpole height limits were discussed, with existing flagpoles to be grandfathered. A question about requiring illumination of U.S. flags was raised, Ms. Powers will follow up.
- The topic of temporary sign removal was addressed. The code currently gives the Police Department authority to remove signs. Discussion included whether an appeals process exists for such removals.

MOTION: Commissioner Williams moved, Commissioner Joiner seconded, and the motion carried 4-0 to approve the First Reading of Ordinance 2025-06 and authorize staff to notice this for the appropriate public hearings.

8. ADOPTION PUBLIC HEARING ORDINANCE 2025-03: A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN POLICY TO ALLOW COASTAL HIGH HAZARD AREA ALTERNATIVES

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF PALMETTO, FLORIDA APPROVING TEXT AMENDMENTS TO THE PALMETTO COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDING OBJECTIVES 1.6 AND 8.5 REGARDING DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE COASTAL HIGH HAZARD AREA (CHHA) AND RELATED POLICIES; AMENDING THE MAXIMUM DENSITIES AND INTENSITIES ALLOWED WITHIN THE CHHA IF CERTAIN CRITERIA CAN BE MET; FINDING THIS AMENDMENT TO BE CONSISTENT WITH THE GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES OF THE ADOPTED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 163.3184, FLORIDA STATUTES; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT, SEVERABILITY, PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Mayor West opened the Public Hearing at 8:21 pm.

Mayor West closed the Public Hearing at 8:21 pm.

MOTION: Commissioner Williams moved, Commissioner Joiner seconded, and the motion carried 4-0 to adopt Ordinance 2025-03, amending Comprehensive Plan Objectives 1.6 and 8.5 regarding development within the Coastal High Hazard Area and related policies.

9. JUNE 2025 CHECK REGISTER (INFORMATIONAL ONLY)

COMMENTS:

10. DEPARTMENT HEADS' COMMENTS

Mr. Rayan provided the following updates:

- Water Valve Replacements: Crews remain actively engaged in ongoing valve replacement work.
- 10th Avenue Complete Street Project: RFQ has been issued; an initial informational meeting was held last week. The project has secured \$1.7 million in state funding and will proceed through the standard process.
- Grant Proposals: Proposals are being obtained for the five project segments outlined in the recent grant application. An update on the City's inclusion in the grant list is expected soon.

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- Ward 1 Phase III: The project is currently in its second quarter. It has received a \$2.5 million appropriation from the state. Delays due to longer lead times for parts are ongoing, but the team is aiming to regain momentum.
- Paving Projects: Paving has been approved and will now move forward. Stormwater infrastructure work is also in progress.
- Inflow & Infiltration (I&I) Mitigation: Efforts continue, including smoke testing and pipelining replacements.
- Daily Operations: Crews continue performing well, especially with ongoing valve replacement tasks.

Mr. Freeman shared that staff would continue working on short-term repairs to the deliberator system, while also planning for a full system replacement in the long term. He also reported that all four City projects submitted for state appropriations, each sponsored by local legislators, were approved and signed by the Governor.

Chief Tyler said it was great to be back from his short retirement. His department is stepping up traffic enforcement.

Mr. Rayan stated that he plans to present the engineer's report, Veolia's report, and a third-party report following a site visit to Foley, Alabama. He anticipates bringing these items back for discussion at the August 25th workshop.

11. MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor shared that the 4th Fest was a fantastic event, with the weather contributing to its success. Leah Brown is scheduled to provide a full report on the event at the August 4th meeting. Upcoming backpack giveaway events were mentioned, along with a successful Juneteenth celebration held at Mt. Carmel. The City's presence on Facebook and Instagram continues to see strong engagement and positive results.

12. COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Commissioner Cornwell shared her appreciation for Officer Lopez, who was seen pushing a man's car in the rain. She inquired about the status of Christmas decorations, to which Mr. Rayan responded that progress is being made. He suggested coordination with the Downtown Main Street Program. Commissioner Cornwell also expressed her gratitude that the fireworks were able to proceed on the 4th of July and thanked Mr. Rayan for the signage indicating upcoming road closures.

Commissioner Joiner seconded how great the 4th of July event was. Our repaired seahorse at 8th Avenue and Riverside Drive looks great!

Commissioner Williams requested updates on the Altier and Gray projects. Mr. Freeman reported that Altier has submitted their rezoning and General Development Plan (GDP) to the Planning Department. The City also received an unsolicited offer regarding a small retention pond area near the site; a survey has been completed, and staff is reviewing details before proceeding. Altier remains

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in the due diligence phase. Regarding the Gray project, Mr. Freeman stated that it is also in the due diligence phase. The TIF application is scheduled to come before the Commission at the August 4th meeting. There may be a slight adjustment to the due diligence timeline, but the project continues to move forward and appears to be on track. On the Heartland project, Ms. Powers noted that Palmetto Green is no longer involved. Sight Development is addressing legal matters, and the legal team is currently reviewing the application of delays related to emergency orders issued after recent hurricanes. For the ReEnvision project, Ms. Powers shared that regular meetings are ongoing with Ms. Young-Gopie. The project is scheduled to come before the CRAAB Board soon to present a conceptual timeline.

Commissioner Williams wants the information on the ReEnvision projects shared with Ward 1. Commissioner Williams asked if the City could share the CRA's social media page on theirs.

Commissioner Williams asked that representatives from Manatee County come to a meeting regarding the Foley, Alabama trip. He then asked if they could cancel the July 28th Budget Workshop.

MOTION: Commissioner Williams moved, Commissioner Whitaker seconded, and the motion carried 4-0 to cancel the Budget Workshop on July 28th.

Commissioner Whitaker was glad to see Chief Tyler back and was excited to see the presentation of new officers today. He also shared a recent experience where his mother-in-law was a victim of fraud and praised the Palmetto Police Department for their exceptional treatment and assistance. He appreciates all they do.

Commissioner Williams asked each Department Head to send him a wish list for the budget.

Mayor West adjourned the meeting at 8:52 pm.

MINUTES APPROVED: AUGUST 25, 2025

JAMES R. FREEMAN

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CITY CLERK