DRAFT
CITY COMMISSION MEETING
JULY 20, 2026
6:15 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
Sunshine Joiner, Vice-Mayor, Commissioner, Ward 2
Tamara Cornwell, Commissioner-at-Large 2
Harold Smith, Commissioner Ward 1 (Entered the meeting at 6:17 pm)
Scott Whitaker, Commissioner-at-Large 1
Brian Williams, Commissioner Ward 3

STAFF PRESENT IN CHAMBERS:
Jim Freeman, City Clerk
Marisa Powers, City Attorney
Mohammed Rayan, Public Works Director (Not Present)
Scott Tyler, Chief of Police
Rowena Young, CRA Director (Present via ZOOM)
Cassi Bailey, Deputy City Clerk
Amanda Beaver, Administrative Assistant
Jake Bibler, CRA Assistant Director
Jeff Bowman, City Planner
Todd Williams, Information Technology (IT) Consultant

** AGENDA WAS AMENDED ON 7/14/2026 TO ADD ITEM NUMBER 9 **

1. Mayor West called the meeting to order at 6:15 pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance, and Pastor James from Crossroads Church, 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 Whitaker seconded, and the motion carried 4-0 to approve the July 20, 2026 City Commission Agenda.**

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

John Sidor spoke about Data Centers and asked that there be a discussion about it.

Barbara McEvoy spoke for Tropic Isles and their opinion that mis-information was being shared regarding the Adaptation Plan.

Jose Torres spoke from Tropic Isles and their concern with the Adaptation Plan.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

a. Minutes: 5/4/2026, 5/18/2026, 6/1/2026
b. Special Function Permit: Turkey Trot
c. Special Function Permit: A Joyful Noise
d. Special Function Permit: Motor Fest 2027
e. Special Function Permit: Teach Them to Fish Camp 2026
f. City Legal Invoices
g. CRAAB Appointment

MOTION: **Commissioner Cornwell moved, Commissioner Joiner seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to approve the Consent Agenda as presented by staff.**

5. ADAPTATION PLAN PRESENTATION (R. YOUNG)

Ms. Young, spoke via ZOOM. She shared that this initiative started after the vulnerability study in 2024.

Matthew Pleasant, Applied Sciences, shared a presentation, which was included in the agenda.

Commissioner Cornwell questioned why this wasn't on a Workshop. It was on a June Workshop agenda, but they ran out of time. So, it was asked that they place it on this agenda for them to be heard. That is why no action is accompanied with this item.

The Commission discussed several concerns related to flood management and seawalls. Commissioner Cornwell questioned how elevating seawalls would help, noting that the water would have to go somewhere. Mr. Pleasant explained that elevated seawalls could provide protection during storm surge events but emphasized the importance of developing a comprehensive and uniform plan to ensure that flood protection measures do not redirect water onto neighboring, lower-lying properties. The Commission also discussed the pumping of water and questioned where the water would be discharged, as well as whether seawalls should be removed in certain areas.

Questions were also raised about the inclusion of photographs of private property in the study. Mr. Bibler explained that the photographs were being used in connection with potential updates to the applicable code and that existing conditions may be grandfathered in until future modifications or updates are required. Commissioner Cornwell then raised additional questions concerning driveways.

Commissioner Williams discussed areas he anticipates being designated as wetlands, noting that some of the areas identified on the map contain mangroves. He expressed concern about an overly cautious "sky is falling" mentality and emphasized the need for flexibility when applying building codes to older homes. He recommended focusing on building code requirements while allowing appropriate deviations when necessary to address existing conditions and help mitigate flooding.

6. PUBLIC HEARING ORDINANCE 2026-10 RE-ZONE BRADFORD BAKER/PALMETTO PLACE, LLC/ 702 10TH AVE W, PALMETTO FL, 34221 (PLANNING)

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF PALMETTO, FLORIDA REZONING APPROXIMATELY 4.5 +/- ACRES OF PROPERTY GENERALLY LOCATED AT 702 10th AVENUE WEST, PALMETTO, FLORIDA, FROM CITY ZONING P (PUBLIC), RM-6 (MULTI-FAMILY), AND CG (COMMERCIAL GENERAL) TO CITY ZONING PD-MU (PLANNED DEVELOPMENT MIXED USE), AND AS MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED IN THIS ORDINANCE; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE. (PALMETTO PLACE, LLC.)

Mayor West opened the Public Hearing at 7:08 pm.

Mr. Bowman introduced this item. This item began in 2024. Taylor Hague, Wade Trim, presented this item. A PowerPoint was included in the agenda. The existing zoning district is P (Public) and RM-6 (Multi-Family) and the proposed zoning district is PD-MU (Planned Development Multi-Use). The Future Land Use Map is Planned Community (PC). He explained the Comprehensive Plan Flex Provision. Staff finds the proposed rezone and use are consistent with the intent of the comprehensive plan and compatible with the future land use category of the Planned Community and the Flex Provisions. The Planning & Zoning Board recommended approval.

Mayor West closed the Public Hearing at 7:18 pm.

MOTION: **Commissioner Joiner moved, Commissioner Whitaker seconded, based on the information and testimony provided, I find the request to rezone the subject parcel from P (Public) and RM-6 (Multifamily Residential) to PD MU (Planned Development Multi-Use and Other Non Residential) to be consistent with the policies and intent of the Comprehensive Plan. I hereby move to approve Rezone RZ-2024-02 / Ordinance 2026-10 with the removal of the specified language by the attorney in the title block.**

Commissioner Williams questioned what would happen if the GDP wasn't approved. Brad Cornelius explained, the zoning would stay, but they would see a new GDP.

The motion carried 5-0.

7. <u>PUBLIC HEARING ORDINANCE 2026-11 GDP -BRADFORD BAKER/ PALMETTO PLACE, LLC/ 702 10TH AVE W, PALMETTO, FL 34221 (PLANNING)</u>

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF PALMETTO, FLORIDA APPROVING A GENERAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR A DEVELOPMENT INCLUDING A MAXIMUM OF 178 MULTIFAMILY UNITS, 15,000 SQUARE FEET OF RETAIL/OFFICE/RESTAURANT, AND 6,700 SQUARE FEET OF AMENITY SPACE WITH CONDITIONS AND SPECIFIC APPROVALS LOCATED ON APPROXIMATELY 4.5+/- ACRES OF PROPERTY GENERALLY LOCATED AT 702 10TH AVENUE WEST, PALMETTO, FLORIDA, AND AS MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED IN THIS ORDINANCE; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE. (PALMETTO PLACE, LLC)

Mayor West opened the Public Hearing at 7:22 pm.

Mr. Bowman introduced the item, which began in 2024. Taylor Hague of Wade Trim presented the proposed mixed-use development, supported by a PowerPoint presentation included in the agenda. The project consists of two buildings, ranging from two to four stories, with a total of 178 dwelling units, including 168 apartments and 10 townhome units. The development also proposes approximately 15,000 square feet of retail, office, and restaurant space, along with a swimming pool and amenity area. If approved, the project's final engineering plans will be reviewed for compliance with all applicable City development regulations.

Transportation and parking considerations were discussed. Based on the submitted and reviewed traffic study, the project is not expected to require roadway or access improvements because existing level-of-service volumes can accommodate the anticipated traffic. With approval of the rezoning, the General Development Plan (GDP) would be consistent with the intent of the Comprehensive Plan, compatible with the Planned Community future land use category and Flex Provisions, and consistent with the Zoning Code requirements for Planned Developments. The Planning and Zoning Board recommended approval by a vote of 3-2. Jason Coates, Shroyer Drapala, Engineering, LLC, presented a PowerPoint, which was included in the minutes.

Commissioner Cornwell raised concerns about access onto 7th Street, noting that it serves as an evacuation route. Mr. Coates explained that the project is expected to have less traffic exiting onto 7th Street and expressed hope that vehicles would not be parked in the proposed angled parking spaces in a manner that would impede traffic flow. Commissioner Cornwell also asked whether there are specific rules or protocols governing streets designated as hurricane evacuation routes. Mr. Coates stated that, to his knowledge, there are no specific requirements and noted that he had coordinated with City staff regarding the project.

Commissioner Williams stated that he was under the impression that the four-story building would be located toward the rear of the development. It was explained that the building configuration was changed due to the development's proximity to the police station. The Commission also raised questions regarding water service and related considerations for the proposed development.

Commissioner Williams questioned whether 8th Street had been narrowed, and it was clarified that the appearance was due to how the photograph was presented. The proposed sidewalks are currently planned to be six feet wide. Questions were also raised regarding the number of diagonal parking spaces along the outside perimeter, as well as whether vans and trucks would be required to park in the internal parking lots. It was confirmed that vans and trucks could use the internal parking areas if they chose to do so. Brad Baker participated in the meeting via Zoom and was asked about the anticipated construction schedule if the project were approved. He stated that the project is planned for next year and that he has two years to begin construction. Commissioner Williams expressed disappointment that the project representatives had not previously appeared before the Commission.

Dominique Leclezo expressed disappointment with the current proposal, noting that the concept being presented differed from what had originally been presented.

Mr. Freeman questioned whether a timeline had been presented with the General Development Plan (GDP). Mr. Cornelius stated that there is a three-year timeline for entitlements. Mr. Freeman noted that the contract, however, provides for a two-year timeline for construction. Mr. Freeman questioned whether this is the final non-appealable General Development Plan (GDP). Yes, this would be the final GDP. He also asked about the City retaining up to 20 feet of property from the roadway. It was noted that such a requirement would significantly affect the proposed development plan and could result in the removal of some of the internal parking spaces.

Mayor West closed the Public Hearing at 8:06 pm.

Commissioner Williams expressed dissatisfaction with the current situation, citing what he viewed as numerous inconsistencies. He questioned when the due diligence period would end. Mr. Freeman explained that the due diligence period had already ended and that, if the required entitlements were not obtained within 180 days, the developer would have certain options under the agreement. The application was deemed complete as of February 6, making August 6 the end of the 180-day period.

Ms. Powers shared that the CRA TIF agreement has been vigorously negotiated on both sides.

MOTION: **Commissioner Williams moved based on the information and testimony provided, I find the request to approve a General Development Permit (GDP) for Mixed Use (178 dwelling units, 15,000 sq ft of retail/office/restaurant, and 6,700 sq ft of amenity space) development to be inconsistent with the policies and intent of the Comprehensive Plan. I hereby move to deny of the GDP / Ordinance 2026-11.**

The motion failed for lack of a second.

MOTION: **Commissioner Joiner moved to re-open the public hearing for Ord. 2026-11, Commissioner Cornwell seconded, and the motion carried 5-0.**

The Public Hearing was re-opened at 8:16 pm.

MOTION: **Commissioner Cornwell moved to continue the Public Hearing to August 3rd, 2026 at 6:15 pm, or as soon thereafter to be heard in these chambers. Commissioner Joiner seconded, and the motion carried 5-0.**

8. FIRST READING ORDINANCE 2026-12 RE-ZONE-JET MOBILE HOME OWNERS ASSOCIATION LLC/ 506 5TH AVE W (PLANNING)

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF PALMETTO, FLORIDA, REZONING APPROXIMATELY 0.8+/- ACRES OF PROPERTY GENERALLY LOCATED AT NORTH OF ILLINOIS STREET, SOUTH AND EAST OF TENNESSEE STREET AND WEST OF WISCONSIN STREET, PALMETTO, FLORIDA, FROM CITY ZONING RM-6 (MULTIPLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL) TO CITY ZONING MHP-1 (MOBILE HOME PARK), AND AS MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED IN THIS ORDINANCE; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE. (JET MOBILE HOME OWNERS ASSOCIATION, INC.)

Mr. Bowman explained this is a simple re-zone for Jet Mobile Home Park and tonight is a First Reading only.

MOTION: **Commissioner Williams moved, Commissioner Cornwell seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to approve the First Reading of Ordinance 2026-12 and authorize staff to advertise for the appropriate public hearings.**

9. FISCAL YEAR 2027 PROPOSED AGGREGATE MILLAGE RATE AND DATES FOR TENTATIVE AND FINAL BUDGET HEARINGS (J.FREEMAN)

Commissioner Williams proposed moving the item to August 3rd, 2026, or, alternatively, setting the proposed millage rate at $5.9671, which is the current millage rate. Commissioner Joiner agreed with the proposal and asked whether the millage rate could be lowered after establishing $5.9671 as the proposed rate. It was confirmed that the rate could be reduced after the proposed millage rate was set.

Mr. Freeman explained that the rollback millage rate is $5.8312. He noted that if the proposed millage rate is set at anything higher than the rollback rate, approval would require a vote of four out of the five Commissioners.

Commissioner Cornwell questioned the need to increase the millage rate, asking what the additional revenue would be used for and why an increase was necessary given that a balanced budget was presented. Commissioner Williams noted that departments had made various cuts to their budgets. Commissioner Cornwell responded that there was no specific plan presented for using additional funds and expressed that the millage rate should not be increased without a clear need. She stated that there are measures that could be taken to maintain the balanced budget.

Commissioner Whitaker suggested setting the proposed millage rate at $5.9671, noting that this would preserve the option to reduce the rate to the $5.8312 rollback rate after further discussions with department heads. He stated that setting the higher proposed rate would provide the Commission with additional flexibility and room for discussion before establishing the final millage rate.

Commissioner Smith disagreed with setting the millage rate higher than the rollback rate, expressing concern that once a higher rate is established, the Commission historically does not reduce it. Commissioner Whitaker responded that the Commission had followed this approach the previous year by initially setting a higher proposed rate and subsequently rolling it back.

Mayor spoke about the budget process and the work staff goes through.

Commissioner Cornwell questioned the impact of the new law on the proposed millage rate. She noted that, even if the Commission establishes a higher preliminary millage rate, any increase above the rollback rate would still require approval by a four-fifths vote of the Commission.

MOTION: **Commissioner Joiner moved, Commissioner Williams seconded, and motion failed 3-2 to approve a proposed aggregate millage rate of $5.9671 for FY 2027 and to schedule the tentative budget hearing for September 14, 2026 at 6:15 p.m. or as soon thereafter as same can be heard in these Chambers and a final budget hearing on September 28, 2026 at 6:15 p.m. or as soon thereafter as same can be heard in these Chambers. (Commissioner Cornwell and Commissioner Smith voted nay.)**

Commissioner Cornwell and Commissioner Whitaker noted that they wanted more time to speak with Department Heads to understand their budget needs before the next meeting.

10. JUNE 2026 CHECK REGISTER (Informational Only)

Mayor West recessed the City Commission Meeting to open the July 20, 2026 CRA Board Meeting at 8:38 pm.

Mayor West reconvened the City Commission Meeting at 9:00 pm.

COMMENTS:

11. DEPARTMENT HEADS' COMMENTS

Mr. Freeman reported that the City is currently in the due diligence period for the CSX parcel. A Phase I environmental assessment has been completed, and work is underway on a Phase II assessment. He also reported that Kimley Horn has requested additional time to present its Complete Streets project to the Commission, estimating that approximately one hour will be needed. Mr. Freeman asked whether the Commission would prefer the presentation during the August 3 workshop, at a separate special workshop, or through individual meetings with Commissioners. Commissioner Cornwell indicated that she would prefer to hear the presentation during the August 3 workshop.

Chief Tyler provided an update on a pedestrian that was killed in the City a couple months ago. An arrest was recently made.

Ms. Powers shared that their office is working to review the new bills that were passed in legislative session and how they impact the City.

12. MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor addressed the adaptation plan was on the agenda tonight because it had appeared on a previous Workshop agenda but we ran out of time for it to be presented. He noted that the City's Fourth of July event was a great success and expressed appreciation for the event. The Mayor also recognized Kim Cooper of City Hall as the Employee of the Quarter. He further noted that data centers will be discussed in greater detail at a future meeting.

13. COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Commissioner Cornwell said she is looking forward to the CRA report regarding 8th Avenue, which is scheduled for August 3. She also praised the City's Fourth of July event and noted that it was a great success. Regarding the budget, she emphasized the importance of discussing the budget first and then aligning other priorities accordingly. She also commended the Chief for attending the Fourth of July event and praised the budget presentation, describing it as clear, easy to read, and easy to understand.

Commissioner Whitaker apologized to Tropic Isles for the organization having to hear the findings of the adaptation plan before the Commission discussed the matter. He praised the City's Fourth of July fireworks, describing them as incredible. He also stated that the City receiving the five out of the six appropriations were outstanding.

Commissioner Joiner echoed the positive comments regarding the City's Fourth of July celebration, describing the event as wonderful and stating that the fireworks were the best.

Commissioner Williams praised the City's employees in connection with the Fourth of July celebration, noting that the event reflected the efforts of the City's outstanding staff.

Mayor West adjourned the meeting at 9:12 pm.