



CITY OF BELLE ISLE, FL CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday, July 7, 2026 * 6:30 PM
MINUTES

Present was:

Mayor – Jason Carson
District 1 Commissioner – Ed Gold
District 2 Commissioner – Holly Bobrowski
District 3 Commissioner – Karl Shuck
District 4 Commissioner – Bobby Lance
District 5 Commissioner – Beth Lowell

Absent was:

District 7 Commissioner – Jim Partin
District 6 Commissioner – Christopher Oller

1. Call to Order and Confirmation of Quorum

Mayor Carson called the Council Meeting to order at 6:30 p.m., and the City Clerk, Yolanda Quiceno, confirmed the presence of a quorum. City Manager (CM) Rudometkin, Chief Grimm, Attorney Schaffer, Public Works Director Phil Price, and City Clerk Yolanda Quiceno were also present.

2. Invocation and Pledge to Flag - Comm Holly Bobrowski, District 2, led the invocation and Pledge to the Flag.

Mayor Carson asked for a motion to excuse the absence of Comm Partin and Comm Oller.

Comm Lance moved to excuse Comm Partin from the meeting.

Comm Bobrowski seconded the motion, which passed unanimously 5:0.

Comm Lance moved to excuse Comm Oller from the meeting.

Comm Gold seconded the motion, which passed unanimously 5:0.

3. Public Comments & Announcements

Mayor Carson opened the floor for public comments and announcements. There being no comments, Mayor Carson closed the public comment section.

4. Presentations - na

5. Consent Items.

- a. Approval of City Council Meeting Minutes – June 16, 2026
- b. Proclamation: Celebrating 250th Anniversary of American Independence

Comm Lowell moved to approve the consent items as presented.

Comm Lance seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

6. Unfinished Business - na

7. New Business

- a. ORD 26-03 First Reading and Consideration - **AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BELLE ISLE, FLORIDA, AMENDING CHAPTER 50, ARTICLE II, SECTIONS 50-32 AND 50-33 OF THE CITY CODE TO AMEND THE PROVISIONS GOVERNING SUBDIVISIONS AND LOT SPLITS AND DEFINITIONS, AND AMENDING CHAPTER 54, ARTICLE I, SECTION 50-3 OF THE CITY CODE GOVERNING NON-CONFORMING USES; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY, CONFLICTS, CODIFICATION, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

CM Rudometkin read Ordinance 26-03 by Title.

Mayor Carson opened for Council discussion.

CM Rudometkin introduced the first reading of Ordinance No. 26-03, which amends the City's subdivision and lot split regulations and related provisions for nonconforming uses. He explained that the ordinance was developed by staff and the City Attorney in response to issues that have arisen with lot splits. He noted that this was a first reading only, with no action required, and advised that the City Attorney and Planning staff were available to answer questions.

Comm Lance shared his concern and wanted to ensure that the Council will still have the availability to vote on major subdivision applications. He expressed concern about ensuring the community has an opportunity to voice support or opposition to certain requests.

Attorney Schaffer explained that many of the changes are required by state law, which now mandates administrative approval for qualifying lot splits and limits City Council's authority. He stated that the ordinance was drafted to preserve as much Council oversight as possible by requiring certain requests, such as flag lot waivers, to come before the City Council. While most lot splits will be handled administratively, requests requiring a waiver will provide an opportunity for Council review and public input. Attorney Schaffer confirmed that public input would occur through the waiver process.

Attorney Schaffer explained that the recent litigation involving the City's lot split regulations prompted a careful review of the applicable code provisions. He stated that, while the City's position in the case was not weak, the review identified opportunities to strengthen the ordinance and eliminate potential ambiguities. He emphasized that the proposed amendments are intended to clarify the code and help prevent similar issues in the future, rather than correct past mistakes.

Comm Bobrowski asked for clarification on how the proposed ordinance would affect a property owner seeking to split a lot that would create a flag lot. She stated that she wants to ensure the public understands that the ordinance simplifies the process and is intended to make lot split reviews more efficient, not more burdensome. Attorney Schaffer explained that the creation of new flag lots is prohibited unless approved by the City Council through a waiver. He noted that staff would identify this at the beginning of the process rather than allowing an applicant to proceed through multiple reviews before being denied.

Comm Bobrowski also asked whether the process would require applicants to appear before the Planning and Zoning Board before seeking a waiver. CM Rudometkin clarified that lot splits do not go through the Planning and Zoning Board but are reviewed administratively by staff and presented to City Council. If a proposal does not meet the code requirements, staff would advise the applicant of the waiver process rather than requiring multiple levels of review. Attorney Schaffer explained that the proposed changes streamline the process by allowing more decisions to be handled administratively, as required by state law, while preserving City Council review for requests requiring waivers, such as flag lots. He emphasized that the intent is not to make the process more difficult or to circumvent state law, but to maintain community oversight where appropriate while complying with the statutory requirements.

Comm Lance said although the ordinance streamlines the process, it also adds professional service fees for applicants and removes the "informal subdivision" classification. Attorney Schaffer explained that the new professional service fee provision recognizes the costs associated with surveys, legal review, and other professional services required during the lot split review process. Attorney Schaffer said that the intent is not to increase fees unnecessarily, but to ensure applicants reimburse the City for costs directly related to their applications rather than having those costs borne by the general public.

Attorney Schaffer explained that the informal subdivision category was removed because it no longer fit within the new administrative approval process required by state law and could create confusion. The revised ordinance simplifies the process by distinguishing between subdivisions and lot splits. Comm Lance asked whether lot split approvals could still require improvements such as road widening, drainage, or other infrastructure. The City Attorney responded that lot splits generally have less impact than larger subdivisions, but the City may still consider appropriate improvements during the administrative review process. He added that, when a waiver is required, the City Council may impose conditions as part of its approval. CM Rudometkin stated that staff would continue to advise the City Council on any conditions or requirements that should be considered during the review process.

CM Rudometkin stated that this was the First Reading and discussion, and that it will be brought back to Council for a second reading and adoption.

b. **Approval of Bing Grant for Horizon Court Collective**

CM Rudometkin presented a newly updated BING Grant application for the Regal Landing wall along Overlook and Matchett Road. Code Enforcement has been working with the homeowners' association regarding the deteriorating condition of the wall and has requested that it be repaired. He noted that the Council previously approved a \$9,615 grant for this project. The applicant has now submitted a new application with three quotes and is requesting \$9,000 toward a project totaling \$19,009.17, which is below the 50% grant funding limit. Staff has confirmed that the applicant has met the BING Grant requirements and understands that the project must begin within the required timeframe, or the grant approval will become void and require a new application. Because the new request is \$9,000, Council would need to reallocate the previously approved amount, returning the remaining \$615 back into District 5's BING Grant funds, leaving approximately \$50,115 available.

Staff recommended Council approve the revised BING Grant application for an amount not to exceed \$9,000, with the understanding that if the final project cost is lower, the grant amount will be reduced to maintain the 50% funding limit.

Comm Lowell stated that the BING Grant process had been ongoing for about 11 months and, while it had been a learning experience, it provided a better understanding of the program. She noted that although the grant requirements are clearly stated in the application, confusion arose as the project changed hands during the process. Comm Lowell expressed appreciation to everyone who assisted with the project and said they were pleased to see the wall finally being repaired after more than a year.

Comm Lowell moved for approval of the Bing Grant for \$9,000 that came out of the previous districts that allotted money, with the remaining \$615.00 going back into District 5. Comm Bobrowski seconded the motion, which passed unanimously 5:0.

c. **Annexation Study Discussion**

CM Rudometkin said that annexation has been a topic of discussion in the City of Belle Isle for several years by current and former mayors, and Council.. An annexation map was also developed identifying areas for potential phased annexation, although that effort has been on hold. CM Rudometkin explained that annexation would be discussed further during the upcoming pre-budget workshop, along with state legislation, property tax reform, hypothetical budget scenarios, non-ad valorem fees, appropriations, and other long-term planning topics. The first step in pursuing annexation would be an annexation study to evaluate the costs of annexation, the level of service required for the new area, and the projected revenues to determine whether annexation would be financially feasible. The City has also discussed voluntary annexation, but current discussions have focused on involuntary annexation, which would require the study. CM Rudometkin asked Council for direction on whether to move forward with funding an annexation study or wait until after the November property tax reform vote. A placeholder of **\$50,000** has been included in the draft budget for the study. If Council chooses to wait, the amount will be removed from the draft budget. If Council wishes to proceed, the funding will remain, with the understanding that the actual cost could exceed \$50,000 and be adjusted through a future budget amendment if necessary.

Comm Bobrowski suggested delaying action until after the upcoming election, noting that changes to the Orange County Commission could affect future discussions. She expressed the opinion that it would be prudent to wait and see who is elected before spending the proposed funds, as future Commission members may be more supportive of the City's interests. Discussion ensued on historical efforts and the proposed tax reform. Comm Shuck agreed.

Comm Gold expressed concern and said he did not want to spend any money doing a survey on an area that is going to fight us. He would like to first find out who is interested in annexing into Belle Isle and put our dollars in those surveyed areas. He further recommended that the staff create a citizen board to lead the charge in identifying prospective candidates for annexation. He would like the volunteers to do as much of the work for free, and then we'll figure out what we need to pay someone for.

8. **Attorney's Report**

Attorney Schaffer addressed questions regarding a recent social media post about the proposed property tax amendment. It was explained that concerns about homesteaded properties being reassessed at just value beginning January 1 were based on outdated statutory language dating back to 1992. Attorney Schaffer stated that, if the amendment is approved, homesteaded properties will not be reassessed at just value and noted that the social media post had been clarified as inaccurate. The information was shared so Council would be prepared to respond to questions from constituents.

9. City Manager's Report

a. City Manager's Report & Work Plan

CM Rudometkin reported on the following

1. CM Rudometkin reported that the City is still awaiting a decision on the \$3.6 million stormwater appropriation request for flood mitigation. The same request was previously approved but later vetoed. No updates have been received.
2. An RFP will be issued for upgrades to the Council Chambers audiovisual system.
3. The FY 2026-2027 draft budget has been provided to the Budget Committee for review. Budget discussions with the Council will continue in August.
4. Staff is closely monitoring proposed property tax reforms and recently enacted legislation affecting the budget process, including changes related to millage voting requirements and the requirement to prepare a hypothetical reduced-budget scenario. These topics will be discussed further at the July 21 budget workshop.
5. The proposed tax bill emphasizes protecting police, fire, and infrastructure funding. The City is evaluating potential impacts and future budget options. A budget pre-workshop will include discussion of increased fire service costs, which rose by more than \$100,000 this year, along with other budget-related items. He and the City Attorney are preparing an ordinance intended to provide the City with flexibility to respond to potential state actions related to property tax legislation. He stated that while future costs will remain a challenge, staff will work with the Council to determine the City's direction.
6. The City received a \$350,000 state appropriation for replacement of the City's marine unit boats and motors. The appropriation was not vetoed by the Governor.
7. Regarding the clock on Hoffner, staff met with the property management company and determined that improving the surrounding landscaping, including removing trees and shrubs that obstruct visibility, would be a better solution than raising the height of the clock. The property management company is willing to proceed with the landscaping improvements.

b. DC Millis reported on the following updates,

1. Residents will be notified on social media about representatives from Law Enforcement Partners of Bowling Green, Kentucky visiting local businesses to publish a PD Calendar.
2. A request will be brought to Council to approve the expenditure of \$20,700 in confiscated funds received through the Florida Contraband Forfeiture Act. The funds may only be used for law enforcement training and equipment.
3. The Fourth of July holiday was busy, particularly on the lakes, but there were no significant incidents.
4. PD received a \$350,000 state appropriation to purchase two inflatable marine patrol boats and a side-by-side utility vehicle for police operations and special events.
5. Officers will complete their annual 40-hour end-of-block training over the next two weeks, including driving, firearms, CPR, and other high-liability training.
6. The Chief welcomed Commissioner Gold back to Council and thanked the residents on Venetian, Donnie and Jackie Hoevenaar, for providing food, water, hydration supplies, and support for the Police Department and City staff.

c. Public Works Report

1. Staff is working with the owner of the CVS property regarding removal of two palm trees near the Hoffner clock to improve its visibility.
2. The Conway Road/Judge Road intersection closure was delayed from July 9 to July 14 due to contractor issues. One message board displayed the incorrect date, and staff is following up with Orange County to have the information corrected. The daytime closure was requested by the contractor to allow sufficient time to complete the pavement repairs properly in a single operation.
3. The Regis Place stormwater pipelining project has been completed, and staff reported that drainage has improved.
4. Baffle boxes on LaBelle Avenue and at Delia Jean Folk Park were cleaned and fitted with new media filters to improve stormwater flow. Staff is evaluating additional stormwater maintenance projects.
5. Tree trimming in the Lake Conway Estates area has been completed, and work will continue in other neighborhoods.
6. Staff is also planning right-of-way tree trimming along the north side of Hoffner Avenue in coordination with the Police Department. Public Works staff continues storm preparation and maintenance efforts while managing work around frequent rain and extreme heat.

10. Mayor's Report

Mayor Carson spoke on the following,

- a. Mayor Carson expressed appreciation to the Special Events Committee for organizing a successful Fourth of July celebration and noted the strong community turnout. He thanked everyone who participated in the presentation of the America 250 proclamation, including Billy Morgan, the Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, and those who assisted with the ceremony. He recognized the performance of the National Anthem, thanked the committee for continuing to add new elements to City events, thanked Yolanda for assisting with the proclamation, thanked Chief Grimm for speaking during the flag ceremony, and acknowledged his military service. He especially thanked his daughter for participating in the ceremony.
- b. Expressed appreciation to Representative Anna Eskamani, Senator Carlos Guillermo Smith, and Chris Dawson of Gray for their efforts in securing the Police Department appropriation.
- c. Thanked Deputy Chief Mills, Public Works Director Price, City Hall staff, and all City employees for their continued work and service.

11. Commissioners' Report

- Comm Lowell reminded the residents and Council to get the word out for any donations, backpacks, and school supplies. She asked for permission to call in on July 21st, both pre-meeting and meeting, as she will be in Missouri.

Comm Bobrowski requested that the Venetian Canals be placed on an August agenda for discussion and informational purposes, noting there are issues affecting both the Venetian Canals and Turtle Cove. Council consensus was to include it on the agenda as a future item.

Council expressed appreciation for the July 4th event and thanked all who participated.

The Council thanked the Mayor, City Council, City staff, Police Department, Public Works Department, Finance staff, and administrative personnel for their service and dedication to the City.

12. Adjournment

There being no further business, Mayor Carson called for a motion to adjourn, which was unanimously approved at 7:40 pm.