



MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL
Tuesday, September 02, 2025
6:00 PM CST
Council Chambers, City Hall

Mayor Liese called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

Invocation - Councilmember Maher

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

PRESENT

Mayor Anna Liese

Councilmember-At-Large Gerard Maher

Ward 1 Shane Finley

Ward 2 Ricky Sheppard

Ward 3 Jessie Harwood

Ward 4 Austin Clark

Confirm or Adjust Agenda Order

Motion made by Councilmember-At-Large Maher, Seconded by Ward 1 Finley to adjust the following agenda items-

Move #17 to Action Agenda: **2025-220**: Motion to approve to advertise for engineering services for a 4-year term with amended Request for Proposal.

Table #20 on request of the applicant/property owner: **2025-209**: Motion to approve the Planning Commission recommendation to deny an addition (covered patio) within 0' of the rear yard setback. The property address is 3 Whispering Branch Way. The tax parcel number is 123A-3-03-028.000. The property is in a R-3 zoning district. The rear yard setback for an addition is 20'. The variance requested is 20'. The Case File Number is 202500448.

Voting Yea: Mayor Liese, Councilmember-At-Large Maher, Ward 1 Finley, Ward 2 Sheppard, Ward 3 Harwood, Ward 4 Clark

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Presentation Agenda.

- a. The next Regular Meeting of the City Council will be held Tuesday, September 16, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers located at City Hall.
- b. Annual Paddle Paradise Event will be held Saturday, September 27th at the south side kayak launch. Participants may register in advance on the City's website or on-site registration beginning at 8:00 a.m. the morning of the event.
- c. Proclamation - National Childhood Cancer Awareness Month
- d. Pearl River Community College – Dr. Adam Breerwood

City Manager's Report.

CITY MANAGER REPORT

September 02, 2025

1. Kome Drive & Kalipekona Pond – This project is complete. The walkthrough was completed on the 22nd. There were no punch list items created. Currently waiting on the substantial completion paperwork and closeout documents from the contractor.
2. MDOT Projects – The contractor has final striping scheduled for this week. Signage will be installed in the next three weeks. MDOT has decided on some additional work before the project is closed. The multimodal path is currently not available as MDOT has not turned it over for use.
3. Paving 2025 – Project is 90 days with a current end date of September 21st. The project is complete. I am working with engineer and contractor to schedule the walkthrough.
4. Coon Branch – The project is 180 days with a current end date of December 13th. They have completed the majority of the work at the outfall at Polo Court and a good portion of the drainage culverts and inlets. They are currently working on the outfall on Kahana. They plan to start in the next two weeks working in between the houses after that outfall is complete.
5. Canal Dredging – The notice of award is on tonight's agenda for your consideration. This document is required to be issued before MDEQ reviews the bid documents for their approval. Once MDEQ approves the bid documents, a Notice to Proceed can be issued.
6. Jourdan River Boardwalk – The engineers are working on corrections and adding the additional language required to the plans and specifications. Once complete, they will resubmit to MDEQ.
7. Montjoy Creek – The engineer has submitted updated drawings to USACE for their consideration. Once approved, a permit will be issued.
8. Hazard Mitigation Grant Program – A kickoff meeting was held for property acquisitions and generator projects. Due to funding limitations, we are asking for a scope change for the generator project. Updated appraisals are needed for the property acquisition project. This will be scheduled for next fiscal year.
9. Bank Stabilization – The engineers have provided preliminary design drawings for Phase I. They are here tonight to present their design.
10. Pelican Cove Drainage Project – The engineer has provided preliminary design and OPC. They will present to the council at the next meeting.
11. Rotten Bayou Nature Trail – **No update on this meeting.** The engineer has redesigned this project into five phases. The funding is already secured for phase 1. The engineer is working on the phase 1 design.
12. Dog Park – **No update on this meeting.** Public Works is currently working on rerouting the ditch according to the engineer's design. They are also completing the clearing of the dog park area.

Public Comments on Agenda Items.

Gene Peters - Tree Ordinance

Don Rose - Real Estate Signs

Council Comments.

Policy Agenda.

Minutes:

1. Motion to approve August 19, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes.

Motion made by Ward 2 Sheppard, Seconded by Ward 3 Harwood to approve August 19, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes.

Voting Yea: Mayor Liese, Councilmember-At-Large Maher, Ward 1 Finley, Ward 2 Sheppard, Ward 3 Harwood, Ward 4 Clark

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Resolutions:

2. **2025-205:** Motion to adopt Resolution 2025-042 thereby adopting the FY2026 Budget as finally determined by the City Council.

Motion made by Ward 2 Sheppard, Seconded by Councilmember-At-Large Maher to adopt Resolution 2025-042 thereby adopting the FY2026 Budget as finally determined by the City Council.

Voting Yea: Mayor Liese, Councilmember-At-Large Maher, Ward 1 Finley, Ward 2 Sheppard, Ward 3 Harwood, Ward 4 Clark

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

3. **2025-206:** Motion to adopt Resolution 2025-043 thereby setting the tax levy for FY2026 to be 29.5 mills and for other related purposes.

Motion made by Councilmember-At-Large Maher, Seconded by Ward 4 Clark to adopt Resolution 2025-043 thereby setting the tax levy for FY2026 to be 29.5 mills and for other related purposes.

Voting Yea: Mayor Liese, Councilmember-At-Large Maher, Ward 1 Finley, Ward 2 Sheppard, Ward 3 Harwood, Ward 4 Clark

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. **2025-214:** Motion to adopt Resolution 2025-044 thereby reappointing Jon McCraw as Commissioner for Gulf Regional Planning Commission.

Motion made by Ward 2 Sheppard, Seconded by Councilmember-At-Large Maher to adopt Resolution 2025-044 thereby reappointing Jon McCraw as Commissioner for Gulf Regional Planning Commission.

Voting Yea: Mayor Liese, Councilmember-At-Large Maher, Ward 1 Finley, Ward 2 Sheppard, Ward 3 Harwood, Ward 4 Clark

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Consent Agenda:

Motion made by Ward 1 Finley, Seconded by Councilmember-At-Large Maher to move the following consent item to action agenda:

#14. **2025-213:** Motion to accept and award low bid received from Breakwater Marine Construction, LLC in the amount of \$4,403,000.00 for Canal Dredging Project and authorize the City Manager to execute the contract.

Voting Yea: Mayor Liese, Councilmember-At-Large Maher, Ward 1 Finley, Ward 2 Sheppard, Ward 3 Harwood, Ward 4 Clark

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Motion made by Ward 1 Finley, Seconded by Ward 3 Harwood to approve the following consent items:

5. **2025-196:** Motion to approve payments to Covington Civil & Environmental, LLC in the amount of \$22,760.00 for Diamondhead Paving 2025, in the amount of \$17,000.00 for Kome Drive and Fairway Drive Drainage Project, in the amount of \$20,160.00 for West Aloha Roadway Improvements Project, and in the amount of \$8,085.00 for the East Aloha Phase II Sidewalks.
6. **2025-197:** Motion to accept the Memorandum of Agreement with Pearl River Community College for the County Tuition Assistance Program for FY 2025-2026 and authorize City Manager, Jon McCraw to execute same.
7. **2025-198:** Motion to approve payment to Chiniche Engineering & Surveying in the amount of \$6,385.00 for Coon Branch Drainage, in the amount of \$9,064.50 for Jourdan River Boardwalk, and in the amount of \$10,374.50 for Canal Dredging.
8. **2025-199:** Motion to accept and award low bid received from Bottom 2 Top Construction, LLC in the amount of \$932,409.69 for 2025 Annual Unit Price Repair Contract and authorize the City Manager to execute the contract for same and to issue the notice to proceed as appropriate.
9. **2025-200:** Motion to request fee waiver from the Diamondhead Water and Sewer District for the installation of a new water meter for the use of the City Dog Park once constructed.
10. **2025-201:** Motion to approve Pay Application 1 in the amount of \$188,034.20 to SCI, LLC., for the Coon Branch Drainage Improvements - Phase I.
11. **2025-202:** Motion to approve Pay Application 2 in the amount of \$472,456.85 to Gulf Pride Paving, LLC., for the Diamondhead Paving Project 2025.
12. **2025-203:** Motion to approve Pay Application 6 in the amount of \$181,973.59 to JLB Contractors, LLC., for the Kome Drive and Kalipekona Pond Drainage Project.
13. **2025-212:** Motion to approve amendment #2 to the Work Assignment with Covington Civil and Environmental, LLC in the amount of \$10,000.00 for a total contract amount not to exceed \$40,000.00 for the Support for 2025 Annual Unit Price Contract.
15. **2025-215:** Motion to declare surplus and proceed with the proper disposal of public works equipment and police uniforms.
16. **2025-219:** Motion to authorize the release of annual fire rebate funds in the amount of \$66,730.70 to Hancock County Board of Supervisors for expenses of the Diamondhead Fire Department relating fire protection services in the City of Diamondhead pursuant to the agreement entered into on April 29, 2025.

Voting Yea: Mayor Liese, Councilmember-At-Large Maher, Ward 1 Finley, Ward 2 Sheppard, Ward 3 Harwood

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Motion made by Mayor Liese, Seconded by Ward 1 Finley to table the following consent item-

#14. **2025-213:** Motion to accept and award low bid received from Breakwater Marine Construction, LLC in the amount of \$4,403,000.00 for Canal Dredging Project and authorize the City Manager to execute the contract.

Voting Yea: Mayor Liese, Councilmember-At-Large Maher, Ward 1 Finley, Ward 2 Sheppard, Ward 3 Harwood, Ward 4 Clark

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Action Agenda.

18. **2025-204:** Motion to request the City Manager explore viable options for repurposing the former guard house on Gex Drive, including the potential for establishing a "Welcome Center" and evaluating the feasibility of utilizing volunteers from the community to staff the facility. (Liese)

Motion made by Mayor Liese, Seconded by Ward 3 Harwood to request the City Manager explore viable options for repurposing the former guard house on Gex Drive, including the potential for establishing a "Welcome Center" and evaluating the feasibility of utilizing volunteers from the community to staff the facility.

Voting Yea: Mayor Liese, Councilmember-At-Large Maher, Ward 1 Finley, Ward 2 Sheppard, Ward 3 Harwood, Ward 4 Clark

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

19. **2025-208:** Motion to approve the Planning Commission recommendation to allow a carport addition within 6' of the side yard property line. The property address is 6810 Apona St. The tax parcel number is 131A-0-01-064.000. The property is in a R-6 zoning district. The side yard setback for an addition is 10'. The variance requested is 4'. The Case File Number is 202500503.

Motion made by Ward 4 Clark, Seconded by Ward 2 Sheppard to approve the Planning Commission recommendation to allow a carport addition within 6' of the side yard property line. The property address is 6810 Apona St. The tax parcel number is 131A-0-01-064.000. The property is in a R-6 zoning district. The side yard setback for an addition is 10'. The variance requested is 4'. The Case File Number is 202500503.

Voting Yea: Mayor Liese, Councilmember-At-Large Maher, Ward 1 Finley, Ward 2 Sheppard, Ward 3 Harwood, Ward 4 Clark

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

21. **2025-210:** Motion to direct the Planning and Zoning Commission to review and revise the language in the current tree ordinance regarding the clearing of lots, both residential and commercial. While the ordinance clearly requires a certain number of trees to be retained, it does not fully align with the intent of preserving mature trees and safeguarding the city's tree canopy. The Commission is asked to consider incorporating a tree survey and pre- and post-inspections as part of the permitting process, as well as requiring that a clearing permit be posted on lots prior to clearing. They should also consider if said permit should publicly outline how many trees are to be retained. Furthermore, the Commission should hold a public hearing to solicit input on proposed revisions and return to the Council with updated language that more effectively protects mature trees and enhances Diamondhead's tree canopy. (Liese)

Motion made by Mayor Liese, Seconded by Ward 1 Finley to direct the Planning and Zoning Commission to review and revise the language in the current tree ordinance regarding the clearing of lots, both residential and commercial. While the ordinance clearly requires a certain number of trees to be retained, it does not fully align with the intent of preserving mature trees and safeguarding the city's tree canopy. The Commission is asked to consider incorporating a tree survey and pre- and post-inspections as part of the permitting process, as well as requiring that a clearing permit be posted on lots prior to clearing. They should also consider if said permit should publicly outline how many trees are to be retained. Furthermore, the Commission should hold a public hearing to solicit input on proposed revisions and return to the Council with updated language that more effectively protects mature trees and enhances Diamondhead's tree canopy.

Voting Yea: Mayor Liese, Councilmember-At-Large Maher, Ward 1 Finley, Ward 2 Sheppard, Ward 3 Harwood, Ward 4 Clark

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

- 22. 2025-211:** Motion to direct the Planning and Zoning Commission to develop and present a complete, actionable plan to bring all existing commercial signage into compliance with the city's current sign ordinance. As the majority of existing signage is grandfathered under previous regulations, the plan should include a sunset clause, establishing a clear deadline for full compliance. This will ensure that our community's visual standards align with the city's growth and aesthetic goals. Additionally, the Commission should hold a public hearing to gather input from the community. (Liese)

Motion made by Mayor Liese, Seconded by Ward 3 Harwood to direct the Planning and Zoning Commission to develop and present a complete, actionable plan to bring all existing commercial signage into compliance with the city's current sign ordinance. As the majority of existing signage is grandfathered under previous regulations, the plan should include a sunset clause, establishing a clear deadline for full compliance. This will ensure that our community's visual standards align with the city's growth and aesthetic goals. Additionally, the Commission should hold a public hearing to gather input from the community.

Voting Yea: Mayor Liese, Councilmember-At-Large Maher, Ward 1 Finley, Ward 2 Sheppard, Ward 3 Harwood, Ward 4 Clark

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

- 23. 2025-216:** Motion to approve text amendment to allow real estate signs 7 days a week.

Councilmember Maher left the meeting at 7:06 p.m.

Motion made by Ward 2 Sheppard, Seconded by Ward 1 Finley to amend motion regarding text amendment to allow real estate signs 7 days a week by sending back to Planning and Zoning Commission for further review and possible amendments.

Voting Yea: Mayor Liese, Ward 1 Finley, Ward 2 Sheppard, Ward 3 Harwood, Ward 4 Clark

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Councilmember Maher returned to the meeting at 7:16 p.m.

- 24. 2025-217:** Motion to approve text amendment to reduce rear yard setback on properties adjoining canals and waterways.

Motion made by Ward 2 Sheppard, Seconded by Councilmember-At-Large Maher to approve text amendment to reduce rear yard setback on properties adjoining canals and waterways.

Voting Yea: Mayor Liese, Councilmember-At-Large Maher, Ward 1 Finley, Ward 2 Sheppard, Ward 3 Harwood, Ward 4 Clark

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

- 25. 2025-218:** Motion to approve text amendment to allow golf carts to cross Exit 16 overpass.

Motion made by Ward 1 Finley, Seconded by Ward 3 Harwood to table motion to approve text amendment to allow golf carts to cross Exit 16 overpass.

Voting Yea: Mayor Liese, Councilmember-At-Large Maher, Ward 1 Finley, Ward 2 Sheppard, Ward 3 Harwood, Ward 4 Clark

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

- 25.a** Motion made by Mayor Liese, Seconded by Councilmember-At-Large Maher to request Planning and Zoning Commission to hold a public hearing for reviewing landscape ordinance.

Voting Yea: Mayor Liese, Councilmember-At-Large Maher, Ward 1 Finley, Ward 2 Sheppard, Ward 3 Harwood, Ward 4 Clark

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

- 17. 2025-220:** Motion to approve to advertise for engineering services for a 4-year term with amended Request for Proposal.

Motion made by Councilmember-At-Large Maher, Seconded by Ward 3 Harwood to approve to advertise for engineering services for a 4-year term with amended Request for Proposal.

Voting Yea: Mayor Liese, Councilmember-At-Large Maher, Ward 1 Finley, Ward 2 Sheppard, Ward 3 Harwood, Ward 4 Clark

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Routine Agenda.

Claims Payable

- 26.** Motion to approve Docket of Claims (DKT233089 - DKT233121) in the amount of \$1,015,730.48.

Motion made by Ward 1 Finley, Seconded by Ward 2 Sheppard to approve Docket of Claims (DKT233089 - DKT233121) in the amount of \$1,015,730.48.

Voting Yea: Mayor Liese, Councilmember-At-Large Maher, Ward 1 Finley, Ward 2 Sheppard, Ward 3 Harwood, Ward 4 Clark

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Public Comments on Non-Agenda Items - None

Council Closing Comments

Executive Session

Motion made by Mayor Liese, Seconded by Ward 3 Harwood to enter closed session to discuss the need for executive session.

Voting Yea: Mayor Liese, Councilmember-At-Large Maher, Ward 1 Finley, Ward 2 Sheppard, Ward 3 Harwood, Ward 4 Clark

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Motion made by Mayor Liese, Seconded by Ward 3 Harwood to enter executive session pursuant to MS Code 25-41-7(g): transaction of business and discussion regarding the prospective purchase: sale, or leasing of lands.

Voting Yea: Mayor Liese, Councilmember-At-Large Maher, Ward 1 Finley, Ward 2 Sheppard, Ward 3 Harwood, Ward 4 Clark

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Motion made by Mayor Liese, Seconded by Ward 3 Harwood to exit executive session.

Voting Yea: Mayor Liese, Councilmember-At-Large Maher, Ward 1 Finley, Ward 2 Sheppard, Ward 3 Harwood, Ward 4 Clark

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Motion made by Mayor Liese, Seconded by Ward 1 Finley to exit closed session.

Voting Yea: Mayor Liese, Councilmember-At-Large Maher, Ward 1 Finley, Ward 2 Sheppard, Ward 3 Harwood, Ward 4 Clark

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

City Attorney Cusick announced that no official action of record was taken during executive session.

Adjourn/Recess.

At 8:06 p.m. motion made by Ward 4 Clark, Seconded by Ward 3 Harwood to adjourn.

Voting Yea: Mayor Liese, Councilmember-At-Large Maher, Ward 1 Finley, Ward 2 Sheppard, Ward 3 Harwood, Ward 4 Clark

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Anna Liese
Mayor

Jeannie Klein
City Clerk