



MINUTES

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS SPECIAL MEETING NOVEMBER 20, 2024 6:00 P.M.

The City of Madeira Beach Board of Commissioners held a special meeting at 6:00 p.m. on November 20, 2024, in the Patricia Shontz Commission Chambers at City Hall, located at 300 Municipal Drive, Madeira Beach, Florida.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Anne-Marie Brooks, Mayor
David Tagliarini, Vice Mayor/Commissioner District 1
Eddie McGeehen, Commissioner District 3
Housh Ghovae, Commissioner District 4

MEMBERS ABSENT: Ray Kerr, Commissioner District 2

CHARTER OFFICERS PRESENT: Robin Gomez, City Manager
Clara VanBlargan, City Clerk
Andrew Laflin, Finance Director/City Treasurer
Nancy Meyer, Trask Daigneault, LLP

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Brooks called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

City Clerk Clara VanBlargan called the roll. Commissioner Kerr was absent.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chuck Dillon, 529 Lillian Drive, said he would like the Board to address banning wood mulch because it clogs the drains and to limit the time that RVs can stay in a resident's yard.

4. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. Ordinance 2024-21, Revising Definition of Substantial Improvement – 2nd Reading & Public Hearing

Attorney Nancy Meyer read Ordinance 2024-21 by title only.

ORDINANCE 2024-21

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF MADEIRA BEACH, FLORIDA, REVISING SECTION 94-33 OF DIVISION 9 (GENERAL) OF CHAPTER 94 (FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT) TO DELETE THE REQUIREMENT TO EVALUATE PREVIOUSLY ISSUED BUILDING PERMITS; AMENDING THE DEFINITIONS OF SUBSTANTIAL DAMAGE AND SUBSTANTIAL IMPROVEMENT IN SECTION 94-93 OF DIVISION 9 (GENERAL) OF CHAPTER 94 (FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT) OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES TO DELETE THE REPETITIVE FLOOD DAMAGE PROVISION AND THE ONE-YEAR LOOK BACK REQUIREMENT; REVISING SECTION 14-39 OF ARTICLE II (TECHNICAL CODES AND STANDARDS) OF CHAPTER 14 (BUILDINGS AND BUILDING REGULATIONS) OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES TO DELETE SUBPARAGRAPH (D) REGARDING THE DEFINITIONS OF SUBSTANTIAL DAMAGE AND SUBSTANTIAL IMPROVEMENT IN THE FLORIDA BUILDING CODE; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT, CODIFICATION AND SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Mayor Brooks opened to public comment. There were no public comments.

There were no Board comments.

Commissioner Ghovae motioned to adopt Ordinance 2024-21, Revising Definition of Substantial Improvement, after second reading. Vice Mayor Tagliarini seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL:

Commissioner Ghovae	"YES"
Vice Mayor Tagliarini	"YES"
Commissioner McGeehen	"YES"
Mayor Brooks	"YES"

The motion carried 4-0.

B. Ordinance 2024-22, Fees & Collection Procedure Manual – FY 2025 Update #1 – 2nd Reading & Public Hearing

ORDINANCE 2024-22

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF MADEIRA BEACH, FLORIDA, ADOPTING A REVISED APPENDIX A. – FEES AND COLLECTION PROCEDURES MANUAL OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF CITY OF MADEIRA BEACH, FLORIDA; REPEALING ORDINANCE 2024-05; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT, CODIFICATION AND SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Mayor Brooks opened to public comment. There were no public comments.

There were no Board Comments.

Vice Mayor Tagliarini motioned to adopt Ordinance 2024-22, Fees & Collection Procedure Manual – FY 2025 Update #1, after second reading. Commissioner McGeehen seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL:

Vice Mayor Tagliarini	“YES”
Commissioner McGeehen	"YES"
Commissioner Ghovae	"YES"
Mayor Brooks	"YES"

The motion carried 4-0.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Mayor Brooks asked to add to the December workshop meeting the two comments from public comment: Banning of wood mulch and limitations on RVs. The Board consented.

Commissioner Ghovae said next year that they would be hurting for tax dollars and asked if they could discuss it at the December workshop to see what they can do, not only to facilitate the residents to move into their homes as quickly as possible and also the businesses to move back in. he would love to look into the future in the next two years and see how the negative tax dollars could affect the City.

Mayor Brooks said they could have an update on where they are at the December workshop permitting, getting percentages of houses in terms of where they are in building back or tear downs. That would give enough time for the planning and building departments to provide information for them to discuss. They would not have a clear view of the financial side until next year. The City Manager said there is another update on the hurricanes and a financial update on the agenda. They provided that last week at the workshop to show the revenue impacts for Fiscal Year 2025. They will also give an update for Fiscal Year 2026.

Commissioner Ghovae reiterated to the residents and business owners that they care and want them to move back in as quickly as possible. Staff are making every effort to issue as many permits as possible.

Mayor Brooks clarified that there has been a little misunderstanding about what staff are doing. The staff in the building department and the planning department work six days a week, Monday through Saturday. They have brought staff in from departments that are not functioning properly because of the flood damage. They are utilized mainly in the building department and the planning

department. The permit department offers, in addition to their six days a week, face-to-face meeting for people who need assistance filing demo permits. When people see a post on social media about the permitting department hours, that is in addition to the six days a week they are working, Monday through Saturday. They also provide two staff members to sit out and work with people who need assistance with building permits or have general questions. She does not see that changing but sees it flowing into more assistance once they get to the rebuild phase. People have already submitted for interior rebuilds. In December, Marci can provide how many substantial letters have gone out, how many were complete tear-downs, and how people will rebuild. That information will give them a financial snap look at how the City is affected. They will know how many houses they are thinking about tearing down as of December. That information will continue to change as the situation continues. There are over 1,700 properties affected in Madeira Beach. Those include single-family homes, duplexes, triplexes, condominiums, and apartment buildings. She is in the City all the time and has not seen a staff member who is not working hard and long hours to help the residents go home. The community must understand that. Nobody is just sitting around.

Commissioner Ghovae said that is commendable. They see staff working around the clock. He asked if they could engage licensed professionals such as an electrician, who can help in certain aspects of reconstruction. They could depend on those professionals in their fields to sign off on things such as power, drywall, or whatever.

Mayor Brooks said the discussion she understands is that they do not currently need that. It is the property owner's responsibility to hire those licensed professionals. Once the build-back permit is issued, the City building inspector does the inspections depending on the work done to move the work to the next phase. The building official currently does not have an issue carrying that load. As things move along, things get busier. If there is a need for additional building inspectors, the City will get them. Staff are aware that help is available and where it will come from. Marci has that area under control, and if she sees the need for additional staff, she will ask for it. The City Manager said they cannot hire professionals to assist property owners.

Mayor Brooks said they must follow the proper process and FEMA's guidelines, and there is punishment for everyone for not doing so, including the property owners. Staff are leading the community down the path where there will be no issues at the end of the rebuild. She would not want someone not to follow the proper procedures, spend money rebuilding, and be told by FEMA they must tear it down.

Commissioner Ghovae asked what would happen if somebody had a house damaged by the hurricane, and the City was backed up and did not have the manpower needed to issue the permits quickly. The City Manager said they have sought assistance through the Pinellas County Emergency Operation Center but have yet to receive it. The initial request was made on October 2. Permits are issued as quickly as possible. It does not help hiring a licensed professional. They need individuals that are familiar with the building permit process. Now that the property owners receive their substantial damage or improvement letter, the work begins, and inspections are called in. The inspections are being done to help people get back into their homes and/or businesses.

Commissioner McGeehen said the City staff is doing an excellent job. That includes everyone and the Board of Commissioners. Citizens have brought their concerns regarding communication and individual inspections to him. They have done everything they were told to do; they have their permits and are ready to get back into their homes. Is it possible for someone to call and give them a timeline for when the inspections will be made? Communication will help them in that regard. Ms. Forbes said that, as of today, the team is actively inputting substantial damage estimates for properties they have inspected through October 30. Once the data is entered, it is QC'd. Those are being done in order of the demo permits they did and the inspection requests. They are trying to do them in order of first in and out. They combine the work done by Title Basis, which canvasses the City and QCs' results. As of Monday, they got QC data from them for about 50 properties. The City's team has done substantial damage assessments for a little over 150 properties. Today, they are trying to look at substantial damage from properties that were visited on the 30th. She is trying to put a timeline together so people will know what to expect and when.

Commissioner McGeehen said they talked about bringing in county inspectors. The City Manager said they have requested additional assistance but have not received it. The inspections are now being done based on permits obtained to rebuild their property. They are not doing any inspections now for anyone who has been removing damage from the storm. They allow people to take photos of the work and upload them into the software. Once they receive their letter informing them of substantial damage or substantial improvement, they can proceed with the rebuild or repair. They still need to get a permit to do that work. It will be reviewed quickly so the work can begin. As the work progressed, they received calls for inspections for work that was in progress and had been completed, etc.

Commissioner McGeehen said people have told him they have problems with looting and illegal dumping and asked if the police presence has been increased. The City Manager explained that the police are patrolling and have made arrests for certain things. Thirty-six properties appear abandoned. They have contacted them about securing their property. Those properties are empty, and there is nothing in them to steal. They have had problems with people trying to break into homes and have been arrested. People are encouraged to call 911 if they see illegal activity. Their deputies are not that busy because the call volume has drastically reduced after the storms. So, they are ready, willing, and able to go out, but they are patrolling. He has observed people taking items from the curb at night. He does not know why they would want to do that. It has been sitting, is nasty, and smelly. That is not considered stealing anything if it is at the curb.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:26 p.m.

Anne-Marie Brooks, Mayor

ATTEST:

DRAFT